



# ARE INTEGRATED SERVICES A STEP TOWARDS INTEGRATION?

UGANDA CASE STUDY – 2018

**DRD** DANISH  
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Cover page Photo Credit: Patients queue for consultations at a Save the Children mobile clinic in Imvepi settlement. Fredrik Lerneryd / Save the Children

Page 2 photo: Sofia, 12, does her homework with her mother, outside their home in Rhino Camp. Sofia dropped out of school when the family fled South Sudan, but has now enrolled on Save the Children's Accelerated Education Programme, which uses a specially condensed curriculum to teach the Ugandan primary curriculum in just three years. Juozas Cernius / Save the Children

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The report builds on previous work by ReDSS on durable solutions in Uganda, in particular a local integration study in 2016 and an early solutions planning report in 2017.<sup>2</sup> It forms part of a series of ReDSS studies exploring integrated services and social cohesion in displacement.

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This research project was undertaken by Sorcha O'Callaghan, an independent consultant, with Shezane Kirubi and Aude Galli from the ReDSS. The report was written by Sorcha O'Callaghan and edited by Kate McGuinness.

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## THE REGIONAL DURABLE SOLUTIONS SECRETARIAT (ReDSS)

The search for durable solutions to the protracted displacement situation in East Africa and the Horn of Africa is a key humanitarian and development concern. This is a regional/cross-border issue, with a strong political dimension, which demands a multi-sector response that goes beyond the existing humanitarian agenda.

The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) was created in 2015 with the aim of maintaining focused momentum and stakeholder engagement towards durable solutions for displacement-affected communities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. ReDSS comprises 13 NGOs: ACTED, CARE International, Concern Worldwide, DRC, IRC, INTERSOS, Mercy Corps, NRC, OXFAM, RCK, Save the Children, World Vision and LWF. The DRC, IRC and NRC form the ReDSS steering committee.<sup>3</sup>

ReDSS is not an implementing agency. It is instead a coordination and information hub that acts as a catalyst and agent provocateur to stimulate forward thinking and policy development on durable solutions for displacement. ReDSS seeks to improve joint learning and programming, inform policy processes, enhance capacity development and facilitate coordination.

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the SPRS-NU, including other projects implemented by the Austrian Development Agency and the Belgian Development Agency, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/uganda/regional-development-and-protection-programme-rdpp-support-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/uganda/regional-development-and-protection-programme-rdpp-support-programme_en)

<sup>2</sup> IRC / ReDSS (2016). Early Solutions Planning in Kenya and Uganda; and ReDSS (2016). Durable Solutions in Uganda: local integration focus.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about ReDSS, see: <http://regionaldss.org>

# GLOSSARY

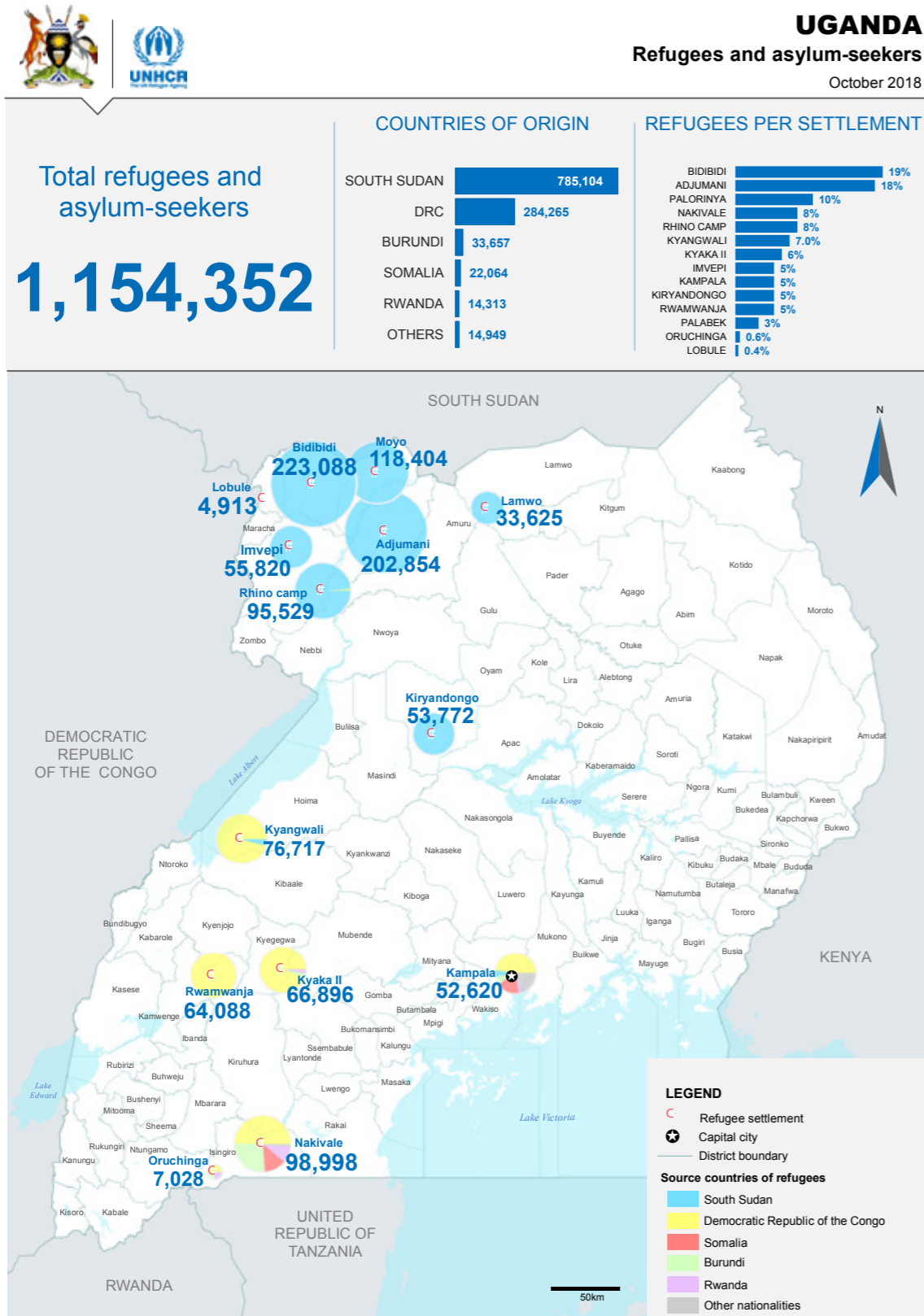
<b>Area-Based Approach</b>	An approach that defines an area, rather than a sector or target group, as the main entry point. All stakeholders, services and needs are mapped and assessed, and relevant actors mobilized and coordinated within it. (ReDSS)
<b>Durable Solutions</b>	A durable solution is achieved when displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It can be achieved through return, local integration and resettlement. (IASC framework)
<b>Host Communities</b>	The local, regional and national governmental, social and economic structures within which refugees live. (UNHCR)
<b>Livelihoods</b>	A combination of the resources used and the activities undertaken in order to live. Resources include individual skills (human capital), land (natural capital), savings (financial capital), equipment (physical capital), as well as formal support groups and informal networks (social capital). (DFID)
<b>Local Integration</b>	Local integration as a durable solution combines three dimensions. First, it is a legal process, whereby refugees attain a wider range of rights in the host state. Second, it is an economic (material) process of establishing sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to the host community. Third, it is a social and cultural (physical) process of adaptation and acceptance that enables the refugees to contribute to the social life of the host country and live without fear of discrimination. (UNHCR).
<b>Operational Agency</b>	Agency implementing humanitarian and development aid programs directly.
<b>Protracted Displacement Situation</b>	Situations where the displaced “have lived in exile for more than 5 years, and when they still have no immediate prospect of finding a durable solution to their plight by means of voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement”. (UNHCR)
<b>ReDSS Durable Solutions Framework</b>	A rapid analytical tool to assess to what extent durable solutions have been achieved in a particular context. The Framework contains 31 indicators that relate to a) Physical Safety – protection, security and social cohesion; b) Material Safety – access to basic services, access to livelihoods, restoration of housing land and property; and c) Legal Safety – access to documentation, family reunification, participation in public affairs, and access to effective remedies and justice. (ReDSS)

<b>Refugee</b>	A person who “owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country”. (Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1A (2), 1951)
<b>Reintegration</b>	The achievement of a sustainable return to country of origin; i.e. the ability of returnees to secure the political, economic and social conditions to maintain their life, livelihood and dignity. (Macrae/UNHCR)
<b>Resettlement</b>	The transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement. (UNHCR)
<b>Returnee</b>	A person in the act or process of going back to their point of departure. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilized combatants; or between a host country (either transit or destination) and a country of origin, as in the case of migrant workers, refugees, asylumseekers and qualified nationals. There are subcategories of return that can describe the way the return is implemented; e.g. voluntary, forced, assisted and spontaneous return; and subcategories that describe who is participating in the return; e.g. repatriation (for refugees). (IOM)
<b>Self-Reliance</b>	The social and economic ability of an individual, household or community to meet basic needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. (UNHCR).
<b>Social Cohesion</b>	The nature and set of relationships between individuals and groups in a particular environment (horizontal social cohesion) and between those individuals and groups and the institutions that govern them in a particular environment (vertical social cohesion). Strong positive and integrated relationships and inclusive identities are perceived as indicative of high social cohesion, whereas weak negative or fragmented relationships and exclusive identities are taken to mean low social cohesion. Social cohesion is therefore a multi-faceted scalar concept. (World Vision).
<b>Transitional Solutions</b>	A framework for transitioning displacement situations into durable solutions, requiring a partnership between humanitarian and development actors, refugees and host communities, and the participation of local actors through area-based interventions. Transitional solutions seek to enhance the self-reliance of protracted refugees, IDPs and host communities alike. (ReDSS/ Samuel Hall 2015).

## LIST OF ACRYONYMS

<b>ACTED</b>	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (France)	<b>OPM</b>	Office of Prime Minister; the OPM Department of Refugees is the central governmental department responsible for refugee affairs
<b>CEFORD</b>	Community Empowerment for Rural Development	<b>ReHoPE</b>	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	<b>SRS</b>	Self Reliance Strategy
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)	<b>SPRS-NU</b>	Support Programme Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council	<b>STA</b>	Settlement Transformative Agenda
<b>DRDIP</b>	Development Response to Displacement Impacts (World Bank)	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>EPRC</b>	Economic Policy Research Centre	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
<b>ERP</b>	Education Response Plan	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>EUTF</b>	European Union Trust Fund	<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda	<b>ZOA</b>	NGO
<b>IASC</b>	Inter Agency Standing Committee		
<b>IDA-18</b>	International Development Association (IDA)-18 (World Bank)		
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person(s)		
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration		
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee		
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview		
<b>LWF</b>	Lutheran World Federation		
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation		
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council		
<b>OAU</b>	Organisation of African Unity		
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs		

# MAP OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS IN UGANDA



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Statistics: Provided by OPM (proGres)

Creation date: 31 October 2018 Author: UNHCR Representation in Uganda Feedback: IM Team Uganda (ugakaimug@unhcr.org) | UNHCR BO Kampala

The structure of the report	
<b>Section 1</b>	(Introduction) provides background to the research aims, describes the refugee-hosting context in northern Uganda and offers an overview of key terminology.
<b>Section 2</b>	(Methodology) presents the methodology used for this research, including reference to methods of enquiry and the limitations of this study.
<b>Section 3</b>	(Gaps Between Policy and Practice) sets out the policy background to refugee integration in Uganda and how services have been integrated for both refugees and their host communities. It describes recent policy developments, including those related to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).
<b>Section 4</b>	(The First Step: Accepting Refugees) describes host community attitudes towards refugees, their motivations for hosting and the first phase of refugee hosting.
<b>Section 5</b>	(Shared Services and Integration) outlines how services to refugees and host communities are integrated in practice and discusses the implications of this in terms of the degree to which refugees integrate into the community.
<b>Section 6</b>	(Social Integration) examines the social integration of refugees and their hosts, describing areas of conflict, positive interactions and links to services.
<b>Section 7</b>	(Conclusion) concludes the report.
<b>Section 8</b>	(Recommendations) provides policy and programme recommendations based on key research findings.

Due to the length and detail of the report, sections three, four, five and six each end with a summary of main findings and recommendations. This is designed to provide key takeaways and next steps. These summaries inform the final conclusions and recommendations presented at the end of the report.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study upon which this report is based examines the longer-term implications of assistance that targets both refugees and their hosts in Uganda. Focusing in particular on host community–refugee relations as instrumental to refugee-hosting conditions, it examines how the policy of integrated services to refugees and their hosts has been applied and analyses the longer-term implications of this approach. Three main issues are considered:

- What is the **current policy in terms of shared services** to host and refugee communities in Uganda and how has this been applied in practice?
- From the perspective of refugees and host populations, **what are the social and economic implications** of shared services? Do they contribute to more positive relationships and greater economic engagement?
- What are **the longer-term implications** of an integrated service delivery model for refugee hosting in Uganda, including links to the integration of refugees into Uganda?

In particular, the study investigates the experiences of South Sudanese refugees and their hosts in settlements in Adjumani and Arua districts of the West Nile sub-region in Uganda's Northern Region. Qualitative research undertaken in Adjumani and Rhino Camp settlements, and surrounding host community villages and parishes, comprise the primary data upon which this report is based. Education and livelihoods are explored as two examples of shared services.

## KEY FINDINGS

Uganda has a renowned and progressive approach to refugees. Refugees have the right to work and can access basic services. They are also offered plots of land for cultivation in village-like settlements and are granted relative freedom of movement. South Sudanese refugees are becoming socially networked into host communities in the vicinity of refugee settlements but face a range of challenges that hamper a greater degree of integration. These include: their lack of opportunities for naturalisation as Ugandan citizens; varying levels of insecurity within refugee communities; the use of aid to anchor refugees to settlements; and their limited prospects for sustainable livelihoods. Combined, these challenges all point to refugees living life on the margins of Ugandan society, with their economic opportunities propped up by humanitarian assistance. Despite the rights offered to refugees, few refugees living in settlements are fully or even informally integrated into host communities.

The Ugandan refugee-hosting model is based on an overall assumption of benefit. Indeed, refugee-hosting communities in the vicinity of the settlements do benefit from the support and services provided to refugees. This assists their initial decision-making process about whether to accept refugees in the first place. Host communities clearly and repeatedly indicate their continued endorsement of the decision to host refugees, which is tied to the promise of increased local development and improved services. Host communities and refugees live together in relative harmony in the vicinity of settlements. The logic that shared or equitable access to services reinforces asylum space and fosters peaceful coexistence is thus largely accurate in terms of the original decision to host.

This initial bargain, however, is affected somewhat by unmet expectations regarding direct tangible benefits to host community households; for instance, unfulfilled demands for livestock, scholarships for children or job opportunities. Tensions related to land, which are compounded by refugee hosting, also factor into this

equation. As much as increased services facilitate the agreement to host refugees, when there are constraints on the resulting services or other promised support, this can create daily competition between refugees and host communities, as is exemplified in ongoing tensions related to the water shortages in Rhino Camp.

One way in which host communities in West Nile sub-region currently benefit from support to refugees is through the 70:30 principle, where 30 percent of the support is provided to the host community, usually on the basis of quotas. While this principle helps ensure host communities benefit from the overall refugee response, its application is unclear and inconsistent, which gives rise to tensions. For example, there are different views about what constitutes a host community. NGOs and operational agencies also face challenges in reaching the 30 percent target, which is rarely achieved in practice. Even when they do meet it, they acknowledge high levels of duplication. Clearer guidance and more coordinated action on the implementation of the 70:30 principle is required.

When host communities are included in a refugee response, their specific needs tend to be treated as secondary considerations within that response, with implications for the relevance of the support that is provided. Moreover, host communities themselves are often treated as secondary at the point of service. An overall assumption of benefit to refugee hosting also downplays the significant financial and opportunity costs to communities at large (for instance, in relation to serious environmental degradation) and to those specific individuals who are negatively affected by refugee hosting. These costs may become more pronounced as refugee stays become more protracted.

Shared services between refugees and their hosts provide a platform for the integration of refugees. For this potential to be realised, however, it needs to be capitalised upon more effectively. At present, support for education and livelihoods struggles to meet core objectives, thus limiting impact in terms of economic integration. There is some evidence that shared education in particular facilitates a degree of peaceful coexistence, both between learners from refugee communities, and across refugee and host communities. As yet, though, there is no indication that this supports the broader social integration of communities. The location of services in geographically isolated settlements where there are low numbers of relatively dispersed Ugandans not only limits the number of Ugandans who can benefit from these services but restricts the potential for social interaction between refugees and host communities. Further, the services established in settlements are oriented to support highly concentrated refugee communities, which has two primary consequences. First, this increases the likelihood that these services will be established as parallel refugee services, operating outside national service structures. Second, it also means that these services will not be sustained should refugee repatriation occur.

Although it is less of a policy and operational priority in the Ugandan government refugee response, nonetheless South Sudanese refugees and Ugandan host communities both within and on the periphery of settlements do interact, creating social bonds and developing trust. This contributes to increasing levels of interdependence. There are examples of refugees and host communities learning one another's languages, participating in cultural and religious events such as marriages and funerals, and using the social networks they have created to develop economic opportunities. For instance, host community members highlight how they use their social networks to obtain casual labour from refugees or share in their food assistance. In turn, refugees indicate that they get jobs on farms and access to land. While social networking assists with peaceful coexistence and reinforces economic interaction, this research shows that this could be developed further. A stronger focus on the social bonds that bring communities together also better balances the predominant economic approach to refugee hosting.

The harmony across refugee and host communities is in contrast to the more strained relations within refugee communities, which erupt into violence at times. These tensions are often inter-ethnic but likewise relate to access to services and opportunities. Refugees indicate that the level of risk within their communities is downplayed by the Ugandan authorities and aid actors. They also point to a widespread lack of understanding

of the current conflict in South Sudan and its implications for life in refugee settlements. More could be done to build on the roles played by community-based organisations, churches and traditional leaders in terms of fostering peaceful coexistence within settlements. In particular, the current policy of co-locating conflicting refugee communities on the basis of time of arrival requires greater management.

Refugee integration is a process that starts from the point of arrival and is determined by the conditions and environment in which the settlement of refugees occurs. The identity and social capital of both refugees and host communities are key determinants in their level of integration. Opportunities for integration depend on a range of factors, including: the proximity of refugee settles to host communities; the availability and location of services; and the quality and amount of land upon which refugees are settled. Moreover, South Sudanese refugees do not constitute a homogenous or unified group. Consequently, more account should be taken of their diversity, which fundamentally determines the quality and pace of their integration. Greater attention also should be given to planning settlements and to incorporating longer-term prospects for integration into this process.

At the national and policy level, many of the debates in Uganda centre on refugee self-reliance and the emergence of refugee economies. There is, however, a danger that focusing primarily on the productive capacities of refugees risks excluding from policy discussions more thorough consideration of their rights and protection needs. Placing responsibility for self-reliance on refugees without addressing the challenges and barriers they face (including those that stem from their residence in refugee settlements) is problematic. At best, this approach does not acknowledge, much less address, the challenges that refugees do face. At worst, failure to account for these challenges and barriers risks exacerbating them, especially if the self-reliance approach is linked to a reduction in humanitarian assistance. It is essential to go beyond support for economic activities and to understand the importance of social integration as a core element in refugee self-reliance strategies.

There is both national and international commitment to a more development-oriented approach to refugee hosting. A number of important policy processes are already underway in Uganda to support this shift in perspective. They include: sector specific development plans for refugee hosting (for example, the Education Response Plan); ambitions for refugees to be included in the next National Development Plan (2020–2030); efforts to ensure greater leadership and coordination of refugee affairs by district local governments; and the drive to address refugee settlement planning that can take account of longer-term development prospects for refugees.

In particular, longer-term development programmes aimed at addressing the vulnerability of refugees and their hosts should take an area-based approach. This entails that development assistance to host communities and refugees is targeted on the basis of vulnerability, capacity and other criteria relevant to the specific needs of these communities, not quotas. If the strategy is to compensate host communities for the pressures resulting from refugee hosting, then communities hosting refugees in urban settings should also be included in this approach.

Some of these processes are a culmination of decades of unmet commitments to longer-term solutions for refugees and their hosts. Many have also been spurred on as a result of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) process in Uganda. To serve as a basis for longer-term solutions for refugees and their hosts, these recent policy developments require fundamental shifts in the leadership of the Ugandan refugee response. They necessitate genuine investment in the development of refugee-hosting districts and communities. These recent policy developments must also define an approach that is rooted in addressing the challenges, barriers and opportunities for host communities and refugees alike. If effectively translated into practice, these processes have the potential to be transformational, thus further strengthening Uganda's global leadership in refugee management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on key study findings, this report proposes five recommendations designed to improve refugee-related policy and programming in mutually beneficial ways for both refugees and host communities. These recommendations are formulated with the full understanding that their implementation must be a collective endeavour involving a broad range of stakeholders – from national and local government, operational agencies, international and local aid and development actors to host and refugee communities themselves.

### **1 Drive forward, fund and ensure coordinated support for current efforts to integrate and localise the Ugandan refugee response**

Current moves to integrate refugees into the National Development Plan III from 2020 onward are highly welcome, as are the articulation of sector-specific response plans and the recognition of the central role of district local government in refugee governance. These positive developments should be supported by an area-based approach to determining local host and refugee community needs.

### **2 Ensure the Livelihoods and Jobs Response Plan incorporates an achievable strategy of self-reliance for refugees both within and outside settlements that is rooted in the economic development and social integration of refugee-hosting districts**

Livelihoods work should be framed by an overarching strategy that aims to achieve refugee self-reliance. It should be linked to the economic development of refugee-hosting districts. Livelihoods work should also take into account the capacities and aspirations of refugees and host communities.

### **3 Prioritise and fund settlement and site planning so that refugees in settlements have better prospects of self-reliance and land sensitivities are managed more effectively**

Integration and longer-term prospects are determined by decisions taken in relation to where and how to settle refugees in the first place. There should be a greater investment of time and resources in settlement and site planning, including attention to building local capacities to participate more effectively in these processes.

### **4 Engage host communities in a more systematic way and address the actual financial costs and opportunity costs of refugee hosting**

The assumed benefits associated with refugee hosting underplay the consideration of costs to communities and individuals in the short and longer term, despite the fact that refugee hosting hinges on the willingness of host communities to do so. Refugee-hosting communities should be better informed about these costs, minimising potential tensions and offering opportunities to collectively address these.

### **5 Recognise and address the diversity of the South Sudanese refugee population and increase capacities for conflict management**

The identity, gender, ethnicity, social networks of refugees and host communities, and their proximity to one other have a major bearing on relations between refugees and hosts, as well as within refugee communities. These factors also impact the pace of integration and impinge on peaceful coexistence, especially within refugee communities. Often overlooked, much more attention should be given to these issues.



**Whether, and in what ways, integrated services contribute to better outcomes for refugees who are in a situation of protracted displacement in Northern Uganda?**



# INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the research and its primary aims. It provides a contextual background to displacement in Uganda and the refugee situation in the Adjumani and Arua districts, which are the main the research sites. The section closes with an overview of some of the key concepts under discussion.

## AIMS

This study examines the longer-term implications of assistance that targets both refugees and their host communities in Uganda's Northern Region. Focusing in particular on community-refugee relations as instrumental to positive refugee-hosting conditions, the study seeks to understand how the policy of integrated services to host communities and refugees has been interpreted and applied in practice, including consideration of longer-term implications. The study sets out to answer the following research questions:



**Whether, and in what ways, integrated services contribute to better outcomes for refugees who are in a situation of protracted displacement in Northern Uganda**

- 1** What is the current policy in terms of shared services to host and refugee communities in Uganda and to what extent are services for refugees and host communities integrated in practice?
- 2** From the perspective of refugees and host populations, what are the social and economic implications of shared services? Do they contribute to more positive relations and greater economic engagement?
- 3** How have different actors, including aid organisations, approached the application of integrated services in practice? To what extent have their approaches been informed by efforts to promote positive community relations?
- 4** What are the longer-term implications of an integrated service delivery model for refugee-hosting in Uganda? Does it contribute to more sustainable refugee hosting conditions for refugees in protracted displacement? Can any links be made to local integration?
- 5** What lessons can be drawn from the policy and practice relating to integrated services –particularly relating to operational agencies – and what recommendations can be drawn for the future?

## CONTEXT: REFUGEE HOSTING IN NORTHERN UGANDA

Northern Uganda has long been an epicentre of mass displacement. Large numbers of Sudanese refugees arrived as early as the 1950s, the first in waves of displacement and economic exchange that has long characterised relations between this region and South Sudan. Most recently, civil war erupted in Juba in December 2013 and quickly engulfed all ten states in South Sudan. By July 2018, the violence had displaced more than 4 million South Sudanese both within and outside the country. Of these, 2.46 million South Sudanese are refugees, including more than 1 million in Uganda.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See: UNHCR South Sudan figures: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan> and OCHA figures: <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-6-16-july-2018>

Ugandan refugee laws and policies, enshrined in the Refugee Act 2006 and the Refugees Regulations of 2010, have been hailed as some of the most progressive in the world.<sup>5</sup> Refugees have the right to work and access basic services, such as healthcare and education. Refugees can move with relative freedom, subject to administrative permissions.<sup>6</sup> Since 1992, refugees have been granted plots of land in village-like settlements (a settlement approach), which is intended to facilitate their self-reliance through agricultural production.<sup>7</sup> Uganda has maintained its open-door policy – and the rights it affords refugees – in the face of an unprecedented influx of refugees since 2013. It is now the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, and third in the world. Refugee figures in Uganda recently have been subject to a verification process and the official figure is now 1.1 million refugees.<sup>8</sup>

Since 1998, Uganda has promoted a development-oriented approach to refugees, whereby refugee-hosting districts are supported for the benefit of both refugees and their hosts, and services are integrated. Most recently, Uganda has become a pilot country (and in many ways is the forerunner) for the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).<sup>9</sup> Launched in Uganda in March 2017, the CRRF is a government-led coordination, policy and facilitation mechanism that aims “to enhance the capacities, funds and skills of the government, especially in refugee-hosting districts, including different authorities concerned at national and district levels to address these challenges. This will enable the government to respond and integrate the new arrivals for the benefit of both refugee and host communities.”<sup>10</sup> The CRRF is generating substantial momentum for a step change in Uganda's approach, which is moving away from a largely humanitarian response towards government-led development approaches.

### Refugee hosting in Adjumani and Arua districts

Refugees in Uganda are hosted in 12 districts and more than 30 settlements located in some of the poorest and most sparsely populated areas of the country. The two sites where this research was undertaken – at settlements in Adjumani and Arua districts – are located in Uganda's Northern Region. Adjumani district, with more than 200,000 refugees, has the highest number of refugees relative to its Ugandan population.<sup>11</sup> There are 17 settlements in Adjumani district, many of which are relatively small and interspersed with the host population. Approximately 90% of the Ugandan population in Northern Region are Madi. Among other indicators of poverty, these Madi have a life expectancy that is seven years below the national average.<sup>12</sup> Adjumani district has been hosting refugees since the mid-1990s and some of its settlements, such as Mungula, have continued to host South Sudanese since then. Other settlements have been established or re-opened since 2012. The Southern Sudan tribal groups (Madi, Kuku, Dinka and Zande) make up about 95% of the refugee population.<sup>13</sup>

Arua district hosts an estimated 142,507 refugees in three settlements, amounting to nearly a quarter of the district population. A further estimated 50,000 refugees live in Arua town.<sup>14</sup> Arua town is the largest town in West Nile sub-region of Uganda's Northern Region and is situated approximately 50km from the border with

<sup>5</sup> The Uganda Refugees Act of 2006 and the Refugees Regulations of 2010 are the legal provisions underpinning refugee policy in Uganda. The 2006 Act enshrined into Ugandan law international and regional standards for refugee protection as provided in the 1951 United Nations Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/05/30/the-reality-behind-ugandas-glowing-reputation>

<sup>7</sup> Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2003). Local integration as a durable solution: refugees, host populations and education in Uganda.

<sup>8</sup> See UNHCR for updated figures: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/23>

<sup>9</sup> The CRRF is a result of the New York Declaration from the UN Summit on Migration in September 2016.

<sup>10</sup> CRRF (2018a). Roadmap for the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Uganda, 2018–2020.

<sup>11</sup> These refugee figures and those relating to Arua are from September 2018; see: <https://ugandarefugees.org/en/country/uga>

<sup>12</sup> Adjumani District Government (2015). Adjumani District Five Year District Development Plan 2015–2020; see: <http://npa.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ADJUMANI-DISTRICT-DDP11-2015-2016-to-2019-2020.pdf> and Vogelsang (2017). Local Communities' Receptiveness to Host Refugees: A Case Study of Adjumani District in Times of a South Sudanese Refugee Emergency; see: <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/353562>

<sup>13</sup> World Bank / UNHCR (2016). An assessment of Uganda's progressive approach to refugee management; see: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/24736/An0assessment00o0refugee0management.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>14</sup> This is an unverified estimate provided by local officials.

South Sudan. More than half of the Arua district population live below the poverty line, a situation that worsens for the mainly Lugbara crop farmers who live in the surrounding areas of Rhino Camp<sup>15</sup>. Rhino Camp, the largest and most concentrated settlement in Arua district, originally opened in 1980 and was expanded after 2013. The settlement currently hosts an estimated 84,105 refugees – mostly South Sudanese of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including the Kakwa, Dinka, Nuer and Kuku, who arrived in two large influxes in 2013 and 2016, and in smaller numbers since then.

Land in Northern Region is held under customary tenure, with significant implications for refugee hosting.<sup>16</sup> Customary land is owned by indigenous communities, administered through traditional governance methods and often managed by clans and sub-clans. Although land is divided up for use by families and individuals, it remains under the ownership of the wider community and is passed on by ancestral lineage through the stewardship of clan leaders and elders.<sup>17</sup>

## TERMINOLOGY: INTEGRATION, DE FACTO INTEGRATION AND OTHER KEY CONCEPTS

### What is integration?

Along with return and resettlement, local integration is one of three solutions to displacement.<sup>18</sup> Definitions of integration vary: they are often country and context-specific and relate to concepts of national identity.<sup>19</sup> Most definitions recognise that integration is a two-way process between receiving and arriving groups, whereby change occurs on both sides. It refers to long-term or permanent settlement, when international protection is no longer required. The ReDSS definition of this term is drawn from UNHCR and highlights three elements:<sup>20</sup>

- A legal process, whereby refugees attain a wider range of rights in the host state
- An economic process of establishing sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to the host community
- A social and cultural process of adaptation and acceptance that enables refugees to contribute to the social life of the host country and live without fear of discrimination

### What is informal or de facto integration?

It has been argued that integration only becomes a durable solution at the point when a refugee becomes a citizen.<sup>21</sup> Others suggest that in contexts of protracted displacement, where refugees are living within the host community, informal or de facto integration occurs despite the absence of legal integration. These definitions of informal or de facto integration are useful because they emphasise relations with the host community and prioritise economic, social and cultural processes. Refugees become informally integrated when they exhibit the following characteristics:<sup>22</sup>

- Not in physical danger and do not live under the threat of refoulement
- Not confined to camps or settlements and have the right of return to their home country
- Able to sustain livelihoods through access to land or employment and can support themselves and their families
- Have access to education or vocational training, health facilities and housing

<sup>15</sup> See: <http://aruadistrict.blogspot.com/2009/06/poverty-and-livelihood-analysis.html>

<sup>16</sup> The Land Act of 1998 defines customary tenure as governed by "rules generally accepted as binding and authoritative by the class of persons to which it applies".

<sup>17</sup> Zakaryan (2018). My Children Should Stand Strong to Make Sure We Get Our Land Back: Host Community Perspectives of Uganda's Lamwo Refugee Settlement..

<sup>18</sup> According to Article 34 of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, "the contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees".

<sup>19</sup> Jacobsen (2001). The Forgotten Solution: Local Integration for Refugees in Developing Countries.

<sup>20</sup> Crisp (2004). Local Settlement of Refugees: A Conceptual and Historical Analysis.

<sup>21</sup> Crisp (2004).

<sup>22</sup> Jacobsen (2001).

- Are socially networked in the host community: intermarriage is common, ceremonies such as weddings and funerals are attended by everyone, and there is little distinction between refugee and host standards of living.

The concept of interim local solutions is recognised in the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, which sets out how some host countries elect to facilitate the "economic, social and cultural inclusion" of refugees, along with "interim legal stay".<sup>23</sup> Some commentators suggest that this articulation of the inclusion of refugees best reflects the current Ugandan model.

### What are integrated or shared services?

Integrated or shared services for refugees and host communities refer to the inclusion of refugees in national systems of service provision, whereby refugees access the same health, education, social services, child protection and other public services that are provided to the nationals of the country.<sup>24</sup> Under this approach, refugees receive public services from the relevant national and local service providers in the same settings and/or on a par with nationals.

In contrast to the parallel service delivery system characteristic of emergency humanitarian responses to refugees, the integrated or shared services approach lies at the heart of a longer-term developmental approach to refugee management. Recognised as part of a comprehensive response, the integrated services approach helps ensure that refugees are integrated into a more holistic, cost efficient and nationally coordinated response that can benefit both host and refugee populations alike. While integrated or shared services between refugees and their hosts may be a factor in creating an environment conducive for the integration of refugees, they are not a substitute for the more complex legal, social and economic processes of local integration.<sup>25</sup>

### What are durable solutions?

A durable solution to displacement is achieved when displaced populations no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their rights without discrimination because of their displacement. A durable solution can be achieved through return, local integration or resettlement. Creating durable solutions requires a multi-stakeholder, multi-sector rights and needs-based programming approach in order to address the physical, material and legal safety of displaced people. Achieving durable solutions is a process that is first and foremost determined by receiving governments and societies. The creation of conditions conducive to durable solutions requires the collective action of multiple political, humanitarian, development, governance and peacebuilding actors.

<sup>23</sup> According to Article 34 of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, "the contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees".

<sup>24</sup> The report uses the terms "shared services" and "integrated services" interchangeably.

<sup>25</sup> Dryden-Peterson (2003). Education of refugees in Uganda: relationships between setting and access.

## ReDSS core elements to inform solutions planning and programming

- 1 Creating durable solutions requires a **multi-stakeholder and sectoral, rights and needs-based programming approach**.
- 2 The process must be viewed as a **collective action rather than mandate driven**, based on an inclusive, participatory and consensus-building approach.
- 3 **National, regional and local authorities have primary responsibility** and need to be supported to play their leadership and coordinating role.
- 4 Developing **area-based solutions approaches** is paramount to ensure integrated and comprehensive programming for host and displaced populations.
- 5 **Community engagement** is critical to inform (re)integration analysis and programming to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and supportive of **social cohesion** and to **adopt a 'displacement affected communities'** approach- inclusive of refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities
- 6 **Gender/age/diversity:** interventions should take into account the gender, age and diversity at play and give special attention to women and youth
- 7 **Displacement is a development issue with humanitarian components** so it is essential to ensure complementarities and synergies between humanitarian, development, peace and state building programming to inform **collective outcomes**.

For more information see: <http://regionaldss.org/index.php/who-we-are/how-we-work/>

## METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on the experiences of South Sudanese refugees and their hosts in Uganda's Northern Region where land is held customarily. It explores education and livelihoods as two examples of shared services. The fieldwork was undertaken in the Alere, Miriye and Maaji III settlements in Adjumani district, Rhino Camp in Arua district, and the surrounding host community villages and parishes.

### PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

A qualitative methodology was employed that used a strong participatory approach consisting of semi-structured key informant interviews (KIs) and focus group discussions in the research sites, and in Adjumani town and Kampala. Specific efforts were made to ensure a diverse cross section of views. Ugandan officials, academics and community leaders at national, district and local levels were interviewed. In addition to a large number of KIs, four operational learning workshops – two in Kampala, and one each in Rhino Camp and Adjumani district – were held with government actors, donors, UN agencies and NGOs involved in the refugee response, providing an operational perspective to the study.

#### Methods of Enquiry



##### Research methods

- Qualitative methodology: key informant interviews, focus group discussions, operational workshops and comprehensive literature review.



##### Research focus and locations

- South Sudanese refugees and their hosts in and near Adjumani and Rhino settlements.
- Focus on integration of education and livelihoods.



##### Engagement with refugees

- 12 focus group discussions and numerous key informant interviews
- Involved refugee leaders and members with different ethnicity, age, gender and length of time spent in Uganda



##### Engagement with host communities

- 8 focus group discussions and numerous key informant interviews
- Involved host community leaders and members living in the vicinity of Adjumani (Rubidire and Coula Coula villages) and Rhino (Katiko, Odobu villages ) settlements
- 4 further focus group discussions with host community and refugees together.



##### Key informant interviews

- 85 key informant interviews and informal discussions
- Involved government representatives from OPM Refugees, district leadership (political and technical) in Adjumani and Arua, local leaders in sub-counties hosting refugees, international, national and community aid organisations, religious and community leaders, community and business groups, donors and researchers.



##### Strong operational focus

- Four operational workshops (2 x Kampala, 1 x Rhino, 1 x Adjumani)
- Approximately 110 government, donor, research and aid organisation representatives.

The research findings were validated in workshops in each of the project sites to ensure uptake of the recommendations, which aim to inform better programming and policy. The research was also informed by a comprehensive review of available academic, research and policy literature.

The perspectives of refugees, both male and female, were sought from different ethnic groups, including: those having shared ethnicity with the host community; representatives from tribes in the majority in a settlement; minority tribes; long-staying refugees; and new arrivals. Within the host community, landlords<sup>26</sup> involved in granting the land for settlements, community members who had received support from aid organisations and those who did not consider themselves as benefitting were included.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study has the following key limitations:

- The study largely focuses on **progress towards socio-economic integration**. Although prospects for full legal integration are examined in terms of the legal and policy environment for integration in Uganda, this was not addressed in depth in the study.
- Time limitations meant that it was **not possible to include South Sudanese in urban centres**, despite many indications that they are more integrated than their co-nationals living in settlements. Interviews with a small number of South Sudanese refugees were possible in Adjumani town.
- For similar reasons, the **perspectives of host communities were largely drawn from those in the immediate vicinity of refugee settlements**. Although efforts were made to gain input from people living in places outside villages and parishes directly hosting refugees and, in the case of Adjumani district, from host communities in town, time restrictions meant more comprehensive engagement was not feasible.
- While some KIs and a workshop with Kampala-based stakeholders were undertaken, **the research is primarily field based** and as such does not provide an in-depth analysis of all current policy developments.

## GAPS BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

This section reviews prospects for the integration of refugees in Uganda. It describes how integration features in law and policy in Uganda, noting a dichotomy between policy and practice. Uganda has long had a policy of integrating services for refugees into its national systems. In historical practice, however, there has often been a separate system of service delivery and governance for refugees. New policy developments address this. This section closes by describing international funding and support to Uganda, which compounds the short-term approach.

### UGANDA'S REFUGEE MODEL: PROGRESSIVE WITHOUT NATURALISATION

#### Integration policy in Uganda

Despite being seen as progressive, whether Ugandan government refugee policies allow for integration is subject to much debate. Ugandan legislation specifically outlines an integration policy, including reference to both the integration of refugees into the communities in which they settle and the incorporation of refugee-related matters in national, local and regional development plans.

#### Integration under the Refugees Regulations of 2010

##### 60. Integration of refugees in host communities.

- (1) The Commissioner shall ensure that refugees are integrated into the communities where the refugee camps or the refugees are settled.
- (2) For the purposes of sub regulation (1), the Commissioner shall sensitise the host communities about the presence of refugees and any other matters relating to their co-existence with each other.

##### 61. Integration of refugee matters in development plans.

The Commissioner shall liaise with the national, local and regional planning authorities for the purposes of ensuring that refugee concerns and related matters are taken into consideration in the initiation and formulation of sustainable development and environmental plans.

##### 67. Refugees attaining citizenship.

- (1) A person holding refugee status in Uganda, who becomes eligible to apply for citizenship in Uganda may do so on his or her own behalf and that of his or her spouse and any dependant minor children.
- (2) A person with refugee status who acquires Ugandan citizenship shall cease to be a refugee.

To access the full statutory instrument, see: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/544e4f154.pdf>

The legal recognition of integration, the rights afforded to refugees and the development-oriented drive towards self-reliance all point to an integration approach in Uganda. Despite some refugees in Uganda being present for decades, however, there is no avenue for full legal integration. The Ugandan constitution and the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, 1999 expressly exempt children whose parents or grandparents were refugees from accessing citizenship by birth. A constitutional court ruling in 2015 appears to indicate that refugees who had satisfied citizenship requirements could apply for naturalisation under the procedures of the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, 1999. In practice, however, this has so far proven inaccessible to refugees.

<sup>26</sup> The word "landlord" is used to describe family heads, clan leaders and elders who manage the usage of customary land by families and individuals.

In 2011, the Government of Uganda pledged to explore opportunities for the local integration of some refugee populations in protracted displacement. Despite a group of some 15,000 possible refugee candidates being identified by the government and UNHCR, progress on this pledge has not been evident.<sup>27</sup> During the operational learning workshops conducted in Kampala as part of this research, participants claim that there is little political or public appetite for this issue to be addressed formally. This has been compounded by the recent high influx of refugees. Workshop participants raise concerns that the overwhelmingly positive narratives about the Ugandan refugee model mean that there is little room for a critique of the absence of full legal integration.

### De facto integration in spite of a lack of naturalisation?

Do the rights afforded to refugees, the settlement approach and the protracted nature of refugee displacement in Uganda enable informal integration?<sup>28</sup> This, too, is not clear. There are different views on the inter-relationships between a settlement approach and the status of integration. Settlements are regarded as a significant departure from refugee camps because they are perceived to be more humane. Settlements offer refugees greater freedoms and a more enabling environment for developing their capacities and becoming self-reliant. Some see local refugee settlements as an intermediary step in which full local integration cannot be pursued.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, others argue that the geographical isolation of refugees – a result of being placed in settlements in remote underpopulated and underdeveloped areas – actually undermines integration as this isolation limits refugee opportunities for social interaction and integration into the economy.<sup>30</sup>

What is beyond debate is that refugees who have moved from settlements to urban centres have achieved the greatest level of de facto integration due to their relative economic independence and social engagement with host communities.<sup>31</sup> The relationship between self-reliance and urban refugees is not straightforward, however. Urban refugees are often those refugees in a position to move out of settlements – where assistance is provided – because they have relevant skills and/or independent means. By opting out of settlements, these refugees also frequently opt out of assistance, although this is not a clear-cut situation: many urban refugees still travel periodically to the settlements in order to benefit from assistance.<sup>32</sup> The number of urban refugees is growing: the refugee population of Kampala was officially estimated at 98,300 in September 2017, a figure that has almost doubled since 2012.<sup>33</sup> Actual numbers of urban refugees are likely higher. Figures for other urban centres are impossible to obtain, although they are thought to be significant. District local government officials in Arua interviewed for this study, for instance, estimate the population of urban refugees to be around 50,000.

Somewhat of a contradiction emerges with respect to realities on the ground. Despite Uganda's long-standing policy of encouraging refugee self-reliance and its legal stance on integration, refugees who are unregistered and opt out of Uganda's policy framework are also often those who are the most self-reliant and the most integrated. Given the complexity of the inter-relationships between integration, self-reliance and urbanisation, this is an area that warrants much more research, policy attention and programmatic engagement. The need to better understand these complexities is made more pressing because of the potential challenges associated with the significant numbers of refugees moving to urban areas, which compounds the rapid urbanisation currently underway in Uganda.

27 TSee UNHCR: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57f4fceb4.html>

28 Low (2006). Local Integration: A Durable Solution for Refugees? See: [www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR25/FMR2538.pdf](http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR25/FMR2538.pdf)

29 Crisp (2004).

30 Kaiser (2006). Between a camp and a hard place: rights, livelihood and experiences of the local settlement system for long-term refugees in Uganda.

31 Agora (2018). Arua Profile. Urban Community Assessment; see: [http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/ago-ra\\_uga\\_aruaneighborhoodreports\\_arua\\_201809.pdf](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/ago-ra_uga_aruaneighborhoodreports_arua_201809.pdf) and IRC (2018). From Response to Resilience: Working with Cities and City Plans to Address Urban Displacement: Lessons from Amman and Kampala; see: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/2424/fromresponsetoresiliencefinalweb.pdf>

32 A 2018 assessment of refugees in Arua shows that 73% of refugee respondents accessed assistance in the settlement, and that this was second only to remittances in terms of the main source of income with employment being the third. See: Agora (2018).

33 IRC (2018).



Celina's daughter Rose gets checked for malaria at a Save the Children mobile clinic in Imvepi settlement. The clinic visits the area once a week. Celina says the nearest alternative services are at least two hours walk away, a long distance with a sick child. Fredrik Lemeryd / Save the Children

## SHARED SERVICES: INTEGRATED IN POLICY; OFTEN SEPARATE IN PRACTICE

### Integrating services in policy

The Ugandan strategy of integrating services for both refugees and host communities stretches as far back as 1999, when the country adopted its Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) for refugees. The SRS sought to “integrate the services provided to the refugees into regular government structures and policies” and, in so doing, to move “from relief to development”.<sup>34</sup> Prior to this, UNHCR and NGO services to refugees and host communities were provided in parallel, with refugee services often of a higher standard than those provided to Ugandan nationals, resulting in tensions between the two communities.<sup>35</sup>

Integrating services has been a central pillar of Uganda's approach to refugees. This is still the case today. This strategy is articulated in the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA), which is linked to Uganda's National Development Plan II (2015–2020) and is aimed at addressing the socio-economic development of refugee-hosting areas. Integrating services is seen not only as a means for ensuring equitable access to services on the part of both refugees and host communities but also as a means for helping to maintain asylum space for refugees.<sup>36</sup>

34 OPM / UNHCR (1999). Strategy Paper: Self Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999–2005.

35 Orach and De Brouwere (2006). Integrating refugee and host health services in West Nile districts, Uganda.

36 GoU / UN Country Team / World Bank (2017). ReHoPE: Refugee and host community population empowerment. Strategic Framework – Uganda.

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda has galvanised efforts to strengthen the integrated delivery of services to host communities and refugees through support for the development of sector-specific response plans in refugee-hosting districts. Launched in September 2018, the first of these sector-specific response plans is a multi-year Education Response Plan managed by the Ministry of Education and Sports. This response plan aims to ensure that humanitarian and development support for education is integrated under one framework that provides equitable access to education for both refugee and host community children in refugee-hosting areas.<sup>37</sup> The Education Response Plan is the first in a series of sector response plans that are linked to their corresponding national sector development plans, which do not currently incorporate reference to refugees. Further plans under development in 2018 include: a Health Sector Integrated Response Plan led by the Ministry of Health; a Water and Environment Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities led by the Ministry of Water and Environment; and a Jobs and Livelihoods Response Plan led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The aim of these sector-specific response plans is both to attract additional funding for service delivery in support of refugees and their host communities in refugee-hosting districts and to ensure that humanitarian and development support in a specific sector is better coordinated with the lead line ministry.

### Integrating services in practice

Uganda currently envisions the integration of services to host and refugee populations in two distinct ways:

- First, integrated services to refugee-hosting areas are provided – to the degree possible – in such a way that ensures refugees and host communities benefit from shared, rather than parallel, services.
- Second, resources are distributed to refugees and their hosts based on quotas, which involves a set percentage of the refugee response being allocated to host communities: usually 30% under the 70:30 principle.

Health and education services are considered to be the most integrated services.<sup>38</sup> In education, refugee children benefit from the programme of Universal Primary Education (UPE) introduced in Uganda in 1997. Refugee children are allowed to: access government-aided schools; use the Ugandan curriculum as the medium for education; and are taught in English as the common language of instruction, from Primary Stage 3 onward.<sup>39</sup> This pattern is similar in health services, whereby both refugees and Ugandan nationals can access free primary healthcare at health facilities. Health services that have been established in support of refugees living in settlements are likewise open to their host communities.

Despite the long-standing strategy of integrating services for refugees into national systems, there is a chronic and persistent gap between policy and practice. At times of major refugee influxes, for example, community schools for refugee children are often run by UNHCR and implementing partners in refugee settlements, although some refugees also attend government-aided schools. For instance, 23 of the 36 schools (more than 60%) in the Adjumani district settlements are community schools that are not integrated into the national system.<sup>40</sup> This means that the schools are funded, monitored and overseen by humanitarian partners, rather than the Ugandan government. These community schools are also not represented in Adjumani district educational plans.

This pattern is repeated in relation to the integrated health services model. In practice, refugees and host communities often access separate services. In West Nile sub-region, for instance, health services provided by NGOs are the point of first consultation in more than 70% of cases for refugees, whereas this is the case in only 13% of the host community. Conversely, Ugandan government health facilities are the first point of reference for the host community in more than 60% of cases and for refugees this figure is slightly more than 20%.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports (2018). Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda; see: <http://www.globalcrrf.org/wpf-content/uploads/2018/07/Education-Response-Plan-for-Refugees-and-Host-Communities-in-Uganda.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Orach and De Brouwere (2006) and Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2003).

<sup>39</sup> Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2003).

<sup>40</sup> The 2018 figures are provided by the Adjumani district education officer.

<sup>41</sup> EPRC / UNICEF (2018). Child Poverty and deprivation in refugee hosting areas: evidence from Uganda.

### Host community quotas

Host communities benefit from refugee responses under the 70:30 principle.<sup>42</sup> The 70:30 principle is a planning guideline for donors and operational agencies issued by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Department of Refugees, which is the central government department responsible for refugee affairs. The objective of this principle is twofold: to reduce the pressures associated with refugee hosting on host communities; and to promote peaceful coexistence between the two groups by ensuring that host communities receive 30% of the humanitarian assistance provided to refugees. Although the precise genesis of this principle and the rationale for the 70:30 split are unknown, it is intended to cover all areas of assistance to refugees, except food assistance, which is only provided only to refugees. This split is most often applied to livelihoods support, skills enhancement programmes, and water and sanitation interventions, in which there are both material inputs and capacity strengthening.

## SHIFTS FROM PARALLEL REFUGEE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Despite the policy of integrated service delivery to refugees, the traditional practice in Uganda for refugee management has been governed separately. This is key to understanding the historical fragmentation in service delivery. The Office for the Prime Minister (OPM) is mandated under the Ugandan constitution and the Refugee Act of 2006 to protect refugees and coordinate services for their welfare.<sup>43</sup> The OPM Department of Refugees, with support from UNHCR, coordinates activities and service provision to refugees by all stakeholders. At district level, the OPM is represented by a Refugee Desk Officer, who is tasked with oversight, coordination and monitoring of refugee programmes on behalf of the central government. The OPM is represented at the settlement level by camp commandants, who focus on services and service delivery at that level.<sup>44</sup>

The implications of this arrangement are twofold. First, refugee affairs are often planned, budgeted and managed separately in relation to services and service delivery for Ugandan nationals. Second, this approach limits the strategic integration of refugee services into national service provision because refugee-related matters are addressed in parallel to other governmental departments and district local government. This approach also reinforces the gap between policy and practice when it comes to refugee issues: to date, coordination of refugee affairs has been largely managed with limited or no involvement of district and local government, despite the Ugandan system of decentralised governance.

The limitations inherent in the lack of inclusion of district and line ministries are well recognised.<sup>45</sup> These shortcomings have been linked, for instance, to the limited success of the Self-Reliance Strategy, as well as other strategies that have built on this ever since.<sup>46</sup> In April 2018, in a deliberate effort to strengthen district local government engagement in refugee affairs, the Ministry of Local Government was appointed as co-chair of the CRRF Steering Group. Also in 2018, the CRRF Steering Group put forward a set of recommendations for strengthening district coordination of refugee affairs, including: the formalisation of joint district quarterly coordination meetings; the agreement of roles and responsibilities for different actors in relation to NGO projects in refugee-hosting districts; and agreement that all interventions be guided by Ugandan government standards for service delivery.<sup>47</sup> At present, a number of these recommendations are being actioned, including the formalisation of linkages between refugee sector coordination structures and government-led Sector Working Groups. At district level, district level focal points have been invited to co-

<sup>42</sup> For the use of different quota ratios, including the 50:50 split used by the European Union Trust Fund, see the discussion below on shared services as a first step towards integration.

<sup>43</sup> Article 189 under the sixth schedule of the Ugandan constitution is put into effect by Part III of the Refugee Act 2006: "Office of Refugees shall be responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees in Uganda and shall, in that capacity, co-ordinate inter-ministerial and non-governmental activities and programmes relating to refugees." The Refugee Act further defines that this includes the responsibility to "protect refugees and coordinate the provision of services for their welfare" (Section 8, para 2(d)). The Refugee Act is silent on the role of local government.

<sup>44</sup> CRRF (2018b). Strengthening District Level Coordination.

<sup>45</sup> GoU / UN Country Team / World Bank (2017).

<sup>46</sup> This is highlighted in the mid-term review that was conducted in 2004

<sup>47</sup> CRRF (2018b).

chair settlement-related inter-agency coordination meetings. At settlement level, district government officers have been invited to co-chair Sector Working Group meetings.

Relevant line ministries have been driving forward the development of sector-specific response plans, for the first time ensuring that sector planning for refugees is not undertaken in parallel to other national planning processes. Line ministries also manage implementation, with strong involvement of the district authorities through the decentralised service delivery model in Uganda.<sup>48</sup> In turn, district level sector response plans for refugees will be linked to District Development Plans. Given limited engagement to date, significant effort and funding are required to ensure that there are adequate resources and capacities in place to translate policy developments into practice.

The shifts in coordination models and the development of sector-specific response plans are part of a comprehensive drive – propelled by the CRRF – towards the integration of refugees into the upcoming National Development Plan III (2020–2030). A number of enabling initiatives are underway. These include: the revision of district planning guidelines to include refugees; work to ensure that refugee population figures can be included in planning and budgeting for the National Development Plan III through the inclusion of refugees in the upcoming Ugandan household survey or census; and the integration of refugee matters in national Sector Working Groups. These Sector Working Groups are charged with the development of Sector Development Plans and budgets. Ensuring that refugees are on their agenda will help facilitate the incorporation of refugee sector-specific response plans (such as the Education Response Plan) into longer-term sector development plans under the National Development Plan III. In combination, these shifts represent a significant opportunity to galvanise a step change in Ugandan government policy for refugees. In particular, these changes help establish a framework through which the vulnerabilities of refugees and their hosts can be addressed in a collective and inclusive manner.

## SHARING RESPONSIBILITY? CONTRADICTIONARY INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

There has been a chronic shortage of funding required to meet the longer-term objectives inherent in the Ugandan refugee strategy, despite international plaudits for the country's approach and global commitments on sharing responsibility for refugees. Donor confidence has also been hit by a series of corruption scandals, the most recent of which (2018) implicates both the Ugandan government and UN agencies in the inflation of refugee numbers.<sup>49</sup> Funding has lagged far behind ambitions, although a comprehensive picture of humanitarian and development funding to refugee-hosting districts is hampered by the lack of an overall financial tracking system.<sup>50</sup> Donors are caught between two contradictory positions. On the one hand, they have a keen interest to promote and support Uganda as a positive success story in refugee hosting, as this bolsters western efforts to contain refugees and migrants in regions of origin. On the other, donors lack the ability and financial means to support this approach in practice.

Policy makers in Uganda describe an uncoordinated funding environment when it comes to refugee-related matters, especially a lack of commitment to an overall strategic framework. Funding is largely programme based, with donors having different strategies, approaches and cycles.<sup>51</sup> A number of donors, most notably USAID, the EU, DFID, Danida and JICA, provide significant development-related funding in support of refugee-hosting districts, along with their humanitarian responses to refugees. Few, if any, development or humanitarian donors, however, provide direct budget support to the relevant Ugandan line ministries or

48 CRRF (2018b).

49 MacCormaic (2017). Irish Aid should have spotted signs ahead of Uganda fraud. See: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/irish-aid-should-have-spotted-signs-ahead-of-uganda-fraud-1.2947036>

50 Efforts commenced in 2018 to establish this under the Ministry of Finance.

51 This is an ongoing issue; see: IRC / ReDSS (2016).

“ [I]n the face of severe underfunding and the fastest-growing refugee emergency in the world, Uganda's ability to realise a model that allows refugees to thrive now risks being jeopardized – and the future of the new comprehensive refugee response framework thrown into question.”

- Joint statement on behalf of the Government of Uganda and UNHCR, 23 March 2017

district local government. Instead, most donors provide financial support through bilateral development agencies, contractors, UN agencies or NGOs.<sup>52</sup>

The following examples illustrate the funding challenges. In 2015, for example, a USD 350 million five-year multi-actor ReHoPE self-reliance and resilience project was developed by UNHCR in collaboration with the World Bank to support the Ugandan government's STA strategy. Targeting refugee and host communities, the project aimed to enhance peaceful coexistence between refugees and Ugandans, and protect asylum space. In 2017, a range of different infrastructural projects were undertaken but with an annual USD 100 million shortfall in funding for UN programmes reported for that year, study respondents indicate that UN programmes had stalled in 2018.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, the Ugandan government issued an appeal for USD 2 billion at a donor Solidarity Summit in 2017 for both immediate and long-term needs. Only USD 524 million was secured, of which just USD 3.5 million was new funding.<sup>54</sup> Even relief activities are chronically underfunded: the 2018 Refugee Response Plan for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda had a funding requirement of USD 694,946,813. As of June 2018, the plan had received an estimated 16% of requirements.<sup>55</sup> In response to these funding issues, NGO workers describe a “chronic state of emergency, despite it no longer being an emergency” because longer-term programming and planning are not prioritised by donors.

The development funding environment, however, is shifting due to Ugandan government funding from the World Bank. The first, a USD 50 million loan from the Regional Operation on Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), supports the Ugandan STA. DRDIP supports socio-economic services and infrastructure, environmental management and economic empowerment in four refugee-hosting districts.<sup>56</sup> An additional USD 200 million in World Bank funding has been sought through the International Development Association (IDA)-18 sub-window, which is a part credit, part grant request.<sup>57</sup>

The development of the sector-specific response plans by Ugandan government line ministries also offers a framework for longer-term, more harmonised funding. The Education Response Plan, for example, has attracted USD 11 million in seed funding from the Education Cannot Wait global fund and investment from the Ugandan government, including through DRDIP, and USD 1.5 million from the 2017 Solidarity Summit. Further, the education donor partners group in Uganda pledged to support the implementation of the Education Response Plan, align their education activities with the plan and increase funding for refugee-hosting districts. The significant policy shifts towards longer-term solutions for refugees require that these donor pledges are implemented so that future investments are tailored to the new approaches. This would ensure that these shifts offer meaningful opportunities for refugees and their host communities to benefit from longer-term development support.

52 CRRF (2018b).

53 GoU / UN / UNHCR (2017). Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees: Translating New York Declaration Commitments into Action; see: [http://solidaritysummit.gou.go.ug/sites/default/files/UgandaComprehensiveRefugeeResponse\\_20\\_June\\_2017.pdf#overlay-context=summit/summit-documentation](http://solidaritysummit.gou.go.ug/sites/default/files/UgandaComprehensiveRefugeeResponse_20_June_2017.pdf#overlay-context=summit/summit-documentation)

54 See: [http://www.globalcrrf.org/crrf\\_country/uga/#\\_ftnref1](http://www.globalcrrf.org/crrf_country/uga/#_ftnref1)

55 See: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64251>

56 For more information on the DRDIP project, see: <http://projects.worldbank.org/P152822?lang=en>

57 See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/12/04/additional-financing-available-to-support-refugees-and-host-communities>





Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) in Rhino Camp. AEP target learners aged 10-18 who have dropped out of school. It uses a specially condensed curriculum to teach the Ugandan primary curriculum in just three years, to help the children and youth complete their primary education.  
Alun McDonald / Save the Children

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Many of the longer-term objectives featured in Uganda's policies have yet to be achieved in practice. The current approach is characterised by a short-term emergency focus. High numbers of refugees and inadequate funding play a significant role but are only part of a picture where there have been continued difficulties translating policy into practice.
- 2** Despite a model of integrated services to refugees, many refugee services sit outside national service delivery structures. This has implications for the degree to which they offer a pathway to integration of refugees.
- 3** Dramatic shifts are underway currently, evidenced by the development of sector plans by line ministries and the greater involvement of district local government authorities. Catalysed by the CRRF, these developments offer real potential for longer-term solutions for refugees. These represent a major stepchange from current approaches and require continued commitment and leadership from all levels of government, as well as increased capacity, to put into practice.
- 4** In keeping with collective responsibility sharing, the new approaches also require a stepchange in support from donors with greater, more long-term and more harmonised funding. Operational agencies will also need to shift away from humanitarian delivery towards supporting the capacity of government and other national actors.
- 5** Given the complexity of the inter-relationship between integration, self-reliance and urbanisation, the experience of urban refugees is an area that warrants much more research, policy attention and potential support. This must inform strategies aimed at longer-term solutions for refugees.



## FIRST STEP: ACCEPTING REFUGEES

Integration is a process that begins with the arrival of a refugee in Uganda. The prospects for, as well as the quality of, integration hinge on two key factors: the Ugandan policy environment; and the receptiveness and attitudes of host communities. This is recognised in the Ugandan refugee model, which promotes both host community inclusion in the refugee response and peaceful coexistence between refugees and hosts. This section explores how these two issues play out in practice in the Adjumani district settlements and in Rhino Camp. The discussion starts with an examination of the motivations for refugee hosting, highlighting how these are more transactional than narratives often explain. It then describes how host communities are included in the refugee response and the degree to which this enables the acceptance of refugees in practice. The section closes with an analysis of the inter-relationships between refugee hosting and land issues. This is a persistent area of tension that represents a significant risk to the acceptance of refugees and prospects for integration.

### AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT? THE MOTIVATIONS FOR REFUGEE HOSTING

“ Even last month, we asked for more refugees. The reason is, our village is not developing. If we have more refugees, this will help.”

- Local Council lead representative, host community in Rhino

Many of the analyses examining why Uganda has retained its open-door policy to refugees in the face of mass influxes focus on macro-level issues and values: Uganda's progressive refugee policy; the first-hand experience of Ugandan leaders as refugees; and pan-African concepts of hospitality.<sup>58</sup> In Adjumani and Arua districts, however, where land tenure is customary and held by communities, the host communities are the primary stakeholders in refugee hosting. They are, as one local leader in Arua district says, “the first donors in the refugee response”.

Aid community narratives centre on the generosity of host communities, which does play a role. At the same time, such narratives underplay the stronger economic motivations that are often the decisive factors in hosting refugees in Uganda. The overall positive impact of refugees for host communities, both in Uganda and elsewhere, is well documented.<sup>59</sup> Despite this, it is often the subjective views of a host community on the impact of refugees that determines their receptiveness.<sup>60</sup> Understanding host community motivations is crucial to understanding the conditions that allow for the acceptance of refugees and prospects for integration. As this farmer in Culcocolo, a host community in Adjumani district, explains:

We used to feel we were in the bush but the road has been opened. Wild animals have moved away. The market used to be far away but now it has moved to Maaji [the settlement]. People here are in two minds. They know the disadvantages. ... But local people want jobs again in South Sudan. They are thinking about the future.

<sup>58</sup> World Bank / UNHCR (2016).

<sup>59</sup> For example, see: Sanghi et al (2016) and Taylor et al (2016).

<sup>60</sup> Dempster and Hargrave (2017). Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants.

When asked to describe why decisions are taken to host refugees, both the leadership and members of host communities point to the underdevelopment and remoteness of their areas. They say the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and local leaders emphasise the potential for improved health and education services, along with infrastructure and other developments, in return for hosting refugees.

This resonates with previous experience. For example, landlords in Pachara parish in Adjumani district highlight how services declined after the repatriation of South Sudanese refugees following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005: “Houses were just left empty. Health centres and primary schools, too. We lost services.” The fact that different villages compete to have refugees settled within or close to their villages demonstrates the degree to which the prospect of services – rather than a sense of altruism or hospitality – is a driving motivation for refugee hosting.

Many community members, particularly the more affluent, also point to historical and contemporary cross-border economic, educational and other forms of exchange between northern Uganda and South Sudan. The leadership of communities, including business leaders and political representatives, describe refugees as an opportunity – both in terms of wider development, and increased business and more contracts. For many people in host communities in northern Uganda, with hopes for future economic opportunities, South Sudan is still viewed as a place for lucrative jobs, once peace returns.

The receptiveness of host communities is also informed by the shared identities, cultural kinship and common histories between northern Uganda and South Sudan. Many Ugandans in northern Uganda share common ethnicities with the Central Equatorial South Sudanese who are a significant proportion of the refugee population in Adjumani and Arua districts. This instils a sense of responsibility to welcome South Sudanese, as this representative from a community-based organisation in Adjumani district explains: “We call them our brothers and sisters from South Sudan, not refugees.” Such narratives are palpably stronger in Adjumani district, where both the host community and many refugees are from Madi and Kuku tribes, which live on both sides of the South Sudan and northern Uganda border. In Rhino Camp, in contrast, the common bond of kinship is not as strong, as the host community is mainly Lugbara.

The long history of reciprocal refugee hosting between South Sudan and northern Uganda is likewise a factor in generating understanding of the difficulties faced by refugees. As a senior official in Adjumani district puts it, “We have an exchange programme with people from South Sudan, due to the turbulence [in both contexts].” This reciprocity is not, however, a straightforward factor. Many Ugandans who fled to South Sudan in the past have experienced maltreatment, including the forced repatriation of refugees by the Sudan People's Liberation Army during the 1980s. More recently, Ugandan nationals working in South Sudan have been killed in the latest violence in the country, a factor that is thought to play a role in the frequently negative host community attitudes towards Dinka refugees in particular.<sup>61</sup>

### THE BARGAIN IN PRACTICE: MUTUAL BENEFITS FOR HOSTS AND REFUGEES

A central finding from the field research informing this report is that the inclusion of host communities in the refugee response assists with host community acceptance of refugees in the immediate vicinity of refugee settlements. The proximity of refugee settlements is key. Feedback from both host and refugee communities elaborates this main finding, indicating that the strategy of inclusion is working in terms of bringing benefits to hosts, enabling continued acceptance of refugee hosting and creating a basis for peaceful coexistence within the vicinity of the settlements. Donor perspectives also support the view that refugees bring benefits: “When communities recognise that refugees are agents of development and that they positively contribute to the sustainable development of their districts, the refugee asylum space is not only protected, but strengthened.”<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> DRC (2018). Contested Refuge: The Political Economy and Conflict Dynamics in Uganda's Bidibidi Refugee Settlements

<sup>62</sup> GoJ / UN Country Team / World Bank (2017).

**“In Adjumani and Arua districts, however, where land tenure is customary and held by communities, the host communities are the primary stakeholders in refugee hosting. They are, as one local leader in Arua district says, “the first donors in the refugee response”.**





Picture from market, Adjumani Uganda. DRC Photo

Host communities in locations surrounding refugee settlements verify that health, education and water services have improved. They also point to better roads, an increased number of markets and, in some instances, improved security. As a farmer from a host community in Adjumani district comments:

The market is now busy. Before the people [refugees] came, there were just forests here. There were wild animals. Now we can walk without fear. The road is built, so we can get to the market and to town. We can now send our children to Alere [settlement] to pick up things from the market.

Host communities also draw attention to direct economic benefits, such as increased markets for grasses, charcoal and bricks, opportunities for casual labour with both refugees and NGOs, and increased demand for local businesses; for example, boda boda (motorcycle taxis) drivers. With the level of service provision based on proximity and population numbers, some host community villages indicate their willingness not only to host refugees in the first place but express intentions to accept more refugees. A village resident from Katiku, near Rhino Camp, asserts: "It was the right decision to accept refugees. We are happy for them to stay for a long time. It is also OK for them to stay – even if peace comes."

South Sudanese refugees in settlements in Adjumani and Arua districts also agree with the approach of sharing aid resources with host communities. There are numerous examples of refugees from various settlements insisting to aid organisations that they should give greater support to host communities. In Rhino Camp, for example, where the surrounding villages face food insecurity due to drought, refugees advocate for host community inclusion in food distributions, as one refugee leader explains:

It is important that the nationals receive food. We are in Uganda. Whatever refugees receive, host community should also receive. Nationals are carrying food for refugees during distribution in order to get some. Empty stomachs are not good. When your neighbour is beating the drum and you are hungry, it creates problems.

This overall rubric of benefit, however, masks local demands for more direct benefits in relation to their own development needs and overshadows the significant costs associated with refugee hosting. As a woman from a village near Rhino Camp explains, "[We] don't have any refugees in the village and so we are left outside [of some support]. There are lots of organisations working in other villages but not in ours." Although they benefit, host communities also pay steep opportunity costs in the form of higher prices, rivalry for aid funding, competition over natural resources, destruction of the environment and struggles for labour and livelihood opportunities. There are, then, both winners and losers among host communities.

Currently, these tensions are not addressed adequately within a general context that is defined by assumed benefits. They play out in a number of ways. First, some of these tensions compound ongoing sentiments of marginalisation and neglect in host communities, which are directed upward towards the government (particularly the OPM) and at aid organisations, a dynamic that is outlined below. Second, conflict and competition over scarce resources between host communities and refugees impact the largely positive relationships between the two communities. Third, the pressure on services in urban centres is raised repeatedly by those host communities and their district local governments. This issue receives little attention due to the predominant focus on settlements in remote areas.<sup>63</sup>

## GRANTING LAND IN RETURN FOR A DEVELOPMENT DIVIDEND

There is a direct intersection between hosting refugees and granting land for settlements. This often exacerbates pre-existing tensions, conflicts and insecurity related to land. The insecurity of host communities and their landlords is rooted in long-standing disputes over land rights and boundaries, as well as concerns about land-grabbing by the central government and powerful locals.<sup>64</sup> This can be compounded by a perceived lack of appreciation for land that is given to refugees, with the OPM and central government, along with aid actors, often caught in the crossfire.

Refugees, both as levers for services and as land users, are directly affected by tensions over land. This has significant implications for their access to land over the longer term. Land issues affect not only the question of whether to host refugees in the first place but also impact on host community decision-making processes related to making additional land available for livelihoods. Land issues are thus fundamental to refugee integration.

Host communities raise three main issues. The first relates to the process of securing land and concerns that this is pressurised, not sufficiently consultative and without due consideration for host community cultural practises. Landlords and host communities describe being persuaded by promises of development by the OPM, which is responsible for leading negotiations over land.<sup>65</sup> As a landlord in Adjumani district claims, "The OPM is taking short cuts. They are not speaking with all the landlords together and it's creating divisions. They are not following all the procedures. We were ready to sue." In Rhino Camp, a landlord who had granted much of the land for that settlement also indicates he is mounting legal action against the OPM. Key stakeholders, such as elders, communal land associations and local officials also report being sidelined in land negotiations.

This sense of central government not respecting local structures, practices and institutions is made worse by host community concerns that the traditional cleansing ritual practised to ready land for use as a settlement has not occurred in many settlements in Adjumani district. This matter is of lesser concern in relation to Rhino Camp. Although these are the unverified perspectives of a few individuals, they nonetheless illustrate the level

<sup>63</sup> Although development programmes such as ReHoPE and DRDIP take issues related to urban pressures into account, these efforts fall short of existing need.

<sup>64</sup> Zakaryan (2018).

<sup>65</sup> See also Vogelsang (2017).

of host community sensitivity over land issues and the lack of legal clarity related to the process of granting land for refugee settlements.

The second concern pertains to unclear and unmet expectations regarding the granting of land. There is no suggestion that host communities will be paid for their land. They are, however, advised that their areas will be developed, that services will be improved and that appreciation will be shown to the clan or family leaders who are the landlords for customary land. In the face of such promises, host communities instead speak of unmet expectations regarding a range of different direct benefits, such as receiving scholarships for their children, improved housing, mattresses or animals. One landlord sums up this situation: “No conditions were agreed upon but promises were made to us. This was a false promise. Only one of the four clans got goats. We don’t know why.”

Given that host communities often expect appreciation for granting land to refugee settlements to be shown in the form of assistance or services from aid agencies, these aid agencies frequently find themselves in the midst of fraught relationships. In Rhino Camp, one NGO staff person explains, “Landlords are carrying a lot of the burden of refugee hosting. And they are becoming impatient. They are a major challenge, as they keep expecting tangible benefits.” One land agreement between landlords and the OPM reviewed during this study does indeed highlight the role of operational partners in providing scholarships, livelihoods and support to elderly persons in that host community. In most instances, however, land is granted by host communities on the basis of verbal, rather than written, agreements. While respecting the confidentiality of individual land granting arrangements, the OPM should make available sample copies of land agreements for refugee settlements. This would ensure that host communities are better informed about the realities of land granting. It would also allow for more active management of host community expectations on the part of the OPM. The OPM also needs to ensure that the commitments it does make to host communities in exchange for land granting are met in full.

Although the Ugandans refugee approach centres on self-reliance through agricultural production, in practice the land that is made available is insufficient. Most refugees who arrived prior to 2015 received plots of land that were 50m<sup>2</sup>. More recently, difficulties in securing land, along with the high numbers of refugees, has meant that plot sizes have reduced dramatically for South Sudanese who have arrived since 2013. In 2018, only 29% of refugees in Uganda report having any land for cultivation.<sup>66</sup> In both the Adjumani district settlements and in Rhino Camp, the plots allocated to refugees are particularly small – typically about 30m<sup>2</sup> – which is only sufficient for household needs.<sup>67</sup> This has led to efforts by refugees to gain access to additional land. Despite a shift on the part of aid actors towards livelihoods production, there is no consistent system in place to support refugees to gain access to the additional land they need for cultivation or animal grazing. Unregulated written or informal verbal arrangements are made through leases, borrowing, sharecropping or other arrangements with their Ugandan host communities.

The security of these agreements is very low, with many covering either one season or one year. This discourages longer-term investment on the part of South Sudanese refugees. Although many indicate that their host community had given plots of land without asking for payment, in some cases the sustainability of these arrangements is further impacted by onerous conditions, extortion or evictions by some host community members. For example, female refugees in Rhino Camp describe being chased off their land just prior to harvest. In Adjumani district, refugees indicate that they were told they were only permitted to plant specific crops due to host community concerns about soil erosion. Representatives from community-based organisations in Adjumani district also highlight that unfair prices for land use are being sought.<sup>68</sup> In

66 Development Pathways / WFP (2018). Analysis of Refugee Vulnerability in Uganda and Recommendations for Improved Targeting of Food Assistance.

67 This is equivalent to 0.0074 acres. Some reports, however, suggest that average refugee families require 2 acres of land in order to become self-sufficient; see: Development Pathways / WFP (2018).

68 For more information, see: DRC (2018).

Adjumani district, for example, those interviewed for this study quote rental prices of between UGX 50,000 and 100,000 (roughly equivalent to USD 13 and 26) per acre per year. In Rhino Camp, prices are almost double this rate: UGX 120,000 to 250,000 (USD 32 to 67) per acre per year.

A third issue raised by host communities in relation to land granting for refugee use derives from a sense of inequity. A woman from Ariwa village, close to Rhino Camp, summarises this point succinctly: “If we are giving land on a semi-permanent basis, then we want food. It needs to be fair. They [refugees] are given food because they don’t have access to land but if they are given land, we should get food.” According to aid agency workers in Rhino Camp, perceptions of inequity on the part of host communities is also a function of continued grievances towards the OPM (that is, broken promises; lack of adequate appreciation for land that is granted). Refugees echo the idea that they are a channel for host communities to express wider grievances about local development. Alongside this, refugees consistently note that unmet demands on the part of host communities will have ramifications for their peaceful coexistence with these local communities.

Access to land is even more challenging for cattle grazing. Host communities repeatedly indicate they “gave their land for people, not for animals”. As displacement becomes protracted, however, many agro-pastoralist South Sudanese are building up large herds of cattle – in some cases as a result of livelihoods inputs from aid organisations. Others are bringing cattle from South Sudan. As one elder in Agojo in Adjumani district explains, “In April this year, they brought 500 cattle from Nimule [South Sudan]. We were not aware. This has created lots of problems. People are not feeling good.” In Odobu 1, in Rhino Camp, the Dinka community claim they now have a herd of more than 1,000 cattle, which is creating ongoing problems with the host community.

Although the sensitive interplay between refugee hosting and land conflicts, particularly in areas where land is held customarily, is well documented,<sup>69</sup> this research could be developed further into a comprehensive analysis of the land issues that bear on refugee hosting. Such an analysis could be used to inform a strategy on how to more effectively mitigate and manage land conflicts. Despite the significance of agricultural production to refugee self-reliance in the settlements, there is an absence of planning to guarantee that land of sufficient quality and scale is granted by host communities. Additional research is required to better understand how to establish a more uniform, sustainable and fair system. Several approaches should be explored to assess their efficacy.

First, land acquisition could be formalised. This has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, this could facilitate greater security, consistency and uniformity. On the other, landlords express concerns about formalising or documenting land agreements because of perceptions that they are signing away their land rights. This approach could also contradict the principles of customary land tenure ownership. One option for addressing this is to enable district authorities to provide customary land rights registration services, which could offer more secure tenure for landlords. The involvement of government, however, must be acceptable for customary landlords. Second, an informal system could be established that entails the witnessing of verbal agreements by mutually agreed, reliable and impartial parties.

69 This interplay is well documented. For example, see: DRC (2018); Development Pathways / WFP (2018); and FAO / OPM (2018). Food security, resilience and well-being analysis of refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**1** Host communities are primary stakeholders in refugee hosting. Understanding their motivations for hosting is crucial. These reasons change depending on a range of issues, including the community in question and the specific context. Therefore, host community motivations must be continually assessed and better understood.

**2** Including host communities in the refugee response helps them to accept refugees, at least in the immediate vicinity of settlements. An overall rubric of benefit, however, masks local demands for more direct benefits in relation to their development needs and overshadows the significant financial and opportunity costs associated with refugee hosting. Although refugee hosting hinges on the goodwill of hosts, there is an absence of in-depth knowledge about and comprehensive assessments of the short and long-term impacts of refugee hosting on host communities. In particular, it is important to understand how some of the negative implications associated with refugee hosting might be more effectively addressed.

**3** The process of securing land for settlements compounds existing tension over land-related issues. This undermines host community acceptance of refugees, as well as their willingness to grant additional land for livelihoods. Both aid agencies and refugees are affected by these unresolved tensions and the ambiguities surrounding those land agreements that have been and continue to be made.

**4** There should be greater transparency on what is agreed between the OPM and landlords. This would ensure that host communities are better informed about the realities of land granting. It would also allow for more active management of host community expectations on the part of the OPM. The OPM needs to ensure that the commitments it does make to host communities in exchange for land granting are met in full.

**5** An in-depth comprehensive analysis of land issues is required in order to inform a strategy to more effectively manage land issues associated with refugee hosting. This should address how to secure land for settlements in a way that does not exacerbate local sensitivities related to tension over land issues. Such an analysis should establish how to build the knowledge of landlords on land issues and create support mechanisms to reinforce their legal ownership in a way that conforms with customary land ownership rights and practices. It should also establish how to ensure a more consistent, sustainable and fair system of acquiring additional land for livelihoods in different settlements.

## SHARED SERVICES AS A STEP TOWARDS INTEGRATION

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda highlights the importance of equitable access to basic services between host communities and refugee populations in order to support peaceful coexistence.<sup>70</sup> Donor policy reflects these strategies. The overall theory of change of the European Union Trust Fund, for instance, assumes that if host communities and refugees benefit from shared support, then inter-communal relations and development outcomes will improve.<sup>71</sup>

This section of the report examines the degree to which refugees and hosts access integrated services in the Adjumani district and Rhino Camp settlements, and the implications for social and economic integration. Discussion focuses on education and livelihoods, as well as the application of the 70:30 principle.<sup>72</sup> It shows that despite a model of integrated services, many of the services provided in settlements are run in parallel to national services. Limited host community engagement with the refugee response is further indicated by a lack of leadership and ownership on the part of district authorities, and by the limited employment of locals in that response.

### SHARED EDUCATION

As outlined in section three (Gaps Between Policy and Practice), many refugee children attend community schools in settlements that are often run either by UNHCR or NGOs. These are not integrated into the national education system. Some refugee children also attend government-aided schools. If these schools have high numbers of refugee children, they may receive additional funding or support from NGOs to manage the increased numbers of learners. Refugees are entitled to free primary education on par with Ugandan nationals. The fact that refugee children are taught in English (the national language in Uganda) from Primary Stage 3 onward and that they gain national certificates upon completion of different levels of education can contribute to their future economic prospects.<sup>73</sup> A common language and a shared learning environment can also help enable social integration.

The significance of education for South Sudanese means that it is a decisive factor in deciding where to flee and settle, and whether to return. Many parents interviewed for this study indicate that they fled to Uganda because of the quality of the educational system. Mothers in Alere settlement, for instance, indicate they would try to keep their children in school in Uganda even if peace comes to South Sudan. Nonetheless, only 43% of refugee learners attend primary school and 8% attend secondary school.<sup>74</sup> Parents of refugee children cite a range of factors affecting enrolment and attendance. These include distance to school, language, abusive disciplinary practises and discrimination. Children in lower primary level, for example, are taught in the local language of the host community, which constitutes a barrier that can lower performance and attendance. Other factors, such as child labour and early marriage, also affect school attendance and drop-out rates, especially among girls. Although these issues play a role at secondary level, the primary factor in this context is unaffordable school fees. For instance, out of an estimated 636 households in Odobu 1 cluster in Rhino Camp, refugees living there indicate that only about 30 children attend secondary school.

70 CRRF (2018a).

71 For more information, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/node/183>

72 Education and livelihoods are provided as examples of services but this is not an in-depth assessment of either sector.

73 Education is a key prerequisite for socio-economic integration and future self-reliance, as higher education achievement is linked to improved labour market outcomes. For example, see: EPRC / UNICEF (2018).

74 Ministry of Education and Sports (2018).



*Celina and her daughter Rose receive medication at a Save the Children mobile clinic in Imvepi settlement. The clinic visits the area once a week. Rose has been diagnosed with malaria. Fredrik Lerneryd / Save the Children*

The quality of education also affects education outcomes. In many of the schools visited during the fieldwork for this study, the host community describe a more dynamic learning environment in both the community and the government-aided schools that are attended by refugees and supported by NGOs than in standard government schools. This is due to the increased availability of scholastic materials, upgraded facilities, higher levels of teacher motivation in response to more regular inspections and supervision, as well as higher in-class competition on account of the strong focus South Sudanese place on the value of education.<sup>75</sup>

While some refugee children are achieving good results, overall performance remains poor. One explanation for these poor results is an alarmingly high pupil to teacher ratio. For instance, Odubo II primary school in Rhino Camp only had seven teachers for more than 2,000 pupils when it was established in 2016. Although this now has been reduced to a ratio of 100 pupils per teacher, this is still twice the national maximum.<sup>76</sup> High pupil-teacher ratios affect pupil performance due to, for example, classroom overcrowding, poor discipline and teachers feeling overwhelmed.<sup>77</sup>

Schools also play an important, and perhaps more immediate, role in the social integration of refugees. This social aspect of schools is palpable – from the messaging that celebrates diversity and insisting “we are one” to the social interaction of refugee and host community children, and the involvement of both refugee and host community parents in school governance. Study respondents indicate that the violence and tensions that initially characterised classroom relations have calmed over time. In particular, children point to friendships across different ethnicities and nationalities being extended to their families. Nonetheless, schools remain a flashpoint, with both refugee and host community parents commenting that parents still get involved in small altercations between refugee children, which then escalate into refugee communities.

75 This is backed up by statistics. For example, in study interviews conducted with the Windle Trust (an international NGO that focuses on education issues), staff indicate that Moyo district got its first grade 1 result in more than ten years in 2017. The district education officer in Arua district claims overall district performance in schools has also improved due to refugees.

76 EPRC / UNICEF (2018).

77 EPRC / UNICEF (2018).

While improved social cohesion is a positive result of shared education, its potential is limited due to the severe under-resourcing of schools, which are already struggling to achieve their educational objectives. Currently, it also appears that the social aspect of schools is largely limited to the learners themselves, as hosts and refugees do not identify schools (or services more widely) as a significant point of social interaction. Furthermore, the geographical isolation of many of the refugee community schools from the host community impacts prospects for refugee–host community engagement. Many of the schools in the settlements, particularly community schools, are attended overwhelmingly by refugee children. In 2018, for example, Ugandan nationals accounted for approximately 20% of those pupils enrolled in settlement schools across Adjumani district. In some settlement schools, the number of host children is much lower: in Pagirinya I primary school in a settlement in Adjumani district,<sup>78</sup> there are only eight Ugandan learners in a student body of 1,567; in Maaji III, Ugandan pupils represent just 3% of the 2,462 pupils enrolled.<sup>79</sup> In contrast, opportunities for refugee–host interaction in government schools are comparatively higher. These schools existed prior to the refugee influx, so they have a student body primarily comprised of host community learners. This means that there is a higher ratio of host community learners to refugee learners in these schools.

### Moving forward

Investment in education offers a significant opportunity to improve the economic prospects of refugees and their hosts, as sustainable livelihoods often hinge on basic skills and qualifications. The Education Response Plan for refugee-hosting districts launched in September 2018 is ambitious: a three-and-a-half-year plan, it will target some 675,000 learners, 23% of which are Ugandan nationals.<sup>80</sup> The plan covers a range of issues, including improved facilities, increased numbers of teachers (of higher quality), more scholastic materials, higher levels of supervision and other efforts designed to strengthen the educational system.

If implemented, the Education Response Plan has the potential to improve educational outcomes for both refugee and host community children. Costed at just less than USD 400 million, this education plan requires funding and harmonised support at a level not yet evident in the overall refugee response. As one facet of a more coherent longer-term approach to refugees in northern Uganda, it also requires a vision and coordinated support for the role of district local government in integrating service delivery for refugees and their hosts into their overall development plans.

## SHARED LIVELIHOODS

From a perspective of shared livelihoods, economic integration involves a process of establishing sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to the host community. Recent studies indicate the vibrancy of refugee economies in refugee-hosting districts of Uganda: 95% of refugees are engaged in crop production and 22% sell part of their produce.<sup>81</sup> In many settlements, dynamic informal markets for exchange exist between refugees and host communities.<sup>82</sup> Despite agricultural production being the cornerstone of Uganda's self-reliance refugee model, however, few South Sudanese have access to land on a sufficient scale and quality to facilitate this. Lack of land fundamentally affects prospects for self-reliance. This is also compounded by additional factors.

78 Figures provided by Adjumani district education officer, August 2018.

79 June 2018 figures provided by the Windle Trust.

80 Ministry of Education and Sports (2018).

81 Betts et al (2014).

82 FAO / OPM (2018).

Study respondents identify four primary barriers to sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance for refugees in settlements in Uganda. These include:

- **Ongoing food insecurity:** Both Adjumani and Arua districts suffered from acute malnutrition rates in 2017; 11.8% and 10.3%, respectively.<sup>83</sup> Food security indicators are worsening over time, which suggests that the passage of time may not improve the prospects for self-reliance. Refugee households that have spent more than six years in Uganda are the least food secure.<sup>84</sup>
- **Focus on subsistence, with limited support for bulk production:** Larger-scale agricultural production by refugees is hampered by a widespread lack of agriculture extension services in the settlements. Poor post-harvest management exacerbates this problem; for example, lack of storage facilities; lack of physical and other forms of access to markets; limited market information and price negotiation skills.
- **Issues with diversification of livelihoods and matching skills with markets:** Comprehensive labour market assessments undertaken by location and sector in settlement areas are not available, nor are detailed economic analyses of the priority marketable trades that could guide prioritisation and rightsize skills to markets. There is also a lack of coordinated action under a clear framework for addressing livelihood issues.<sup>85</sup>
- **Lack of integration into economies beyond settlements:** While there are examples of vibrant micro-economies in some settlements in Adjumani and Arua districts, these are often physically isolated from bigger markets. Most refugee economies are dependent on the settlements and very few refugees access employment.

The overall refugee response model in Uganda does not currently provide prospects for economic integration for most refugees. This is reinforced by the current approach of aid agencies. As livelihood experts consulted for this study explain, the current emergency livelihoods programming approach is an enormous missed opportunity. Although the focus on livelihoods is increasingly shifting towards longer-term and more diverse approaches, serious concerns remain. Those who work at operational agencies identify the following limitations on the current approach to livelihoods interventions:

- **Livelihoods funding is primarily single year, limiting opportunities for longer-term strategies towards self-reliance:** Multi-year programmes often repeat the same activities year on year, despite shifts towards graduation approaches.
- **Insufficient diversity in terms of livelihoods and income generating activities:** There is a predominance of agricultural support. In the absence of sufficient productive land, this is not leading to sustainable livelihoods for a large number of refugees. Moreover, much of the focus is on household production. Although change is occurring, an insufficient focus on access to employment and skills training linked to market opportunities remains. Livelihoods support often targets interventions based on vulnerability, rather than capacity. This means that those individuals with the ability to become self-sufficient are often not supported.
- **Limited analysis and understanding of economic potential:** There is insufficient focus on the aspirations of refugees themselves and their existing skills background. This has implications for the relevance and impact of interventions. Humanitarian programmes are often imposed by aid agencies, thus curtailing opportunities for the local ownership of such interventions. Concerns about the depth and quality of aid agency assessments reinforce this.
- **Concerns regarding quality, technical capacity and development approaches:** Some agencies face challenges with the technical skills required to support larger-scale agricultural production. They also

83 GoU / UNHCR / UNICEF / WFP (2017). Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in Refugee Settlements.

84 Development Pathways / WFP (2018).

85 Lakwo and Enabel (2018). Secondary Labour Market Study in Northern Uganda.



lack the experience and capacities necessary to shift towards longer-term development approaches.

Aid agencies have responded to these concerns in various ways, including: the widespread use of cash-based interventions to support livelihoods; training and inputs to support the establishment of farmer groups; village saving and loan associations; and vocational training (bakery, tailoring, hairdressing) and income generation grants to individuals and groups to establish businesses. Among study respondents, however, there was widespread recognition that much more is required if the livelihoods approach is to be successful in creating self-reliance among refugee communities.

### Mutually reinforcing social and economic integration

There are signs of growing economic interdependence between host and refugee communities in and around the settlements. This is largely a result of the interactions between the two communities themselves, rather than interventions by NGOs. Both host and refugee communities indicate that female traders in the market have very strong social bonds. South Sudanese women report that they often use these connections to access land for their private use at little or no cost, using food or other gifts in return. As one Lugbara woman living adjacent to Rhino Camp explains, “The motivation to give land is friendship. At times, when refugees get food, they give. So the little we have, we give too.”

Much of the economic interaction that occurs relates to needs in the settlements or farming activities. For example, individuals from host communities are hired by refugees to construct or repair their houses and refugees are hired as agricultural labourers. There are, however, obstacles to greater economic interaction. Not only are some economies heavily controlled by host communities (for example, wood and grass-related activities; charcoal sales) but South Sudanese female traders in Rhino Camp also indicate that they are only allowed access to licensed markets. In other markets (for example, in Ofua III in Rhino Camp), refugee women have been charged additional taxes to trade their goods. They have also been pushed out of the more informal markets operated by their host community.

NGOs active in the refugee settlement areas mainly facilitate social engagement through joint livelihoods training programmes and the support provided in settlements. Participants for livelihoods training programmes tend to be drawn from both refugee and host communities, under the 70:30 principle. This serves to build peaceful coexistence and to forge relationships with landlords who may grant refugees land for cultivation. Trainings are undertaken collectively. Male and female participants from both host and refugee communities are then sub-divided into groups to undertake livelihoods activities together. The opportunities for these groups to be a driver of social and economic integration are, however, restricted by various factors. Some of these include the remoteness of the refugee settlements, lack of refugee access to land, small host community populations and the fact that some mixed groups are simply imposed by aid agencies keen to meet their host community targets under the 70:30 principle. As one staff person working for international NGO in Rhino Camp puts it:




Most of the mixed groups are made up of Equatorians [from South Sudan]. We don't differentiate on tribal lines but this is what happens. The cultural and language similarities make things easier. If nationals are far away, then it is difficult for them to be active. When groups are mixed, approximately 80% of refugees get land for free.

There is a trade-off to be made in terms of peaceful coexistence and livelihoods outcomes. Although mixed host community and refugee groups have better access to land, yields are often higher in groups comprised only of Ugandan nationals.<sup>86</sup> In general, many livelihoods staff in aid agencies highlight difficulties with sustainability, indicating that most of the farmer groups do not continue working together once the support

86 Also see: DRC (2018).

stops. In contrast, the mixed village saving and loan associations that are established tend to be more successful, with participants saying that these associations allow them access to loans, which they use to fund a range of needs from farming inputs and school fees to medical emergencies.

### Operational aid agency perspectives on mixed livelihoods groups

Profile	 Ugandan nationals only	 Ugandan and South Sudanese (mixed)	 South Sudanese only
Access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No problem with access to land; no negotiation process</li> <li>Usually high-quality land and in a good location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High chance of accessing land</li> <li>Land is often free</li> <li>Often good quality land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties with access to land; long negotiation process</li> <li>Prices can be high</li> <li>Often poor-quality land at a distance from the settlements</li> </ul>
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher production due to: better land quality; more agricultural experience; higher levels of work activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production dependent on quality of land and level of engagement; host community often more active than refugees; some refugees develop relationships resulting in access to additional land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production dependent on quality of land and level of engagement; higher proportion of farmer groups collapse without support</li> </ul>

### Self-reliance: shifting towards development approaches versus changing policy

There is widespread agreement among refugees, aid actors and livelihoods experts that refugees are far from self-reliant and that a significant shift is required.<sup>87</sup> Many interviewees insist that sustainable livelihoods for refugees depends on several factors. These include: the integration of refugees in Uganda's development agenda; significant increases in the amount of land provided to refugees; and the upscaling and commercialisation of both host community and refugee livelihoods alike. These shifts must also be coupled with the continued promotion of peaceful coexistence.<sup>88</sup> Linked to these changes, some advocate that there is a need for aid actors to continue to shift attention away from livelihoods support to instead focus on providing technical and capacity building support to local government and relevant line ministries as part of wider support to agricultural systems and structures that can facilitate more large-scale agricultural production.<sup>89</sup>

In contrast, a more dramatic departure from current policy may be required. A focus on refugee self-reliance in the current environment risks focusing on the efforts that can be made by rare individuals, who can

87 This is backed up by reports. For example, see: FAO / OPM (2018) and Development Pathways / WFP (2018).

88 The 2018 FAO strategy for Uganda highlights similar points. See: FAO / OPM (2018).

89 Development Pathways / WFP (2018).

manage to become self-reliant against all odds, rather than on changing the policies, systems and support that could facilitate more beneficial economic outcomes. In particular, there is a push for support for refugees outside settlements, where self-reliance has been possible for some.<sup>90</sup>

A new Jobs and Livelihoods Response Plan is presently being developed, led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. This offers a significant opportunity for a step change towards a comprehensive economic development strategy. For the first time, this response plan provides a pathway towards refugee self-reliance. The Jobs and Livelihoods Response Plan must be underpinned by an overall vision and strategy of what is required to facilitate refugee self-reliance in Uganda. It must also be informed by a frank assessment of what is facilitating and what is impeding self-reliance, including attention to the settlement policy. Such a plan will require a dramatic departure from the current short-term livelihoods approaches and a shift towards a strategy that is firmly rooted in longer-term development approaches.

## THE 70:30 PRINCIPLE: HELPFUL BUT UNCLEAR

One key mechanism for ensuring host community inclusion in the Ugandan refugee response is through the 70:30 principle, whereby 30% of the overall refugee support is provided to host communities. This approach is designed to reduce the pressures associated with refugee hosting, facilitate acceptance of refugees and promote peaceful coexistence. It can thus serve as a platform for integration.

### Including host communities on the basis of numbers and quotas

Both refugees and host communities indicate that including hosts in the refugee response helps foster peaceful coexistence. They also agree that support should be equitably distributed. While the overall principle is therefore helpful, the current application of the 70:30 mechanism is unclear and inconsistent.

Study findings from the operational workshop in Adjumani district indicate that there is widespread dissatisfaction among aid agencies about the 70:30 rule for a number of reasons. First, it is not entirely clear which communities qualify as host communities. Aid organisations tend to target host communities in different ways. Some claim that they only target villages in the immediate vicinity of a settlement. Others target on a parish-wide basis. Yet others go beyond this, when numbers require.<sup>91</sup> This means that the host community is often not determined on the basis of an assessment designed to identify those communities most impacted by refugees. Rather, the host community is defined on the basis of meeting beneficiary targets, according to the 30% quota.

Second, there is little clarity on the part of the host communities themselves as to what properly defines a host community. This is causing tensions. Landlords, for example, assert that the host community should be those villages which are directly hosting refugees and have given their land to do so. Other host communities claim that the host community should also include villages that are directly impacted by refugees; for instance, those areas suffering environmental degradation as a result of firewood or grass collection by refugees. Along similar lines, local government officials indicate that the definition of the host community should be extended to communities at the sub-county or even district level as the impact of refugee hosting extends beyond those communities directly adjacent to the settlements.

Third, targeting within host communities is inconsistent. In reality, aid agencies often have different targets – 70:30; 67:33; 50:50 – in an effort to try different approaches to increase host community involvement. This differential approach to targeting also suggests that there is a lack of clarity on the purpose of the principle. Is it designed to show appreciation for landlords and host communities who give land? Does it serve to

<sup>90</sup> See: Ilcan et al (2015). Humanitarian assistance the politics of self-reliance: Uganda's Nakivale refugee settlement; and Easton-Calabria et al (2017). Refugee Self-Reliance: Moving Beyond the Marketplace.

<sup>91</sup> Districts are divided into counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages.

mitigate the pressures associated with refugee hosting? Is the primary purpose to ensure equity in assistance between host communities and refugees? During the operational workshop in Adjumani district, participating aid agencies admit to struggling with a lack of a clearly defined and coordinated approach. This results in multiple targeting of the same host communities. It also creates difficulties with reaching operational targets and gives rise to a lack of monitoring and oversight. Host community members also indicate that it is often only the leaders in their communities who benefit from humanitarian aid and development assistance, while many of the most vulnerable in their communities do not benefit.

Finally, the 70:30 formula points to a question about the relevance and effectiveness of refugee programmes for host communities, given that refugees and host communities often have different levels of vulnerability to different shocks and different coping strategies.<sup>92</sup> As one livelihoods expert working for a UN agency puts it: “[The host] community doesn’t need handouts. What they need is for pressure to be taken off their services and for their vulnerabilities to be addressed.”

### Moving Forward

A participant in the operational workshop in Kampala concludes: “The 70:30 principle has serious limitations. We must go beyond the current approach of supporting on the basis of status, quotas and numbers.” With policy shifts towards longer-term development programming, the participants in the same Kampala workshop suggest that the principle should be replaced with a focus on both host community and refugee capacities, vulnerabilities and needs through district development plans or area-based approaches. This is why an increasing number of aid and development programmes are using different approaches; for example, 50:50 targeting based on vulnerabilities.

Despite difficulties associated with the 70:30 principle, it should nonetheless be retained in humanitarian responses due to the fact that economic benefits feature so strongly in the rationale for refugee hosting. Even if development approaches are stepped up, it is likely that humanitarian support will still be required.<sup>93</sup> Feedback collected for this study also indicates that it helps foster peaceful coexistence. Further, it is likely that dropping it would meet political opposition, especially from local and district government officials in refugee hosting districts.





The primary objective of the 70:30 principle in humanitarian assistance should be clarified. First and foremost, it aims to mitigate the impact of refugee hosting and support peaceful coexistence (see Table 1). It is not designed to offer appreciation to host communities for the provision of land for settlements. Under the 70:30 principle, it is also necessary to clarify how the host community is defined. This should be delineated to include those villages which offer their land for the settlement and/or those which are impacted by the settlement. The designation of the host community should be determined through an assessment of each settlement. Such an assessment should also provide an overview of the implications of refugee hosting for host communities, which could inform humanitarian support. Given that the central aim of the Ugandan refugee response is to support the needs of refugees on a short-term basis, the quota of host communities should remain at 30%, which should be seen as a secondary objective oriented to fostering peaceful coexistence.

Longer-term development programmes aimed at addressing the vulnerability of refugees and their hosts should take an area-based approach in which the host community and refugees are targeted on the basis of vulnerability, capacity and other criteria relevant to the specific programmes, not quotas. If the strategy is to compensate host communities for the pressures resulting from refugee hosting, then communities hosting refugees in urban settings should also be included.

<sup>92</sup> FAO / OPM (2018).

<sup>93</sup> A 2018 study on food aid targeting highlights how food aid will be required on a long-term basis for many refugees in Uganda; see: Development Pathways / WFP (2018).

## OBJECTIVES FOR INCLUDING HOST COMMUNITIES

Key Issues	Which hosts?	Meeting this objective	Humanitarian response: include hosts?	Development programmes: include hosts?
 <b>Appreciation: granting land for settlements</b>	Landlords and communities in villages granting land for refugee settlement	One-time appreciation provided as part of land negotiation	NO: to avoid ambiguity*	NO: to avoid ambiguity**
 <b>Mitigate impact: services &amp; environment</b>	Communities in villages granting land for refugee settlement; villages impacted by the settlement	Comprehensive impact assessment of refugee hosting in settlement vicinity	YES: settlement services consider host community needs & access; ongoing assistance based on needs	YES: host & refugee communities part of area-based service delivery
 <b>Equity &amp; peaceful coexistence</b>	Communities in villages granting land for refugee settlement; villages impacted by the settlement	Comprehensive impact assessment of refugee hosting in settlement vicinity	YES: settlement services consider host community needs & access; ongoing assistance based on needs	YES: host & refugee communities part of area-based service delivery
 <b>Address ongoing vulnerability: host communities</b>	Host population at sub-county or district level in refugee-hosting districts	Area-based development plans, in conjunction with impact assessment	NO: approach should be developmental	YES: host & refugee communities part of area-based service delivery

\* could be included as hosts

\*\*could be included as hosts or targeted in a specific development programme

Table 1: Including host communities in humanitarian and development support for refugees

Efforts are now starting to include district-level sector coordination and a large number of donors are stepping up support to strengthen and build the capacity of district local government actors. Study respondents explain, however, that their participation is still hampered by the lack of an overall shared vision of future roles and responsibilities, and by fragmented support that does not meet their current needs. Despite significant policy shifts towards more integrated service delivery (for example, through the Education Response Plan), there is as yet little understanding about how this will affect roles and responsibilities at the district government level. Given the interest to include refugees in the National Development Plan III from 2020 onward, there is a need for greater and more harmonised support and funding at the district government level. Addressing this need will enable local government actors to begin to take forward their role in planning and coordinating the refugee response. This role includes: data and information management; planning and budgeting from local to central levels; and coordination and oversight. Most significantly, increased participation on the part of local government in the refugee response requires a continued shift in mentality. Going forward, central government actors, donors and operational agencies must better recognise district local government actors as leaders in the refugee response.

### Lack of job opportunities

Posing challenges for local ownership, the refugee response raises concerns among host communities because of their lack of access to jobs in aid operations in light of the preference given to those outside the refugee-hosting districts. This can give rise to tensions. In late 2016, for example, Adjumani youth presented a petition to aid agencies operating in their area that demanded 80% of UN and NGO jobs be given to those from inside the district, which was later followed by street protests.<sup>95</sup> Protests against aid organisations have also occurred in many other areas. The Refugee Welfare Committee 3 representative of Rhino Camp elaborates: “The host community are striking because they are angry about jobs. They were burning tyres and blocking the roads. We are worried that this will affect us if they don’t get [what they want].”

Aid organisations have taken steps to ensure that job opportunities are advertised more widely, including at settlement level and in district local government offices. Some, such as the Ugandan Red Cross, have initiated internships for local populations. Others explain that jobs are awarded on the basis of merit, with those from outside districts often having higher levels of education and experience of working in the aid sector. As some host community members point out, however, lack of local employment is also a function of some of the jobs on offer: host communities are less inclined to undertake menial work for the low wages that refugees are willing to accept. Some respondents suggest that the employment issue has been stirred up by local politicians, who are keen to demonstrate they are maximising economic opportunities for their constituencies. Among those study respondents who raise the issue of jobs, it is clear that district government officials are the most bitter.

In their view, refugee affairs are not only governed from the centre but development demands are not materialising and some of the main benefits, such as employment, are largely accruing to those outside the district.

<sup>95</sup> Vogelsang (2017).

## DISTRICT OWNERSHIP

### District coordination

The dichotomy between the Ugandan refugee response and the country’s wider public service delivery in support of its nationals is clearly evident at a district and settlement level. Although Uganda has a decentralised governance model, district local government is often sidelined in current humanitarian responses. Many longer-term humanitarian programmes do, however, involve district authorities to a degree. In contravention of the Non-Governmental Organisations Act 2016, in the majority of districts, operational agencies often do not share information on activities, budgets or areas of operation. This means district authorities lack basic information about the provision of services, rendering them unable to integrate this into area planning and monitoring.<sup>94</sup> One chief administrator officer in Arua explains, “NGOs are causing problems. They need to know the host community and local authorities. They look at them as useless people. But when there is a problem, they come running to us. Major decisions are taken elsewhere, and we are simply informed.”

District government authorities further indicate that when they are invited to meetings, their participation is hampered by limited human and financial resources. Limited resources also constrain their engagement at a programmatic level; for instance, in monitoring health clinics, educational facilities or water systems (although district technical officers are more actively involved in such activities).

<sup>94</sup> ReHoPE Support Team (2017). Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Stocktake Report.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**1** Integrated services can offer a pathway to social and economic integration. Unless they are planned and executed with integration in mind, however, this will be incidental. The geographical isolation of refugees in settlements, where there are low numbers of relatively dispersed Ugandan nationals, limits the degree of social and economic integration that results from shared services.

**2** Education offers a route to socio-economic integration as educated refugees will have the language and qualifications necessary to access employment in the future. Currently, issues related to access to quality education, particularly at secondary level, limit this potential. The Education Response Plan has the potential to significantly improve prospects. There is a risk, however, that without high levels of harmonised funding, along with clear roles and responsibilities, this will not be realised. Shared education plays an important role in fostering increased understanding and interaction among young learners. Again, this potential is limited by resources and the low number of host community learners in refugee settlement schools.

**3** The refugee settlements are sites of dynamic economies. At the same time, there is widespread recognition that refugees face major barriers to self-reliance, which fundamentally undermine prospects for economic integration. The current short-term emergency focus of humanitarian aid interventions is having a significant impact on these outcomes. The Jobs and Livelihoods Response Plan offers an opportunity for a step change towards refugee self-reliance as part of an economic development strategy for refugee-hosting districts. This must be informed by a frank assessment of what is facilitating and what is impeding self-reliance at present, including the Ugandan government settlement policy.

**4** The 70:30 principle is part of a logic of inclusion of host communities in a humanitarian response that is largely focused on refugees. The overall principle is sound and should be retained in emergency responses. As it is currently applied, however, the 70:30 principle is unclear, inconsistent and causes tensions. It is necessary to clarify the central objectives of this mechanism, including issues related to coordination, in order to ensure that objectives are achieved. Quotas should not be introduced into longer-term development programmes. Instead, these should take an area-based approach, where both host and refugee communities are considered together in terms of their vulnerabilities, capacities and needs.

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION

This section focuses on social integration as a process of adaptation and acceptance that enables refugees to contribute to the social life of their host country and to live without fear of discrimination. The discussion shows how this is happening on the periphery of refugee settlements. Integration occurs despite the predominant economic focus of the Ugandan refugee model and many aid agency interventions. Starting with an examination of host and refugee community relations and then moving on to look at intra-refugee relations, which are more contentious, this section highlights how different refugee groups are adapting and integrating at different rates, depending on their identity, location and time of arrival. This section closes with a review of some of the elements that are required from the outset to assist refugee integration.

### REFUGEE–HOST RELATIONS

South Sudanese refugees and their hosts report largely harmonious relations, which are improving over time. Many South Sudanese refugees emphasise how Ugandan refugee policies shape their everyday experiences. As this refugee in Tika in Rhino Camp explains, “It is not just the host community. The Ugandan government really supports us. They have not held us in a camp. They have given us freedom to move; given us advice. We can get travel permits. The host community follows in the footsteps of the upper office [central government].” More so than their hosts, refugees draw attention to the need for continued goodwill from their hosts. They also feel a responsibility to demonstrate their appreciation and forge strong relations with their host community. This may be due to widely held views that their stay will be protracted. Although a political accord was agreed in South Sudan in August 2018, most South Sudanese believe they will not return quickly. They also believe that their return is predicated on guarantees of peace and access to services. Many hope their children can continue their education in Uganda, even when safe return becomes possible.

The research findings of this study show that where people and services are located is instrumental in terms of opportunities for interaction between host community and refugees. Where refugees are co-located with the host community, there is more interaction through schools, markets and livelihoods activities. This is most evident among urban refugees who are living amidst the host community and who report stronger socio-economic engagement. Many refugees living in urban settings retain a link with their original settlement location to obtain assistance, often moving between the town and settlement (for example, staying in town during term times when children are at school). Where the settlement is closer to an urban centre, such as Mireye settlement in Adjumani district, there is greater social interaction and economic integration between refugees and local residents.

Various types of refugees have different levels of interaction with hosts. Youth football players and children at school, for instance, are seen by both communities as having strong relations, like women traders in the local markets and refugees who have been in the settlements for a long time. Older men (aside from those in positions of authority) are viewed as having the least interaction with the host community. There are many signs of mutual refugee and host adaptation and acceptance. Young people in particular are learning one another’s languages. Wedding ceremonies and funeral services are jointly attended. Fundraising activities – to build a church, for example – are shared. There is also some evidence for behavioural change among South Sudanese. Learning a different approach to conflict management, for example, this refugee in Ocea in Rhino Camp explains that “we see how they don’t fight and we try to learn this”.

Against a backdrop of mainly positive relations, however, significant strains and tensions exist. Many of these revolve around issues of access: to natural resources, on the one hand; and to services and humanitarian assistance, on the other. These tensions illustrate the limitations inherent to the assumption of overall benefits for host communities that receive refugees. They also show how sharing services does not necessarily lead

to improved coexistence.

Tensions surrounding access to natural resources are more pronounced in Rhino Camp than in the refugee settlements in Adjumani district. These natural resources include wood for fuel or shelter, grasses for roofs and land for cattle grazing. Issues linked to natural resources are repeatedly raised by host communities and district local government officials. There are two central concerns. First, there is serious environmental degradation in the vicinity of Rhino Camp, with a UN environmental officer who works in the area referring to the situation as a “time bomb”.

Second, the host community around Rhino Camp regard natural resources as a source of income over which they want to retain control. Although disputed by study respondents in the host community, refugee women in Rhino Camp insist that they are not permitted to collect firewood and grasses. Instead they must buy these necessities from the host community. This refugee woman explains: “Sometimes you stay all day without cooking, if you don’t have the money to buy [wood] or you still risk [gathering] it.” In both Rhino Camp and the Adjumani district settlements, women recount being fearful of collecting firewood because of the risk of abuse or violence by host community members.

There is no system in place to regulate equitable access to local natural resources. It is largely left to the two communities to work it out. This is also the case with cattle grazing. Although this is the most pressing concern raised by the host communities, it is a relatively under-funded component of the refugee response. This underlines the limited attention to host community issues in what is a refugee-focused response. Fuel efficient stoves have been distributed to both refugees and host communities to reduce firewood collection but uptake has been low. Development programmes, such as the World Bank Development Response to Displacement Impacts (DRDIP), do have more focused environmental components. While hugely important, these mitigation strategies are only part of the picture. What is required is a much more proactive environmental impact assessment of refugee settlements from the time of their establishment, with planning from the outset on environmental management and monitoring that incorporates mitigation strategies.

Tensions related to access to services and humanitarian assistance are focused on three primary issues. First, while host communities credit the improvement of local services to the arrival of refugees, when services are scarce, intense competition arises between the two communities. The scarcity of water in Rhino Camp is a primary example: water points are places of strain. Second, host communities lack rights to access food assistance, which is deemed unfair by both host communities and many refugees. While some host community members do access food through humanitarian distributions,<sup>96</sup> it is clear that many others do not. This is evidenced, for example, in statements from both refugees and host communities that Ugandan nationals ask for food during distributions or carry food for refugees in exchange for receiving a small portion. Host communities also voice resentment, as with this woman: “When you go to the houses of South Sudanese refugee friends, you feel bad. You see their store of food.”

Third, the issue of unequal access to services is compounded by perceived or actual discrimination of host communities when accessing services. In both Rhino Camp and the Adjumani district refugee settlements, the host community cite being pushed behind refugees in queues for water, healthcare and other services. They also express perceptions that in some cases service providers give preferential treatment to refugees. The inequality of services between refugees and host communities is leading to an acute sense of injustice, as is summed up by a host community woman in Rhino Camp: “For them [refugees], they are the upper grade and the nationals are the lower grade.”

In addition to these various issues of access, two other factors impact how host and refugee communities relate to one another: inter-ethnic issues and problems with communication. In terms of inter-ethnic issues, host communities express concerns about the Dinka in particular, who are often viewed as aggressive,

arrogant and a threat to young women. As one elder from Adjumani district says, “Love has become very hard. The mentality of fighting makes love very difficult. They like fighting and they like to rape. They think they are born to rule. Our young girls in the community are at risk.” Interviews with Dinka community members confirm overall positive relations with the host community but some note that they are discriminated against based on their identity, especially when they raise issues; for example, being called “parasites”; being told that they only have “cows in their heads”.

The inability to communicate effectively is also seen as divisive. Both communities describe neutral interactions being misconstrued or small quarrels escalating due to misunderstandings. Many refugees suggest that language training for adults could significantly improve relations. As a member of the host community in Ocea zone in Rhino Camp explains: “People [Ugandan nationals] are fighting to learn new languages. Trying to talk in Arabic. It is necessary, as you will not doubt what people are trying to say to you. And there won’t be misunderstanding.” In Rhino Camp, long-staying refugees are often called upon to mediate because many have acquired at least some of the local language.

Both communities indicate that community dialogues are helpful to negotiate and resolve low-level concerns or conflicts. More serious areas of competition, however, such as access to natural resources and grazing land, are identified as needing higher-level mechanisms and engagement to manage them effectively on an ongoing basis. Both host communities and refugees note that this does not occur on a sufficient basis at present.

## INTRA-REFUGEE RELATIONS: DIVISIONS DOWNPLAYED?

Both refugees and host communities identify the main points of conflict as within the refugee communities themselves, rather than between hosts and refugees. An elder in Ocea zone in Rhino Camp puts this succinctly: “With the host community it’s a bit easier. It’s harder within the South Sudanese.” Unsurprisingly, significant political and inter-ethnic tensions are prevalent among South Sudanese in both the Adjumani district settlements and Rhino Camp. Study respondents draw attention to how events in the conflict in South Sudan immediately reverberate across the settlements. In both settlement areas, tensions have erupted into deadly violence. In 2017, for example, a fight between two youths in Maaji settlement in Adjumani district resulted in the death of one of them, a Madi boy, sparking violence across the settlement. Local police interviewed during the fieldwork, however, are keen to emphasise that violence on such a scale is rare and that relations are improving over time.

The security situation in Rhino Camp is more serious than in the Adjumani district settlements. Over the course of 2018, Rhino Camp received a continuous stream of new arrivals, many of them Dinka and Nuer. In June 2018, an argument between Dinka and Nuer youths escalated into almost 48 hours of violence, claiming the lives of at least five Dinka and causing many more injuries.<sup>97</sup> A number of those interviewed for this study indicate that the risk of serious violence has been downplayed by key actors, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). They also argue that this problem could have been better anticipated as a result of greater engagement with refugees and more vigilant monitoring of the profile of the new arrivals.

Following the deaths in June 2018, district police ordered the relocation of the Nuer to Omugo 6, a new village in Omugo zone. This relocation went against the official policy, which indicates that where refugees are settled should be in accordance with the time of their arrival, not on the basis of their ethnicity. This policy is met with widespread derision by refugees, especially in Rhino Camp.

As a pastor in Rhino Camp warns when asked about security: “You feel it here. The conflict is live.” The level of fear and the scale of violence raises questions about the co-location policy and its appropriateness in the absence of a proactive strategy and adequate resourcing to guard against violence. Many refugees are voting



*Cycling in Adjumani town. DRC Photo*

with their feet, saying that they shift location within settlements to be with their tribal groups, in contravention of the policy.

With such high levels of tension and division between refugees, it is unsurprising that there are also intra-refugee tensions over access to resources, services and opportunities. Settlement residents speak about conflicts between children at school reverberating back into their communities. There are also issues at water points and during food distributions. Ethnic dimensions play a role in terms of ongoing tensions between already divided communities and because of discrimination against minority tribes, which results in their comparative lack of representation, access to resources and opportunities. A representative of a minority tribe in Ocea zone in Rhino Camp elaborates:

When it comes to representation, we are not found. We are not in the leadership or in any of the committees. The RWC [Refugee Welfare Committee] approves the names and the minority groups are removed. Our children don’t access the scholarships. These go to other tribes. The different tribes meet at night. They apply and get the jobs. We don’t hear about them.

Refugees raise concerns about the lack of understanding among aid actors of the South Sudan conflict and its ethnic dimensions. Certainly, there appears to be little appreciation of the significance for relations within the settlements of different events or political coalitions in the South Sudan conflict. Some operational agency staff even struggle to differentiate between Nuer and Dinka. The general approach is apolitical: you are in Uganda now, so you must follow the rules. One elder in Omugo in Rhino Camp complains:

Partners don’t have any awareness of the conflict. There is no impact from their peacebuilding work. It’s being done by Ugandans, not South Sudanese, and without proper translators. People just listen politely. When the major peacebuilding efforts are not being undertaken by South Sudanese, then the activities are not respected by the South Sudanese.

In both Adjumani district settlements and Rhino Camp, refugees emphasise the significant role that churches and elders can play in peacebuilding efforts. They go on to point out, however, that these are not being capitalised upon sufficiently by aid actors. This is a function of a broader lack of engagement with the skills and capacities of the South Sudanese refugee population, as well as its traditional leadership and community organisations. South Sudanese leaders from different churches speak of the difficult peacebuilding efforts they are making to build bridges across different congregations but protest that NGOs use them as “platforms, not partners”.

## **NOT JUST ONE GROUP: DIFFERENT RATES OF SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEE ADAPTATION**

The Ugandan refugee-hosting approach focuses on the South Sudanese as one single unified group. In reality, the South Sudanese consist of various groups, which are adapting to and integrating themselves into Ugandan society at different paces. The ethnic identity of South Sudanese refugees and the receiving host community are key factors in their adaptation: different tribal groups are received differently and adapt at different paces. In Adjumani district, where the host community is predominantly Madi, South Sudanese from Madi and Kuku tribes appear more integrated economically, with apparently greater levels of access to land for cultivation and to economic opportunities in Adjumani town. According to a member of a business association in Adjumani town: “We find it easier to do things with the Kuku and Madi, as we are one. The Dinkas are in the settlements. That is their area.”

The social capital of refugees – their language, social networks and educational background – also plays a role in their capacity for social interaction and to access aid resources. Time is another important factor, with those refugees who have spent time in Uganda before (either for education purposes or as a refugee) often having much stronger links to host communities. They have better local networks, often speak the local language and are called upon to play negotiation or mediation roles between different communities. Host communities perceive less educated refugees as more challenging.

As the social and economic integration of South Sudanese refugees are intertwined, work in support of the self-reliance of refugees requires greater consideration of their diversity. It is also necessary to better understand how ethnicity, gender, location, age and other key factors assist or impede the ability of South Sudanese refugees to adapt and integrate. In contrast to this need, the Ugandan refugee response often considers South Sudanese refugees as a national caseload, undifferentiated in their status as refugees.

The South Sudanese refugee population is, however, a diverse population. The vulnerabilities and resilience of this population are frequently as dependent on social factors as on their skills and capacities. One way to more effectively address this reality is to facilitate a much higher level of engagement with and participation by South Sudanese refugees in humanitarian and development interventions. This also requires attention to ensuring that the diverse voices in this refugee community are included – not only the leadership or more educated members of those communities, as is often the case. Study respondents working for aid agencies and South Sudanese refugees alike point to the need to do so.

## **SETTLING REFUGEES FOR INTEGRATION**

This study shows that the integration of refugees is a two-way process between refugees and their host communities, which depends on multiple factors relating to both the refugees and host communities themselves. External conditions also play a role in the integration process. It is useful to summarise these:

- **Ethnicity:** those who share ethnicity with host communities are more connected and have more opportunities

- **Social capital:** refugees with local languages, high levels of education and wider local social networks are more engaged
- **Time:** new arrivals are much less connected than long-staying or returning refugees
- **Gender and age:** older men are less adapted than women, young people and children
- **Location:** greater proximity to host communities means better opportunities for integration; mutual access to shared services increases interactions
- **Co-location based on arrival time:** co-locating divided refugee ethnic groups without adequate support has implications for their security
- **Skills and backgrounds:** refugees with agricultural skills are more adapted to life in refugee settlements
- **Availability of land:** refugees with more land and higher quality (more fertile) land often have better livelihoods

The location and layout of a refugee settlement have an impact on these factors. Site planning for settlements is, in the words of a UN site planner interviewed for this study, “totally different to planning a camp, where greater consideration is given to security, curtailing movement, food distribution and other issues”. Instead, settlement planning considers how to service the host community and how to reinforce existing services and structures, with facilities and markets often located on the periphery of settlements. Although the Ugandan refugee response is based on a policy that focuses on the self-reliance and integration of refugees, in practice it has proved difficult to incorporate factors that enable this when planning settlements, especially under emergency conditions. There are three reasons that help clarify the difficulties associated with supporting refugee self-reliance and integration.

First, land in settlement areas is held customarily and not owned by government. This means that the location of settlements is often determined on the basis of what land is offered by local landlords. This curtails any determination based on what land might be most suitable for the settlement of refugees. The land that is offered is often far from urban centres and markets, of low quality and not on a scale required for cultivation. This all significantly impacts prospects for refugee self-reliance and integration. Moreover, land that is offered may later be withdrawn due to disputes about the amount of land available and the configuration of the settlement. These factors also influence the expansion of settlements: the lack of available land around some settlements in Adjumani and Arua districts has meant that plot sizes are shrinking.

Second, especially during periods of high influxes of refugees, settlement planning is often undertaken under severe time restrictions. Consequently, it is often not possible to conduct a comprehensive survey of the settlement area; for instance, to undertake hydrological or environmental impact assessments. The availability of natural resources is a key issue, both for the short-term focus of aid actors and the longer-term prospects of refugees. In Ofua zone in Rhino Camp, water was trucked over a 90km round trip for nearly six months at a cost of USD 6,500 per day. Refugee settlement water engineers have to work with what they have and figure out how to manage it, rather than plan for the feasibility of mass human settlement in an area. Challenges related to accessing basic necessities impact on refugee self-reliance. Scarce resources can create problems between refugees and their host communities, which can inhibit integration processes.

Third, while some settlements have been well planned, there is often a major gap in terms of coordination of activities and actors in line with the agreed plan. While the OPM has overall responsibility in principle, this role is often not very active in practice, especially during emergencies. This leads to plans being completely ignored, with operational partners undertaking uncoordinated activities that result in what is described as a “complete absence of control”, according to participants in the operational workshop in Kampala. This lack of coordination means that, despite access to land and services being considered on paper, this does not materialise fully in practice when refugees are being settled.

Decisions taken at the time of a refugee influx have a fundamental impact on the quality and pace of both the self-reliance and integration of refugees. Therefore, settlement planning must be a priority. In recognition of this, the OPM has established a Refugee Settlement Land Taskforce to address land administration in settlements and has prioritised this in advance of the 2019 deadline outlined in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Roadmap.<sup>98</sup> The taskforce has three aims: to ensure that systematic planning is undertaken for all refugee settlements in government-owned land with digital survey plans; to engage communities on land rights in areas where land is held customarily; and to work with host communities on improved land management practices.<sup>99</sup>

Phase 1 of taskforce activities focuses on refugee settlements in government-held land in west and south-west Uganda. One outcome is likely to be that future settlements will be planned in line with a master plan. This will involve experts, including Ministry of Land experts and hydrological surveyors, so that smaller village-like refugee settlements consisting of clusters of households are established in areas surrounded by agricultural land. Given the fundamental impact that the location of refugee settlements has on their self-reliance and integration into Ugandan society, the prioritisation of refugee settlement planning for the longer-term is a welcome development.

Some of the key issues that must be addressed in refugee settlement planning, both at times of mass influx and over the longer term, include the following:

**Planning should occur at both district and settlement level in advance of refugee arrivals**

- Broaden planning focus to include district government authorities, which will ensure settlement planning is more comprehensive and fits into district development plans
- Use planning processes that are similar to urban planning processes, given the feasibility that sites will be long-term human settlements
- Involve multi-functional teams that incorporate both development and humanitarian actors
- Factor time into settlement planning, with funding made available for advance planning

**Multi-functional teams under the leadership of district government authorities should consider:**

- Location of settlements, including proximity to markets
- Negotiation: engage early with local landlords on both land for refugee settlements and livelihoods, with contingency plans for settlement expansion from the outset<sup>100</sup>
- Land provision: plan on the basis of the quality (fertility) and scale of land; currently land is allocated based on the number of households, an approach that does not consider the carrying capacity of the land in specific contexts nor account for self-reliance
- Water availability: undertake hydrological studies prior to settling large numbers of refugees, as water is critical to the viability of settlement land
- Livelihoods: consider what types of livelihoods are likely to work in a given context in order to inform livelihood approaches from the outset
- Environmental impact assessments: put environmental management plans in place, including attention to the availability of sustainable shelter materials to avoid mass deforestation; identify key actors responsible for managing plans
- Contingency planning: use for new settlements and settlement expansion

**Significant resources are required for the management and coordination of complex plans**

- Fill funding and resource gaps related to management and coordination of plans, so they can be

98 CRRF (2018a).

99 OPM (2018). Refugee Settlement Land Management in Uganda.

100 This is very challenging during times of high refugee influxes.

operationalised in a coherent manner<sup>101</sup>

- Clarify roles and responsibilities, ensuring sufficient capacity and experience, especially during the emergency phase; this may require multi-functional teams and will require support to district government to enable them to take on key roles, including leadership
- Hold NGOs accountable for delivery against the agreed plans, with donor funding to support the overall framework to ensure coordinated action

**Monitoring and accountability**

- Establish multi-functional monitoring teams to review the development of settlements and provide recommendations for how these sites, their residents and hosts can be supported to achieve long-term development objectives.

101 In the absence of such funding, various NGOs will undertake activities without an overall framework.





## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Against a backdrop of mainly positive relations between refugees and host communities in the vicinity of settlements, there are areas of significant strain. Many of these revolve around issues of access: to natural resources, services and humanitarian assistance. These tensions highlight how the assumptions of overall benefit for hosts and of shared services leading to peaceful coexistence mask a more complex picture. When services or resources are stretched, this can bring tensions and conflict.
- 2** Relations between conflicting refugee groups have grown more tense. The policy of co-location of conflicting refugee groups should be reconsidered beyond the level of the village, unless this is accompanied by proactive policing, protection and peacebuilding. Operational agencies should step up their conflict awareness and understanding of the roles traditional leadership plays in peacebuilding. They should also support the community structures of refugees.
- 3** South Sudanese refugees are not a homogenous group. More account should be taken of their diversity, which fundamentally determines the quality and pace of their integration. Greater engagement of and participation with diverse South Sudanese communities should be considered.
- 4** Integration is a process that begins at the point of arrival. The identity and social capital of both refugees and hosts are key determinants of their level of integration. Additional factors are equally important, including: proximity to host communities; the availability and proximity of services; and the quality and amount of land upon which they are settled. The current prioritisation of settlement planning is welcome. This should focus not only on the planning of settlements but coordinate with district planning processes.

## CONCLUSION

South Sudanese refugees are becoming socially and economically networked into Uganda host communities in the vicinity of settlements at variable rates, depending on a range of individual and contextual factors. They also have access to needed services and support. At the same time, lack of opportunities for naturalisation, limited prospects for sustainable livelihoods and levels of insecurity within refugee communities all point to refugees living life on the margins of Ugandan society, with their economic lives propped up by humanitarian assistance.

This research shows that some of the primary assumptions underpinning the refugee-hosting model in Uganda are only partially accurate. In particular, the assumption that host communities will automatically benefit from the presence of refugees is far more complex in practice. The related assumption that shared services will contribute to peace coexistence also belies a more complicated set of relationships. At present, refugee-hosting communities in the vicinity of refugee settlements do benefit from the support and services provided to refugees. This assists host communities in their initial decision-making about whether to accept refugees. Host communities clearly and repeatedly indicate that their continued endorsement of the decision to host refugees is tied to the promise of increased local development and improved services. The logic that shared or equitable access to services will reinforce asylum space and foster peaceful coexistence is largely relevant in terms of the original decision to host refugees. Even this initial bargain, however, can be affected by unmet expectations relating to direct tangible benefits to host community households and the land-related tensions that can develop in settlement situations.

Although promises for increased services facilitate agreements for host communities to receive refugees, when services or other support are constrained, this brings daily competition and creates tensions between refugees and hosts. Host communities and their specific development needs are not only treated as secondary considerations in the overall Ugandan refugee response but they themselves can be treated as secondary at the points of service. An overall assumption of benefit also downplays the significant hidden and opportunity costs of refugee hosting to communities at large (for instance, environmental impacts). This assumption likewise overlooks the negative affects experienced by the vulnerable and marginalised individuals of a host community, who can bear a disproportionate burden. While South Sudanese refugees and Ugandan nationals live together in relative harmony at present, as time goes on concerns about the quality of and access to these services may become more pronounced. The 70:30 principle is part of the general logic used to ensure benefits to refugee-hosting communities. In practice, the application of this principle is unclear, inconsistent and a source of tension. Clearer guidance and more coordinated action on the implementation of the 70:30 principle are urgently required.

Shared services between refugees and their host communities provide a platform for the integration of refugees. This is also assumed to promote peaceful coexistence. It is necessary, however, to better capitalise on such opportunities in order to realise this potential. Support for education and livelihoods currently struggles to meet core objectives, thus limiting potentials for economic integration. Study findings provide some evidence that shared education in particular contributes to peaceful coexistence – both between learners from refugee communities and across refugee and host communities – but there is as yet no indication that this assists with the broader social integration of refugee and host communities. The location of services in refugee settlements, which are geographically isolated and in areas where Ugandan nationals are few and far between, limits the numbers of Ugandans who can benefit from these services. Corresponding to this, the location of refugee settlements also restricts the potential for social interaction. Services in refugee settlements are first and foremost established to support highly concentrated refugee communities. This has two implications. On the one hand, this increases the likelihood that these services will function in parallel to (outside) Ugandan national structures. On the other, it means that these services will not be sustained should repatriation occur.

The social integration of South Sudanese refugees is occurring on a localised level, especially where host communities are on the periphery of settlements or in towns. Although social integration is of lesser importance to policy and operational priorities, this is occurring organically. Social integration not only contributes to peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities but this research shows that it also reinforces economic interactions. This opportunity could be built upon further. A stronger focus on the social bonds that bring communities together is also helpful in balancing the predominantly economic approach that defines Ugandan refugee hosting policy. The harmony across South Sudanese refugees and Ugandan host communities is in contrast with the more difficult relations within refugee communities. Closer management of the co-location of conflicting refugee communities is required, as is the strengthening of conflict awareness among operational agencies.

Refugee integration is a gradual process that starts from the point of arrival and is determined by the conditions and environment in which refugee settlement occurs. The ethnic identity and social capital of both refugees and hosts are key factors in their level of integration. For refugees based in settlements, so too is their proximity to host communities. The availability and proximity of services, along with the quality and amount of land upon which they are settled are equally important factors. Moreover, South Sudanese refugees are not a homogenous or unified group (despite inclinations to regard them as such). More account should be taken of the diversity of South Sudanese refugees, as this also determines the pace and degree of integration. Much greater attention should be paid to the planning of refugee settlements, especially the need to incorporate longer-term prospects for integration into this process.

At the national and policy level, many of the debates in Uganda centre on refugee self-reliance and the emergence of refugee economies. There is, however, a danger that focusing primarily on the productive capacities of refugees risks excluding from policy discussions more thorough consideration of their rights and protection needs. Placing responsibility for self-reliance on refugees without addressing the challenges and barriers they face (including those that stem from their residence in refugee settlements) is problematic. At best, this approach does not acknowledge, much less address, the challenges that refugees do face. At worst, failure to account for these challenges and barriers risks exacerbating them, especially if the self-reliance approach is linked to a reduction in humanitarian assistance.

National and international commitments to a more development-oriented approach to refugee hosting serve to augment strictly humanitarian approaches. A number of important policy processes are already underway in Uganda to support this shift in perspective. These processes, if effectively translated into practice, have the potential to be transformational. They include: sector specific development plans for refugee hosting (for example, the Education Response Plan); ambitions for refugees to be included in the next National Development Plan (2020–2030); efforts to ensure greater leadership and coordination of refugee affairs by district local governments; and the drive to address refugee settlement planning that can take account of longer-term development prospects for refugees. Some of these processes are a culmination of decades of unmet commitments to longer-term solutions for refugees and their hosts. Many have also been spurred on as a result of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) process in Uganda. To serve as a basis for longer-term solutions for refugees and their hosts, these recent policy developments require fundamental shifts in the leadership of the Ugandan refugee response. They likewise necessitate genuine investment in the development of refugee-hosting districts and communities. These recent policy developments must also define an approach that is rooted in addressing the challenges, barriers and opportunities for host communities and refugees alike.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

## Drive forward, fund and ensure coordinated support for current efforts to integrate and localise the Ugandan refugee response

Current moves to integrate refugees into the National Development Plan III from 2020 onward are highly welcome, as are the articulation of sector-specific response plans and the recognition of the central role of district local government in refugee governance. These positive developments should be supported by an area-based approach to determining local host and refugee community needs.

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| <b>Policy</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Given the number of policy changes currently underway in Uganda, it is necessary to develop a vision and strategy that reflects the future governance and architecture of refugee response and management. In particular, this must reflect the greater involvement of line ministries and district local government in coordinating the refugee response, including the reconfiguration of different roles and responsibilities into a new architecture and addressing how accountabilities can be assured.</li><li>• This also requires an overarching coordination framework, at district level, under which coordination and management of the new refugee response plans fit, and how these interact with humanitarian coordination at settlement level.</li><li>• The policy shifts underway require significant upscaling of funding. Donors will need to provide harmonised funding and coordinated support to the Government of Uganda to translate the new development-oriented approach to refugee response into reality.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Programme</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donors and operational agencies should build on current efforts to ensure more harmonised and coordinated support to investment, technical support and capacity strengthening to district local government to enable them to integrate refugee affairs into their work. Operational agencies should strengthen engagement and transparency with district local government and participate fully in new coordination structures.</li><li>• UN and operational agencies should begin strategising now for transitioning to development approaches to refugee response, drawing on lessons from other contexts.</li><li>• UN and operational agencies should strengthen their partnerships with national and local organisations in Uganda, increasing investment and establishing partnership approaches that build capacity and support these organisations to take leading roles over the longer term.</li><li>• Operational agencies should establish mechanisms and practices that help increase the engagement and participation of refugees and host communities in refugee management and response. Failure to do so is affecting the relevance, sense of local ownership, and impact of programmes and projects. This needs to change in order to ensure greater sustainability. Efforts to engage beyond the leadership of refugee and host communities should be explored to capture the diverse experiences of diverse communities.</li></ul> |

2

## Ensure that the Livelihoods and Jobs Response Plan incorporates an achievable strategy of self-reliance for refugees both within and outside settlements that is rooted in the economic development and social integration of refugee-hosting districts

Livelihoods work should be framed by an overarching strategy that aims to achieve refugee self-reliance. It should be linked to the economic development of refugee-hosting districts. Livelihoods work should also take into account the capacities and aspirations of refugees and host communities.

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| <b>Policy</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Livelihoods and Jobs Response Plan should aim at the self-reliance of both refugees and host communities. This should recognise the need for diverse livelihoods support, linked to a clear market assessment of the opportunities that exist in different districts and based on more in-depth understanding of the capacities and interests of refugees and host communities. This must be informed by a frank assessment of what is facilitating and what is impeding self-reliance at present, including examination of the refugee settlement policy, land availability and the mobility of refugees.</li><li>• Donors should fund research and analysis on the self-reliance of refugees in urban centres to better understand what support might enable more refugees to become self-reliant in contexts outside refugee settlements and what type of support might facilitate this. This should be incorporated into the self-reliance strategy.</li><li>• Donors should shift to multi-year funding of livelihoods programmes, and investment in the technical capacities and approaches required for district local government and operational agencies to move beyond support for subsistence.</li></ul> |
| <b>Programme</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donors and operational agencies should supplement current livelihoods targeting that focuses primarily on vulnerability to step up work that targets on the basis of capacity.</li></ul>  |

**3****Prioritise and fund settlement and site planning so that refugees in settlements have better prospects of self-reliance and land sensitivities are managed better**

Integration and longer-term prospects are determined by decisions taken in relation to where and how to settle refugees in the first place. There should be a greater investment of time and resources in settlement and site planning, including attention to building local capacities to participate more effectively in these processes.

**Policy**

- The work of the Refugee Settlement Land Taskforce should be supported to expand to areas under customary land tenure and ownership. Taskforce work should be aligned with strategies for self-reliance and integrated into district development plans, with donors providing contingency funding to ensure that the plans can be implemented in practice.
  - Undertake a comprehensive policy analysis of land issues relating to refugee hosting. This should include how to address securing land for settlements in a way that mitigates impact on land sensitivities. It should also build on the knowledge of local landlords on land-related issues and support mechanisms that can reinforce secure tenure in a context of customary ownership. The policy analysis should seek ways to establish a more consistent, sustainable and fair system of acquiring land for different settlements, with attention to livelihoods issues.
- While respecting the confidentiality of individual agreements, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) should make available sample copies of land agreements so that agencies and other stakeholders can be made aware the implications for aid delivery. This would also contribute to greater transparency and increased knowledge at the local level, especially for landlords, and lead to the more effective management of local expectations of appreciation.

**Programme**

- Multi-functional settlement planning teams should be established that include government, development and humanitarian actors, under district local government leadership. Planning should consider the negotiation of land for settlement and livelihoods, land quality and carrying capacity, water availability, and environmental impact and management, as well as the location of services within the settlements.
- The OPM and UNHCR should work together to establish clearer operating procedures for the management and coordination of settlement plans at times of high refugee influxes, and donors should be brought on board to finance these plans and ensure accountability by their partners.
- UN and operational partners should increase their knowledge and engagement with landlords who have granted land for refugee settlement to ensure that their roles are respected. In particular, operational agencies should ensure that livelihoods work does not compound land sensitivities in the vicinity of settlements. This requires greater knowledge of customary land tenure principles and practices.

**4****Engage host communities in a more systematic way and address the actual financial costs and opportunity costs of refugee hosting**

The assumed benefits associated with refugee hosting underplay the consideration of costs to communities and individuals in the short and longer term, despite the fact that refugee hosting hinges on the willingness of host communities to do so. Refugee-hosting communities should be better informed about these costs, minimising potential tensions and offering opportunities to collectively address these.

**Policy**

- Undertake comprehensive research and analysis of the short and longer-term implications of refugee hosting for host communities in a sample number of settlements and in urban centres. Development efforts should identify and address the actual financial and opportunity costs associated with refugee hosting.
- Retain the 70:30 principle and provide clear guidance on its objectives and implementation. This quota-based instrument should be used for humanitarian responses only. Support to host communities should be set at 30% in recognition that humanitarian action is a short-term response designed to save refugee lives and alleviate suffering. This is distinct from broader development approaches.

**Programme**

- Develop a coordinated system to address natural resource management, including close collaboration with the host community. This should include designating and managing rotating areas of access and other areas for conservation and replanting. Fuel efficiency should also be addressed.
- Operational agencies should engage host communities in more systematic ways that focus on their specific needs and vulnerabilities. They should increase communication and transparency regarding support granted to both host and refugee communities to better manage expectations and foster greater local ownership.
- Operational agencies should ensure greater coordination regarding their targeting of host communities to ensure objectives are met and duplication is reduced. Donors should increase their monitoring of this.
- Operational agencies should undertake a collective review of their employment recruitment practices to understand how greater involvement of both Ugandan nationals and South Sudanese in refugee-hosting districts could be supported.
- Develop and invest in area-based approaches in which the host community and refugees are targeted on the basis of vulnerability, capacity and other criteria relevant to the specific programmes.

**5****Recognise and address the diversity of the South Sudanese refugee population and increase capacities for conflict management**

The identity, gender, ethnicity, social networks of refugees and host communities, and their proximity to one other have a major bearing on relations between refugees and hosts, as well as within refugee communities. These factors also impact the pace of integration and impinge on peaceful coexistence, especially within refugee communities. Often overlooked, much more attention should be given to these issues.

**Policy**

- Reconsider the co-location of conflicting refugee groups below the level of the village unless this is accompanied by a proactive policing, protection and peacebuilding strategy, including monitoring of new arrivals.

**Programme**

- Operational agencies should strengthen the knowledge of the South Sudan conflict among their staff, and its implications for conflict, tensions and marginalisation inside the refugee settlements.
- Operational agencies working on protection and peacebuilding should increase their support to conflict-mitigation and peacebuilding actors within South Sudanese communities. In particular, the roles of elders and church leaders should be more effectively harnessed as part of an overall effort to draw on the existing capacities within the South Sudanese refugee population.
- Operational agencies should scale-up language training for adults and other mechanisms to foster interaction between communities – such as sports – to build social interaction.

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## REGIONAL DURABLE SOLUTIONS SECRETARIAT



### CONTACT INFORMATION

Hosted at the Danish Refugee Council  
Lower Kabete Road (Ngecha Road Junction)  
P. O. Box 14762-00800, Westlands, Nairobi.  
**Office:**+ 254 20 418 0403/4/5  
**Email:**[info@regionaldss.org](mailto:info@regionaldss.org)  
**Website:**[www.regionaldss.org](http://www.regionaldss.org)  
**Twitter:**@ReDSS\_HoA

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