

Integrated approaches to refugee management in Uganda

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Question

What does the evidence tell us about long-term impacts of integrated approaches to refugee management in Uganda?

- *What evidence is there that integrated approaches to refugee management, including through national systems generate long-term impact on refugee and host communities?*
- *What evidence is there that these integrated approaches improve refugee self-reliance and contribute to economies?*
- *What evidence is there about cost-effectiveness of integrated approaches?*

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1. Summary

Uganda has been a global leader in implementing an integrated approach to refugee management in which refugees enjoy essentially the same rights and access to jobs and services as locals. This approach has benefited both refugees and host communities: the former have land and (limited) livelihood opportunities, the latter benefit from improved services for all and the positive effects of refugees on the local and wider economy. But both still face significant challenges: refugees struggle to become self-reliant, while host communities have to cope with increased competition for resources and services. Rising refugee numbers coupled with funding shortfalls are exacerbating host community-refugee tensions, and raise questions about the sustainability of Uganda’s approach.

In recent years, the number of people in situations of forced displacement has reached new highs: 70.8 million at the end of 2018 (UNHCR, 2019b: 1). More and more of these are situations of protracted displacement, lasting over five years. The majority of the world’s refugees are found in developing countries, placing strain on often already overburdened services. This has led to a shift in approach to protracted refugee crises from a humanitarian response to a development-oriented one, which meets the long-term needs of refugees and host communities. The shift is reflected, for example, in recent international commitments made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, and in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees. As of end 2019 it was hosting 1.38 million refugees, with the largest share from South Sudan, followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).¹ Most refugees are concentrated in the north and south-west of the country.

Uganda has, particularly since 1998, had a very liberal refugee policy. Refugees have the right to work, enjoy freedom of movement, can own property and set up a business, and have access to social services such as health and education. **They essentially enjoy the same rights and services as Ugandans: the one difference is that they cannot acquire Ugandan citizenship.** Successive policies and strategies have shifted refugee management in Uganda from a humanitarian approach to a development one, aimed at fostering sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities and thereby contributing to national growth, ensuring access to services for all, and encouraging social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. A key element of the strategy to promote sustainable livelihoods for refugees is allocation of plots of land for residential and agricultural purposes, with the aim of enabling them to become self-reliant.

This review identified several studies conducted over the past three years by key international development agencies (including the World Bank, UNDP², WFP³) **which assess the impact of Uganda’s integrated refugee management approach.** There was also other grey literature as well as academic papers. The evidence base is thus quite strong, albeit with scope for more in-depth research on specific aspects (e.g. access to specific services, impact on women and other groups). A number of common themes emerge:

¹ <https://ugandarefugees.org/en/country/uga>

² United Nations Development Programme

³ World Food Programme

Poverty – poverty levels among refugee populations are high (ranging from 48% to 60% depending on the study), **and higher than those among host communities** (between 17% and 30% in the same studies).

Aid dependence - levels of aid dependence among refugees are high, though this is less (37%) among more established refugees (in Uganda for five years or more) than among recent arrivals (less than two years in Uganda) (62%) (World Bank, 2019: 64).

Food security – both refugees and host communities experience food insecurity, but this is higher among refugees (7 out of 10 refugee households compared to 5 out of 10 host households) (World Bank, 2019: 40). Food insecurity is also greater among established refugees (in Uganda for many years and hence getting less food aid) than among recent arrivals. This policy has recently changed and all refugees now receive the same levels of assistance in the form of food or cash as of Sept-2018.

Vulnerability – demographic characteristics of refugee populations make them more vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity: some 56% of refugees are under the age of 15 and 25% less than five years of age; dependency ratios among refugee households are high (1.7 dependent members for every non-dependent member, compared to 1.2 among host households) (World Bank, 2019: 27).

Land policy – allocation of land is the cornerstone of Uganda’s strategy to promote self-reliance among refugees: cultivation of land is expected to meet the refugees’ food needs and generate income. Refugees use the land for cultivation and rearing animals, but face a number of problems:

- a) **plot sizes have reduced** as refugee numbers have increased, and current allocations are insufficient to meet food needs. Plot sizes vary by location but overall average size is 30 x 30 metres or 0.22 acres (UNDP, 2018: 4);
- b) **soil quality can be poor:** in general refugees tend to have less productive land than host communities;
- c) refugees are largely allocated land in settlements, which can be in remote rural locations, making income generation difficult;
- d) **refugees only have user rights to land** – they cannot sell it or use it as collateral for credit;
- e) **not all refugees are farmers** – and the policy is unsuitable for those in urban locations.

One study concluded, ‘expectations that refugees can achieve agricultural subsistence do not match reality’ (Ruadel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 22).

Labour force participation and wages – Refugees are economically active, with one study finding they have an average of 3.5 livelihood activities/sources of income (Poole, 2019: 9). The **refugee labour force participation rate in Uganda averages 38%, compared to 74% for Ugandans** (Vemuru et al, 2016: xi). There are also **wide income gaps between refugees and hosts:** in Kampala nationals earn the equivalent of USD 250 per month, while refugees earn USD 175 per month (Vemuru et al, 2016: 37). Average household income is higher among established refugees than recent arrivals.

Alternative livelihoods (Vemuru et al, 2016: 36-39; Poole, 2019: 9-12) – Most refugees are hired for manual labour jobs, e.g. land cultivation, brickmaking. They are **mainly in occupations providing little income, social protection or job security**. There are **urban-rural differences**,

with those in urban areas having more opportunities to become self-reliant. In rural areas economic activities for refugees revolve around agriculture and livestock, as well as trade. In urban areas refugees trade in agricultural products (e.g. food items, basic farm inputs) and run a wide range of enterprises (e.g. shops, restaurants, transportation services), with some differentiation according to nationality.

Barriers – A number of barriers **constrain the ability of refugees in both urban areas and settlements to seek employment**: unfamiliarity with the language, legal issues, inadequate interviewing skills, discrimination and a lack of relevant documents. **Access to skilled jobs is harder still** (e.g. because of differences in academic qualifications). Refugees also face difficulties in accessing credit in Uganda.

Women and the labour market – Women’s participation in the formal sector is very low, averaging 9% for refugee women compared to 35% for Ugandan women employed in non-agricultural sectors, though self-employment among refugee women is higher at 28% (Vemuru et al, 2016: 38). There are **gender differences in livelihoods**: female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to sell homemade products and cultivated food and carry out paid housework (but less likely to earn money from casual labour and selling bush products) (Poole, 2019: 11). Women face discrimination in accessing productive resources, land, credit, employment and self-employment opportunities, which increases female refugees’ exposure to risk (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metouis, 2017a: 11).

Access to services – Services for refugees and host communities used to be run in parallel, with the former often being better funded than the latter. Integration of services (including health, education and water and sanitation) was designed to end this inequality and promote peaceful coexistence. 30% of provided services are earmarked for the host community while the remaining 70% are intended for refugees. **Refugee settlements have primary health facilities and integration has led to improved access for host communities**. While primary education is provided free of charge to refugee children, they face challenges because of differing curricula and language, leading to **low enrolment and high dropout rates** (only 43% of refugee children attend primary school (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33)). **Access to secondary education is difficult for refugees** because they cannot afford the fees. A much lower percentage of refugee children attend secondary compared to primary school.

Impact on host communities and wider economy (Vemuru et al, 2016: 40; Taylor et al, 2016: 20) – There is **strong economic interdependence between refugees and host communities**. There is evidence of **refugees in Uganda having significant positive effects on host communities** in terms of job creation, increased demand and supply of goods (increased trade). These effects are felt both locally and in the wider Ugandan economy. The ‘income spillover’ (local income generated by refugee households) easily exceeds the cost of food aid for refugees (and is higher for aid given as cash rather than as food). Uganda’s policy of giving refugees access to land benefits refugees and adds significantly to their positive effect on income in and around the settlements.

Financial constraints for Uganda – Uganda is increasingly facing challenges dealing with its own poverty and under-development, let alone that of the million-plus refugees it is hosting: 27% of Ugandans live below the national poverty line (Poole, 2019: 4). Issues such as climate change, lack of infrastructure and low levels of human capital are hampering growth and leading to rising poverty. Aid to Uganda by key donors has been cut (or switched from direct budget

support to project-based aid), while population growth is not matched by tax revenue, all contributing to increased fiscal pressures.

Social cohesion – The literature paints a mixed picture with regard to social cohesion in refugee-hosting areas of Uganda. There is evidence of peaceful co-existence, including intermarriages between refugees and locals, and integration of services has improved relations. But refugees also face discrimination and hostility, particularly in urban settings. Moreover, the **increasing numbers of people in protracted refugee situations in the country is placing strain on services and resources, and leading to rising tension with host communities.**

Cost effectiveness – This review found no evidence of cost effectiveness implications of integrated approaches to refugee management in Uganda. However, a review by Thompson (2017) addressed this question in the wider context of protracted refugee crises (i.e. beyond Uganda). It looked for evidence that moving from emergency humanitarian response to longer-term development focussed activities that promote refugee self-reliance and resilience reduces overall operational costs and saves money in the long run. It found no evidence ‘to either support or refute the hypothesis that, in the context of refugee crises, a shift from emergency humanitarian response to longer-term development-focussed activities reduces operational costs’ (Thompson, 2017: 2).

2. Integration of humanitarian response and development

Importance of integrated approaches

As of end 2018 70.8 million people were forcibly displaced due mostly to conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations; of these **25.9 million were refugees** and 3.5 million asylum seekers who had crossed international borders (UNHCR, 2019b: 2) . **The majority of refugees come from developing countries** in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, and **the majority of refugees are hosted in developing countries** (UNHCR, 2019b: 3). Low and middle income countries (LMICs) now host 88% of the world’s refugees (Kock et al, 2018: x). Given that many of those countries are themselves struggling to meet the needs of their people, the large-scale influx of refugees places an even greater burden on them.

This is even more so because **a growing number of refugee crises are protracted**. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a protracted refugee situation is one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five or more years in a given asylum country (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017b: 1). As of end 2018, 15.9 million refugees were in protracted situations (UNHCR, 2019b: 22). Of this number, 5.8 million were in a situation lasting 20 years or more, and 10.1 million refugees were in protracted situations of less than 20 years (UNHCR, 2019b: 22). Refugees now spend an average of ten years away from their homes, and for refugees displaced more than five years, the average is 21 years (Kocks et al, 2018: x).

The ‘traditional’ approach to refugee crises is for these to be addressed as a humanitarian response led by international donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Refugees are provided with support to meet their immediate needs, but as the initial urgency dies down, interest in their situation declines and raising continual funds to provide for them becomes more and more challenging (Aleinikoff, 2015). At the same time, the typical approach of host countries is to settle refugees in separate camps, and limit their rights to work, move around,

access services, and so on. Refugees are generally provided with services through humanitarian agencies, and these are not accessible to nationals. Given that in many LMICs service provision is weak, this can result in a situation where refugees have better services than host communities. Add to this the increased strain on resources and livelihoods created by a large-scale, protracted refugee influx, and it is not surprising that host community resentment and tensions can rise (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017b: 1). For refugees, the traditional humanitarian response approach keeps them in a ‘limbo’ situation, unable to return to their countries of origin, but equally unable to build a new life for themselves in their host country (Aleinikoff, 2015). The cost implications for the host governments and the international community are also significant.

Table 1: Differences between international humanitarian assistance and international development cooperation

	International Humanitarian Assistance	International Development Cooperation
<i>Objectives</i>	- save lives - alleviate human suffering	- alleviate poverty - long-term social and economic development - good governance/rule of law
<i>Modus operandi</i>	- short-term ^a - individual & immediate - unconditional - implemented by IOs, NGOs, local contractors	- long-term - structural - selective/conditional
<i>Principles</i>	- humanitarian principles (e.g. humanity, independence, impartiality, neutrality)	- principles for aid effectiveness (e.g. national ownership, alignment with partner’s strategies, harmonization among donors)
<i>Legal basis</i>	- international humanitarian law (e.g. Geneva Conventions)	- agreements with partner countries, binding under international law
<i>Actors</i>	- multilateral (e.g. UNHCR, WFP) - bilateral (e.g. Sida) - non-governmental (e.g. Oxfam, Care, Red Cross, Red Crescent Moon)	- multilateral (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF) - bilateral (Danida, Sida, USAID) - non-governmental (e.g. Action Aid, Christian Aid)

Humanitarian – Development Gap

Source: Kocks et al (2018: 22), licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

The above considerations have led to a **shift in thinking on refugee management, away from a purely humanitarian response (in which refugees are given aid) and towards an integrated development approach** (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017b: vi). In the latter, refugees are supported to become self-reliant and services for refugees and host communities are integrated (refugees are brought under national systems rather than setting up separate, parallel service delivery mechanisms for them). This approach recognises the potential that refugees have, not only to generate income for themselves, but to contribute to economic growth of the host country. It also recognises the importance of meeting the needs of vulnerable host communities. This approach is beneficial for refugees, for host communities and – since it reduces refugee dependence on aid – for the international community (Aleinikoff, 2015). Table 1

shows the difference between international humanitarian assistance and international development cooperation.

International commitments

The shift from humanitarian to development-oriented approaches to refugee management is reflected in a number of international commitments.

- The **Solutions Alliance**⁴ was launched in 2014 to advance a partnership-oriented approach to addressing protracted displacement situations and preventing new displacement situations from becoming protracted. It brings together a range of humanitarian and development actors (donor and host governments, UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, civil society organisations, international NGOs, the private sector and academia). It focuses on and rewards countries as ‘champions’ for inclusion of displaced people in national development plans and support for self-reliance (Betts, 2017).
- The **World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)** in Istanbul in May 2016 was the first global UN humanitarian conference bringing together the humanitarian community with other actors working in development, peacebuilding and peacekeeping to argue for a more coherent approach (Ruauadel & Morrison-Metois, 2017b: 2). Enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors was one of the ten **Grand Bargain** commitments coming out of the WHS.⁵ This led to the **New Way of Working (NWOW)** which calls on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively together, based on their comparative advantages, towards ‘collective outcomes’ that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years.⁶
- The **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016, reaffirmed commitment to strengthen and enhance protection for people on the move. It also committed member states to applying a **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)** to large-scale and protracted refugee situations. The Framework includes ‘measures to support the impact on host countries, including host communities and refugees’ timely access to solutions’ (Ruauadel and Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 13). The 2016 New York Declaration paved the way for adoption of the 2018 **Global Compact on Refugees**, which was intended to provide a basis for predictable and equitable burden-and-responsibility sharing to strengthen cooperation and solidarity with refugees and their hosts.

The above commitments have also translated into some funding commitments. The World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank Group, and other partners created the **Global Concessional Financing Facility** to provide concessional financing to middle-income countries hosting large refugee populations; and the World Bank launched a financing window in the IDA-18 replenishment, providing up to USD 2 billion in grants and concessional loans to low-income countries to meet the development needs of refugees and host communities (CGDev & IRC, 2017: xi).

⁴ For details see Betts, A. (2017), ‘A new approach to old problems: the Solutions Alliance’, Forced Migration Review. <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/solutions/betts.pdf>

⁵ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/jsc/content/new-way-working>

While there is international recognition and commitment to a new approach to refugee management in protracted displacement situations, implementing these in practice has been slower. **Uganda has been one of the leading countries in taking an integrated approach to refugee management**, consistent with the principles and commitments outlined above.

3. Refugee situation in Uganda

Refugee numbers

Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees fleeing persecution and conflicts in the Great Lakes, East Africa and the Horn of Africa (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 1). Until 2010, Uganda's refugee population remained stable with voluntary repatriations and refugee resettlement nearly keeping pace with new arrivals. However, from 2010 onward, renewed conflict in the DRC led to a steady influx of refugees. Numbers rose again in 2013 because of renewed violence in South Sudan and instability in Burundi, and then in 2016 because of the intensification of conflict in South Sudan (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 1; Herbert & Idris, 2018: 12). As of end December 2019, Uganda was hosting 1,381,122 refugees: South Sudanese made up the largest refugee population (861,590 people), followed by refugees from the DRC (397,638) and Burundi (45,671).⁷ Another 54,143 refugees from Somalia, Rwanda, Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia have lived in protracted exile in Uganda for the past three decades (UNHCR, 2019: 6). After surpassing Ethiopia and Kenya in early 2017, Uganda became the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa (Watera et al, 2017: 7).

The majority of refugees in Uganda (62%) are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2019: 6). The refugees are concentrated in 12 of Uganda's 121 districts: 62% in northern Uganda or West Nile; 21% in southwestern Uganda or South West; and 12 % in central Uganda or Mid-West; only 5% live in urban centres (UNHCR, 2019: 6). Host populations in refugee-hosting counties total 2.1 million (UNHCR, 2019:13). It is unlikely that many of these refugees will be able to return to their home countries in the foreseeable future.

Refugee policies

Uganda's refugee regime is one of the most progressive in the world. Refugees have the right to work, establish a business, own property, have freedom of movement and have access to social services such as education and healthcare (Vemuru et al, 2016; UNHCR, 2019: 7). In essence, they enjoy the same rights and services as Ugandans: the one difference is that refugees and their children can never become Ugandan citizens (Vemuru et al, 2016: viii). The country's favourable protection environment for refugees is grounded in the 2006 Refugee Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulations (UNHCR, 2019: 7).

Uganda shifted from the traditional approach to refugee management (keeping humanitarian response separate from national development) toward integration of services for all people in its territory in 1998 (Vemuru et al, 2016: 20). The new policy, the **Self-Reliance⁸ Strategy**,

⁷ <https://ugandarefugees.org/en/country/uga>

⁸ Self-reliance is defined by UNHCR as 'the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity' (cited in Rohwerder, 2016: 1).

emphasised the need for refugees to be self-sufficient (Vemuru et al, 2016; Watera et al, 2017: 14). This was followed in 2003 by the Development Assistance for Refugee Hosting Areas (DAR) strategy, aimed at improving the living conditions of refugees and nationals (Krause, 2016: 52). Refugees are provided with a plot of land for housing and cultivation and can settle alongside their host communities (UNHCR, 2019: 7).

Since 2015, the **Uganda National Development Plan (NDP II 2015/16-2020/21)** includes refugees in national development planning and structures through a five-year government strategy called the **Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA)** (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 10). The STA aims to promote social and economic development in areas hosting refugees for both refugees and host communities. Through the STA, Uganda pursues a non-encampment policy to refugee protection and assistance (UNHCR, 2019: 7).

The main initiative to support the STA is a multi-year **Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategy**, established in 2016 (Krause, 2016: 4). This brings together the government of Uganda, UN agencies, the World Bank, development partners and the private sector to support resilience-building efforts for refugees and host communities (with a cost of up to USD 350 million over a five-year period) (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 10). Its goal is 'developing a coordinated strategy to transform and transition interventions in Uganda's refugee-impacted districts from a humanitarian to a development approach' (UNHCR, 2019: 7). Key objectives include (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 11):

- fostering sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities, thereby contributing to socioeconomic growth and increased individual income;
- improving delivery of social services such as education, health and WASH in refugee hosting areas;
- encouraging social cohesion and peaceful coexistence through the inclusion of refugees and host communities in development interventions.

Uganda is one of the pilot countries for the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)**, which emerged out of the New York summit in 2016. The Government of Uganda formally launched the CRRF in March 2017, embracing existing initiatives, mechanisms and policies seeking to address the needs of refugee and host communities in Uganda (UNHCR, 2019: 7). The CRRF is embedded into the NDP II 2015/16-2020/21 and seeks to advance Uganda's STA, including through the implementation of the humanitarian refugee response (emergencies and protracted situations) and development-oriented interventions like ReHoPE (UNHCR, 2019: 7). The CRRF's long-term goal is sustainability of the STA and inclusion of refugees into national and local development plans.

Uganda has thus developed and implemented key initiatives to support refugees' self-reliance and economic independence. For the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, Uganda's 'approach is based on two premises: firstly, that displacement is an area of shared responsibility for governmental, humanitarian and development actors; secondly, that it is an area of shared opportunity for refugees and Ugandans alike' (Ruaudel & Morrison, 2017a: 9). The right to work, buttressed by labour rights, is essential for the development of sustainable livelihoods for refugees: Uganda provides those rights.

This review focuses on the impact of Uganda's integrated approach to refugee management on refugees and host communities in terms of meeting their basic needs, access to services and livelihoods, and the impact on wider society in terms of economic growth and social cohesion.

The main studies used to assess impact were conducted over the past three years by key international development agencies and are detailed in Box 1.

Box 1: Main studies used in this review

Vemuru et al (2016). *An Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management* – conducted by a **World Bank** team, this focuses on the legal and policy framework in Uganda, and a socioeconomic impact assessment. The latter looked at refugees' access to services, interactions between refugees and host communities, and economic activities among refugees and outcomes. It drew on qualitative and quantitative methods. As well as administration of individual questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. The study covered rural and urban areas of Uganda, with sites selected to ensure representation of refugees from different contexts and countries.

Taylor et al (2016). *Economic Impact of Refugee Settlements in Uganda* – conducted by the **World Food Programme (WFP)** and researchers from the University of California, it documents the impacts of refugees and WFP aid within a 15 km radius around two refugee settlements in Uganda. These were Rwamwanja in the south-west housing mainly DRC refugees, and Adjumani in the north with refugees from South Sudan. The study used local economy-wide impact evaluation (LEWIE) methodology. This model was used to simulate the impacts of an additional refugee household, as well as an additional dollar of WFP aid, on real (inflation-adjusted) total income in the local economy, as well as on the incomes of refugee and host-country households. As well as detailed information on the economic activities of both refugee and local host country households, separate business surveys were administered.

UNDP (2018). *Understanding Land Dynamics and Livelihood in Refugee Hosting Districts of Northern Uganda* -The study drew on 12 focus group discussions and 16 key informant interviews held in November 2017 among select refugee and host communities in Adjumani, Yumbe, Arua and Lamwo districts. The districts were selected on purpose to reflect the age of settlements, refugee population as well as the social cultural diversity (ethnicity) of refugee hosting communities. Refugee respondents included both recent arrivals (less than two years) and those in protracted situations (more than five years). The qualitative data was complemented by data from the 2017 Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) survey, conducted in all five refugee-hosting districts in Northern Uganda.

UNICEF (2018). *Child Poverty and Deprivation in Refugee-Hosting Areas: Evidence from Uganda* – This study assessed child poverty, deprivation and social service delivery in refugee and host communities in selected districts in the country's three major refugee-hosting areas: West Nile, the South West, and the capital, Kampala. The overall aim was to compare child poverty and deprivation among refugee and host communities, determine whether there are any (in)equities in the delivery of social services, and identify impediments to the effective delivery of services. Primary data was obtained from households and communities in the districts of Arua, Yumbe, Adjumani, Kamwenge, Isingiro and Kampala. A household survey was supplemented by focus group discussion and key informant interviews.

Development Pathways (2018). *Analysis of Refugee Vulnerability in Uganda and Recommendations for Improved Targeting of Food Assistance* – The aim of the research was to build an understanding of vulnerability to food insecurity among the refugee population in Uganda and make proposals for revised selection criteria for food assistance. A range of approaches was used in the research: literature review; analysis of secondary data; qualitative research in six settlements across six districts; a comprehensive household survey conducted in 18 settlements across ten districts (5,000 households) between April and December 2017.

Overall, the study attempted to build a representative picture of refugees across Uganda, examining settlements across the country to incorporate differences such as location, nationality and length of time in Uganda.

Betts, A. et al (2019). *Refugee Economies in Uganda: What difference does the self-reliance model make?* – This study looks at the impact of Uganda’s refugee model, specifically three aspects: allowing refugees to work and choose where to live; allocating plots of land to refugees; and promoting integrated social service provision for hosts and refugees. It does so by comparing outcomes in terms of income, food security, refugee-host interaction, etc. between Somali and Congolese refugees in Uganda and those in Kenya. The study draws on quantitative and qualitative research, including a survey of 8,000 refugees and host community members in urban and camp contexts in both countries.

World Bank (2019). *Informing the Refugee Policy Response in Uganda. Results from the Uganda Refugee and Host Communities (URHS) 2018 Household Survey* – Conducted by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the World Bank, the survey questionnaire closely followed that of the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS). It provides information on the demographic composition of households, household characteristics (including access to basic services), the socio-economic traits of its members (education, health, labour, etc.), country of origin of refugees, the date of arrival, whether they are registered or not, their integration into the socio-economic landscape and their perceptions. The consumption and income modules allow estimates of poverty figures. The survey, conducted in June and July 2018, was representative of the refugee and host community population of Uganda at the national level. Moreover, it was representative of the refugee and host population in the regions of West Nile and South West, and the city of Kampala.

Poole (2019). *The refugee response in northern Uganda. Resources beyond international humanitarian assistance* – conducted by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), this study explores how refugees make ends meet at the household level.⁹ A household survey was carried out in Bidibidi refugee settlement in Yumbe district (longer established) and the Omugo and Imvepi extension of Rhino Camp settlement (more recent arrivals). The survey was designed to be illustrative rather than representative: the total sample size was 500 households across the two sites. In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted.

4. Poverty and food security

Poverty

The Uganda Refugee and Host Communities 2018 Household Survey (URHS) reports that **48% of the refugee population were living in poverty, compared to 17% for hosts** (World Bank, 2019: 34). Poverty among refugees was highest in the West Nile region, where close to 60% of refugees were poor and around 30% of hosts (World Bank, 2019: 34). Poverty levels among refugees vary depending on time spent in Uganda: 59% of refugees arriving in the previous two years lived below the poverty line, compared to only 22% of those who had been in Uganda for five years or more (World Bank, 2019: 34). A study by Development Pathways in 2018 had

⁹ The two other key aspects of the study were mapping what resources contribute to crisis response at the system level, and understanding how resource data could improve crisis response (Poole, 2019: 1).

similar findings: close to 70% of refugees overall were living below the national poverty line compared to 20% of Ugandans; and poverty levels were much higher among refugees in West Nile (74%) than among those in the Mid West and South West (both 59%) (Development Pathways, 2018: 16). The high levels of poverty among refugees are reflected in dependence on aid for income: about 54% of refugees reported aid as their main source of income (World Bank, 2019: 64). The 2019 HPG report also concludes that **refugees rely heavily on international assistance** – almost 100% of respondents reported that they were in receipt of food aid and 60% indicated that aid organisations were their most important source of support when faced with regular shortfalls in household income (Poole, 2019: 9). However, there were significant differences in aid dependence depending on length of time spent in Uganda: humanitarian assistance was the main form of income for 37% of refugees who had arrived over five years earlier, compared to for 62% of refugees who had arrived in the preceding two years (World Bank, 2019: 64).

Food security

The 2018 URHS also found that **food security was a concern among both refugee and host populations**: 7 out of 10 refugee households experienced severe food insecurity, compared to 5 out of 10 host households (World Bank, 2019: 40). The UNDP (2018: 9) study of land use and food security in Northern Uganda, found **significant differences in food security between refugees and host communities**, and between refugees depending on the length of time they had been in the country. Those in a situation of protracted displacement (e.g. in Adjumani and Arua) received less food aid and hence were more likely to be food insecure than more recent arrivals (UNDP, 2018: 10). Figure 1 gives the proportion of people who had missed some meals in the last seven days, and those who had gone an entire day without eating in the same period. However, it should be noted that current policy as of 2018, is that refugees in settlements receive the same amount of food assistance irrespective of length of stay in Uganda (*MOU between WFP-UNHCR-Office of the Prime Minister*).

See: Figure 1: Prevalence of food insecurity, Source: UNDP, 2018: 10, <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/uganda/docs/UNDPUG18%20-%20Understanding%20Land%20Dynamics.pdf>

UNICEF's 2018 survey also identified high levels of food insecurity, and noted that many refugee households are increasingly adopting negative coping mechanisms, including a reduction in meal portion and frequency, sale of household assets, withdrawing children from school, and criminal acts such as stealing (UNICEF, 2018: 31). Other coping mechanisms include the supply of casual labour to Ugandan nationals (UNICEF, 2018: 31). The Development Pathways study echoes the findings of the other studies: overall, only 2% of refugee households were classified as food secure, 22% marginally food secure, 60% moderately insecure, and 16% severely insecure (Development Pathways, 2018: 20). However, there was significant geographical variation in food security classification, e.g. severe food insecurity ranged from 3% in Koboko to 35% in Isingiro (Development Pathways, 2018: 20). Furthermore, prevalence of severe food insecurity was three times higher among refugees who had been in the country for six years or longer, compared to those arriving in the past two years (Development Pathways, 2018: 21).

Both the 2018 URHS and the 2018 Development Pathways study noted that the **demographic characteristics of refugee populations made them particularly vulnerable**. Households with

more children and older persons had significantly higher odds of being severely food insecure and lower odds of being classified as food secure (Development Pathways, 2018: 22). Dependency ratios among refugee households are higher (1.7 dependent members for every non-dependent member) than among host households (1.2) (World Bank, 2019: 29). Furthermore, refugees are younger than hosts: around 56% of refugees are below the age of 15 (compared to 48% of hosts), and around 25% are younger than five years of age (World Bank, 2019: 27).

5. Land as a source of sustainable livelihoods

The mainstay of Uganda's approach to promoting self-reliance for refugees is through cultivation of land: this is expected to meet both the refugees' food needs and generate income for them. 'Refugees' independence from aid structures is especially pursued through agricultural approaches: in principle refugees receive two plots of land – one to live on, one to farm – as well as the necessary means to work the land' (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 11). The 2016 World Bank assessment found that refugees use the allocated land for crop production and animal rearing to complement their food rations and to sell any surpluses to meet their other basic needs such as salt, soap and clothing (Vemuru et al, 2016: 44).

However, the literature identifies several problems with the Uganda strategy of relying on land as a source of sustainable livelihoods for refugees:

Inadequate land size

The size of land allocated to refugees has decreased with time. The official land allocation used to be 50 x 50 metres per household for either purpose (residential or farming) (Vemuru et al, 2016: 44). But since the large influx of refugees from the DRC and from South Sudan in 2013, this was reduced to 20 x 30 metres for residential areas, and 50 x 50 metres for arable areas (Vemuru et al, 2016: 44). Size of land allocated also varies by settlement. In Arua in Northern Uganda, for example, prior to 2016 refugees were given agricultural land of about 50 x 50 metres and a homestead plot of 20 x 30 metres, while in Adjumani refugees got 30 x 30 metres for residential and 30 x 50 metres for agricultural use (UNDP, 2018: 4). Following a surge in refugee numbers in 2016, in general the practice of allocating separate residential and agricultural plots stopped. Overall, the average plot size after 2016 was 30 x 30 metres or 0.22 acres – though in some areas it was far less (see Tables 2 and 3) (UNDP, 2018: 4). Betts et al's study (2019: 18) comparing refugees in Uganda and Kenya found that plot sizes in Nakivale and other South-Western settlements were supposed to be 15 x 20 metres for shelter (residence) and 50 x 50 metres for cultivation, but could end up being as little as 20 x 50 metres. In the 2016 World Bank assessment many residents reported not having received arable land but rather were allocated a residential plot (Vemuru et al, 2016). Ruaudel and Morrison-Metois (2017a: 22) echo this: 'The plots of land allocated are far too small to allow significant cultivation, and in some cases refugees' houses occupied their entire 30m by 30m plot'.

See: Table 2: Land allocation size (metres) before and after refugee influx of 2016, Source: UNDP, 2018: 4, <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/uganda/docs/UNDPUG18%20-%20Understanding%20Land%20Dynamics.pdf>

See: Table 3: Average land size per household (acres), *Source: UNDP, 2018: 4,*
<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/uganda/docs/UNDPUG18%20-%20Understanding%20Land%20Dynamics.pdf>

UNDP made estimations of crop yields in Ajua settlement, based on the average 0.22 acre plot size of land allocated to refugees (UNDP, 2018: 10):

Assuming a refugee household allocates 0.15 acres and 0.07 acres of the allocated 0.22-acre agriculture plot to the production of maize and beans respectively, holding other factors such as weather constant, a household would produce about 75 kg of maize and 26 kg of beans per year. Based on the current WFP full food ration provided to each refugee, quantities for beans and maize would last a 6-member household about 1 and 1.8 months, respectively. By implication, in the absence of food rations, a refugee household can hardly sustain itself for a year by feeding on food grown on the allocated plot.

The UNDP study notes that, although the food gap reduces with use of modern technologies and increase in land size, the **quantities produced are still insufficient to meet food needs**. The 2018 Development Pathways study also found that land size was inadequate: around 70% of refugees surveyed reported not having sufficient land for cultivation – only 9% reported having more than half an acre of land, and only 3% had more than one acre (Development Pathways, 2018: 17).

Poor soil quality and remote location

A related problem is **land/soil quality: sometimes this is not suitable for cultivation**. Ruauadel and Morrison-Metois (2017a: 22) describe newly arrived refugees clearing their plots of scrub vegetation, but the 'plots were too small to support subsistence cultivation and were extremely rocky and dry. At best, refugees had planted very small areas around the margins of their plots'. In the 2018 UNDP study of land use in Northern Uganda, some settlements such as Mungula I and II in Adjumani, were reported to have fertile soils while others were reportedly rocky, infertile and unproductive (e.g. Alere in Adjumani) (UNDP, 2018: 7). Moreover, 'Although no scientific soil fertility tests were conducted to ascertain the quality of soil quality allocated to refugees, by and large, compared to hosts, refugees tend to cultivate less productive land' (UNDP, 2018: 7). Respondents in the UNICEF study (2018, 30) also identified rocky and infertile arable land that does not support agriculture as a major problem. The Development Pathways study (2018: 18) too highlighted the problem of land received by refugees being of inadequate quality: only around a quarter of households who cultivated their land were able to sell some of their produce. The same issue of deteriorating quality, fertility and reduced proximity to markets was reported in the study by Betts et al (2019: 18).

While in principle refugees can settle either in urban areas or in rural refugee settlements, in practice the Ugandan government has favoured a policy of confinement of refugees to settlements (Ruauadel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 9). The location of the settlement has a big impact on use of land: settlements in remote rural regions which are relatively isolated from flourishing urban areas, make it hard for refugees to secure income from their land (Ruauadel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 11).

Other issues

Refugees are not allowed to permanently acquire land. They can exclusively use their assigned plots, but they do not possess the power to own, sell, rent out or pledge the allocated land as collateral for credit from financial institutions (UNDP, 2018: 4). There is no fixed timeframe over which refugees can use the land, but their user rights are revoked upon relocation, resettlement elsewhere, or upon return to their countries of origin (UNDP, 2018: 4).

Ruauadel and Morrison-Metois (2017a: 12) argue that there has been **too much focus on supporting agriculture** and a certain mismatch with the profile of the refugees, many of whom are pastoralists and young people with limited skill or interest in agriculture. They also point out that the approach is unsuitable for urban refugees.

Other challenges to agricultural livelihoods are drought, pest and animal attacks on crops, crop and animal theft, and post-harvest losses due to poor handling techniques and storage facilities – forcing farmers to sell immediately after harvest and the lowest point in the price cycle (Vemuru et al, 2016: 34; Development Pathways, 2018: 18). The UNDP study of Northern Uganda also identified inadequate use of innovative modern technologies to make farming more sustainable, resilient and productive (UNDP, 2018: 8).

Ruauadel and Morrison-Metois (2017a: 22) conclude that **‘expectations that refugees can achieve agricultural subsistence do not match reality’**.

6. Access to other livelihoods

Labour force participation and wage levels

The 2019 HPG report notes that **refugees are ‘active economic agents, engaging with markets, generating income** and, in some cases, benefitting from transnational financial and economic networks’ (Poole, 2019: 9). It found that almost three-quarters (72%) of survey respondents had three or more livelihood activities or sources of income, with an average across the sample set of 3.5 (Poole, 2019: 9).

The refugee labour force participation in Uganda averages 38%, compared to 74% for Ugandans (Vemuru et al, 2016: xi). The 2016 World Bank assessment found that 43% of respondents were actively engaged in the labour market: 12% in the formal sector and 31% in the informal sector (Vemuru et al, 2016: 36). A number of barriers constrain the ability of refugees in both urban areas and settlements to seek employment: unfamiliarity with the language, legal issues, inadequate interviewing skills, discrimination and a lack of relevant documents (Vemuru et al, 2016: 36).

As well as labour force participation, there is also a **wide income gap between refugees and nationals**: in Kampala, for example, which has the highest average salary in the country, nationals earn the equivalent of USD 250 per month, while refugees earn USD 175 per month (Vemuru et al, 2016: 37). The 2018 URHS found that, among the wage employed, refugees earned wages that were 35% to 45% lower compared to hosts, even after accounting for workers’ observable characteristics (World Bank, 2019: 68). The 2019 HPG report found that average household cash income among refugees was the equivalent of USD 101 for the preceding three months – so just USD 33.52 per month (Poole, 2019: 9) [it did not give income for host community households]. Furthermore, income was influenced by the amount of time a

household had been established in the settlement: average household income among survey respondents in Bidibidi (i.e. refugees in Uganda for over five years) was UGX 499,884 (USD 135) compared to UGX 179,368 (USD 49) in a more recently established extension of Rhino Camp and Imvepi (Poole, 2019: 11).

In the HPG survey, only 2% of respondents felt they were able to meet their household needs and invest for the future; 46% felt they were doing 'just OK'; 34% were 'just about coping'; and 17% were 'struggling to get by' (Poole, 2019: 12). The study by Betts et al (2019: 5) comparing the situation of refugees in Uganda with those in Kenya, found that the former generally had higher income levels than the latter, but there was no significant difference between the surrounding host communities. The one notable exception was Congolese refugees in Nakivale (Uganda) earning less than Congolese refugees in Kakuma (Kenya): this was due to the former being mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture, and the latter having access to NGO jobs.

Access to skilled jobs

Refugees face difficulties in accessing jobs which require a higher skill level, such as working in the education or health sectors. Reasons include differences in academic qualifications, limited proficiency in English, difficulties in acquiring their degrees and having their academic documents certified (Vemuru et al, 2016: 36). This is echoed by the 2019 HPG report, which found that 'refugees do not currently appear to be able to match their skills to available work opportunities' (Poole, 2019: 9). Many of the refugees surveyed reported that the livelihoods they were engaged in were not the same as those before they became refugees: for example, 79% of casual labourers had not been casual labourers prior to their displacement (Poole, 2019: 9). As well as lack of employment opportunities in settlement areas, and challenges in matching qualifications to Ugandan standards and requirements, respondents also described informal discrimination against refugee job-seekers (Poole, 2019: 9).

The 2016 World Bank assessment found that **most refugees were hired for manual jobs such as land cultivation, brickmaking and domestic work**: because of the lack of alternative employment, refugees had to accept employment conditions such as low and late payment of wages, long working hours and no breaks (Vemuru et al, 2016: 38). **Refugees were mainly engaged in occupations that provided little income, social protection or job security** – though this was also true of Ugandans, since over 82% of the population in Uganda was engaged in agriculture (Vemuru et al, 2016: 39). The 2019 HPG report identified common sources of income among refugees as selling home-made products (41% of survey respondents), non-agricultural casual labour (38%), selling bush products (30%), petty trade (29%) and agricultural casual labour (26%) (Poole, 2019: 9).

Access to financial services

Refugees also face difficulties in accessing credit in Uganda, more than host communities. The 2018 URHS found that about 37% of refugees had a loan (either personal, from friends/relatives or from a money lender), in marked contrast with hosts at 60% (World Bank, 2019: 57). Personal loans and loans from friends were the most common source of loans for both refugees and hosts. However, there were marked regional differences in access to financial services: for West Nile, only 1 in 5 refugee households had a loan and less than 1 in 10 of refugees received any form of credit. This was much lower than the 56% and 27% respective rates reported by refugees in the Southwest (World Bank, 2019: 57). There were also differences based on length of time in Uganda: about 10% of refugees who arrived in Uganda less than 2

years ago had a personal loan, compared to 20% of refugees who arrived more than five years ago (World Bank, 2019: 57). These findings are echoed by the HPG survey in which 46% of respondents reported relying on family and friends in the first instance, while 34% stated they had no one they could go to (Poole, 2019: 12). None of the respondents felt they could go to formal credit providers, including micro-finance institutions and banks; in some cases, refugees had set up village savings groups (Poole, 2019: 12).

Rural-urban differences

Economic opportunities for refugees in Uganda vary in terms of formal and informal employment and access to productive capital from rural to urban areas (Vemuru et al, 2016). The World Bank assessment (Vemuru et al, 2016: 43) found that refugees in urban areas were slightly more likely than those in rural areas to be formally or self-employed by 2% and 5% respectively, and therefore had increased opportunities to become more self-reliant.

In rural areas, economic activities for refugees revolve around agriculture and livestock: 78% of surveyed refugees in rural areas were engaged in agriculture compared to just 5% in urban areas (Vemuru et al, 2016: 34). Another main activity for refugees in settlements was trade, and running diverse businesses such as bars, mills, transportation services, money transfer services and retail shops (Vemuru et al, 2016: 35).

Crop surpluses attract Ugandan traders to refugee settlements, operating as a direct chain between refugees and locals (Vemuru et al, 2016: 34). Ugandan private companies have also seen refugee settlement areas as potential markets. For example, 'Ugandan telecom companies launched several initiatives aimed at targeting refugee users of SMS banking and transfer services' (Vemuru et al, 2016: 40). The 2016 World Bank assessment noted that this has provided employment for refugees in the settlement areas, and has helped other refugees by making it easier for them to receive remittances from relatives and friends within or outside of the country.

In urban areas refugees trade in agricultural products, e.g. food items, basic farm inputs, and run enterprises. In Kampala about 75% of male respondents and 90% of female respondents reported being engaged in trade (Vemuru et al, 2016: 35). The World Bank assessment found that refugees in Kampala were engaged in a wide range of enterprises, with some differentiation based on nationality. Thus Congolese, Ethiopian and Rwandan refugees mainly ran small-scale enterprises selling fabric, tailoring, operating very small restaurants and bars; Eritrean refugees were primarily involved in running internet cafes and managing money transfers; while Somali refugees were involved in large-scale businesses such as mini-supermarkets, larger restaurants, transportation services, foreign exchange bureaus, garages and guesthouses (Vemuru et al, 2016: 35).

Women and the labour market

The level of women's participation in the formal sector is very low, averaging 9% for refugee women compared to 35% for Ugandan women employed in non-agricultural sectors (Vemuru et al, 2016: 38). Self-employment among refugee women is higher at 28% (Vemuru et al, 2016: 38). Refugee women face discrimination in accessing productive resources, land, credit, employment and self-employment opportunities, which increases female refugees' exposure to risk (Ruaudel & Morrison-Metois, 2017a: 11). Ruaudel and Morrison-Metois (2017a: 12) note that **vulnerable refugee women who are unable to support themselves and their**

families economically can have recourse to negative coping strategies and become involved in commercial sex. This is echoed in the Development Pathways study (2018: 19), which found that ‘when rations run out some older women resort to begging while there are examples of young women resorting to survival sex’.

The 2019 HPG report also notes that economic opportunities vary according to gender (Poole, 2019: 11). In the survey, female-headed households were more likely to earn income from selling homemade products, jobs with private business, paid housework and selling cultivated food compared to male-headed households (but less likely to earn money from casual labour and selling bush products) (Poole, 2019: 11).

7. Access to services

The main social services provided to refugees are health, education, water and sanitation, and community services (Vemuru et al, 2016: 30). The 2018 UNICEF study of service delivery among refugee and host communities identified two critical aspects: one, access to good-quality basic services such as health care, education, water, sanitation and shelter is constrained given that **the main refugee-hosting areas are among the poorest and least developed in the country**; and two, the **presence of refugees exacerbates existing vulnerabilities** and renders the population in refugee-hosting areas less resilient to economic and environmental shocks (UNICEF, 2018: 3).

As noted, in 1998 Uganda introduced the Self-Reliance Strategy based on **integration of services for refugees and host communities**. Before this, services for refugees and host communities were run in parallel, with the former being better funded than the latter that were run by the local administration (Vemuru et al, 2016: 20). Integration of services was considered important because ‘having one population receive a higher level of services than another living under similar circumstances was viewed as morally repugnant and was thought to interfere with efforts to create and promote coexistence’ (Vemuru et al, 2016: 20). Integrated services include health, education and water and sanitation. 30% of provided services are earmarked for the host community while the remaining 70% are intended for refugees, though this can be difficult to measure in practice – particularly where both refugees and host populations use the same facilities (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32).

Health services

Refugee settlements have primary health facilities; these are usually located in gazetted or recognised settlements and camps. **Referrals of serious medical or surgical conditions are made to government or NGO-supported hospitals** in the refugee-affected district or region. According to the 2016 World Bank assessment, the integration of health services is clearly felt at the facility level, where both refugees and host communities receive services without discrimination (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32). Under the integrated arrangement, health workers are recruited and posted to health units in the refugee settlements by the Government of Uganda, and UNHCR pays them an incentive (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32). First-line (primary) health units are adequately equipped with drugs and medical equipment, provided by the government and UNHCR (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32). Under the 30% initiative, implementing partners can provide drugs to host community health facilities, even when there are no refugees accessing health services from it (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32).

Evaluation of the impact of integration of health services appears limited. The 2016 World Bank assessment reported a significant improvement, particularly for host communities: ‘a significant number of host communities that had been unable to access refugee health facilities felt that they had greater ownership and rights to use them than the refugees’ (Vemuru et al, 2016: 20-21).

Integration of services has led to increased availability of drugs and health care workers for host populations, something that is appreciated by them (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33). In contrast, **refugees experienced a reduction in medical referrals**, possibly due in part to increased competition for scarce medical supplies (Vemuru et al, 2016: 20). A further issue is that the remuneration paid to NGO health staff in refugee settlements is higher than government staff of comparable qualifications and responsibilities – this can be a demotivating factor for the latter, even though they are permanent staff and will get pensions, while the former (NGO staff) are on contract (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33).

The 2018 URHS found that **health care centres were slightly more accessible to refugees than host communities, both financially and in terms of geographical proximity** (World Bank, 2019: 56). It notes that, as well as government facilities, the presence of health NGOs and humanitarian organisations in refugee settlements makes free healthcare slightly more accessible for refugees and results in differences in the type of health facilities that hosts and refugees use (World Bank, 2019: 56). In Kampala, refugees and hosts mostly use private health services; while hosts in the Southwest and West Nile and refugees in the Southwest use government health facilities, refugees in West Nile use services provided by the humanitarian health response (UNICEF, 2018: 25).

With regard to fees, **primary health facilities are mostly free in Uganda, but there are host-refugee differences where fees are paid**. The 2018 URHS found that the proportion of those who paid for a health consultation was low, 7% of refugees and 20% of hosts paid for the services received (World Bank, 2019: 56). In the Southwest and West Nile regions, access to healthcare is higher for refugees than hosts, while required payment is two to three times lower (World Bank, 2019: 56). Relative to refugees in other regions, for refugees in Kampala access to healthcare is lower and payment is required more often, consistent with higher usage of private health facilities in the capital (World Bank, 2019: 56).

Education

The education system in Uganda is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary. **Primary education is provided to refugees in settlements free of charge**, consistent with Uganda’s Universal Primary Education policy. The 2018 URHS found high enrolment rates in primary school among both refugees and host communities (65% and 68% respectively) (World Bank, 2019: 52). However, there are two issues facing refugees. The first is that the study curriculum, instruction language and materials present a challenge because of refugees coming from countries with very different education environments. This causes many refugee children to drop out at lower primary level: the 2016 World Bank assessment found that **only around 43% of all refugee children attended primary school**, even though it was free (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33). **Completion rates are similarly low**: only 14% of young refugees aged 15-17 years completed primary education, compared to 34% of hosts (World Bank, 2019: 52).

The second challenge for refugee children is in accessing secondary education because of tuition and other fees that refugees cannot afford (Vemuru et al, 2016: 31). In a secondary school in Nakivale, one of the first established settlements, students from the refugee population pay a development fee of UGX 47,000, while those from the host population pay fees of UGX 79,000

(Vemuru et al, 2016: 32). UNHCR and other international agencies, together with the Ugandan government, fund primary education provision, but UNHCR can only support a small number of secondary students (Vemuru et al, 2016: 31). **A much lower percentage of refugee children attend secondary compared to primary school:** 9% of refugees between 21 and 23 years of age had completed secondary education, compared to 27% of hosts (World Bank, 2019: 52)

An analysis of the reasons for non-enrolment among male and female school-aged children found that 85% of respondents could not afford school fees, particularly at secondary level, and about 7% attributed non-enrolment among girls to security concerns about the schools (Vemuru et al, 2016: 34).

Prior to the integration of education services, separate schools had been set up for refugees and local residents, which were exclusively attended by each group with minimal interaction between them (Vemuru et al, 2016: 32). The integration of primary schooling and of students in classrooms has fostered amicable coexistence between refugee and local children (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33). Betts et al (2019: 5) found that being in Nakivale (Uganda) was associated with three years less education than being in Kakuma (Kenya) for refugees who arrived before the age of sixteen. The report notes that this could be due to the greater involvement of the international community in parallel (separate for hosts and refugees) service provision in Kenya compared with integrated national government provision in Kenya (Betts et al, 2019: 5). Water and sanitation

Access to safe water and sanitation reduces morbidity and mortality and enhances the quality of life. In 2014, **refugees were more likely to use protected sources for fetching drinking water than host communities** in five refugee settlements (Nakivale, Oruchinga, Rwamwanja, Kyaka II and Kiryandongo) (UNICEF, 2018: 11). These results may in part be explained by the ease with which water infrastructure can be established for settlements compared with geographically dispersed host populations.

Safe excreta disposal is an essential element of any WASH programme as it reduces the potential contamination of water, food or hands; it also guarantees privacy and reinforces human dignity. In 2014, **compared with hosts, refugees were less likely to have a toilet facility;** in some settlements such as Kiryandongo and Rwamwanja, the proportion of households without any toilet facility was as high as 28.5% and 14.9% respectively (see Table 4) (UNICEF, 2018: 11). Unlike water infrastructure that is mostly provided by NGOs and government, the setting up of toilet facilities is largely initiated by households.

See: Table 4: Type of toilet facility (%) among refugee and host communities in five refugee hosting areas, Source: UNICEF, 2018: 12, https://www.unicef.org/esaro/UNICEF_Uganda_--_2018_--_Child_Poverty_and_Deprivation_in_Refugee-Hostin....pdf

The 2018 URHS also found that host households had lower access to basic services than refugee households particularly in relation to water and sanitation services: access to improved water¹⁰ was relatively high for refugees at 94% versus 66% for hosts (World Bank, 2019: 50). Similarly, 39% of refugee households had access to improved sanitation but only 26% of host households (World Bank, 2019: 50).

There are marked regional differences in access to improved water and sanitation facilities. Access to improved sanitation was low for both the West Nile and Southwest, but especially for the latter: only 14% of host households there and 8% of refugee households reported having access to improved sanitation facilities (World Bank, 2019: 50). However, access to improved water in the West Nile was high, at 76% and 95% of host and refugee households respectively (World Bank, 2019: 50).

8. Impact on host communities and wider economy

Income spillovers and employment creation

The World Bank's 2016 assessment noted that, '**Uganda's approach has allowed refugees to positively contribute to their own and Uganda's economic and social development**, exemplified by the significant volume of economic transactions between refugees and Ugandan nationals and by the creation of employment opportunities for Ugandan nationals by refugees'. There is economic interdependence among refugees, and between refugees and host communities (Vemuru et al, 2016: 40). Some refugee settlements are closely embedded in the local Ugandan economies, attracting goods, people and capital from outside to their active internal markets. Many refugees in rural areas operate their own businesses and some employ Ugandans (Clements et al, 2016: 50).

Taylor et al (2016: 20) note that:

In the unique Ugandan setting there exist plenty of pathways through which refugees and locals can interact to have mutually beneficial interactions. Cash and food aid transfers to refugee households, who are a large proportion of the local population, generate increased demand and supply of food and other goods. Businesses in and around refugee settlements purchase inputs locally while simultaneously providing employment opportunities for everyone within the community.

Key findings of the 2016 WFP study which looked at the economic impacts of two refugee settlements, Rwamwanja in the south-west and Adjumani in the north, include (Taylor et al, 2016: 1-2):

- **The local income generated by an additional refugee household was significant at both settlements. It was higher for cash than food aid**, and it was higher at Rwamwanja than Adjumani.
 - An average refugee household receiving cash food assistance increased annual real income in the local economy by UGX 3.8 million (USD 1,106) at Rwamwanja

¹⁰ The World Health Organization defines 'improved' sources of drinking water as including piped water into the dwelling, piped water into a yard/plot, a public tap or standpipe, a tube well or borehole, a protected dug well, a protected spring, bottled water, and rain water (World Bank, 2018: 50).

Settlement, and by UGX 3.7 million (USD 1,072) at Adjumani Settlement. These numbers include the income impacts on the host-country as well as refugee households.

- The impacts of refugees receiving aid in food instead of cash were UGX 3.0 million (USD 866) and UGX 2.9 million (USD 827) at the two settlements, respectively.
- **The income generated by refugees easily exceeded the cost of WFP food aid at both settlements.**
 - Net of WFP food aid costs, an additional refugee household receiving cash aid generated UGX 2.3 million (US D671) in and around Rwamwanja and UGX 1.9 million (USD 563) at Adjumani.
 - A refugee household receiving aid in food generated net gains of UGX 1.5 million (USD 431) above and beyond the cost of WFP food aid at Rwamwanja and UGX 1.1 million (USD 318) at Adjumani.
- **Most of the income spillovers** (i.e. income generated above and beyond cost of WFP aid) **from refugees accrued to host-country households and businesses around the two settlements**, because they usually had more productive assets and were in a better position to increase their supply of goods and services as the local demand rose.
- **Refugees also created income spillovers for the rest of Uganda**, when households and businesses bought goods and services outside the local economy (that is, beyond the 15 km radius around each settlement).
- **Refugees farmed the land they were allocated intensively**; output per unit land was significantly higher for refugees than for host-country farmers around the two settlements because they devoted considerably more labour to their plots than host-country farms, and this resulted in larger harvests.
- **Refugee farmers, like host-country farms, created income spillovers** when they hired labour from other households and purchased inputs from local businesses. They also contributed to the local food supply and potentially influenced food prices. Most of the food that refugees produced was consumed within the household or else sold to other refugees.
- **Providing refugees with land significantly increased refugees' impacts on local incomes.**
 - The income spillover (net of WFP aid cost) from an additional refugee household receiving cash and land in Rwamwanja was UGX 3 million (USD 876) per year—higher than the spillover without land (UGX 2.3 million, or USD 671).
 - In Adjumani, the spillover from a refugee household receiving cash and land was UGX 2.3 million (USD 655), compared with UGX 1.9 million (USD 563) without land.
 - Access to land also increased the local income spillovers created by refugees receiving food aid (to UGX 2.1 million, or USD 603, in Rwamwanja and UGX 1.5 million, or USD 427, in Adjumani).

The report concludes that refugees create positive impacts on local economies in and around the settlements in which they live (Taylor et al, 2016: 32). Furthermore, the economic impacts of WFP refugee food aid are significant and positive, but these impacts depend on the form in which it is given (local income spillovers are larger with cash than food) and the structure of local economies. Thirdly, Uganda's policy of giving refugees access to land benefits refugees and adds significantly to their positive effect on income in and around the settlements.

Lessons identified by the report are that **refugees can create significant economic benefits for their host countries**. These benefits are larger when refugees can interact with the host country economy around them; when they receive assistance in the form of cash that can be spent on locally supplied goods and services; and when they have access to land and other resources to produce food and generate income (Taylor et al, 2016: 33). ‘Carefully designed refugee assistance policies can (then) accomplish the dual goal of assisting displaced people while generating large economic benefits for people living in and around refugee settlements’ (Taylor et al, 2016: 33).

The entrepreneurial potential of refugees is also apparent from the 2018 URHS: it found that one in five households owned a non-agriculture enterprise (World Bank, 2019: 82). Moreover, they were generating jobs for Ugandan nationals: about one in five employees of refugee enterprises were Ugandans (World Bank, 2019: 82).

Financial constraints for Uganda

Uganda is increasingly facing challenges dealing with its own poverty and under-development, let alone that of the million-plus refugees it is hosting. The country has one of the highest population growth rates in Africa (3.3% in 2017), with the population projected to triple from an estimated 43 million in 2018 to 132 million in 2050 (Poole, 2019: 3).

There has been a reversal in earlier gains in poverty reduction in Uganda in recent years. In 1993 over 50% of the population lived below the national poverty line, but this fell rapidly to 19.7% in 2013 (Poole, 2019: 4). However, the 2017 Uganda National Household Survey showed that, despite impressive economic growth, 27% of Ugandans were below the poverty line in 2016/17 (Poole, 2019: 4). Moreover, reverses in poverty reduction were particularly acute in the north – where most refugees are located – and east of the country (Poole, 2019: 4).

Many poor households are dependent on rain-fed agriculture which is increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change; other obstacles to growth include lack of infrastructure, low levels of human capital, weak public service delivery, limited access to and high cost of credit, and an undeveloped land market (Poole, 2019: 4).

Uganda faces growing fiscal constraints: increased demand for public services from a rapidly growing population, which is not matched by equivalent growth in tax revenues – leading the government to borrow both domestically and internationally on non-concessional terms, adding to fiscal pressures (Poole, 2019: 5).

While Uganda is a major aid recipient, several factors have led to a number of key donors scaling back their direct budget support and switching instead to project-based aid, over which they have greater control and visibility (Poole, 2019: 5). Relevant factors include: the 2005 amendment to the Constitution allowing the president to run for a third term; increased international recognition of human rights abuses; and a series of high-profile aid corruption scandals (Poole, 2019: 5).

The lack of funding increases the pressure on the Ugandan government and is leading to rising tensions between refugees and host communities. When funding is given, it tends to be short-term and insufficient to provide real change or meaningful strategies of self-reliance (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 19). Given that Uganda’s refugee crisis is protracted, the funding shortfall is likely to have a significant negative impact on peace and stability in Uganda (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 19).

Social cohesion

The literature paints a mixed picture with regard to social cohesion in refugee-hosting areas of Uganda. The 2016 World Bank assessment found that ‘a commendable level of peaceful coexistence is evident between the refugees and host communities in all settlements in Uganda’ (Vemuru et al, 2016: 28). One obvious sign of this is intermarriages, which do take place between refugees and locals, further improving relationships (Vemuru et al, 2016). The same assessment noted that, while refugees were initially unhappy about the integration of services (education, health, etc.) as they felt host communities were benefiting from their suffering, it had led to ‘improved access to services, especially to host community areas close to settlements, contributing to improved relationships’ (Vemuru et al, 2016: 33). But a study of urban refugees, found that Ugandan attitudes towards refugees are ‘generally negative’ and suspicious, with refugees viewed as an economic burden or as collaborators with hostile foreign governments (Rosenburg, 2016, cited in Herbert & Idris, 2018: 15).

While Uganda has a reputation for being welcoming to refugees, the **increasing numbers of people in protracted refugee situations in the country is placing strain on services and resources, and leading to rising tension with host communities** (Watera et al, 2017: 13). Services in Uganda were already overburdened and lacking proper investment, and the added strain of refugee influxes could lead to worsening development indicators, particularly for malnutrition, child and maternal mortality and literacy (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17).

Competition for scarce natural resources is generating tensions in the north-west, particularly over timber and water. Small-scale conflict over natural resources especially water is reported in the Kiryandongo, Adjumani and Rhino refugee settlements in the northwest (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17). Nearly every household in West Nile, especially in rural areas, uses firewood or charcoal for cooking. But trees are being cut down at an unsustainable rate, and the need for wood is driving low-level community conflict and tensions between refugees and host communities. Moreover, loss of tree cover has knock on effects on soil fertility, flooding, silting of waterways and water quality. Access to clean water is another contentious issue exacerbated by recent drought. There are questions over groundwater sustainability with the refugee influx, but trucking or piping water in from the Nile is expensive (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17).

The **growing frustration of host communities** is summed up by two respondents in the 2018 UNICEF survey (UNICEF, 2018: 32):

“We were glad to hear that refugees were coming. We thought we would get the same food with the refugees but nothing like that has happened. We used to sell charcoal and buy food but these days, because of the refugee influx, all trees have been cut down to resettle refugees.” (Host focused group discussion participant, Yumbe)

“When the refugees came, a lot changed. The land we were using for agriculture was taken away and given to refugees. Food production was greatly affected. Currently, refugees steal the little food that we produce. Our animals like goats and pigs, and cats among others, have also not been spared. While various organizations provide food to the refugees, we are not considered for food rations by the government as immediate hosts to the refugees. And the government that brought the refugees into our area has not intervened with food support. As a result, we have no food at home and our children go to school without food.” (Host FGD participant, Rwamwanja)

Issues also arise when the refugee influx into an area is so great that locals are outnumbered. In West Nile, for example, population density was low, and the influx of large numbers of South Sudanese has led to locals being outnumbered by refugees. Adjumani district, for example, had a population of 225,251 in the 2014 Ugandan population census, but as of 4 August 2017 was hosting 227,857 refugees (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17). This could cause resentment among host communities, particularly when refugees speak different languages and have a very different culture. Local cooperation to help settle refugees, e.g. giving up communal land, is premised in part on government promises of investment in infrastructure (e.g. roads) and development. But when such promises are delayed/not kept this could generate local anger (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17). A further risk is that local politicians could use the refugee issue as a political hammer to mobilise support, particularly given the government's moves to introduce decentralization and the forthcoming elections in 2021 (Herbert & Idris, 2018: 17).

Education represents a key opportunity to promote social cohesion. In the 2018 URHS, 60% of refugee households in the West Nile and Southwest regions reported that their children have Ugandan friends with whom they share recreational spaces (World Bank, 2019: 83). The figure was even higher in Kampala (84%) (World Bank, 2019: 83). There are variations in the patterns of social bonding between Ugandan children and certain refugee nationalities. Somali and Burundi refugee families reported their children have more interaction with Ugandan children (75% and 67% respectively), relative to South Sudanese and Congolese families (58% and 53% respectively) (World Bank, 2019: 83). While these are positive signs of social integration, according to UNHCR, more than half of host communities stated that they do not interact with refugees mainly because of a lack of common language and lack of refugee neighbours in their day-to-day lives (cited in World Bank, 2019: 83).

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Key websites

- Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk
- Forced Migration Review: www.fmreview.org

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