

# AN ASSESSMENT OF UGANDA'S PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO REFUGEE MANAGEMENT





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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

COBURWAS	CO-Congolese, BU-Burundi, RWA Rwanda and S-Sudan
LFPR	Labor force participation rate
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ReHoPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



# Executive Summary

**Background.** For several decades, Uganda has been generously hosting refugees and asylum seekers from the conflict-affected countries in its neighborhood, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi. Since achieving its independence in 1962, the country has been hosting an average of approximately 161,000 refugees per year. As of December 2015, there were over 477,187 refugees and 35,779 asylum-seekers in Uganda in nine host districts located mainly in the northern, southern, and southwestern regions of the country. The refugees come from 13 countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eritrea. Congolese account for 41.7 percent of total refugees in

Uganda, followed by the South Sudanese at 39.4 percent.

Uganda's refugee laws are among the most progressive in the world. Refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to work; have freedom of movement; and can access Ugandan social services, such as health and education. But refugee-impacted areas are at risk due to underlying poverty, vulnerability, and limited resilience to shock further exacerbated by the presence of refugees. The government of Uganda, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners, has taken steps to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and their host communities.



Refugees in Uganda are either self-settled or live in organized settlements that cover approximately 350 square miles of land set aside by the government of Uganda. Many refugees, especially in the northern districts, are in protracted displacement, and the Ugandan constitution prohibits the naturalization of an offspring of a refugee, even if he or she is born in Uganda and even if one parent is Ugandan. Some refugees have the option of returning to their country of origin, and some can resettle in a third country—often in the West, but doing so is expensive and not viable at a large scale.

**Study context.** Uganda’s development approach to refugees offers important domestic and international lessons. The World Bank, in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, the government of Uganda, and UNHCR Uganda, undertook an assessment with the overall objective of analyzing the evolving refugee policy and practices in Uganda to: (1) better understand how well the policy framework has contributed to the refugees’ well-being and self-reliance; (2) identify key areas of policy and practice that can be better implemented to enhance social and economic benefits for refugee and host communities; and (3) identify lessons from Uganda’s experience to inform the design and implementation of the Settlement Transformative Agenda and the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy as well as the policy dialogue in other refugee-hosting countries.

This study includes a legal and policy analysis and a socioeconomic impact assessment, the former complementing the latter. The impact of legal and policy frameworks on the refugee situation in Uganda are analyzed, as are the social and economic impacts and the contribution of the current policy framework on these outcomes for the

refugees. The study employs qualitative and quantitative research methods and covers refugees in rural and urban sites in Uganda. The study’s primary focus is on the socioeconomic impact of Uganda’s refugee law on the refugees themselves. This focus and the tight timeframe did not allow the team to assess the socioeconomic impact of the presence of refugees on host communities. That would require a separate and broader study.

**Policy analysis.** The Uganda Refugee Policy, embodied in the 2006 Refugees Act and 2010 Refugees Regulations and lauded as one of the most generous in the world, has many impressive aspects: (1) opening Uganda’s door to all asylum seekers irrespective of their nationality or ethnic affiliation, (2) granting refugees relative freedom of movement and the right to seek employment, (3) providing prima facie asylum for refugees of certain nationalities, and (4) giving a piece of land to each refugee family for their own exclusive (agricultural) use. One significant limitation of the legal framework is that it does not provide the permanent solution of citizenship for refugees who can neither repatriate nor be resettled elsewhere. In the absence of voluntary repatriation or third-country resettlement, refugees in Uganda remain as such for life, a fate shared by their children and even their grandchildren. Refugees can, however, vote, and be elected at the village level, per Section 46(3) of the Local Government Act and the constitution.

**The 2006 Refugees Act and 2010 Refugees Regulations.** The 2006 Refugees Act and the 2010 Refugees Regulations embody key refugee protection principles and freedoms: (1) the right to own and dispose of movable property and to lease or sublease immovable property; (2) the right to engage in agriculture, industry, and business;

to practice one's profession; and to access formal and informal employment opportunities; (3) the right to economic, social, and cultural benefits, including access to elementary education, protection of intellectual property rights (e.g., copyright protection for musicians and artists), and the issuance of a United Nations convention travel document for the purpose of travel outside of Uganda; (4) entitlement to receive fair and just treatment, without discrimination; (5) the right to seek asylum and not be refouled; (6) the freedom of movement, subject to "reasonable restrictions" on the grounds of national security or public order; (7) the right of freedom of association, although this is limited to nonpolitical associations, nonprofit associations, and trade unions; (8) the principle of family unity; (9) East African Community nationals as asylum seekers are entitled to all the rights and privileges normally enjoyed by other East African Community citizens as conferred by the East African Community treaty of cooperation and its protocols; and (10) refugees are registered and provided identification and travel documents.

The regulations are limited in their application and/or understanding of some settlements, such as: (1) the requirement that refugees residing in gazetted rural settlements obtain administrative permits to leave and return to their designated settlements is helpful to refugees without identity documents, but might limit economic opportunities for others; (2) there is ambiguity about refugees participating in profit-making associations, which is currently constraining their market interactions and resulting in a poor return for produce and products; and (3) there are considerable obstacles to receiving travel and identification documents, particularly with regard to costs and delays.

**Development initiatives.** The government of Uganda, in collaboration with UNHCR and other partners, has conducted a number of development initiatives benefiting refugees and host communities, including the 1998 Self-Reliance Strategy; the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program; the Settlement Transformative Agenda—part of the National Development Plan II; and the ReHoPE strategy. The government of Uganda has included refugee issues in its national development planning as part of the draft National Development Plan II (NDP II 2015/16–2019/20), led by the Office of the Prime Minister for the government of Uganda.

**Social impacts.** Refugees and their host communities remain vulnerable due to underlying poverty and vulnerabilities exacerbated by weak basic social services delivery, poor infrastructure, and limited market opportunities. However, refugees located in rural settlements, whether on community-owned or gazetted lands, are able to access basic services, receive physical protection, and are provided land to cultivate for self-sustenance. Refugees with some income or ability to fend for themselves are self-settled in urban centers, where they rent lodging. A commendable level of peaceful coexistence is evident between refugees and host communities in all of the settlements, an observation confirmed by host population local leaders, refugee welfare councils, government officials from the Office of the Prime Minister and the district and local level, implementing partners, and UNHCR. Inter marriages are reported in many settlements, contributing to improved relationships.

The ability of refugees to access social services, participate in economic activities, and socially interact among themselves and with their host

communities has been facilitated by Section 30 of the Refugees Act, which provides for freedom of movement within Uganda for recognized refugees. To promote peaceful coexistence, the government of Uganda and UNHCR adopted a policy of providing the host community with 30 percent of all services intended to benefit the refugees, with the other 70 percent being given to the refugee community. The provision of water has proved critical. In 1999, a coordinated system for the provision of health, education, water, sanitation, and select community services was designed to address disparities between the provisions in refugee settlements and the host communities.

Education services are split into three sections: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Free primary education is provided at locations within the settlements. School infrastructure and equipment as well as the recruitment and compensation of teaching staff are handled by UNHCR and other international agencies. The curriculum, however, remains a challenge because study materials and instruction language are at odds with those of the refugee countries. Secondary education requires tuition and other fees that refugees are unable to afford. They remain dependent on support from UNHCR, which can only support a small number of students.

Water has been provided through the construction of water sources for both refugees and host communities, depending on the availability. With the support of UNHCR and other international non-governmental organizations, first-line settlement-level health facilities and centers are functioning, adequately equipped with drugs, medical personnel, and ambulances. More serious medical conditions or surgeries are referred to government or private hospitals in the refugee-hosting district, either at the regional or national level.

This integration has improved access to services, especially to host community areas neighboring the settlements, contributing to improved relationships among refugees and host communities. The host population appreciates the approach and acknowledges the significant improvement in the services, especially the availability of drugs and health personnel, schools staffed with teachers, and better roads.

One cause of hostility between the communities is the suspicion that the government favors the refugees at the expense of its own citizens. Land management in settlements poses the biggest challenge to authorities with respect to host populations and refugees. Both accuse the other of grazing animals on their lands, which leads to the destruction of crops. The forced eviction by the Office of the Prime Minister of local citizens occupying gazetted settlement land in Kyegegwa was legal, but it was not handled in a humane way, which led to substantial friction. The issue was addressed when the Office of the Prime Minister agreed to provide concessions to the host community by handing over two square miles of degazetted land to the Kamwenge local authority to settle some of its residents.

**Economic impacts.** The economic opportunities for refugees in terms of employment (formal and informal) and access to productive capital varies in rural and urban areas in Uganda. Over 78 percent of refugees in rural settlements are engaged in agricultural activities compared with 5 percent in urban areas. The main crops grown are maize, beans, sorghum, cassava, potatoes, groundnuts, and bananas. Animals reared include goats, cattle, pigs, poultry, and rabbits. Crop surpluses attract Ugandan traders to the refugee settlements, operating as a direct supply chain. The refugee

labor force participation rate (LFPR) is an average 38 percent compared with Uganda's 74 percent.

A breakdown by nationality indicates that Congolese refugees have the highest participation rate at 57 percent, specifically 16 percent in the formal sector and 41 percent in the self-employment sector, whereas Ethiopians have the lowest rate at 7.7 percent, all from the self-employment sector. These figures indicate an overall low rate of economic integration among refugees, particularly those from Ethiopia. A comparison with the LFPR of their countries of origin—the Democratic Republic of Congo at 72 percent and Ethiopia at 85 percent (WDI data 2014)—confirms their low economic integration rates in Uganda.

A breakdown by settlement and gender shows that Kampala has the highest male LFPR at 59 percent compared with a female LFPR of 43 percent, whereas Rwamwanja has the highest rate for females at 47 percent compared with a male LFPR of 48 percent. A variety of nonfarm activities supplement agriculture, including trade, which is facilitated by the freedom of movement and right to work per the Ugandan Refugees Act. Business enterprises such as bars, hair dressing, milling, transportation, money transfers, and retail are run by refugees. In terms of employability and economic integration of refugees, almost 43 percent are actively engaged in the labor market of their host communities: 12 percent in the formal sector and 31 percent self-employed. Refugees living in urban areas and rural settlements cite unfamiliarity with the language, legal issues, poor interview skills, discrimination, and a lack of relevant documents as barriers to accessing employment.

Refugees are mainly engaged in occupations that provide little income, social protection, or job security. Twenty-eight percent of female refugees are involved in agriculture, trade, or are self-employed; their participation in the formal sector is low—only 9 percent. Initiatives such as community savings groups and women savings and credit groups have provided female refugees with seed money to start businesses. Women reportedly face constraints with respect to access to land, credit, employment, and self-employment opportunities.

There is economic interdependence among refugees and between refugees and host communities. Traders from both communities dealing in agricultural produce such as tomatoes, cabbage, rice, and beans get their input supplies from the refugees or from local residents. Refugee traders dealing in manufactured merchandise make their purchases from the local wholesale shops or in nearby towns. Refugee settlement areas have attracted the attention of Ugandan private enterprises, such as the Ugandan telecom companies, which launched several initiatives aimed at targeting refugee users of SMS banking and transfer services. For example, Orange Uganda Limited, a provider of telecommunication and Internet services in Uganda, invested in a large radio tower in the Nakivale settlement to promote its "Orange Money" services. In Rwamwanja and Adjumani, a number of refugees operate as mobile money unit agents, providing employment for them and facilitating other refugees in accessing remittances from their relatives and friends within or outside of the country. This mobile money is hugely helpful to refugees trying to meet expenses, including school fees for their children.

There are a number of key factors that determine the likelihood of refugees participating in the labor market: (1) longer duration of stay as a refugee; (2) level of education (secondary or postsecondary); (3) hospitality of host community and its relationship with refugees; and (4) proximity to urban areas, which benefits employment and trade. Access to cultivable land and credit is influenced by: (1) the duration of stay as a refugee; (2) employment status (self-employed refugees more likely to access land and credit); and (3) registration as a refugee by the Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR.

**Conclusion.** As the government of Uganda and UNHCR strive to reduce poverty and mitigate risk for vulnerable refugees and their host communities, the close involvement of key stakeholders, such as district leadership, sector ministries, host communities, and refugees, is imperative. A shift in the philosophy of refugee assistance is also crucial: refugees should be viewed as economic actors in charge of their destiny (development approach) rather than as beneficiaries of aid (humanitarian approach). Integration of social services and economic activities will need to be informed by deeper situational analysis in the nine refugee-hosting districts, which vary with respect

to their land tenure systems, cultural and social settings, economic and livelihood opportunities, and infrastructure status. To ensure impact, the focus should be on transformative investments that will address the pressing needs of refugees and host communities alike and that will jumpstart local economies, such as the water treatment plant in Nakivale or the feeder roads in Kyangwali. Further, a comprehensive approach is needed to enhance girls and women's access to education and livelihoods and to reduce security and safety risks among them. Returns from agricultural livelihoods could be greatly improved with better access to input and output markets and technological interventions for improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The freedom of movement ensured by the policy framework requires careful facilitation to enable easier movement in and out of settlement areas, including requisite oversight so that refugees are better able to coordinate and collaborate with host communities on economic activities. Specific attention and backstopping is needed for urban refugees—especially youth—to enable them to benefit from social and economic opportunities without being exploited or resorting to risky behaviors.

# CHAPTER 1

## Refugees in Uganda

### Background

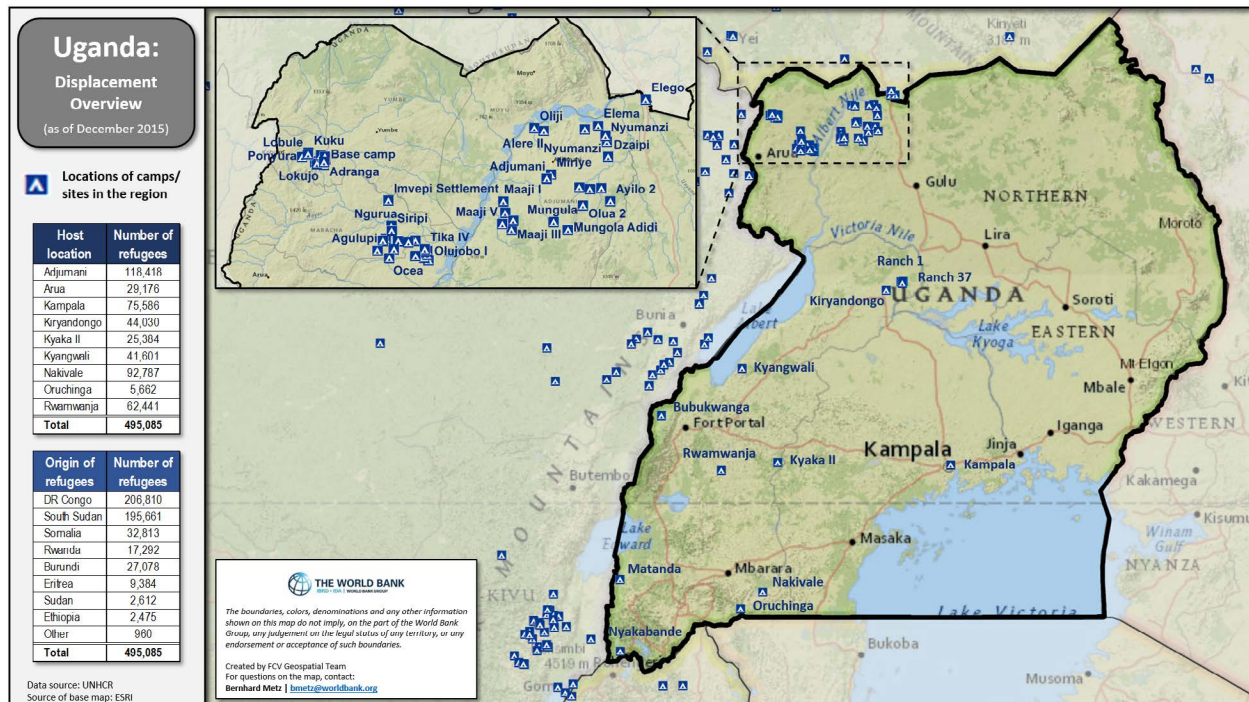
Since 1959, Uganda has generously and continuously hosted refugees and asylum seekers.

Since its independence, approximately 161,000 people per year from neighboring countries have sought refuge in Uganda, mainly because of persistent conflict and instability in their home countries, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, and Burundi. As of

December 2015, there were over 477,187 refugees and 35,779 asylum-seekers in Uganda, hosted in nine districts (map 1.1) predominantly located in the northern, southern, and southwestern regions of the country.

The district of Adjumani hosts the most refugees—23.8 percent of the total refugee population, followed by Nakivale and Kampala districts (table 1.1). The refugees come from 13 countries,

Map 1.1. Refugee Hosting Locations in Uganda



Source: World Bank 2016.

**Table 1.1. Refugee Population by Location and Nationality  
(as of September 30, 2015)<sup>a</sup>**

Location	Number of Refugees	Local Population	Refugees in Local Population (%)	Nationality	Number of Refugees
Adjumani	118,418	232,813	50.9	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	206,810
Arua	29,176	785,189	3.7	South Sudan	195,661
Kampala	75,586	1,516,210	5.0	Somalia	32,813
Kiryandongo	44,030	268,188	16.4	Burundi	27,078
Kyaka II	25,384	277,379	9.2	Rwanda	17,292
Kyangwali	41,601	573,903	7.2	Eritrea	9,384
Nakivale	92,787	492,116	18.9	Sudan	2,612
Oruchinga	5,662	492,116	1.2	Ethiopia	2,475
Rwamwanja	62,441	421,470	14.8	Other	960
<b>Total</b>	<b>495,085</b>	<b>Average share</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>495,085</b>

a. Refugees account for 1.3 percent of the total Ugandan population of 37.8 million.  
Source: UNHCR. 2015.

including the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eritrea. Congolese account for 41.7 percent of total refugees; South Sudanese for 39.4 percent.

**Uganda's refugee laws are among the most progressive in the world.** The 2006 Refugees Act and 2010 Refugees Regulations entitle refugees to the right to work, freedom of movement, and availability of Ugandan social services, including access to documents such as Refugee Identity Cards as well as birth, death, marriage, and education certificates. Refugees are provided with a subsistence agriculture plot in gazetted settlements. They can own property and enter into contracts, including land leases. 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.

Despite Uganda's progressive refugee policy and the contribution of refugees to local economies, refugee-impacted areas remain vulnerable. The underlying poverty and vulnerability of refugees and their limited resilience to shocks contributes to higher levels of poverty in refugee-hosting areas. Refugee communities typically suffer from lower agricultural productivity and greater environmental degradation due to poor climatic and soil conditions and/or overuse. Weak basic social services delivery and limited market opportunities are usually due to the remoteness of the communities combined with poor infrastructure. Less than 10 percent of rural settlements have access to electricity, including nongrid connections like solar lamps. This poor access to clean energy has significant environmental impacts because many depend on firewood, and this will likely result in further deforestation. Malaria, respiratory tract infections, diarrhea, and preventable diseases are more prevalent among children in refugee-hosting areas. Global Acute Malnutrition among established refugee populations is below 10 percent,



but stunting is high at about 24 percent, mainly due to a lack of diversity in the diet; anemia rates are unacceptably high at about 48 percent for infants and 23 percent for nonpregnant women. The limited resilience among refugees is a result of the weakness of their community organizations and social capital, a lack of diverse livelihoods, and limited assets and capital to withstand difficult periods (Government of Uganda, UNHCR, and World Food Program 2014).

**The government of Uganda, in collaboration with the UNHCR and partners, has taken a number of steps to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and their host communities.** The draft National Development Plan II (NDP II 2015/16–2019/20) includes a refugee-specific strategy known as the Settlement Transformative Agenda, an initiative led by the Office of the Prime Minister of the government of Uganda. The agenda aims to achieve:

“self-reliance and local settlement for refugees, and to promote social development in the refugee hosting areas as a durable solution to the refugees’ problems, while protecting national and local interests.” (OPM 2015)

It has six objectives: (1) land management that ensures “settlement” land is managed efficiently and sustainably; (2) sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities that contributes to socioeconomic transformation and growth; (3) governance and the rule of law to ensure that settlements are governed in an environment that respects rights and promotes the rule of law among refugees and host communities; (4) peaceful coexistence with the creation of an enabling environment for safety, harmony, and dignity among refugees and host communities,

contributing to social cohesion; (5) environmental protection and conservation of the natural environment in and around refugee settlements; and (6) community infrastructure that progressively enhances the economic and social infrastructure available in refugee-hosting areas in accordance with local government plans and systems.

**Uganda’s approach to the management of refugees offers important lessons—domestically and internationally.** Efforts to develop the Settlement Transformative Agenda and the ReHoPE strategy—both important developmental initiatives—could build on and benefit from the experience and lessons from previous initiatives in Uganda. Countries hosting large numbers of refugees in protracted displacement could also learn from Uganda’s approach. With this in mind, the World Bank, in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister of the government of Uganda and UNHCR Uganda, undertook an assessment of Uganda’s approach to the management of refugees. The overall objective of the study was to assess and analyze the evolving refugee policy and practice in Uganda to: (1) better understand how well the policy framework has contributed to the refugee’s well-being and self-reliance; (2) identify key areas of policy that can be better implemented to enhance social and economic benefits for refugee communities; and (3) identify lessons from Uganda’s experience to inform the design and implementation of the Settlement Transformative Agenda, the ReHoPE strategy, and the policy dialogue in other refugee-hosting countries.

**The study is divided into two complementary parts: (1) legal and policy analysis and (2) socio-economic impact assessment.** The first part focuses on the Ugandan legal and policy framework as well as various UNHCR initiatives aimed at

improving the situation among refugees in the country. The social impact analysis focuses on refugee access to social services; interactions between refugee groups and between refugee and host communities; and gender issues related to security, safety, and violence. The purpose of this assessment is to examine the positive and negative contributions of the current policy framework and other factors on social outcomes for refugees. The second part focuses on economic activities among refugees and the extent to which the current policy framework impacts these outcomes. Key areas examined are: dynamics around informal and formal employment opportunities, including wages and labor; access to skills training and jobs; self-employment or small business-based income-generating opportunities; and ease of access to means of production, including financing and markets. The analysis focuses on other factors that have impacted economic outcomes positively or negatively, and offers recommendations to address them.

**The study employed qualitative and quantitative research methods.** Qualitative methods include: (1) exploratory design—document review and content analysis to synthesize the legal and policy framework governing refugees in Uganda; and (2) cross-sectional design—administration of individual questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to solicit opinions from a cross-section of resource persons about the policy framework governing refugees in Uganda, its impact on their protection, and its enhancement of their socioeconomic prospects. Resource persons interviewed include local government officials, staff from the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, implementing partners in refugee settlement areas, refugee welfare councils, opinion leaders among refugees who are self-settled in

urban areas, and refugee and host communities in the rural settlements. Social service providers in the visited host districts were also interviewed. Refugee policy implementation processes were observed at points of entry for asylum seekers. The quantitative methods included the multinomial logit model for the empirical analysis on choice of employment. The analysis of the factors that affect refugees' access to productive capital in the form of land and credit as a mean of economic integration and self-reliance was undertaken using the dichotomous probit model.

**The study covers rural and urban refugee sites in Uganda.** The urban areas of Kampala and Adjumani were sampled for interviews with self-settled refugees. The Kampala City sample was larger than that of Adjumani because it hosts more refugees, is a more vibrant commercial center, and is home to the head office of UNHCR and several nongovernmental organizations addressing human rights issues such as the plight of refugees. Adjumani, Nakivale, and Rwamwanja are the rural sites that were visited. Chanika, Bunagana, and Nyakabande reception centers are the points of entry that were visited to observe processes. Rural and urban research sites were selected to ensure representation of refugees from different contexts and countries. Time and cost factors were considered.

## Refugees in Uganda: A Historic Overview

**Uganda has a long tradition of hosting refugees.** Before its independence, the country hosted European refugees fleeing conflict and violence. Soon after the end of the World War II, the British colonial administration offered refuge to thousands of Polish nationals. Some were resettled in

various parts of Uganda; others moved to Tanzania and even Australia. Uganda hosted refugees from other European countries, including Germany, Italy, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, France, and Malta (Jallow et al. 2004). The British government invited Zionist leaders in Europe to settle Jewish people fleeing from persecution in the northeastern part of Uganda.

**As a result of its location in an unstable region, Uganda has been hosting an average of about 161,000 refugees since the 1950s.**

In 1955, after the collapse of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium of the Sudan, the Anyanya rebellion (the First Sudanese Civil War) led to the influx of 80,000 Sudanese refugees into Uganda. These

early refugees were largely and spontaneously settled in northern Uganda, with some heading to urban centers like Kampala and Jinja, where significant communities of Sudanese Nubians were already residing. Seventeen years later, in 1972, following the Addis Ababa Accords, most of the Sudanese repatriated to Sudan. The second major influx of refugees took place in 1959 when about 80,000 refugees came from what was then the Belgian United Nations mandate Territory of Rwanda. To accommodate these refugees, the first gazetted refugee settlement was established in Oruchinga in southwestern Uganda. Following the independence of Uganda in 1962, refugees from the newly independent states of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo continued to flow

Burundian refugees find refuge in Kashojwa village  
© UNHCR/Frederic Noy



into Uganda, leading to the establishment of more gazetted settlements in Nakivale and Kyaka.

**In the 1990s and 2000s, two major voluntary repatriation operations temporarily reduced the number of refugees in Uganda.** Following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, large-scale repatriation movements facilitated the voluntary return of Rwandan and Sudanese refugees to their respective countries, but the ongoing influx of refugees from neighboring countries such as Rwanda, South Sudan, and Burundi has increased their numbers in Uganda. Ethnic Hutu refugees from Rwanda have replaced their co-nationals—the Tutsis—and South Sudanese refugees who had returned home after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were forced to flee back to Uganda following the outbreak of conflict in December 2013.

**Most of the refugees in Uganda are in a situation of protracted displacement with limited prospects for a durable solution.** Repatriation is not an option for many Somali and Congolese refugees living in Uganda due to the continued instability in their home countries. Refugees in Uganda are either self-settled or live in organized settlements that cover approximately 350 square miles of land set aside by the government for hosting refugees. Self-settled refugees live in close proximity to Ugandan nationals. Some have established businesses, and most are able to

support themselves. Refugees who continue to live in settlements are equipped with a plot of land and tools and have a semblance of self-sufficiency. The Ugandan government and aid agencies provide basic health and education services to them. What all refugees in Uganda lack is a long-term solution. Many were born in Uganda into refugee families, but even second-generation refugees are unable to obtain Ugandan citizenship because the constitution prohibits the naturalization of the offspring of refugees even if they are born in Uganda and even if one of their parents is Ugandan. Local integration beyond the refugee settlements is not part of the government policy. Resettlement to a third country—often in Europe, the United States, Canada, or Australia—is the preferred option for many refugees. Resettlement is, however, the most expensive option and therefore not a viable one for most refugees.

**Uganda's history of refugee protection has not always been impeccable.** Based on the fear that self-settled Rwandan refugees would join the National Resistance Army, in 1982–83, the government conducted a mass forcible repatriation of thousands of Rwandan Tutsi refugees who were then residing in the southwestern part of Uganda. The circumstances surrounding this incident are unique, but it remains a sad episode in the country's history, a blip in the otherwise stellar record of Uganda as an asylum country. A new settlement—Kyaka II—was established in 1984 to host Rwandan refugees settled in national villages.

# CHAPTER 2

## Uganda's Refugee Law, Policy Framework, and Development Initiatives

This chapter looks at Uganda's refugee law and policy framework, including an overview of their evolution and a description of the salient features of existing law. Factors that explain Uganda's generous approach to refugees are explored, and development initiatives conducted by the government of Uganda and donors to improve conditions for refugees are examined.

**The policy framework under which Uganda offers protection to refugees and asylum seekers is lauded as one of the most generous in the world.** Refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to work, have freedom of movement, and can access Ugandan social services, such as health and education. Further, under this policy, refugees are availed with identity documents, such as



Agriculture is widely practiced among refugees.  
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Identity cards, birth, death, marriage, and education certificates. As a policy, all refugees living in settlements are provided with an agricultural plot on which to cultivate crops. Refugees can own property, lease land, and generally harness their commercial and professional expertise without interference. Because of these factors, Uganda offers refugees their best chance for self-reliance.

**Uganda’s door is open to all asylum seekers.**

It is lauded for having one of the best refugee law and policy regimes in the world (Owing and Nagujja 2014). According to Jallow et al. (2004) “Both in policy and practice, there is a conducive environment for refugees in Uganda which deserves recognition.” Uganda has emerged as a country possessing a very receptive climate for refugees and “the place where the rest of the world can learn something about the treatment of refugees” (Faigle 2015). It is recognized that while Uganda is experiencing an ongoing “silent emergency” due to a “slow but steady” refugee influx, especially from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and more recently, Burundi, it has nevertheless kept its asylum door open to all seeking refuge within its borders, a posture which *Die Zeit* has characterized as being both “generous and exemplary” (Faigle 2015).

**The Ugandan refugee policy is impressive but limited in one important way.** The most impressive aspects include: (1) having an open door policy to all asylum seekers regardless of nationality or ethnicity; (2) granting refugees relative freedom of movement and the right to seek employment; and (3) providing each family of refugees with a plot of land for their exclusive (agricultural) use. But while the legal framework provides generous support for the integration of refugees, it does not provide a permanent solution for those who can neither repatriate nor be resettled in

another country. People in this situation remain refugees in Uganda for life, a fate also shared by their children and even their grandchildren, who have no hope of obtaining citizenship. Refugees can, however, vote and be elected at the village level per Section 46(3) of the Local Government Act and the constitution.

## Evolution of Uganda’s Refugee Law and Policy

**Uganda’s national policy and legal framework is comprehensive in its scope and progressive in its content.** The current policy is clearly influenced by the long-term presence of refugees—since the late 1940s—but it is also firmly grounded in the elaborate body of protection principles in international and regional frameworks. The development of policy and law regarding refugees from the colonial era to early postindependence to post-colonial modern era legislation, reflected in the 2006 Refugees Act, has clearly been progressive.

**The colonial era law included draconian provisions.** The first colonial era law made no distinction between ordinary aliens and refugees. The Aliens Registration and Control Act, enacted by the British Colonial Office in 1949, contained draconian provisions for the handling and controlling of all aliens in Uganda, regardless of whether or not they were refugees. In principle, this law did not apply to Africans, but by issuing a statutory instrument, the minister could choose to apply any or all of its provisions to “any or all classes of Africans,” implying that this would include refugees.

**Legislation passed in 1960 emphasized control and regulation of refugees, not human rights.** For over four decades, the Control of Aliens Refugees Act of 1960 served as the principal

domestic legislation regarding refugees, until the enactment of the 2006 Refugees Act. The colonial era laws were designed for the “proper control” of refugees in Uganda and for “regulating” their “return” to their countries of origin. The emphasis was on “refugee control and regulation” rather than on broad human rights and humane treatment. The laws did not explicitly provide the granting of asylum to refugees, but the 1960 legislation provided the establishment of “refugee settlements” and the appointment of “commandants” for such settlements for the first time. Commandants were given extensive powers to maintain order in the settlements. They could arrest, detain, and expel refugees without any due process if their conduct was deemed prejudicial to peace and good order or to positive relations with any other government. They were authorized to seize and dispose of the personal property of refugees without compensation. They could issue orders that severely controlled the refugees’ freedom of movement and freedom to choose where to reside. The law was clearly incompatible with the provisions of the 1995 Ugandan constitution<sup>1</sup> as well as with provisions of international and regional legal instruments to which Uganda had already acceded after its independence.

**The practice of the law, however, was better than the letter of it.** The way refugees in Uganda were actually treated, even under the 1960 law, was much more humane and protection-oriented than what the law stipulated. Refugee groups such as Rwandese and Sudanese were able to secure some access to employment and education opportunities so that when they eventually returned to their homes, they became the backbone of the new ruling elite, running the civil

1. [http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution\\_1995.pdf](http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution_1995.pdf).

service, military, and private sectors in their respective countries.

## Current Legal and Policy Framework

Today, the legal regime for the protection of refugees in Uganda is multitiered, comprising three essential dimensions: (1) international conventions and declarations, (2) regional agreements, and (3) national legislation and regulations.

### International and Domestic Laws Governing the Situation of Refugees in Uganda

**International agreements.** After being admitted as a member of the United Nations, Uganda began the process of agreeing to a number of international and human rights instruments. In 1976, it acceded to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,<sup>2</sup> complementary instruments that are universal in scope and constitute the legal foundation for the global protection regime for refugees. The main objective of the 1951 convention is to ensure that refugees, wherever they may be located,

“are assured of the widest and most liberal possible exercise of the fundamental rights and freedom as are contained in the UN Charter itself (United Nations 1945)<sup>3</sup> and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948).”

The 1967 protocol essentially retained the same definition for the term “refugee.” It removed the

2. <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

3. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf>.



Refugees from Burundi fetching water  
© UNHCR

limitation on the personal scope of the 1951 convention “to meet new refugee situations” that had arisen since 1951, and it eliminated the dateline of January 1, 1951, as contained in the convention. *Refugee* is defined as:

“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside their country of nationality and is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence

is a result of such events, is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it.”

**The Organization of African Unity convention.** Uganda, as a major asylum country and a new OAU member, actively participated in the debates and negotiations leading to the drafting and conclusion of the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also participated, but only in an advisory capacity. The convention builds on existing international protection architecture and seeks to address aspects and challenges related to

4. <http://www.unhcr.org/45dc1a682.html>.



the protection of refugees that are specific to the African continent and that, as a result, may not be adequately addressed in existing global refugee protection instruments. The main contribution of the OAU convention is its broadening of the international legal definition of the term “refugee” to include all persons externally displaced due to armed conflict as well as those fleeing political persecution and domination.

The 1969 OAU convention contains a number of progressive and innovative provisions that were largely inspired by existing human rights instruments, including the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>5</sup> Most significant is the provision that broadens the definition of the term *refugee* to:

“[a]lso apply to every person who owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.”

The OAU convention also recognizes the right to seek asylum, and stresses that the granting of asylum, being essentially a “peaceful and humanitarian act,” should not be regarded as an unfriendly act by another country. It prohibits refugees from engaging in subversive acts or activities that are likely to cause tensions among OAU member states, whether by use of arms, through the press, or by radio. The convention could not have anticipated the advent of the Internet and accompanying electronic media, but the spirit of this provision certainly includes these new forms

5. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

of communication. The convention underscores the principle of nondiscrimination in the application and implementation of its principles and standards, especially in the granting of asylum and other basic rights for refugees. It obliges all African Union member states to cooperate with UNHCR because it is intended to serve not as substitute for the 1951 United Nations convention but rather as its effective regional complement. To facilitate freedom of movement for refugees, the OAU convention calls on its member states to issue United Nations convention travel documents to refugees and to recognize same as valid for purposes of entry into other member states. The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (the African Charter),<sup>6</sup> which Uganda ratified again in 1986 without any reservations, is another notable instrument related to the regional legal framework for refugees.

**African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR).** In Article 12(2) and (3), the ACHPR specifically recognizes the right of every individual who risks being persecuted to “leave” their country and to “seek and obtain” asylum in another country. This, language is clearly inspired by 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of “everyone to leave” his own country and to “seek and enjoy asylum from persecution” in another country in Articles 13 and 14, respectively.

**The 1995 constitution.** The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995,<sup>7</sup> implicitly excludes refugees from becoming Ugandan citizens, whether by birth or by registration. Theoretically, a refugee could obtain citizenship by naturalization under Article 13 if the parliament enacted a

6. <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/achpr/>.

7. [http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution\\_1995.pdf](http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution_1995.pdf).

law permitting it, but politically, this has not been done. And while it is possible in principle for refugee “foundlings and adopted children” to attain Ugandan citizenship per Article 11, the constitution denies refugees who are born in Uganda and their children citizenship by registration if the “mother of his or her parents or any of his or her grandparents was a refugee in Uganda.”

**Refugees Act, 2006.** After intense lobbying, particularly by UNHCR, the Ugandan parliament repealed and replaced the 1960 Control of Alien Refugees Act<sup>8</sup> with a more comprehensive and progressive law—the Refugees Act 2006.<sup>9</sup> In Uganda, not unlike other common law jurisdictions, a treaty does not automatically become part of municipal law. The national courts cannot enforce a treaty until the parliament enacts specific legislation to incorporate or domesticate it. The passing of the Refugees Act in 2006 and its entry into force in 2008 represented a major paradigm shift and was a great step forward. Its provisions incorporated all international and regional standards for refugee protection as provided in the 1951 United Nations convention, the 1967 protocol, and the 1969 OAU convention into municipal law, making these instruments a part of Ugandan law enforceable by national courts.

**2010 Refugees Regulations.**<sup>10</sup> This model piece of subsidiary legislation, issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, was published as a statutory instrument in the *Uganda Gazette* on February 26, 2010. It constitutes the last major aspect of the three-tier architecture that comprise the comprehensive legal protection framework for refugees (international, regional, and national). The gazet-

ing of the regulations represented the culmination of a protracted legislative process that began with Uganda’s accession to the 1951 United Nations convention and the 1967 protocol, and was followed by the ratification of the 1969 OAU convention and the Refugees Act of 2006. This had the legal effect of incorporating these international and regional treaties into Uganda’s domestic laws and hence to become legally enforceable by Ugandan courts. The key provisions of the 2010 regulations are discussed in the following sections.

## Rights and Obligations of Refugees

**The 2006 Refugees Act and the 2010 regulations embody key refugee protection principles and freedoms.** They are derived directly from the international and regional refugee instruments that Uganda ratified without entering reservations. The 2010 Refugees Regulations were not only crafted to operationalize the provisions of the 2006 Refugees Act, but also to supplement the same with new and novel provisions where there were gaps. As a result, they contain a number of provisions that are radical, progressive, or innovative.

**Property rights and access to land.** The 2006 Refugees Act provides that refugees have the right to own and dispose of movable property and the right to lease and sublease immovable property, such as land. It provides refugees with the right to dispose of assets and personal belongings from wherever acquired, including while in Uganda. The 2010 Refugees Regulations further elaborate this point by according refugees residing in “designated settlements” or “refugee areas” with reasonable access to land (not ownership) for the purpose of cultivation or pasturing. Refugees do not, however, have the right to sell or lease the land allocated to them “strictly for their individual or family utilization.” Refugees residing outside

8. <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/rwmain/open-docpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=544e48d84>.

9. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4b7baba52.html>.

10. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/544e4f154.html>.

the designated areas may legally acquire leasehold titles, but not freehold, just like other resident aliens, and they may freely dispose of their occupancy interest or sublease on commercial terms.

**Compared with Uganda, refugee laws of other countries in the region have less favorable provisions regarding property rights.**

The domestic refugee laws of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan make no mention of the property rights of refugees. Even those countries that have provisions dealing with property rights in their refugee laws have taken different approaches. Kenya has explicitly adopted the standard set by the 1951 Convention. Article 16(1) of the 2006 Refugee Act of Kenya provides that refugees are entitled to the rights and are subject to the obligations contained in the international conventions to which Kenya is a party. Sudan's Regulation of Asylum Act of 1974 provides for registration of movable property owned by refugees at the time of entry into Sudan. Article 8 stipulates that at the time of registration of the particulars of a refugee, the particulars of all movable properties brought by the refugee into Sudan will be registered so that they will be permitted to take them upon return to his/her country of origin. Article 9 prohibits the ownership of land and immovable property. The act does not explicitly deal with the right of the refugees to own movable property while they are in displacement in Sudan, although it could be implied from articles 8 and 9 that refugees can own moveable property provided that they cannot take it with them when leaving Sudan to return to their own or another asylum country.

**Access to employment.** Uganda struggles with high levels of unemployment, especially among youth. Nevertheless, in yet another generous provision, the 2006 Refugees Act grants refugees the right to: (1) engage in agriculture, industry,

and business, whether as workers or proprietors; (2) practice their profession, provided they are properly qualified with recognized certificates; and (3) access formal and informal employment opportunities wherever available in the country and without the need to first obtain work permits, as is strictly required of all who are not East African citizens. The 2010 regulations stipulate that refugees have the right of access to employment on par with the most favored alien—e.g., East African citizens. Accordingly, refugees are exempt from hefty fees for obtaining work permits, a move clearly intended to facilitate local integration and self-reliance.

The domestic refugee laws of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya effectively limit refugees' right to work by imposing the same restrictions and conditions on them that are applicable to aliens. Often, however, refugees become a source of cheap, unskilled, casual labor, and a majority of displaced people end up working in the informal economy, where work is low paying, unpredictable, and exploitative. Article 7 of Djibouti's Ordinance No. 77053/P.R./A.E. du 1977 stipulates that, for the exercise of a professional activity, refugees are to be treated as foreigners living in Djibouti. Article 21 of the 2004 Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation provides that refugees and their families are entitled to the same rights and are subject to the same restrictions generally imposed on persons who are not citizens of Ethiopia. A similar approach was taken by Article 16 of the 2006 Kenyan Refugee Act. It should be noted that, regardless of the legal provisions of the refugee-hosting country, refugees and asylum seekers are usually engaged in informal economic activities or employed by households or firms engaged in them.

**Other social and economic rights.** The Refugees Act incorporates all of the economic, social, and

cultural rights to which a refugee is entitled as contained in Articles 17–24 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Uganda acceded without reservations to any provisions—as was done by some state parties. The law adopts a very favorable standard of treatment—no less than that accorded to other aliens generally. In some instances, it even adopts the most favorable standard—that which is normally accorded to its own nationals, including the right to access elementary education at par with nationals; the right to enjoy the same protection accorded nationals with respect to intellectual property rights (e.g., copyrights for musicians and artists); and the right to be issued a United Nations convention travel document in order to travel outside of Uganda.

#### **Nondiscrimination and equality before the law.**

Under the law, every recognized refugee is entitled to receive fair and just treatment without discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, gender, or membership in any particular social group. It may, however, prove problematic to invoke this principle to apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender refugees given the negative stance taken by the Ugandan parliament recently regarding this issue. All refugees are entitled to equal treatment and protection before the law and have an unabridged right of access to law courts to seek or defend their rights and, where necessary, to receive legal assistance for doing so. Ugandan refugee law provides special protections to refugees and asylum seekers who are HIV positive. One particular regulation stipulates that HIV+ asylum seekers will not be prejudiced in any way with regard to their application for refugee status in Uganda. Moreover, once granted refugee status, such persons should be “accorded the most favorable treatment accorded

to Uganda nationals as regards access to medical care and professional treatment.” This is a unique and remarkable reflection of Uganda’s “generous and exemplary” (Faigle 2015) policy toward refugees.

#### **The right to seek asylum and nonrefoulement.**

The right to seek asylum is the key that enables a refugee to access all of the other rights and freedoms recognized under the law. The principle of nonrefoulement is the logical complement to the right to seek asylum, as embodied in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human Rights. The principle strictly prohibits the deportation or forcible return of refugees to the countries from which they have fled due to a well-founded fear. All states, therefore, have an overriding obligation not to expel, deport, or forcibly return refugees—whether or not they have been formally recognized as such—to places where they risk persecution or where their lives are threatened by generalized conflict or lawlessness. Ugandan public officials at border entry points and elsewhere generally maintain this obligation; reports of significant breaches of this fundamental principle are rare.

**Freedom of movement.** Refugees in Uganda are entitled to freedom of movement, although they can be lawfully subject to “reasonable restrictions” on grounds of national security or public order. This right is generally maintained for refugees living in urban areas. But refugees residing in gazetted rural settlements are usually required to obtain administrative permits allowing them to leave and return to their designated settlements. This is partly to ensure that refugees do not clandestinely return to their home countries and then return to the settlements because that could pose a security risk. The requirement for movement permits for refugees in settlements will be

phased out once the refugees have been issued identity cards like the nationals. Still, these refugee settlements are not detention camps because refugees can freely interact with their surrounding host communities, with whom they generally live in harmony. Uganda is the only country in the Horn of Africa with a domestic refugee law that explicitly provides for the freedom of movement for refugees. Ethiopia's domestic refugee legislation, the 2004 Refugee Proclamation, does not provide for freedom of movement in a manner provided by the 2006 Uganda Refugee Act. However, Article 21 gives the Head of the Security, Immigration, and Refugee Affairs Authority the power to designate places and areas where refugees and asylum seekers can live. Kenya's Refugee Act 2006 does not explicitly deal with freedom of movement. Article 16 of the law takes the approach followed by the Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation (2004), giving the minister responsible for refugee affairs the authority to designate areas in Kenya as refugee camps.

**Freedom of association.** The Refugees Act recognizes that refugees have a right to freedom of association, but this does not extend to political and for-profit associations or trade unions. The restriction on political associations is understandable because they could adversely impact the local political environment and lead to interference in the host country politics, but it is not clear why refugees should be precluded from forming for-profit associations or trade unions.

**Family unity.** In line with the international and regional legal protection frameworks, the Refugees Act fully recognizes the principle of family unity as a universal fundamental human right. It contains progressive provisions relating to the rights of women and children who are

refugees and to family members of recognized refugees.

**East African Community nationals as asylum seekers.** This novel regulation recognizes the reality that in the recent past, Uganda has received several thousand asylum seekers from all of its East African Community partners: Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania. The regulation recognizes the legal reality that refugees remain nationals of their respective countries of origin and, as such, are entitled to all the rights and privileges normally enjoyed by other East African Community citizens as conferred by the East African Community treaty of cooperation and its protocols, especially with regard to the provisions about freedom of movement and establishment within the community. This regulation will surely have positive implications for refugee self-reliance and the pursuit of durable solutions for this category of refugees, although it risks having the effect of making these refugees "more equal than others."

**Registration and documentation of refugees.** There are detailed provisions in the 2010 regulations designed to operationalize provisions of the Refugees Act regarding the registration of refugees and the issuance of identification and travel documents, which affects the ability of refugees to exercise freedom of movement for their economic empowerment with regard to opportunities within or outside of Uganda. Newly arrived asylum seekers in settlements are expected to report to settlement commandants to be registered, after which they are entitled to relief assistance. The interministerial Refugee Eligibility Committee determines the refugee's status and, once granted, each refugee family is allocated a plot of land by the Office of the Prime Minister and provided with basic assistance, such as ration cards entitling them to monthly food and nonfood items.

In Kampala, the approach to handling new arrivals is different. Asylum seekers are expected to report to the Crime Intelligence Office at Old Kampala Police Station to be registered, after which a card bearing the individual's registration reference number is issued to them. They then report to the Office of Prime Minister's Department of Refugees to have their refugee status determined by the Refugee Eligibility Committee. An applicant aggrieved by the decision of the committee can appeal to the Refugee Appeals Board within 30 days of receiving notice of the decision. In accordance with Uganda's judicial system, committee and appeals board decisions are considered administrative and are appealable to the High Court of Uganda. Interviews conducted with refugees in Kisoro in June 2015 as part of this study, however, reveal that refugees face considerable obstacles when dealing with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the agency responsible for issuing their travel documents and identification cards, especially in terms of cost and delays. However, the Office of the Prime Minister clarified that refugees are not expected to deal with Ministry of Internal Affairs for any document. Refugee IDs are directly issued by the Office of the Prime Minister using the Refugee Information Management System; and to obtain Conventional Travel Documents, a refugee places a request with the Office of the Prime Minister, which is then responsible for following up with Internal Affairs on the refugee's behalf.

#### **Refugee Information Management System.**

The government of Uganda, through the Office of the Prime Minister, is responsible for refugee registration and data management in the country. The government uses the Refugee Information Management System to capture and store data on every refugee received in Uganda. The system

was introduced to minimize impersonations and to safeguard refugee data.

**Access to Ugandan citizenship.** As previously noted, the 1995 Ugandan constitution implicitly excludes refugees from attaining Ugandan citizenship, whether by birth or by registration.

### **Political and Geographical Factors Influencing the Ugandan Legal System Governing Refugees**

**Factors that influence the generous policy framework.** The openness and generosity of local Ugandan communities toward refugees is partly related to the fact that many Ugandans have themselves been refugees or internally displaced at one time, including people in government positions (Jallow et al. 2004). Even Uganda's current President Yoweri Museveni fled to Tanzania in the 1970s and lived there as a refugee. Another factor often cited regarding the openness of Uganda is the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic affinities between Ugandans and many of the refugees from across the border.

A question commonly raised is: Why does Uganda not seem to suffer from "asylum fatigue syndrome" as other countries often do when faced with chronic refugee inflows, even ones of shorter duration and magnitude? Indeed, Uganda continues to maintain an open door policy and, over time, has established what is widely considered to be a liberal and excellent record as a country of refuge. Observers seeking to explain this unique and outstanding humanitarian record have advanced a number of possible reasons, as explored below.

Uganda's location in the heart of Africa, surrounded on all sides by several "trouble spots" is significant. To the west is the war-torn region of the Democratic Republic of Congo; to the north, the equally war-ravaged parts of South Sudan; in the east, Kenya, which is facing the terror of the Al-shabaab militia and its own recent internal political strife; in the south Rwanda, some of whose citizens are still threatened by the former perpetrators of the genocide who continue to operate in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and, recently, Burundi, which continues to experience violent political opposition to its president's "third term." The shared ethnicity among communities living along all of these countries' borders is another important contributor, with nearly half of Uganda's 64 constitutionally recognized indigenous communities having become administratively divided from their kith and kin by the colonial borders.

The political ideology of Pan-Africanism, which was strongly advocated by many of Africa's postcolonial leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania, is considered important by Uganda's political leadership. All of Uganda's postcolonial leaders espoused this ideology, especially the current leader, President Yoweri Museveni, who recently declared,

"We handle refugees well [in Uganda] because we do not believe in colonial borders. These are Africans; and Uganda is therefore their home."<sup>11</sup>

This ideological posture also conforms to the African traditional philosophy of "Ubuntu," which

11. "Statement on the Occasion of the 23rd Summit of the African Peer Review Forum." Johannesburg, June 13, 2015: <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/media/speeches/2015/06/14/statement-23rd-summit-african-peer-review-forum>.

since ancient times dictates that "empungi" or "impunzi" (refugees) are warmly received as brothers and sisters and are welcome to share even the little that hosts may have.

A number of the country's successive leaders as well as many officials in the current government, including the president, have themselves been refugees—either before or after assuming power. They therefore have a natural empathy for those who have come to Uganda seeking asylum. Due to the insecurity created by the Lord's Resistance Army and previous civil wars, Uganda has many years of experience dealing with internally displaced people. In addition, among the local population, many have been displaced or used to be refugees themselves, which increases empathy and generosity among the local population toward the current refugees.

A crucial factor is that despite its geographical location amid a rough and turbulent neighborhood, Uganda itself has been politically stable for decades, especially since the defeat of the notorious Lord's Resistance Army and the consequent return of internally displaced persons in northern Uganda to their home villages. Lastly, there is the factor of effective partnership between the government and UNHCR. This close working relationship dates back to the early 1960s and has matured into a strong and efficient collaborative relationship for the benefit of refugees. It extends in its scope to all the reception centers and settlements located in the remotest corners of the country. This historical partnership has ensured the effective protection of refugees and the formulation of innovative programs for receiving, settling, and integrating them, which has given Uganda its well-deserved global reputation for being a "generous and exemplary" host (Faigle 2015).





# CHAPTER 3

## Development Programs

The government of Uganda, in collaboration with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners, has undertaken a number of development initiatives benefiting refugees and host communities, including the 1998 Self-Reliance Strategy, Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program, the Settlement Transformative Agenda, and the Refugee and Host Community Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy. In addition, the government of Uganda has included refugee issues in its national development planning. This chapter discusses

the main government-led development initiatives addressing the needs of the displaced and host communities.

### Refugees and National Development Plans

It is rare for refugees to be included and considered in a government's national plans due to the perception that refugees are temporary visitors who will return to their countries of origin sooner or later. However, given the protracted nature of



Students learn at informal schools in Kashojwa village © UNHCR

the refugee situation in many African countries, Uganda has done so. One reason for taking such a bold step is that the lives of refugees living in Uganda and those of the people living in the host communities are intricately linked and require a holistic approach to deal with and plan for their needs.

In 1998, the Ugandan government shifted its policy toward integration of services provided to people in “its territory” in accordance with the 1995 constitution and the liberal land settlement policy that was adopted by the government. The new policy emphasized the need for refugees to be self-reliant and put in place a land policy supporting that goal. The decentralization policy gave district and local authorities the power to run local affairs and to decide how each local government could best manage and plan for existing populations (nationals and refugees), which was particularly relevant for regions hosting refugees. Uganda’s National Development Plan contains explicit language for the inclusion of refugees in the planning process in the belief that refugees can contribute to the development of their host country until they can safely return to their own.

## Self-Reliance Strategy

**The Self-Reliance Strategy** was introduced in 1998 by the government of Uganda and UNHCR in response to the protracted nature of refugee populations and the need for them to positively contribute to their host countries. It mainly targeted the districts of Moyo, Adjumani, and Arua, which were hosting Sudanese refugees, with the initial aim of improving and increasing self-sufficiency with regard to food and harmonizing the use of social services by refugees and host communities. It was also intended to support and improve the performance and capacities of the

local governments in the three districts to plan and deliver services to refugees and host communities. At the time the strategy was introduced, Uganda was hosting 220,000 refugees, the reasons for their flight from Sudan were far from resolved, and there was little hope of an end to the conflict that would allow for their peaceful return. The government of Uganda and UNHCR recognized the protracted nature of the conflict and thought it wise to improve the standards of living of the people of Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani districts, including the refugees.

The integration of local services under the strategy was an important innovation. Before the strategy was put in place, services to refugees and host populations were run in parallel, and the services to the refugees were better funded than those to the host population that were run by the local administration. Integrating the provision of services to both groups was at the core of the Self-Reliance Strategy 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. The strategy benefited refugees and host communities while it strengthened local service delivery. It was therefore viewed as a win-win for the Ugandan government and UNHCR.

### **The implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy met with successes and shortcomings.**

There was significant improvement in the health sector, although refugees experienced a reduction in medical referrals, possibly partly due to increased competition for scarce medical supplies. According to a midterm review of the strategy’s operations, 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. One challenge was the strategy's multilayered team and the implementation arrangements, which complicated the achievement of its intended objective. The first hurdle for the strategy's implementation was essentially a shift from a relief to a development approach, which required personnel who could handle the shift in operational modalities. The second hurdle involved the abrupt shift of staff due to the lack of qualified staff in place among implementing partners who were able to make that mental shift. UNHCR's role in the development-led initiative was complicated by the fact that it did not have staff qualified in development operations; it only had staff qualified in relief and humanitarian assistance.

Another impediment to the strategy's implementation was the parallel system of support to refugees by bilateral donors and the United Nations system, which were not in tandem with Uganda's national development plans. At its inception, the Self-Reliance Strategy was conceived as a gradual process, where UNHCR would eventually relinquish its role as initiator and withdraw into its traditional role of supporting relief and humanitarian assistance efforts. Development partners also supported refugee-related work, but these efforts were not aligned with the structural and programmatic set-up of the strategy. In 2004, the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR conducted a mid-term review of the strategy to assess its successes and challenges. The review revealed many positive results, including increased food production, greater access to well-functioning social services for refugees and host communities, the provision of skills training to refugees and host communities, and increased contact between the two communities on matters of common concern.

**Lessons learned.** The Self-Reliance Strategy primarily targeted three districts—Moyo, Adjumani, and Arua. However, a number of other refugee-hosting districts, such as Kampala, Koboko, Hoima, Kiryandongo, Isingiro, Kyegegwa, and Kamwenge, were not part of the strategy. And while the strategy was mainly focused on food and service delivery to refugees and host communities, it is now clear that focusing on the economic and social development of all the refugee-impacted districts in Uganda would have provided more dividends and been better aligned with the Uganda National Development Plans. While the Self-Reliance Strategy was a much-needed program, its implementation brought to the fore important lessons to inform future interventions. The roles and responsibilities of the government, UNHCR, and local authorities should have been specified at the start. Also of concern is the decline in the quality and quantity of services provided at facilities handed over to local authorities. A final missing element was a lack of credit and financial and technical assistance for income-generating activities within the districts.

## Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas

**Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister developed the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program with the same mandate as UNHCR's Self-Reliance Strategy.** While the Self-Reliance Strategy specifically sought to improve food self-sufficiency, harmonize social services delivery, and support local government capacity in essential services delivery, the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program was a reaction to the midterm review of the strategy by the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR, which revealed key areas requiring attention. In 2004, in response to these

concerns, the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR set up a secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister with the mandate to:

“identify a set of interventions, through significant stakeholder consultation, while building on the [Self-Reliance Strategy] and facilitate transition to the next phase SRS-DAR [Self-Reliance Strategy–Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program].”

**After a multistakeholder consultation and based on the successes registered under the Self-Reliance Strategy, five working pillars were developed for the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program:**

1. A significant effort to strengthen Uganda’s decentralization processes to allow for effective governance at the district and local government level and to ensure that refugees and host communities are integrated into district development planning;
2. Recognition that the Self-Reliance Strategy was a national initiative—that is was not only for three districts—and calling for the support of all national efforts in refugee-hosting districts in the areas of decentralization, poverty reduction, good governance, and peaceful coexistence between the communities with the hope that such a shift could promote longer-term social, economic, and political stability, not only in Uganda but also in neighboring countries;
3. An outcome of the Self-Reliance Strategy and midterm review, an understanding of the need for focused support on income-generating activities, not just food sufficiency, and a recognition that other income-generating activities were needed, such as diversifying with

cash crops, livestock rearing, agro-processing, and improved labor skills (e.g., the Koboko Partnership, described later in this chapter);

4. Coexistence and security for refugees and host communities considered under the rubric of human security is imperative to achieving the well-being of refugees and could possibly lead to refugees and host communities both embracing the idea of community protection; and
5. A recognition that a search for durable solutions for protracted refugee situations requires empowering refugee and host communities to lead in the improvement of their livelihoods and demonstrate that refugees can also be agents of change when they are empowered and when they live in harmony with their hosts.

These pillars helped the government build on previous efforts by taking into consideration the High Commissioner for Refugees’ Framework for Durable Solutions and Convention Plus Commitments to target development toward all refugee-hosting districts.

**The Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program targeted eight districts hosting 500,000 beneficiaries.** The first phase of the operation was in 2004–07 and was reviewed to assess the need for a three-year extension. While significant progress was made in the infancy of the Self-Reliance Strategy and the Development Assistance to Refugee-hosting Areas program, the midterm review revealed a number of areas that had impacted their implementation. A greater effort in decision making and participatory interaction was needed among local institutions, which pointed to the necessity of strengthening district capacity to implement strategy programs. There



was also a need to formally integrate refugee concerns related to socioeconomic development into other government planning processes. The ReHoPE strategy is a response to this concern.

**The Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program was conceived to benefit from the implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy.** The program targeted 500,000 beneficiaries in subcounties with refugee settlements in each of the eight refugee-hosting districts.<sup>12</sup> Its implementation was underpinned by nine main considerations: (1) improvement of crop production for individual farmers and coordinated national-level support; (2) livestock improvement for local citizens and refugees and training on the benefits of livestock; (3) access to income-generating activities, mainly for small-scale traders to scale up the local economy on the demand and

12. The districts are Arua, Adjumani, Hoima, Kyenjojo, Masindi, Isingiro, Moyo, and Yumbe.

supply sides; (4) natural resources management, particularly land, bodies of water, and care for the environment; (5) strengthening health services used by refugees and host communities; (6) access to education, particularly at the primary level, due to the protracted nature of the refugee situation; (7) improved physical access to refugees and host communities in remote corners of the country; (8) security for the host and refugee communities and the creation of mechanisms to resolve conflicts; and (9) capacity enhancement for district and local leaders.

## Settlement Transformative Agenda

**Refugees are specifically mentioned in the Uganda National Development Plan II.** The Office of the Prime Minister—the department in charge of implementing government policies—was tasked with developing and managing the

Settlement Transformative Agenda, a five-year government-led initiative. Phase 1, which takes place in the first year, includes analysis, preparation, and planning. Phase 2, which takes place over the next three years, involves intensive implementation. Phase 3 is the closing and wrap-up as well as a year of consolidation and hand-over to local or community bodies.

Coordination at the settlement level is spearheaded by refugee desk officers at the Office of the Prime Minister with the involvement of district and local governments, UNHCR, operating and implementing partners, and representatives of host and refugee communities. Local governments, with the support of the Office of the Prime Minister, play leading roles in the planning and delivery of services to host communities. The Settlement Transformative Agenda is included in the National Development Plan II, and an initial core financial allocation is expected from the national budget in fiscal 2015/16. The Office of the Prime Minister, in conjunction with the ministry of finance, UNHCR, and the United Nations agencies as part of the United Nations Country Team will raise funds for phases 2 and 3.

The Settlement Transformative Agenda's activities will initially be focused on refugee-affected areas with settlements on gazetted lands and on exploring approaches for nongazetted settlements. Because gazetted settlements are government-owned, there is more available farmland in areas reserved for refugees, and the economic opportunities and management approach are different than for nongazetted settlements on community-owned land.

**The agenda has six main pillars:** (1) land management to ensure that settlement land is managed in an efficient and sustainable manner; (2) sustainable

livelihoods for refugees and host communities that contribute to socioeconomic transformation and growth; (3) governance and the rule of law to ensure that settlements are governed in an environment that respects rights and promotes the rule of law among refugees and host communities; (4) peaceful coexistence through the creation of an enabling environment for the safety, harmony, and dignity of refugees and host communities, contributing to social cohesion; (5) protection of the environment through the defense and conservation of the natural environment in and around refugee settlements; and (6) community infrastructure that progressively enhances the economic and social infrastructure available in refugee-hosting areas in accordance with local government plans and systems.

**The government of Uganda has requested that the United Nations Country Team in Uganda and the World Bank support the Settlement Transformative Agenda.** Through a US\$50 million credit, the World Bank is supporting the agenda's objectives with an operation to address the impact of the refugee presence on host communities in four districts: Arua, Adjumani, Isingiro, and Kiryandongo. The United Nations and the World Bank are currently developing the ReHoPE strategy with funding from the United Nations–World Bank Trust Fund, a joint strategic framework for a self-reliance and resilience program for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

## The Refugee and Host Community Empowerment Strategy

**The Refugee and Host Community Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy is an effort of the government of Uganda, UNHCR, the United Nations Country Team in Uganda, the World**

**Bank, and other development partners to increase and strengthen the Self-Reliance Strategy and the resilience of refugees and host communities.** It builds on the past steps taken toward these goals and aligns interventions with country-level development plans. As was previously noted, the Self-Reliance Strategy enjoyed successes and experienced some shortfalls, which led to a shift to the Development Assistance to Refugee-hosting Areas by the Office of the Prime Minister in 2006. As a follow-up initiative to the Self-Reliance Strategy framework, UNHCR is designing the ReHoPE strategy, with the goal of developing a coordinated strategy to transform and transition interventions in Uganda’s refugee-impacted districts from a humanitarian to a development approach.

The United Nations Country Team in Uganda will be focused on the economic and social development of the nine refugee-impacted districts in Uganda during this five-year initiative. ReHoPE is seen as an investment framework and tripartite working relationship between the government of Uganda, the United Nations Country Team in Uganda, and development partners. It draws inspiration from the National Development Plan II (2015/16–2019/20) and the Settlement Transformative Agenda framed under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework—UNDAF 2016–20. ReHoPE will support the coordination and effective alignment of the planning and joint programming in the nine refugee-impacted districts.

ReHoPE seeks to ensure that refugees in Uganda are protected and can live in safety and with dignity in their host communities in order to attain progressive solutions for all. The five goals and objectives of ReHoPE are: (1) foster sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities,

thereby contributing to socioeconomic growth and increased individual income; (2) improve delivery of social services such as education; health; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in refugee hosting areas; (3) create an enabling protection environment that promotes the full enjoyment of rights for refugees to live in safety, harmony, and dignity with their host communities and the natural environment; (4) encourage social cohesion and peaceful coexistence through the inclusion of refugees and host communities in development interventions; and (5) prepare refugees for solutions when/if they return home through the building of knowledge, skills, and capacity.

The successful achievement of ReHoPE objectives hinges on a multipronged approach. ReHoPE seeks a strong partnership with other development partners and national and local governments, with an emphasis on consulting women and men from impacted districts—both refugees and host communities, instituting equal standards for services to hosts and refugees, utilizing national systems and service providers whenever possible, avoiding parallel project management systems, and strongly supporting women’s empowerment and gender equality. The ReHoPE strategy envisions “a joint program” at a cost of up to US\$350 million over a five-year period. The effort would involve United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, the government of Uganda, development partners, and the private sector.

ReHoPE has another ingredient embedded in its design. Uganda hosts refugees from several countries in the region. For each of these situations, except for the South Sudanese refugees, there is a regional security mechanism in place for peace and security—the Framework of Hope: Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the

Region, the High Commissioner's Global Initiative for Somali Refugees,<sup>13</sup> and the Comprehensive Strategy for the Rwandan Refugee Situation.<sup>14</sup> The refugees' countries of origin remain conflict-affected and, therefore, the return of refugees may not be possible in the medium-term, which means the refugee situation is protracted.

## The Koboko Partnership

**The Koboko Partnership is an example of how collaboration between the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, and implementing partners can help generate socioeconomic benefits for refugees and host communities.** A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, the local government of the Koboko district, and implementing partners Associazione Centro AiutiVolontari and Kato Eco Farming Limited for a three-year initiative to strengthen socioeconomic resilience among Congolese refugees currently living in the Koboko district. The partnership seeks to deliver commercial-scale agriculture and broader local economic development support to refugee-hosting areas.

The key themes of Koboko Partnership are: strengthen socioeconomic resilience of communities, sustainably increase household incomes, and utilize the economic cooperation between refugee and host communities to foster peaceful coexistence.

13. <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/527b8f7d6.html>.

14. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f33a1642.html>.

**Associazione Centro AiutiVolontari would help implement the project by targeting 750 refugees and 1,500 host community farmers and providing them three years of training in agricultural skills.** UNHCR would finance the construction of the utilities essential for such trainings. The Office of the Prime Minister and the local government in Koboko would secure more arable land for refugees and host communities to practice modern agriculture and improve their socioeconomic status.

**Kato Eco Farming, the other implementing partner, would provide agricultural inputs, machinery, maintenance, and fuel.** It would act as a guarantor for a loan to 750 refugees and develop market linkages for agricultural produce. The third phase of the project would link these efforts to ReHoPE by attracting support from the private sector and development partners. Indeed, the lessons learned from the Koboko Partnership will be a useful barometer for the ReHoPE program and the Settlement Transformative Agenda to measure and assess cooperation among the government, the United Nations, implementing partners, and the private sector in enhancing the socioeconomic well-being of refugee and host communities while promoting social cohesion between them. The Koboko model thus serves as a good model from which ReHOPE and Settlement Transformative Agenda can borrow for the implementation of their five years of planned activities in the nine refugee-hosting districts.



# CHAPTER 4

## Socioeconomic Impacts

Uganda has progressive legal and policy frameworks that entitle refugees to the right to work, freedom of movement, and access to Ugandan social services—each of which has socioeconomic impacts. This chapter explores the socioeconomic situation of refugees, interactions with their host communities, and the role and impact of Uganda’s refugee law and policy framework in determining outcomes.

### Social Structures and Interactions

**The legal regime in Uganda allows for enhanced social interaction between refugees and host communities.** The Refugees Act 2006 (Part V) and the Refugees Regulation 2010 (Part XI) provide for the rights and obligations of refugees; their integration into host communities; the inclusion of their concerns in country development plans; the



A refugee from Burundi tills a plot of land  
© UNHCR

adoption of refugee children; and affirmative action in favor of women, children, and persons with disabilities.

**Refugees located in settlements are able to access basic services and easily receive needed security protection.** The settlements are organized in a way that acknowledges inherent tensions and conflicts among the refugees. For example, the Nuer and the Dinka from South Sudan as well as other refugees from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are housed a safe distance from one another, as are individuals harboring animosity toward one another. However, the government does not deliberately attempt to settle all refugees according to their ethnic divisions. Rather, every attempt is made to foster coexistence among the groups. In Nakivale, for example, the Banyamulenge live alongside other Congolese; in Adjumani, Dinka and Nuer families live together, including in the Rhino Camp, where a single incident between Dinka and Nuer youth over a Premier League soccer match was quickly contained.

### **Refugee–Host Community Relations**

**Refugees entering Uganda are often well informed about Uganda’s amicable treatment of refugees as compared with other East African countries.** Uganda is frequently a preferred destination for refugees because of the friendliness of the host population and the provision of social services and security. Indeed, a commendable level of peaceful coexistence is evident between the refugees and host communities in all settlements in Uganda, an observation confirmed by local leaders of the host communities, refugee welfare councils, officials from the Office of the Prime Minister and district and local governments, implementing partners, and the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who were consulted during this assessment.

**The overall relationship between refugees and the host communities is amicable.** The two populations coexist peacefully, and intermarriage between the groups is evident, further improving relationships. Intermarriages have made communication between the groups easier because refugee spouses teach their national spouses their languages and vice-versa. Refugees living in Nakivale have been attempting to learn Lunyankole, the language spoken by the local citizens.

**In Adjumani, the refugee situation is protracted.** Settlements in the Adjumani district are the result of negotiations with host communities for land. The relationship between the refugees and the host population has been largely peaceful. Local integration has occurred, especially among refugees from the Madi tribes of South Sudan, partly due to their long stay in the area. Mungula I, Mungula II, and Miriyeyi, where some refugees have settled for over ten years, are among the oldest settlements in Uganda.

**Social cohesion is derived from the United Nations Convention, and specifically from social relationships among refugees and between refugee and host communities.** It is guided by provisions of the Refugees Act on Personal Status, which also informs marriages. In practice, marriage between refugees and Ugandan nationals has been subject to Ugandan law, which provides for the cultural norms and practices to apply in circumstances that do not favor refugees or where refugees are needy. This has led marriages to skew to mainly female refugees marrying male Ugandan nationals. There is, however, protection under section 33 of the Refugee Act that protects the

rights of women, particularly with regard to social, cultural, economic, and civic issues.

**Refugees with some income, who are capable of taking care of themselves, are self-settled in urban centers where they rent housing.** Many refugees in Adjumani Town and Kampala City mention prior connections and a fear of living in settlements—based on past experiences in other refugee camps—as reasons for residing in urban areas. Others are seeking employment or education for themselves, their children, or their siblings.

**Hostilities between refugees and host populations have been recorded in a few instances.**

In Nakivale and Rwamwanja, hostilities arose due to a suspicion that refugees were being favored by the government of Uganda at the expense of its citizens. In 2013, a settlement commandant was killed by members of the host population in Rwamwanja while reclaiming land from them to settle Congolese refugees.<sup>15</sup> Otherwise, concerted efforts continue to build peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities in these settlements. The government of Uganda and UNHCR adopted a policy in Rwamwanja of providing the host community with 30 percent of all services provided to refugees—who received the remaining 70 percent.<sup>16</sup> Water, a scarce resource in Rwamwanja, was provided to host communities with additional boreholes in the settlement and surrounding areas that were easily accessed by the host communities. This played an enormous role in unifying refugees and the host population, and was reinforced by the formation of water source

committees, which included representatives from both populations.

**The biggest challenge to authorities with respect to host populations and refugees is land management in settlements.** Access and use of land threatens peaceful coexistence among refugees of the same or different origin as well as with nationals. In Nakivale, refugees and nationals accuse each other of grazing animals on the other's land, destroying crops. The forceful eviction by the Office of the Prime Minister of the local citizens who had occupied the gazetted settlement land of Rwamwanja was legally permissible but inhumanely conducted, taking place even as negotiations were underway with the local authorities of Kamwenge district. The incident fostered much anger in host communities, including protests. The Office of the Prime Minister agreed to provide concessions to the host community by handing over two square miles of degazetted land to the Kamwenge local authority to settle some of its residents. Harmony is gradually being restored among the residents.

**Relationships Between Refugee Groups**

**Interactions between different groups of refugees in settlements are at a functional level, but they can also serve as opportunities for psychosocial support.** Relationships among refugees are usually the result of frequent interactions, whether voluntary or need-based. Interactions can include dispute and conflict resolution or receiving services, such as access to markets, water, education, and health. An example of a refugee social organization in Rwamwanja is the Umoja farmers group, which ploughs fields, harvests, and sells crops as a group, dividing the

15. Interview with Settlement Commandant Rwamwanja on June 25, 2015.

16. Interview with Sub-Program Manager Lutheran World Federation Rwamwanja on June 23, 2015.

proceeds among themselves.<sup>17</sup> Income from selling produce eases the financial stress of group members. Such groups could be supported with tailored training programs of the necessary skills and knowledge to transform agriculture from the current subsistence model to a profit-generating activity.

**The relationship between refugees from the same country of differing ethnicities, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, is outwardly peaceful.** There are no observed substantive conflicts; the groups coexist without provoking one another. However, most South Sudanese refugees in Kampala report insecurity in camps and settlements caused by tribes with whom they had personal conflicts who were also living in the settlements in Adjumani or Kiryadongo.

**Some refugee groups have maintained social and cultural norms and distinctions within settlements.** The Dinka of South Sudan reportedly do not entertain the idea of intermarriage due to the lack of commonality of their cultural practices with that of other ethnic groups. The Dinka are predominantly cattle keepers, unfamiliar with agriculture.<sup>18</sup> Further, there is mutual suspicion among the Dinka, the Nuer, and other ethnic groups regarding political issues in their home country of South Sudan, which is not conducive to intermarriage.

17. Interview with Refugee Welfare Council I Kikurura B on June 21, 2015.

18. Focus group discussion with male youth Boroli in Adjumani on June 27, 2015.

## Access to Services

**The main social services provided to refugees in settlements are health, education, water, sanitation, and community services.** The ability of refugees to access social services in general, participate in economic activities, and socially interact among themselves and their host communities is facilitated by Section 30 of the Refugees Act, which provides recognized refugees freedom of movement within Uganda. This freedom may be reasonably limited, but sometimes restrictions are challenged for being needlessly restrictive. Social services were provided to refugees and host populations in two parallel systems (Garimoi and De Brouwere 2005) until a coordinated system was designed in 1999 to address disparities between them and the difficulty faced by the district in coordinating and supervising them. As a result of this strategy, health, education, and water services were integrated, and parallel service systems for refugees and the host population were eliminated in Arua, Moyo, and Adjumani districts.

**Medical Team International is currently implementing health services in refugee settlements.** First-line health facilities and centers are functional at the settlement level, and any referrals of serious medical or surgical conditions are made to government or private hospitals in the refugee-affected district or region. Health centers are usually located in gazetted or recognized settlements and camps. They are open to local residents and adequately equipped with drugs, medical personnel, and ambulances through the support of UNHCR and other international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Staffing costs are met by UNHCR. Medical Team International provides health services in Rhino Camp, Adjumani, Nakivale, and Oruchinga; African Humanitarian Action provides

health services in Rwamwanja and Kyaka II; Action Against Hunger provides services in Kyangwali; and Real Medicine Foundation provides services in Kiryandongo.

**The government of Uganda provides primary education to refugees under the provision of the Refugees Act requiring that refugees receive the same treatment as nationals.** This is consistent with the 1951 Refugee Convention on Education,<sup>19</sup> which states:

“[t]he Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.”

Education services can be divided into three parts—primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary education is provided in the settlements free of cost, emulating Uganda’s Universal Primary Education policy. The costs for the infrastructure, equipment, and the recruitment and payment of the teaching staff for these settlement schools are funded by UNHCR and other international agencies. The government of Uganda provides the curriculum for all the settlement primary schools, and refugee children also benefit from Universal Primary Education funding. However, the study curriculum, instruction language, and materials present a challenge because refugees come from countries with quite different educational environments. And while the government of Uganda, with the support of UNHCR, has succeeded in providing primary education, but secondary education remains challenging due to tuition and other fees that refugees cannot afford. They remain dependent on funding from

19. <http://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf>.

UNHCR, which can only support a small number of students.

**Refugee schools also serve host communities.**

The Bujubuli Primary School, for example, which was established in 1984 by UNHCR for refugee students in Kyaka II, serves refugee and host populations in the area, realizing social integration at school. Social integration among school children has been problematic only in cases with extremely diverse student bodies, such as the Kashojwa Primary School in Nakivale, which teaches multiethnic students from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Uganda. The refugee students there tend to restrict their interactions to their own ethnic group.

**COBURWAS Learning Center—a day care, nursery, and primary school—was established in the Kyangwali refugee settlement in the Hoima district.**

It was started and is run by the refugee community, as its name reflects: CO = Congolese, BU = Burundi, RWA = Rwanda, and S = Sudan. The learning center provides quality education to vulnerable children and to the host community. Orphaned children enroll for free and are given school uniforms and two decent meals per day. The learning center is increasing access to quality education by opening up student hostels near the best schools in the region and providing food and accommodations to children from surrounding areas. These efforts have removed the geographical barriers keeping vulnerable students from attending school. In addition to regular academic work, students are trained to be responsible community leaders and entrepreneurs, and they are empowered to start initiatives that tackle community problems. The learning center helps address the social and economic needs of less privileged

and gifted children by offering financial scholarships from the primary to the university level to students who would otherwise be unable to attend school.

**The COBURWAS Technical Center, also in the Kyangwali refugee settlement, provides technical and social entrepreneurship skills to youth.**

Intended to empower trainees to be job creators and innovators, the technical center offers training in tailoring and traditional crafts, computers, masonry, carpentry, and joinery. To further encourage self-reliance, trained youth begin workshops of their own, training others so they can work in groups. CIYOTA opened a community micro-finance operation in the Kyangwali refugee settlement for income-generating projects such as agribusiness and social enterprises such as recreation centers, Internet cafes, and phone-charging stations. CIYOTA offers agriculture loans to farmers to meet family expenses while they wait for the best market for their produce. Community micro-finance offers business loans to people who want to start small businesses or expand existing ones.

**Integration of Social Services**

Structural integration of services and service provision was undertaken to cover refugees and their host populations due to the increased demand for services such as health and education; it also provided an opportunity for the local integration of refugee and host communities. Among the integrated services are health, education, and water. There has been an initiative by the service providers to extend 30 percent of services intended for refugees to the host population. But it is sometimes difficult to quantify services to ensure 70 percent retention for the refugees, such as in the case of health provision when both populations have access to one health facility.

**Health services.** The integration of health services is clearly felt at the facility level, where both refugees and host populations receive services without discrimination. Refugee settlements have first-line health units; referrals are made to government or NGO-supported hospitals. 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. UNHCR and the government of Uganda equip the health facilities with drugs and other medical equipment. Implementing teams such as Medical Team International ensures the delivery of such support on behalf of UNHCR. On another note, under the 30 percent arrangement, implementing partners can provide drugs to the health facilities of the host community even when there are no refugees accessing health services from it.

**Education services.** The integration of education services was proposed as an alternative to the separate schools that had been set up for refugees and local residents, which were exclusively attended by each group with minimal interaction between them. Education is an expensive social service. It is not accessed on demand like health services, and it must be handled delicately. The government of Uganda is primarily responsible for education at the primary level; the Windle Trust on behalf of UNHCR has assumed responsibility at the secondary level. Nakivale, one of the first established settlements, has a secondary school that was built by UNHCR, which also recruits and pays teachers. Students from the host population are required to pay fees of 79,000 Ugandan Shillings, but students from the refugee population only pay a development fee of 47,000 Ugandan Shillings. The government of Uganda supports supervision and ensures the quality of

education; after screening vulnerable refugees, Windle Trust sponsors them.

**Water services.** Water is provided through the construction of water sources for refugees and host communities, depending on availability. Once a water source is identified, a borehole is sunk and the entire community surrounding it becomes the beneficiary. Implementing partners have also made efforts to provide water sources to host populations in their own communities. In Rwamwanja, 14 boreholes were drilled, 10 underground tanks constructed, and 10 spring wells protected for the host population.<sup>20</sup>

**Implication of service integration on coexistence of groups.** Refugees who believed that UNHCR funding was for their exclusive use were initially unhappy about the integration of services; they felt that host communities were benefiting from their suffering. However, the integration of services has improved access to services, especially to host community areas close to settlements, contributing to improved relationships. The host population appreciates the approach and acknowledges the significant improvements in health services, such as the availability of drugs and health care workers; education, such as schools with available teachers; and improved roads.

**The education sector, especially primary schools, has built strong social cohesion.** The integration of students in Kyaka II and Adjumani classrooms foster amicable coexistence between refugee children and their peers from the host population. These friendly relationships can endure and help overcome the tendency to

20. Interview with The Lutheran World Foundation's Sub-Program Manager Rwamwanja on the June 22, 2015.

discriminate with the emergence of new groups, such as clubs and sports teams.

**Service integration in the primary schools has also had negative impacts.** Under the Uganda curriculum, lower primary education uses thematic education that requires teaching be conducted in the area's local language. Lunyankole is the local language in Nakivale, where at least five ethnic groups reside. As a result, many refugee children drop out of school at the lower primary level if they cannot afford to go to a private school. On the whole, only around 43 percent of all refugee children attend primary school even though it is free, and a much lower percentage attends secondary school, which is not. Nevertheless, education remains a key prerequisite for self-reliance and effective integration.

**There are disadvantages to the integration of services.** The remuneration paid to NGO health staff in the settlements is higher than government staff of comparable qualifications and responsibilities. This was observed to be a demotivating factor among those strictly paid by the government, despite the fact that the health workers at the settlements are on contract while the others are under the civil service, which is permanent and pensionable.

## Economic Opportunities and Livelihoods

Economic opportunities for refugees in Uganda vary in terms of formal and informal employment and access to productive capital from rural to urban areas. Other key determinants include legal status, level of education prior to and since becoming a refugee, employment status and experience prior to becoming a refugee,

integration training, household size, marital status, technical skills, language fluency, and job interviewing skills.

## **Employment and Access to Labor Market**

### **Education is crucial for accessing employment, but refugees face considerable constraints.**

Despite great efforts by UNHCR and the government of Uganda to provide educational services to refugee children, not all are enrolled in school. An analysis of the reasons for the nonenrollment among male and female school-aged children reveals that 85 percent of respondents could not afford school fees, particularly at the secondary level, and about 7 percent of respondents attributed nonenrollment among girls to security concerns about the schools. Other constraining factors include overcrowding of classrooms or nearby schools (1.4 percent), late registration at schools (3 percent), language or curriculum obstacle (3 percent), and child labor (3 percent).

### **On-Farm Livelihoods**

#### **In the rural settlements, economic activities revolve around agriculture and livestock.**

Evidence shows that refugees are engaged in farming activities on lands allocated to them as well as on leased plots, supporting their self-reliance in accordance with Article 13 of the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951) and the Uganda Refugees Act 2006 that allow refugees to access movable and immovable property on par with most aliens. However, refugees cannot permanently acquire land in terms of freehold/

mailo<sup>21</sup> land, according to the 1995 Ugandan constitution. Over 78 percent of surveyed refugees in rural settlements engage in agriculture; in urban areas, the figure is only 5 percent. Refugees in urban areas trade in agriculture products, such as food items and basic farm inputs. The main crops grown are maize, beans, sorghum, cassava, potatoes, groundnuts, and bananas. Animals reared include goats, cattle, pigs, poultry, and rabbits. Crop surpluses attract Ugandan traders to refugee settlements, operating as a direct supply chain. However, agricultural livelihoods face several challenges. The data show that 52 percent of farming respondents report drought as the main challenge, followed by pest and animal attacks on crops at 14 percent, crop and animal theft at 9 percent, and fire at 1 percent. In addition, 59 percent of the sample reported suffering postharvest losses due to a lack of storage facilities and crop theft. A World Food Program report estimates that postharvest losses reach up to 40 percent in Uganda. However, because postharvest handling techniques and storage facilities are inadequate, surpluses tend to be sold immediately after harvest at the lowest point in the price cycle. The loss of potential income contributes to food insecurity and undernutrition among smallholder farming families, especially during lean seasons (WFP 2016).<sup>22</sup>

#### **Refugees face two key challenges in marketing produce.** About 66 percent of respondents

21. Mailo tenure involves the holding of land in perpetuity. It was established under the Uganda Agreement of 1900. It permits the separation of ownership of land from the ownership of developments on land made by a lawful occupant. Additionally, it enables the holder to exercise full power of ownership, subject to the customary and statutory rights of those persons lawful or bonafide in occupation of the land at the time that tenure was created and their successors in title.

22. <https://ccaafs.cgiar.org/fr/blog/look-food-losses-uganda-and-insights-fao-save-food-programme#.Vvrbd03fP86>.



reported that local traders use faulty scales when weighing produce, which shortchanges them. However, this practice is not refugee-specific—it is quite common in Uganda.<sup>23</sup> Seventy percent of respondents decried the extremely low prices offered by local traders for produce, with implications for the ability and timing of refugees to become self-reliant. The refugees lose potential income to marketing constraints caused by limits to their right of freedom of association, which prevents them from joining profit-making associations. Authorities need to explore options for marketing the products of refugees to enable them get better market prices and earn reasonable incomes that can then be used for resettlement and to meet other socioeconomic obligations. Addressing these issues is critical to sustaining agricultural self-reliance for refugees.

### Nonfarm Livelihoods

**Another main activity for refugees in settlements is trade.** Because refugees enjoy the freedom of movement and right to do work granted by Article 17 of the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951) and Section 64 of the 2006 Ugandan Refugees Act, an average about 10 percent of male refugees and a relatively higher 47 percent of female refugees are involved in trade. In Kampala, about 75 percent of male and 90 percent female refugees are engaged in trade. In addition, a variety of nonfarm activities supplement agricultural livelihoods in the settlement areas, including diverse businesses run by refugees, such as bars, mills, transportation services, money transfer services, and retail shops.

**Refugees in Kampala City are engaged in a wide range of economic activities.** Enterprises

23. <http://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/organisation-of-collective-marketing-activities-by-small-scale-farmers.pdf>.

that are mainly run by Congolese, Ethiopian, and Rwandan refugees include small-scale trading of accessories, selling of fabric, retail trading, brokerage services with countries of origin, tailoring, and operating very small restaurants and bars. Eritrean refugees are primarily involved in running Internet cafes and managing money transfers; and Somali refugees are involved in large-scale business, such as mini-super markets, restaurants, transportation services, foreign exchange bureaus, bars, garages, and guesthouses. Vulnerable refugees are involved in less lucrative businesses, such as domestic work—mainly in the homes of fellow refugees. Refugees who are more economically sound are therefore able to follow a clear livelihood plan and have sufficient access to livelihood resources. Kampala, as a capital city, offers a wide range of self-employment opportunities in the formal and informal sector. In settlement areas like Nakivale, Rwamwanja, Mungula, and Miriyei, there are many potential business opportunities, such as wholesale shops, retail businesses, food vending, and mobile money, among others. There is no significant difference across settlements with respect to self-employment: refugees throughout Uganda are engaged in similar small businesses, such as tailoring, local brewing, operating restaurants, food vending, selling charcoal, domestic work, retail and whole trade, mobile money businesses, construction, transport, and boda-boda (motor-cycle taxi). Table 4.1 shows the top five livelihoods pursued by each nationality in the settlements and in Kampala.<sup>24</sup>

### Jobs

**Refugees actively engage with the labor market in terms of employment and economic interaction.** Nearly 43 percent of respondents are actively

24. <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/refugee-economies-2014.pdf>.

**Table 4.1. Top Five Livelihoods by Nationality of Refugee**

Nationality	Rural Livelihood	Percent	Urban Livelihood	Percent
Congolese	Farming own plot	46	Vendor (no shop)	19
	Farm worker for others	21	Seller clothes, textile, and accessories	16
	Construction workers	5	Tailor	10
	Small shop	3	Brokerage	6
	Worker for INGO/UN	3	Hair/beauty services	4
Somali	Seller clothes, textile, and accessories	16	Restaurant	18
	Restaurant	11	Small shop	13
	Small shop	10	Fast-food stand	10
	Fast-food stand	10	Vendor (no shop)	6
	Med-large shop	5	Taxi/mini-bus	5
	Household chores for others	5	Teacher	5
Rwandan	Farming own plot	48	Vendor (no shop)	14
	Farm worker for others	18	Seller clothes, textile, and accessories	12
	Motorcycle taxi	4	Fast-food stand	8
	Bar/café	4	Small shop	8
	Middleman for crop trade	3	Craft-making	6
South Sudanese	Farming own plot	54		
	Brewery	11		
	Vendor (no shop)	8		
	Worker for international nongovernmental organization/ United Nations	4		
	Small shop	3		
	Teacher	3		

Source: University of Oxford Refugees Study Centre (2014).

engaged in the labor market—12 percent in the formal sector and 31 percent self-employed. This can be attributed to the 2006 Refugees Act, which allows refugees to work. Only a small number of refugees are engaged in occupations requiring a higher skill level, such as the provision of educational or health services, due to the differences of academic qualifications and limited proficiency in English. The difficulties faced in acquiring their degrees and having their academic documents

certified prevents qualified refugees from engaging in formal job searches. Refugees who were previously employed in their home countries are more likely to find a job than other refugees, but this category of refugees comprise only 8 percent of the survey sample, representing a small impact when compared with the broader refugee population.

**Table 4.2. Key Barriers to Seeking Employment (Percentage of Respondents)**

Barriers	Urban	South and Southwest	North
Language	10	27	10
Legal	7	5	11
Interview skills	7	8	10
Discrimination	5	10	7
Relevant documents	21	17	21

Source: Author tabulation from field survey, June 2015.

**There is a wide variation among refugee nationalities in terms of formal sector engagement.**

By nationality, the data show that Burundian refugees are the most active in the formal sector (18 percent); and that Congolese dominate the self-employment sector (41 percent), followed by Rwandans (39 percent), and Burundians (35 percent). Ethiopians have negligible formal sector participation rates. The low rate of integration among Ethiopians and Eritreans is due to the fact that most refugees are directly involved in crop farming or agro-related businesses, and as traditional animal keepers, Ethiopians and Eritreans do not have those skills. The highest percentage of economically active male refugees in the formal sector is found in Kampala (24 percent), followed by Nakivale (16 percent), Rwamwanja and Mungula (15 percent), and finally Mirieyi (3 percent).

**A number of barriers constrain the ability of refugees to seek employment.** Common obstacles cited by refugees living in urban and settlement areas include unfamiliarity with the language, legal issues, inadequate interviewing skills, discrimination, and a lack of relevant documents (table 4.2). The presence of discrimination is notoriously difficult to assess, and the perception of discrimination depends on culturally determined sensitivities and expectations. Refugees may at

times perceive discrimination when other issues are actually hampering their ability to secure jobs. At other times, discriminatory behavior by employers may not be perceived as such. Ten percent of survey respondents noted implicit discrimination between locals and refugees: if a refugee has the same level of education as a local resident, the job will more likely be given to the local resident. This finding is in line with those of Rydgren (2004) which notes that recruitment practices discriminate against minorities and that employers might focus on English language requirements; qualification-assessment procedures; and soft skills, such as having a positive attitude, getting along with coworkers, and demonstrating good communication skills with customers. An analysis of average monthly incomes by settlement area and refugee status reveals that nationals receive higher average monthly incomes than refugees. Kampala has the highest average salary of Shs 440,857 (US\$250 equivalent) for nationals and Shs 347,882 (US\$175 equivalent) for refugees.

**Refugees employ numerous strategies when seeking employment.** Respondents who were currently employed cited door-to-door job searches as the most common way of acquiring a job. Sixty-two percent of employed women and 48 percent of employed men found work this

way. Sixteen percent of employed women and 30 percent of employed men found work through a Ugandan acquaintance. Eleven percent of employed women and 8 percent of employed men found work through local organizations, and 2 percent of employed women and 3 percent of men found work through religious institutions. Only an average of 3 percent found work through international organizations. The door-to-door technique is pronounced due to the freedom of movement provided to refugees by the Uganda Refugees Act 2006.

**Refugees are exposed to work-related hazards.**

Sixty percent of refugee workers report back or joint pain, 14 percent report respiratory problems, and 13 percent report that they have sustained work-related injuries. Six percent of working refugees report having suffered burns and fractures. In addition to health problems and exposure to risk at work, survey participants reported unfair job circumstances that they were forced to tolerate, including pressure to accept low and late payment of wages; long working hours; no breaks; and in a small number of cases, physical abuse. Despite their right to work and freedom of movement, most refugees are hired for manual jobs, such as land cultivation, brickmaking, and domestic work. Because of the limited availability of alternative employment, refugees must accept their employment conditions. These incidents are no different from those related to nonrefugees/local population. Unfortunately no reliable data is available, but according to Ugandan authorities, mortality and injury rates due to work-related hazards are very high in Uganda<sup>25</sup>

25. Media interview. State Minister for Labor, Mr Mwesigwa Rukutana. <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Many-Ugandans-dying-of-occupational-hazards---govt/-/688334/2296922/-/vwmkauz/-/index.html>.

## Gender Dimensions

**Female refugees face discrimination in their economic pursuits.** The level of women's participation in the formal sector is very low, averaging about 9 percent compared with 35 percent for Ugandan women employed in nonagricultural sectors (WDI 2016). The self-employment level is higher at 28 percent. Fifteen percent of women in Mungula reported being engaged in the formal sector; in Mirieyi, none did. In terms of self-employment, women are the most economically active in Rwamwanja at 34 percent, followed by Kampala at 33 percent, Nakivale at 32 percent, and Adjumani at 22 percent. Self-employment opportunities for female refugees can be attributed to a number of initiatives, such as women's credit groups that help women get seed money to start businesses and save money through community savings groups. About 40 percent of women report being involved in a group compared with 13 percent of men.

**Skills acquisition by refugees has been facilitated by NGOs.**

An analysis of the beneficiaries reveals that 30 percent of women acquired sewing skills, and 30 percent of men acquired brickmaking skills. Twenty-three percent of men and 18 percent of women acquired agricultural skills; and 14 percent of men and 10 percent of women acquired carpentry skills. Thirty-five percent of women acquired other skills, such as bookkeeping, art, and design, compared with 27 percent of men. The acquisition of skills by refugees is a result of the UNICEF education programs, which provide training in the form of adult learning. InterAid-Uganda's training center at Kabusu in Kampala provides beginning English language lessons; vocational training, including tailoring and brickmaking; and instruction in music, dance, and drama, among other offerings.

**Table 4.3. Distribution of Refugees by Occupation, Education, and Gender (percent)**

Education level	Male				Female			
	Agriculture	Education	Trade	Others	Agriculture	Education	Trade	Others
No education	52.6	10.5	36.8	0.0	60.0	3.3	35.0	1.7
Primary	71.4	2.0	18.4	8.2	46.4	7.1	46.4	0.0
Secondary	56.9	3.9	31.4	7.8	29.6	6.8	59.1	4.6
Vocation	52.9	5.9	29.4	11.8	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0
University	33.3	16.7	44.4	5.6	37.5	0.0	62.5	0.0
Total	57.8	5.8	29.2	7.1	45.6	5.9	46.8	1.8

Source: Author tabulation from field survey, June 2015.

**Refugees are mainly engaged in occupations that provide little income, social protection, or job security.** However, this condition is shared by the local population because over 82 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture in Uganda. Industry employs 5 percent of the labor force, and services account for the remaining 13 percent. The minimum working age is 18, but many children work out of economic necessity and because school fees are so high. Most children work in the informal sector. Wages in Uganda are extremely low, and most workers supplement their incomes with second jobs and family farming (OECD).<sup>26</sup>

Table 4.3 demonstrates the occupation distribution of refugees. Fifty-eight percent of male refugees are engaged in agriculture, while only 6 percent are engaged in education-related activities and 29 percent in trade. Forty-six percent of female refugees are engaged in agriculture, 6 percent in education, and 47 percent in trade. Female refugees report that even though men are less likely to be involved in agricultural

activities, in most cases, they are still in control of the decision making in the home, and they usually use the money from selling the crops on alcohol, leaving female refugees in a state of vulnerability from which becoming self-reliant is quite difficult.

#### Incidence of Crime

**Refugee settlements are plagued with crime and violence.** Crime rates vary across the settlements: 78 percent of survey respondents in Nakivale report that they have been the victim of a crime; this is followed by Rwamwanja at 71 percent, Mirieyi at 68 percent, Kampala at 63 percent, and Adjumani—the lowest—at 56 percent. Across the settlements, sexual violence is the most common type of reported violence at 39 percent, followed by burglary at 30 percent. The least commonly reported crime is fraud, at 3 percent. Burglary rates are highest in Rwamwanja at 52 percent, followed by Mirieyi at 47 percent and Adjumani at 33 percent. Sexual violence rates are highest in Nakivale at 56 percent, followed by Kampala at 45 percent, and Adjumani at 33 percent. Theft rates are highest in Mungula at 25 percent; assault rates are highest in Adjumani at 33 percent; and fraud rates are highest in Rwamwanja at 10 percent.

26. <https://www.oecd.org/employment/50423364.pdf> and Nordic Consulting Group (2011), End Review of the Project – Strengthening Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda “Enterprise Uganda”, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/46/47399575.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/46/47399575.pdf).

**Table 4.4. Top Five Crimes as a Share of Total Crimes in Uganda in 2009**

Type of Crime	Share of Total Crimes (percent)
Theft	27
Assault	17
Sexual violence	8
Robbery	7
Child-related offense	5
Total number of crimes in 2009	103,592

Source: Uganda Police Force: <http://www.upf.go.ug/> (2009 data).

Crime is a common occurrence in Uganda, affecting both local and refugee populations. Common types of crime include theft; residential break-ins; strong-armed robberies; pick-pocketing; financial fraud involving credit cards, personal checks, and counterfeiting; skimming (a practice to capture personal identification information from ATM terminals); sexual assaults; murders; and shootings. Violence surged in Northern Uganda during the early part of 2014. Gulu was beset with violent crime. Boda boda drivers (motorcycle taxi drivers) were being killed—almost on a daily basis—by unknown thugs. Lira experienced a violent crime wave against business owners, prompting the inspector general of police to replace the city’s police leadership and to personally travel to the town to help relieve the community’s angst (U.S. State Department 2016).<sup>27</sup> Table 4.4 shows the top five crimes committed in Uganda as reported by the Ugandan police force. It should be noted that police may underreport crimes because there are only a limited number of agents.<sup>28</sup>

27. <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17446>.

28. Uganda Police Force: <http://www.upf.go.ug/> (2009 data).

### Economic Interactions Between Refugees and Host Communities

**There is economic interdependence among refugees and between refugees and host communities.** Refugee and host community traders dealing in agricultural products such as tomatoes, cabbage, rice, and beans get their input supplies from refugees or from local residents. Traders dealing in manufactured merchandise purchase from local wholesale shops or from nearby towns, such as Mbarara, Fortportal, Gulu, Arua, and even Kampala. These trading activities link refugee settlements with other traders in Uganda and with the international markets from which they purchase merchandise for retail sale. Traders also supply the refugee settlements with supplies for retail businesses. A number of refugee-run businesses were started with seed money from operating NGOs in line with Article 18 of the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951). In this regard, Uganda is doing better than other refugee-hosting countries because a large proportion of refugees in urban areas are self-employed.

### Refugee settlement areas have attracted the attention of Ugandan private enterprises.

Ugandan telecom companies have launched several initiatives aimed at targeting refugee users of SMS banking and transfer services. For example, Orange Uganda Limited, a provider of telecommunication and Internet services in Uganda, invested in a large radio tower in the Nakivale settlement to promote its “Orange Money” services. In Rwamwanja and Adjumani, a number of refugees operate as agents of mobile money units, which provides employment and facilitates refugees accessing remittances from relatives and friends within and outside Uganda, greatly helping refugees with issues such as paying their children’s school fees.

## Determinants of Labor Force Participation

**Several factors determine formal and self-employment opportunities for refugees.** Two model formulations were attempted to examine the factors that determine refugee labor-market

participation in the formal and self-employment areas in Uganda (table 4.5). The marginal effects of selected factors for being formally or self-employed in reference to the base category of unemployed are seen for the estimated

**Table 4.5. Determinants of Female Labor Market Participation in Uganda**

Variables	Model 1				Model 2			
	Formal Labor Market		Self-Employment		Formal Labor Market		Self-Employment	
	ME	P-value	ME	P-value	ME	P-value	ME	P-value
Refugee duration	0.015	(0.000)	0.008*	(0.089)				
Literacy (Yes=1, N=0)	0.010*	(0.081)	0.033**	(0.023)				
Female education (RC: No education)								
Secondary	0.008**	(0.045)	0.058**	(0.032)	0.044	(0.145)	0.028*	(0.053)
Postsecondary	0.031**	(0.012)	0.099***	(0.000)	0.035*	(0.091)	0.084*	(0.077)
Married (Yes=1, No=0)	0.087	(0.325)	0.045**	(0.012)	0.005	(0.669)	0.012*	(0.057)
Gender (Male=1, female=0)	0.008***	(0.000)	0.002	(0.162)	0.004*	(0.084)	0.033*	(0.048)
Age of household head					0.052*	(0.071)	0.022**	(0.028)
Age squared of household head					-0.066	(0.533)	-0.005*	(0.083)
Former experience	0.006*	(0.066)	0.001**	(0.024)	0.055	(0.358)	0.142	(0.921)
Ugandan experience					0.042**	(0.027)	0.002*	(0.069)
Number of school-going children	-0.008**	(0.023)	0.013*	(0.058)	-0.055	(0.312)	0.074	(0.355)
Sick	-0.002*	(0.063)	-0.120	(0.188)	-0.009*	(0.099)	0.412	(0.120)
Registered refugee	0.078	(0.945)	0.017*	(0.058)	0.001	(0.438)	0.028**	(0.044)
Payment method								
Daily	0.002**	(0.045)	0.015	(0.944)	0.003*	(0.077)	0.033	(0.233)
Weekly	0.012*	(0.055)	0.007	(0.778)	0.029	(0.341)	0.087	(0.523)
Monthly	0.001	(0.286)	0.056	(0.147)	0.048	(0.947)	0.099	(0.217)
Urban area (Yes=1, No=0)	0.020**	(0.034)	0.051***	(0.000)	0.005*	(0.091)	0.023**	(0.021)
Hospitality	0.024**	(0.012)	0.011*	(0.089)	0.007*	(0.066)	0.047*	(0.052)
Crime	-0.044	(0.147)	0.001	(0.245)	0.047	(0.181)	0.058	(0.478)
Received training on job searching	0.005*	(0.056)	0.033	(0.146)	0.002*	(0.014)	0.025	(0.230)
Log likelihood	-345.6				-288.0			
No. observations	308				306			
Wald chi-square	76.75	(0.000)			54.8	(0.000)		

Standard errors in parentheses \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001.  
Note: RC is the reference base category.

multinomial model. An important finding is that duration of stay plays an important role in a refugee's ability to be self-employed in Uganda, but it has no significant effect on formal wage employment. The findings in table 4.5 indicate that for every additional year a refugee stays, the likelihood of their being self-employed increases by about 0.8 percent, possibly suggesting that the longer refugees stay, the more they become accustomed to the local environment, enhancing their self-reliance in local communities.

Also, according to a 2009 UNHCR study, refugees in Uganda prefer self-employment to employment for reasons mainly related to language issues, which can create the conditions for abuse and exploitation in the form of low, inadequate, and unreliable compensation. The longer refugees remain in the country, the more likely they are to find networks to help them become independently employed (Macchiavello 2003).

In the UNHCR study sample, 16.2 percent of employed individuals lost their jobs compared with only 2.8 percent of self-employed individuals. Being self-employed in the Kampala labor market—namely owning a business, no matter how small—offers refugees the best chance for a good income and more control over the continuity of their businesses, which then enhances their ability to succeed.

Finally, the study presents evidence that self-employed refugees are more successful than employed refugees:

“Of the working self-employed individuals: 26.1 percent are ‘self-sufficient,’ 15.5 percent are on the way to self-sufficiency, 7.7 percent struggle to survive, and 2.8 percent lost their self-sufficiency. By comparison, among the

employed: 23.2 percent are self-sufficient, 4.1 percent are on the way to self-sufficiency, 10.5 percent struggle to survive and 3.5 percent lost their self-sufficiency. In short, being self-employed offers better chances to attain self-sufficiency than being employed.”

Therefore, the government of Uganda, UNHCR, and other stakeholders should devise the means to progressively scale back food handouts to refugees who have stayed in the country for a long time, supporting employment opportunities and thus encouraging their self-reliance.

**Education.** Education levels, particularly secondary and postsecondary, play an important role in the labor participation of refugees. Refugees with a secondary education are about 0.8 percent more likely to be formally or self-employed, and refugees with postsecondary education are about 3 percent more likely to be formally or self-employed compared with those with no education. In model 2, a postsecondary education increases the likelihood of working by about 4 percent; secondary and postsecondary education increases self-employment by 3 and 8 percent, respectively. The implication of these findings is that education and training have the potential to enhance skills and thereby increase the chances of refugees being employed. Policy measures to enhance refugee training to attain at least postsecondary education are therefore critical for enabling their entry in the labor market and their becoming self-reliant.

**Marital status.** Being married increases the probability of a refugee being self-employed by 1–5 percent. Just being married has implications for acquiring a job. Male refugees are about 0.8 percent more likely to be engaged in formal employment and 3 percent in self-employment



than their female counterparts compared with the unemployed base category. The finding shows gender-biased labor participation rates among refugees, with female refugees being disadvantaged—pointing to the need for specific measures aimed at empowering female refugees to realize self-reliance.

**Age.** Age impacts female participation in the formal labor market. One additional year of age increases the probability of participating in the formal labor market by 5 percent and increases the chances of being self-employed by 2 percent. The estimated marginal effect on age squared is negative and statistically significant. It shows that, after a given age, the probability of acquiring formal employment decreases by 1 percent. This finding explains the inability of older refugees to acquire new skills that can enable them meet the formal job requirements in Uganda. The findings reveal that age has an important implication on female refugee participation in self-employment.

**Experience.** Refugees with previous job experiences in their countries of origin are more likely to be formally or self-employed. One year of former experience increases the likelihood of being formally employed by 0.6 percent and self-employed by 0.1 percent. It is important to note that refugees with job experience in Uganda are more likely to participate in the formal labor market or be self-employed by 4 and 0.2 percent, respectively. Job experience in Uganda that required proficiency in the English language trumps home-country experience for refugees. This result is not surprising because refugees are constrained by a lack of English proficiency, which limits their entry in the formal labor market. The failure of employers to recognize the academic qualifications of refugees further inhibits their entry in the labor market.

**Frequency of payment of wages.** Daily and weekly payment of wages has a significant impact on formal labor participation, by about 0.2 percent and 1 percent, respectively; monthly payments have no effect, implying that it is difficult for refugees to find permanent jobs. The descriptive evidence revealed that most working refugees do so without a contract of any kind, which carries the risk of being exploited. Being a registered refugee increases the likelihood of self-employment by 2–3 percent, but it has no effect on formal employment.

**School-going children.** The number of children attending school reduces the likelihood of a woman participating in the formal labor market by about 0.8 percent; it increases rate of self-employment by about 1 percent.

**Ill health.** Predictably, illness has a significant decreasing effect on refugee participation in formal employment, reducing formal job participation by 0.2–1 percent.

**Urban refugees.** Refugees in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to be formally or self-employed by 2 and 5 percent, respectively. The marginal effects in model 2 reveal that refugees residing in urban settlements are 0.5 percent more likely to be formally employed than those in rural settlements and 2 percent more likely to be self-employed. Uganda is an agro-based economy, with over 80 percent of the population employed in the agriculture sector. This explains why there is less wage-based employment in rural refugee settlements, where farming is the main activity. Many refugees work on family farms allocated to them by the Office of the Prime Minister. Some work on neighboring farms. Efforts are needed to settle refugees in urban areas as a more feasible means of promoting their self-reliance.

**Hospitality.** The hospitality of local host communities has a real impact on the potential participation of refugees in the formal labor market and on their being self-employed relative to being unemployed. The estimated marginal effect shows that the hospitality of the host community is likely to increase the employability of refugees by about 2 percent for formal employment and 1 percent for self-employment compared with host communities exhibiting a lack of hospitality. Hospitality was analyzed with the aim of exploring the components of hospitality from the characteristics of the host communities in refugee settlements areas. Refugees and locals were asked closed interview questions about their perceptions and interactions with locals.

**Job-search training.** Training refugees in job-search skills increases their likelihood of participating in the formal labor market by 0.2–0.5 percent compared with those who do not received training. This result indicates the need to provide this type of training and job information to refugees to increase their chances of being absorbed into the labor market.

## Access to Productive Capital

### Land

Access to land in the context of refugees in Uganda refers to the ability of refugees to use allocated land for residential and cultivation purposes in order to enhance self-reliance rather than being considered a legal right. The data show that about 49 percent of respondents in Nakivale and Rwamwanja are using gazetted land, and 73 percent of respondents in Adjumani, Miriyei, and Mungula are using community land for cultivation, compared with 1.8 percent of urban respondents. The official land allocation by the Office of the Prime Minister's is 50 x 50 meters per household for residential and agriculture purposes. However, since December 2013, after

the large influx of refugees during the 2012 Congolese emergency and the 2013 South Sudanese emergency, the size of the land allocated to refugees was reduced to a plot size of 20 x 30 meters for residential areas and 50 x 50 meters for arable land. Despite this, many of the respondents reported having not received arable land but instead were allocated a residential plot. The duration of the refugee presence in Uganda significantly influences the probability of accessing community land by about 7 percent compared with 1 percent for accessing gazetted land in the settlements. Refugees utilize 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. This is enabled by their freedom of movement and right to work, enshrined in the Refugees Act of 2006.

**Duration of stay.** Among the factors determining access to land is the duration of stay of the refugee, which increases use by about 1 percent for each additional year, and the educational level of the refugee, with secondary education increasing the likelihood to access community land by about 4 percent (table 4.6).

**Marital status and size of household.** Marital status significantly increases the probability of gaining access to land compared with unmarried refugees by about 2 percent for gazetted land and 6 percent for community land. With other factors remaining constant, heads of households who are married are about 4 percent more likely to access land. Household size increases the likelihood of access to land by about 2 percent for community land use and 1.8 percent for the full sample model, which can be explained by the greater sense of responsibility married refugees feel to meet the demands for additional food for their households.

**Table 4.6. Estimated Marginal Effects for the Determinants of Access to Land for Refugees**

Variables	Gazetted Land		Community Land		Full Sample	
	ME	p-val	ME	P-value	ME	p-val
Refugee duration in years	0.008**	(0.021)	0.023**	(0.004)	0.009*	(0.052)
Marital status (married=1)	0.022*	(0.081)	0.064**	(0.003)	0.043***	(0.000)
Female	0.005*	(0.067)	0.123*	(0.079)	0.071**	(0.016)
Age of household head	-0.041	(0.159)	-0.023*	(0.064)	-0.013	(0.333)
Age squared of household head	0.017*	(0.087)	0.091**	(0.029)	0.084*	(0.056)
Employment status (RC: unemployed)						
Wage employment	0.062	(0.411)	0.008*	(0.064)	-0.023	(0.764)
Self-employment	0.031*	(0.071)	0.012***	(0.000)	0.031**	(0.004)
Education (RC: no education)						
Primary	0.055	(0.419)	0.036	(0.621)	0.038	(0.653)
Secondary	0.029	(0.158)	0.041*	(0.075)	0.077*	(0.099)
Postsecondary	-0.148	(0.108)	-0.053	(0.607)	-0.142	(0.244)
Household size	0.016	(0.104)	0.022**	(0.024)	0.018*	(0.087)
Registered refugee	0.013*	(0.057)	0.067**	(0.035)	0.042***	(0.008)
Hospitality	0.226	(0.135)	0.052*	(0.087)	0.110**	(0.038)
Crime	-0.049	(0.391)	-0.036	(0.549)	-0.061	(0.379)
Land rent	-0.041	(0.128)	-0.112**	(0.025)	-0.094***	(0.001)
Settlement area (Urban=0, rural=1)	0.015**	(0.004)	0.027***	(0.001)	0.129*	(0.063)
Observations	202		134		457	
Log likelihood	-111.91		-68.43		-183.6	
chi2	53.81	(0.000)	22.95	(0.085)	141.4	(0.000)
Pseudo R2	19.23		26.00		28.12	

P-values in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
 Note: RC reference base category.

**Gender of head of household.** The importance of the gender of the head of household in accessing land is seen as significant in the settlement areas. The estimated marginal effects demonstrate that male-headed households have access to about 1 percent more gazetted land and 13 percent more community land than those that are female-headed households. These results highlight the gender discrimination that exists regarding access to productive resources, which impacts self-reliance among refugees.

**Age of head of household.** The age of the head of household has a significant effect on access to land. The marginal effect on age is negative and statistically significant regarding the use of community land, while age squared is positive for gazetted and community land use. This means that young refugees are less likely to access community land, but the probability of access to land increases by about 2 percent for gazetted land and 9 percent for community land for each additional year.

**Employment status.** Employment status influences access to land. Refugees who are self-employed have a 3 percent higher probability of accessing gazetted land and a 23 percent higher probability of accessing community land than those who are unemployed. Refugees with additional sources of income increase their probability of land access by approximately 16 percent in the full sample compared with unemployed refugees. The interviewed host community explained that refugees are usually more creative and have good local networks in the host community. They want more land from which to profit and generate additional income. Through the local village structures of operating NGOs, the government and partner organizations could put in place measures to allow enterprising refugees to acquire more land so they can advance their self-reliance and support their fellow refugees by involving them in cultivation. This finding has important policy implications for the Ugandan government and all stakeholders. Particular attention should be paid to programs providing refugees with relevant short-term skills training that allows them to become self-employed in fields such as high-yield farming, tailoring, brickmaking, and sewing.

**Hospitality of host community.** Another very important factor affecting the probability of refugees' accessing productive capital is the hospitality of the host communities. It increases the likelihood of a refugee acquiring community land for farming by 5 percent across all sites and acquiring any kind of land by 11 percent compared with host communities hostile to refugees. This finding means that host communities that are receptive to refugees enhance the probability that the refugees will be self-reliant. The government of Uganda's strategy to be more sensitive to refugees and host communities is critical to fostering better refugee-host community relations and to extending services provided to refugees to host communities,

as was done in Mungula, Mirieyi, and Adjumani, where 30 percent of all services are targeted to host communities.

**Refugee status.** The registration status of refugees by the Office of the Prime Minister/ UNHCR influences their access to land in settlement areas. The estimated marginal effects show that being a registered refugee increases access to gazetted land by 1 percent and community land by 8 percent, a finding in line with the 2006 Ugandan Refugees Act's article on land access, which gives refugees the right to rent land under lease arrangements. Rents for land also influences access to land in settlement areas. The estimated marginal effects show that a unit increase in land rent reduces access to community land among refugees by 11 percent and among overall respondents by 9 percent. This finding highlights that living in a rural settlement influences access to land. The estimated marginal effects show that living in rural settlements increases access to community land by 11 percent.

#### **Credit**

Access to credit is a critical element with regard to quality and timely inputs for refugees needing to make investments in agriculture. Credit is also critical for initiating self-employment ventures, including small-scale activities and enterprises. In the absence of needed collateral, and with a poor network of financial institutions and the remoteness of settlement areas, the credit supply is limited. Access to credit among refugees is influenced by a number of factors, discussed below.

**Duration of stay.** Male refugees' access to credit is significantly influenced by the duration of their stay in the host community; there is no effect for female refugees. For each additional year the male refugee stays, the probability of his accessing

**Table 4.7. Estimated Marginal Effects for the Determinants of Access to Credit for Refugees**

Variables	Male		Female		Full Sample	
	ME	p-val	ME	p-val	ME	p-val
Refugee duration in years	0.004*	(0.084)	0.004	(0.232)	0.005	(0.205)
Employment status (RC: unemployed)						
Wage employment	0.051***	(0.001)	0.061***	(0.004)	0.982	(0.178)
Self-employment	0.037***	(0.001)	0.025***	(0.002)	0.093*	(0.086)
Marital status (RC: married=1)	0.024*	(0.096)	0.030	(0.602)	0.008*	(0.059)
Age of household head	0.004	(0.780)	0.002	(0.887)	0.200	(0.979)
Age squared of household head	-0.070	(0.707)	-0.052	(0.780)	0.025	(0.886)
Gender (male=1, female=0)					0.027*	(0.087)
Education (RC: no education)						
Primary	0.007	(0.941)	-0.000	(0.800)	0.146	(0.115)
Secondary	0.032**	(0.023)	0.012**	(0.046)	0.007	(0.918)
Postsecondary	0.090**	(0.032)	0.023*	(0.079)	0.073*	(0.059)
Household size	0.010	(0.290)	0.011	(0.261)	0.013	(0.104)
Registered refugee	0.068	(0.243)	0.066	(0.233)	0.023	(0.808)
Hospitality of host community	0.069	(0.213)	0.111**	(0.046)	0.115**	(0.044)
Crime	-0.082**	(0.013)	-0.012**	(0.030)	-0.066	(0.202)
Home area (RC: rural)	0.011**	(0.016)	(0.030)	(0.581)	0.041**	(0.046)
Land access	0.002**	(0.020)	(0.051)	(0.338)	0.042**	(0.030)
Observations	159		151		85	
Log likelihood	-59.26		-52.69		-18.01	
chi2	23.13	(0.000)	26.88	(0.000)	49.05	(0.000)
PseudoR2	16		20		56	

P-values in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.  
Note: RC reference base category.

credit increases by approximately 0.4 percent (table 4.7). Length of stay does not affect a woman's ability to get credit at all.

**Employment among male refugees.** Wage employment and self-employment among male refugees significantly increases the probability of their accessing credit by about 5 and 3 percent, respectively, compared with those who are unemployed; for female refugees, the probability increases by 6 and 2 percent, respectively. Across all study sites, wage employment increases the probability of access to credit by about 9 percent

compared with the unemployed, which is quite instructive of the need for the government of Uganda, UNHCR, and the donor community to support qualified refugees seeking jobs to promote their self-reliance.

**Education.** The estimated marginal effects for credit access clearly articulate the importance of education in increasing the probability of a household accessing credit. Table 6 shows that the attainment of higher education has an increasing effect on access to credit. A male head of household with a postsecondary education

(vocational or university) is about 9 percent more likely to access credit than one with no education; a secondary education increases the likelihood of accessing credit by 3 percent. A female head of household with a postsecondary education is about 2 percent more likely to have access to credit than one with no education; a secondary education increases the likelihood by about 1 percent. Primary education has no effect on credit access compared with the base category of no education. The policy implication of this finding is that the government of Uganda, UNHCR, and all stakeholders should enable access to higher education for refugees. Unlike urban refugees in Kampala and other towns, access to secondary and postsecondary education for most refugees living in rural settlements remains a huge challenge.

**Gender.** The gender of the head of household is another important determinant of refugee access to credit in Uganda. The estimated marginal effects in model 3 show that a male-headed household is about 1 percent more likely to access credit than a female-headed household with other

factors remaining constant. This finding highlights the gender discrimination in terms of accessing productive resources, which increases the female refugees' exposure to risk. Local women's savings and credit associations need to promote greater access to credit for women, using seed money from operating NGOs. Vocational training and skills-enhancement efforts should be supported.

**Hospitality.** The hospitality of the host community increases the probability of a refugee accessing productive capital. If a local community is friendly, it increases the likelihood that a female refugee will access credit by about 11 percent; for the full sample, it increases the probability by 12 percent. High crime rates reduce the probability of a male refugee accessing credit by about 8 percent. This finding points to the need for the government to ensure compliance and rule of law in refugee settlement areas. UNHCR, stakeholders, and NGOs operating in host communities, in coordination with the Ugandan police force, should focus on measures to reduce crime rates with community sensitization and refugee self-governance through the welfare councils and block leaders.

# CHAPTER 5

## Conclusion

**Uganda is widely recognized for its liberal and progressive refugee policy and legal framework, which embeds international conventions and declarations, regional agreements, national legislation, and regulations.** For decades, Uganda has maintained an open-door policy for anyone seeking asylum, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion, and other than a few isolated incidents mainly related to sensitive security issues, the country has adhered to its principles. In law and practice, Uganda accords refugees and asylum

seekers humane treatment, generally respects their civil rights, and ensures that they are treated in a sensitive and dignified manner, especially women, children, the elderly, and the disabled.

**Uganda’s policy and legal framework provides refugees with significant rights, including freedom of movement.** This is an important enabling right for refugees to exercise their socioeconomic rights, including the provision of travel and identity documents and the right to seek work without



Children at play in refugee settlement  
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paying fees for a work permit, as is required of other aliens. Freedom of movement allows refugees to access employment opportunities and actively participate in the labor force in wage- and self-employment situations. Urban refugees are able to lease land and own property. The provision of land for the habitation and cultivation of refugees enables cultivation for self-sustenance by refugees, but the principles of association that restrict refugees from profit-making unions adversely affects their ability to interact with the market and receive a good return on their agricultural produce, which leaves them susceptible to exploitation by unscrupulous traders with regard to prices and weighing at the marketplace.

**The settlement approach adopted by Uganda is quite progressive.** Refugees stay alongside local communities in designated settlements on gazetted or community lands, fostering interaction between refugee and host. The proximity has enabled the integration of basic services, including education, health, water, and other community services. Thirty percent of provided services are earmarked for the host community; the remaining 70 percent are aimed at refugees. The service integration has improved access to services, especially by host communities that neighbor settlements, improving relationships among refugees and host communities. The host population appreciates the integrated approach, acknowledging the great improvement in services, especially in health care, with an increased availability of drugs and health workers; in education, with improved availability of teachers in schools; and better roads.

**The policy framework has limitations.** An important limitation of an otherwise progressive refugee policy and legal framework relates to the inability of refugees to acquire Ugandan citizenship regardless of how long they remain in the country. This

leaves many refugees in a protracted refugee state when the durable solutions of return or resettlement are not possible.

**Coordinated—and where possible integrated—delivery of basic education, health, water, and other community services have provided host communities with numerous benefits.**

Integration at the planning, financing, and management levels is underway, but given how crucial education—especially at the secondary and postsecondary level—is to a refugee’s ability to access gainful employment, and given the current limitations of education delivery beyond the primary level, a more concerted effort is needed by the government of Uganda and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). COBURWAS, a community-initiated integrated education model offers some useful ideas. Similarly, while primary health care is well organized, there is a great need for investments from the government of Uganda at the district and regional levels to meet the needs of referral medical services for refugees and nationals. Investment in skills and vocational training are essential to improving the employability of refugees and nationals; this will require a concerted effort. Focused attention is also needed to address gender-based discrimination in accessing land, credit, input and output markets, and employment opportunities.

**The Settlement Transformative Agenda and the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy offer excellent opportunities to design and implement a developmental approach that builds on past achievements and addresses challenges related to the Self-Reliance Strategy and Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program.** Close collaboration between the Office of the Prime



Minister and UNHCR, the key operational entities, is crucial, as is the active involvement of key stakeholders, such as district leaders, sector ministries, host communities, and refugees in the planning and implementation phases. Capacity building of local government administrations is needed to ensure that local development planning effectively addresses refugee-related issues. Recruitment of qualified staff oriented toward and knowledgeable about an implementation culture that is shifting from a relief/humanitarian approach to a development one is required. A change in the philosophy of refugee assistance is needed: refugees should be viewed as economic actors in charge of their destinies (development approach) rather than as beneficiaries of aid (humanitarian approach). The Self-Reliance Strategy and Development Assistance to Refugee-hosting Areas program offer critical lessons that should be considered, but other than a midterm review of the Self-Reliance Strategy, which informed the creation of the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program, no proper evaluation of the initiatives seems to exist. A thorough evaluation of both is essential to inform the Settlement Transformative Agenda and the ReHoPE program.

**Programming should be informed by a deeper situational analysis of the nine refugee-hosting districts where the Settlement Transformative Agenda and ReHoPE will be implemented.**

Specific focus needs to be on land tenure systems, cultural and social settings, economic and

livelihood opportunities, and infrastructure status. The programs should be tailored to meet the differentiated needs of refugees on settlements in gazetted lands in the southern and southwestern districts, on community lands in the northern and northwestern districts, and those self-settled in urban areas. To ensure impact, the focus should be on transformative investments to address the pressing needs of refugees and host communities and investments that will jump-start local economies, such as a water treatment plant in Nakivale and feeder roads in Kyangwali. A comprehensive approach is needed to address gender-based discrimination in education and livelihoods and reduce the security and safety risks faced by women and girls. Returns from agricultural livelihoods could be greatly enhanced with improved access to input and output markets and technological interventions for improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

**A few modifications to policy implementation can help refugees.** The freedom of movement ensured by the policy framework needs to be carefully implemented to enable refugees to move in and out of settlement areas more easily. This would include requisite oversight so that refugees can better coordinate and collaborate with host communities on economic activities. Specific attention and backstopping will be required to enable urban refugees, especially youth, to benefit from social and economic opportunities without being exploited or engaging in risky behavior.



# APPENDIX A

## Methodology

### Study Design

The study employed qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative aspect employed exploratory and cross-sectional descriptive study designs. For the exploratory design, a document review was conducted involving a content analysis technique synthesizing the legal and policy framework that governs refugees in Uganda. The cross-sectional design employed the administration of individual questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions that solicited opinions from a cross-section of resource persons on the policy framework, its impact on the protection of refugees, and the enhancement of their socio-economic prospects. Resource persons interviewed include: officials from local government, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); implementing partners in refugee settlement areas; refugee welfare councils; opinion leaders among refugees who are self-settled in urban areas; refugees in urban and rural areas; and the host communities they live alongside. Social service providers in host districts were also interviewed to gauge their perceptions on the integration of services. Observations of policy implementation processes were conducted at points of entry for asylum seekers. For the most part, the methodology approach is informed by the literature review relevant to the Ugandan refugees (see appendix B).

### Study Area

This study was carried out at numerous rural and urban refugee sites in Uganda. Kampala and Adjumani urban areas were sampled for conducting interviews with self-settled refugees. The Kampala City sample is larger than that of Adjumani because more refugees live in Kampala City than anywhere else in the country. This is largely because it is a vibrant commercial center and home to UNHCR's head office as well as several nongovernmental organizations that address human rights issues, including the plight of refugees. The rural sites visited were Adjumani, Nakivale, and Rwamwanja. Points of entry visited for observation of the process were reception centers in Chanika, Bunagana, and Nyakabande.

The selection of the rural and urban research sites was based on time and cost implications while taking into account that refugees are not a homogeneous social class: they have different income levels and countries of origin.

### Qualitative Data

#### Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was used to determine the target group for participation. Purposive sampling was used at an earlier stage to identify the sample frame from the sample population, which included refugee welfare councils, refugees living in settlements, host communities,

local officials in host communities, staff from the Office of the Prime Minister working in the settlement camps, and staff from UNHCR and nongovernmental organizations (implementing and operational partners) carrying out humanitarian activities for refugees in selected settlements. With regard to the Office of the Prime Minister, the focus was on senior settlement officers, resettlement desk officers, and settlement commandants. With regard to UNHCR, implementing partners, and nongovernmental organizations, the focus was on team leaders and program officers. In host districts, interviews were conducted with senior personnel in the social services sectors of education, health, and community services as well as local council executives at the settlement level.

A sample design should be based on a population with fairly accurate statistics, but it has long been recognized that the collection of accurate data on displaced populations faces formidable obstacles, including refusal to participate out of a sense of fear. And with the steady influx of refugees in Uganda, no accurate official statistics exist.

Qualitative data collection employed in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted in the form of narratives, using interview guides for individual informants to gather data from 320 key informants with the help of 10 field assistants. Focus group discussions were conducted with 12 groups of female refugees and 12 groups of male refugees. Of the 12 groups in each gender bracket, six comprised adults; the remaining 12 comprised adolescents. Two focus group discussions, one for male and one for female participants in each age bracket were held at each selected refugee settlement and the respective host community.

Discussions were conducted at the institutional level with UNHCR officials and one team leader from the settlement areas, one settlement commandant from each settlement camp, one resident desk officer from each refugee settlement area, three representatives from each refugee welfare committee, and two settlement-level local council officials from the host communities. Interviews were also conducted with 40 opinion leaders from among self-settled refugees and with 10 from the host communities, six heads of school, three people in charge of health centers in refugee-hosting areas, and one program officer from each implementing and operating partner that provides social services in each of the three settlement areas visited.

Urban refugees were engaged at the community level to get a sense of how refugee policies support and enhance the lives of refugees in settlements.

The collected qualitative data were coded by theme and condensed for content analysis. The resulting data were summarized, categorized for interpretation, and used for reporting. Analyses of the legal and policy documents were conducted and integrated into the main report.

## Quantitative Data

The assessment administered questionnaires to individual sampled respondents using semistructured instruments. The questionnaire included questions on household background, education, employment, wages, working conditions, access to productive capital (land and credit), access to social amenities, safety, and other sources of household income.

## Study Sample

The field survey covered 500 respondents comprising 350 refugee respondents and 150 host-community respondents from refugee settlements in rural and urban areas. The refugee settlements in rural areas include Nakivale, Rwamanja, Mungula, Mirieyi; the urban areas included Adjumani Town Council and Kampala. A convenient sampling technique was adopted whereby preidentified refugee and local communities were targeted in the settlement areas; it was then expanded using a snowball approach. The questionnaires were completed through one-on-one interviews with heads of households or their spouses from the different groups: Congolese, South Sudanese, Rwandese, and Burundians. Interviews for these groups were conducted by five bilingual assistants. Three of the five assistants were themselves refugees. They targeted male and female refugees and local residents of working age who were either looking for work or were employed.

Prior to the field data collection, the findings of the literature review were compiled and used to guide the design of the questionnaire and fieldwork of the study. The sampling design was also informed by the fact that Ugandan refugees hail from a variety of neighboring countries. The respondents from the communities were approached using a snowball technique that began with their own networks. The sample is purposive rather than representative of the refugees involved.

## Data Collection Tool

The design question was pretested on a sample population in the field to make the questions clearer. The data collection was completed at the end of June 2015. During the pretest, attention

was paid to the consistency of responses obtained and the ease with which responses were elicited. Anything in the questionnaire that was unclear was corrected. To ensure its validity and that it met the required standards, the study questionnaire was iteratively refined.

The questions were presented to heads of households who at the time of the interviews were economically active and aged 15 or older, which is the working age group in Uganda. Economically active people are those of working age who contribute or are available to contribute to the production of goods and services. Employed and unemployed refugees and local residents constitute the economically active population. This population is measured in relation to a brief reference period known as the *currently active* or *labor force*. It gives a measure of the number of persons constituting the supply of labor at a given point in time.

The questionnaire captured issues related to gender experience among male and female refugees, challenges with regard to registration, ease of accessing job information, the reasons for the failure of many to access formal jobs, types of employment, access to training, access to land, and access to and cost of credit, among others. We also investigated whether there is discrimination based on the formality status of refugee as well as any gender-based discrimination regarding country of origin and level of education.

## Theoretical Framework for Empirical Analysis

The present study follows a model of unordered choices where the individual  $i$  will compare the different levels of utility associated with various choices and then choose the one that maximizes his or her utility  $U_{ij}$  among the utilities  $j$

(Combarous 1999). For the individual  $i$ , the utility of choice  $j$  is given by:

$$(1) \quad U_{ij} = \beta' X_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

From equation 1,  $X$  is a vector of observed individual characteristics,  $\beta'$  is the vector of unknown parameters, and  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  a random error term. The utility function is composed of a stochastic component, which is a function of the observed individual characteristics, and a nonstochastic component, which is a linear function of observed variables. The probability that the individual  $i$  will participate in the labor market when employed in sector  $j$  is the probability that the utility of the sector  $j$  is higher than that associated with the other segments, which is given by the following expression:

$$(2) \quad P(U_{ij} - U_{ik}) > \varepsilon_k - \varepsilon_j \quad \text{for } k \neq j; j, k = 0, 1, 2$$

Equation 2 implies that the probability that the individual  $i$  will participate in the labor sector  $j$  is the probability that the differential random components is higher than the difference between the nonrandom components; this is given by:

$$(3) \quad P(X\beta_j - \beta_k) > \varepsilon_k - \varepsilon_j \quad \text{for } k \neq j; j, k = 0, 1, 2$$

The maximization of the underlying utility function produces individual decisions as a function of an average reservation wage and an average disutility of labor. It can be assumed that people weigh the costs and the pecuniary and nonpecuniary benefits associated with the different segments of the labor market before choosing the one that offers the greatest utility (Al Aynaoui 1996).

Thus, the desired wage and the disutility of labor vary according to the choices made. A person chooses a specific job even if the benefits that it offers are less advantageous than those offered by

another. So, if one assumes a lack of entry barriers, people will choose jobs on the basis of their respective comparative advantages, regardless of whether they are pecuniary or nonpecuniary.

## Data Analysis and Empirical Strategy

Before data analysis, the collected data was cleaned, sorted, coded, and entered, resulting in the final data set used in the analysis. The analysis is done using STATA software. To realize the proposed study objective, we used simple descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, standard deviation, graphical analysis, and cross tabulations, among others.

This forms the basis for the empirical analysis that involves estimation of a variant of regression models for factors that affect employment of refugees, land access, and access to finance. The empirical analysis includes a set of explanatory variables proposed from the literature, such as pre- and postmigration education levels, age, registration status, family size, access to credit, duration of stay, previous employment status, local language proficiency, acquired skills, and location of the refugees.

## Analysis of Determinants of Employment Choices

The present study uses a multinomial logit model to determine the economic activities for the refugees and local residents in the resettlement areas. To provide more insight on economic integration and self-reliance of refugees in Uganda, we examined the determinants of employment choice among refugees and local residents in refugee resettlement areas in Uganda by estimating a multinomial logit model. This gives us the marginal effects of being employed in formal employment or informal employment (self-

employed) compared with being unemployed. In this case, the use of the multinomial logit model is justified by the fact that people must choose between three alternatives that are mutually exclusive. In other words, choosing an employment category excludes the possibility of being employed in another employment category at the same time. If we consider those who take part in the labor market, it can be assumed that each individual “*i*” will have to choose between three alternatives ( $j=0, 1$  and  $2$ : namely be formally employed, self-employed, or unemployed). We then calculate the predicted probability of each outcome. We estimate the following model:

$$(4) \quad \Pr(Y_i = j | X_i) = \frac{e^{X_i \beta_j}}{\sum_{k=1}^j e^{X_i \beta_k}} = \alpha + \beta_j X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

In this model,  $Y_i$  is the dependent variable measuring the outcome for individual  $i$ , and  $j$  indexes each outcome of employment status (formal employment ( $j=1$ ) self-employment ( $j=2$ ), and unemployment ( $j=3$ ). For identifiability, unemployment is set as the reference category so that the parameters can be estimated from the multinomial logistic model. For the estimated model, we report the marginal effects or the relative risk ratio because coefficients from a logistic model are hard to interpret and have no meaning. Random factors, as well as unobservable factors influencing employment decisions are captured by the error term  $\varepsilon_i$ . The sign, magnitude, and statistical significance of the coefficients will provide information about the relevance of different factors affecting the employability of refugees in Uganda.

### Access to Agricultural Land and Finance

The study provides insight on access to productive capital in the form of land and credit as a means of economic integration and self-reliance among refugees. Our objective is to examine

whether refugees have access to land and credit or productive capital. In this case, the sample is split between agricultural and nonagricultural employees to ascertain access to land by refugees and local residents in the resettlement areas. Here, we want to know whether refugees derive their livelihoods from agriculture-related activities. This is analyzed using a dichotomous probit model. Using such models, we classify refugees into two groups: those that have access to land or credit and those with no access. We then estimate the probability that a refugee belongs to either group as a function of the observable characteristics, and this yields insightful findings with relevant policy implications. The basic model proposed for this analysis is given by the following expression:

$$(5) \quad Rf\_access_i = \alpha + \beta X_h + \phi X_c + v_i$$

From Equation 6,  $Rf\_access$  denotes access to land or credit of refugee  $i$ . The first estimation focuses on the factors that determine access to land, and the dependent variable  $Rf\_access = 1$  and zero determine otherwise. The second estimation examines the factors that affect access of refugees to productive assets, mainly credit, with  $Rf\_access = 1$  if refugees have access to credit, and otherwise zero. From model 6, household characteristics  $X_h$ , which explain the model, are household size, marital status, premigration education, postmigration education, registration status, on-the-job training, marital status, household size, and children under age 5, among others. In addition,  $X_c$  represent the community characteristics (land tenure system, residence) that explain the model, while  $v_i$  is the normally distributed error term.

**The main independent** variable for the empirical model includes age and age squared and the refuge stay duration as indicator variable for

**Table A.1. Distribution of Respondents by Settlement Area and Gender (percent)**

Gender	Adjumani	Kampala	Mirieyi	Mungula	Nakivale	Rwamwanja
Male	38	42	29	47	50	60
Female	62	58	71	53	50	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field survey June 2015.

duration or number of years in the host country. We also include a variable for current job status as an indicator of accumulated job skills that would increase one's economic integration.

Education level is used as a categorical variable (no education, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education) to capture the different skill levels. In addition, we include a variable of perceived hospitality of the local community to examine how much it affects the promotion of the economic integration of refugees. A categorical variable for marital status is included to examine the effect of household responsibility and need to search for a job. We include the dwelling status of refugees to capture the different employment opportunities between rural and urban areas. We also include the gender of the head of household, crime rates, and land rent rates to capture the land value in the settlement areas.

Table A.1 presents the sample composition of our respondents for this study by age and gender in the different settlement areas. Our study sample consisted of local residents and refugees who arrived in Uganda at least six months prior. The refugee sample consisted of individuals from seven countries: Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan. Data in table A.1 shows that more female refugees were sampled, as high as 71 percent in Mirieyi, 62 percent in Adjumani, 58 percent in Kampala, and 53 percent in Mungula; in Rwamwanja, more men were sampled.

The distribution of respondents by age cohort is presented in table A.2. The sample is grouped into four cohorts: (1) young, ages 15–19; (2) youth, ages 20–24; (3) adult, ages 25–64; and (4) elderly, ages 65 and older. Over 69 percent of respondents from all of the settlements were adult men and women.

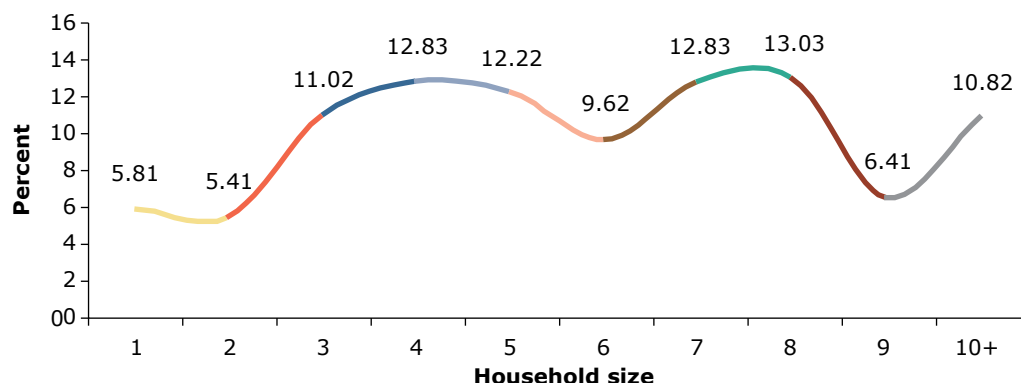
**Table A.2. Distribution of the Respondents in Different Settlement Areas by Age Cohort and Gender (percent)**

Age group	Adjumani		Kampala		Mirieyi		Mungula		Nakivale		Rwamwanja	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Young	0	4	2	3	7	0	5	0	0	4	2	0
Youth	19	8	9	14	7	15	15	0	6	9	8	20
Adult	69	85	87	79	87	85	80	91	91	86	86	77
Elderly	13	4	2	3	0	0	0	9	3	1	5	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey June 2015.



**Figure A.1. Distribution of Respondents by Household Size (percent)**



Source: Field survey June 2015.

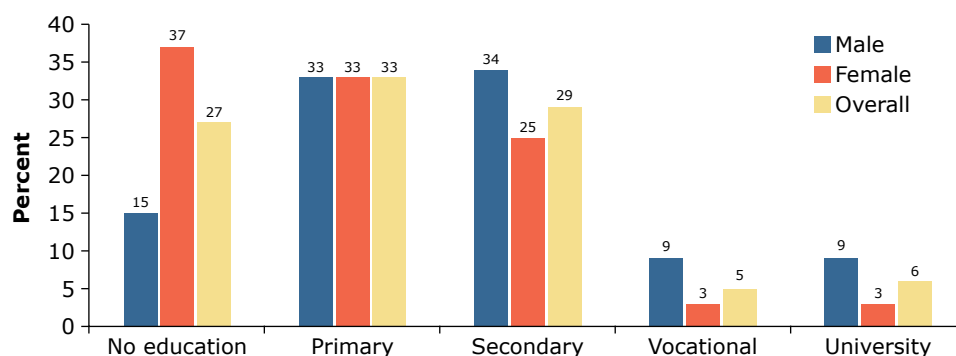
Only a small number of sampled refugees were under 19 years old, and few were above age 65. In Adjumani, however, the elderly (ages 65 and older) are better represented (13 percent) because the refugees have been living there for over 15 years.

more. These results have strong implications in terms of the cost of caring for refugees, demonstrating the need for refugees to become self-reliant and be economically integrated with local communities.

Figure A.1 provides more insight on the household size of the respondents. Most households have at least five members. About 12 percent of households have seven members, 13 percent have eight members, and, 10.8 percent have 10 members or

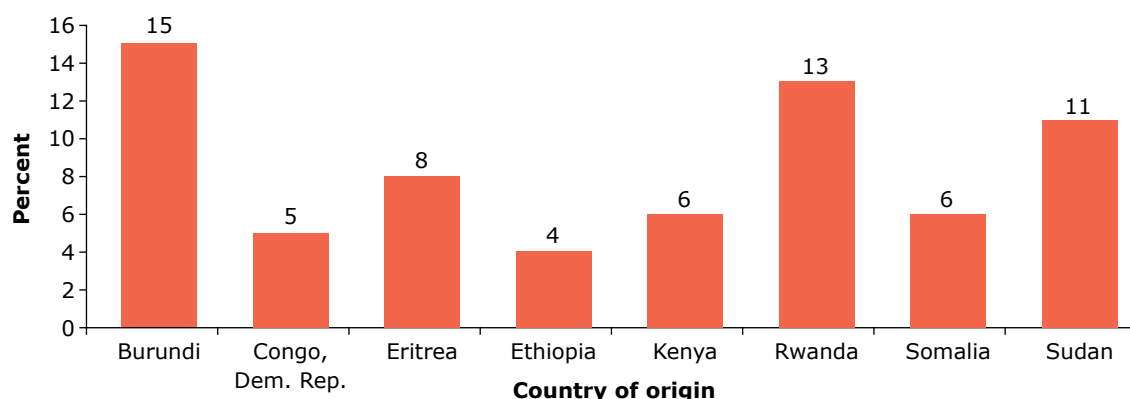
Figure A.2 presents the distribution of education level among refugees, focusing on gender differences. Analysis of the education profile of the refugees and host communities reveal that education levels among refugees are generally

**Figure A.2. Percentage Distribution of Refugees by Educational Attainment and Gender**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.3. Average Duration of Stay Among Refugees by Nationality**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

low, and there are gender inequalities across all education levels. About 37 percent of women have no education compared with only 15 percent of men.

Thirty-four percent of men have a secondary education compared with only 25 percent of women (figure A.2). Fewer women complete a post-secondary education (vocational school or university) than men. This finding also indicates that refugees continue to face significant

challenges in accessing education, especially at the postsecondary level.

Analysis of average years of refugees by nationality (figure A.3) shows that Burundian refugees have stayed an average of 15 years, followed by Rwandan refugees at 13 years, and Sudanese refugees at 11 years.

In terms of shelter in the study areas, overall refugees in settlements stay in temporary households with mud walls and floors and polythene roofs (figure A.4). However, about 89 percent of urban-based refugees in Kampala reside in rental houses, with only 4 percent living in temporary housing. In Adjumani, about 27 percent of the respondents live in rented houses.

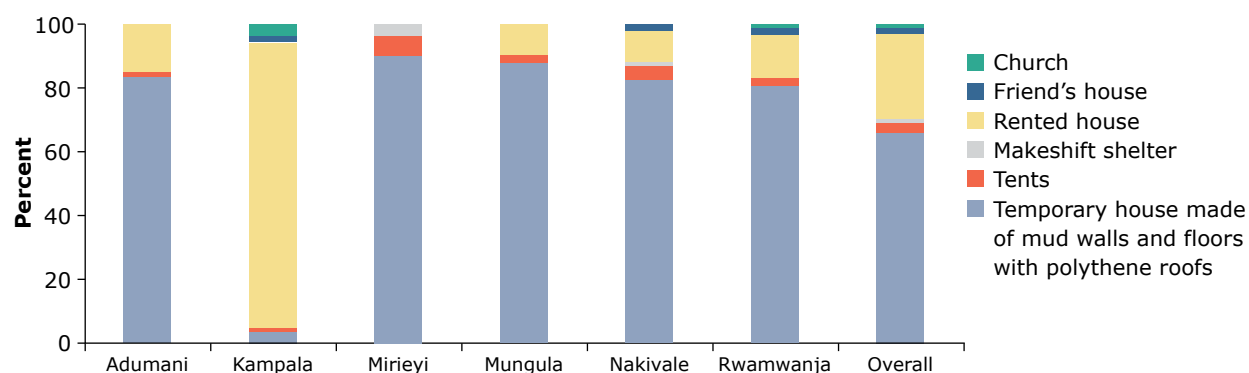
Labor force participation by nationality of respondents was analyzed to provide insight into the employability and economic integration of refugees in host communities (table A.3). Overall, about 43 percent of survey respondents are actively engaged in the labor market—12.8 percent in the formal sector and 30.5 percent

**Table A.3. Employment Status by Nationality of Respondents (percent)**

Country	Unemployed	Employed	Self-employed
Burundi	47.5	17.5	35.0
Congo	42.8	16.5	40.8
Eritrea	62.5	12.5	25.0
Ethiopia	92.3	0	7.7
Rwanda	68.2	13.3	18.5
Somalia	55.6	5.6	38.9
Sudan	62.6	11.1	26.3
Uganda	25.9	25.9	48.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>57.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>30.5</b>

Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.4. Nature of Household Shelter Across the Settlement Areas**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

self-employed. More Burundian refugees (17.5 percent) are active in the formal sector than any other group; the lowest participation rate in the formal sector is among Ethiopian refugees at 0 percent.

The Congolese dominate the self-employment sector at 41 percent, followed by Somali Rwandans at 39 percent, and Burundians at 35 percent. In terms of self-employment, Ethiopian refugees have the lowest rates of self-employment at 7.7 percent. This finding indicates a low rate of

economic integration among Ethiopians and, to a lesser degree, Eritreans.

Table A.4 presents an analysis of economic activities across settlements. The data reveals divergent experiences among refugees: Kampala has the highest rates of male refugees active in the formal sector at 23.9 percent; followed by Nakivale at 16.2 percent; Rwamwanja at 15.4 percent; Mungula at 15 percent; and Mirieyi, the lowest, at 3 percent. The level of female participation observed in the formal sector is very low, averaging

**Table A.4. Distribution of Employment Status by Settlement and Gender (percent)**

Settlement	Male			Female		
	Unemployed	Employed	Self-employed	Unemployed	Employed	Self-employed
Adjumani	63.3	13.3	23.3	70.8	7.7	21.5
Kampala	41.3	23.9	34.8	57.1	9.5	33.3
Mirieyi	53.3	12.5	31.3	81.1	0.0	18.9
Mungula	52.0	15.0	33.0	57.1	14.3	28.6
Nakivale	55.9	16.2	27.9	59.3	8.8	31.9
Rwamwanja	51.7	15.4	32.9	53.2	12.7	34.1
Total	52.9	16.1	30.5	63.1	8.8	28.1

Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Table A.5. Distribution of Occupation of Refugees by Settlements and Gender (percent)**

	Male				Female			
	Agriculture	Education	Trade	Other	Agriculture	Education	Trade	Other
Adjumani	76.0	4.0	20.0	0.0	81.5	12.5	12.0	0.0
Kampala	4.6	11.4	75.0	9.1	3.4	3.4	89.8	3.4
Mirieyi	82.7	08.2	9.1	0.0	86.5	7.7	5.9	0.0
Mungula	80.0	0.1	10.0	10.0	90.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
Nakivale	78.3	2.2	13.0	6.5	64.6	8.3	25.0	2.1
Rwamwanja	82.1	0.0	10.3	7.7	69.0	0.0	31.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Table A.6. Percentage Distribution of Refugee Access to Different Services by Settlements**

Access to	Adjumani	Kampala	Mirieyi	Mungula	Nakivale	Rwamwanja	Overall
Education	86	75	71	95	81	72	72
Health	98	84	85	90	95	95	92
Clean water	81	79	85	93	77	75	80
Market	48	26	24	49	17	19	26
Security	67	66	53	84	73	64	68
Electricity	21	71	4	12	5	3	21

Source: Field Survey June 2015.

about 9 percent, compared with 28 percent who are self-employed.

Table A.5 presents the occupations of refugees by settlement and gender. Over 78 percent of surveyed refugees in rural settlements are engaged in agricultural activities compared with only 5 percent in urban areas. In Kampala, about 75 percent male refugees and 90 percent female refugees are engaged in trade. A small number of refugees are engaged in occupations that require higher skills, such as educational services.

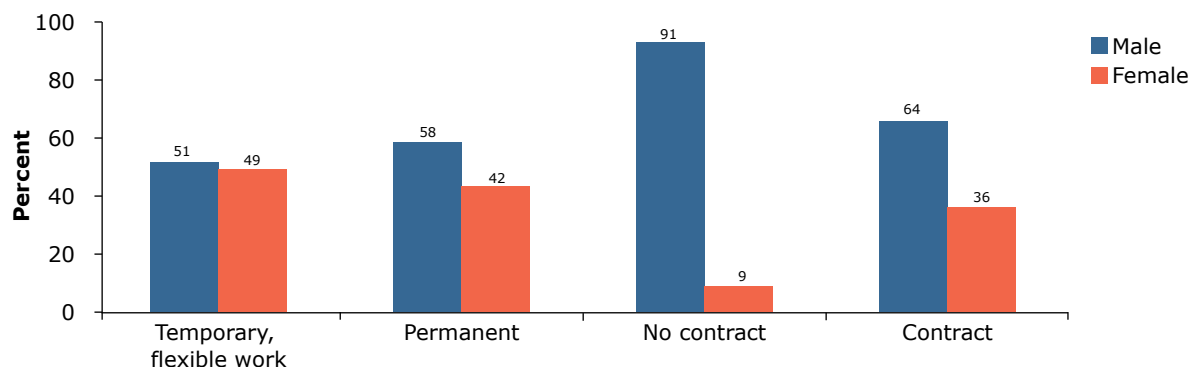
Table A.6 presents the status of access to selected services in different settlement areas. Seventy-two percent of refugees in all settlement areas have access to primary education, health services, and

clean water, but only 26 percent have access to the market. Another issue of concern is poor access to clean energy.

Figure A.5 presents types of employment for all working respondents. The participation of men in employment without a contract compared with women is very high, but it is comparable across other employment types.

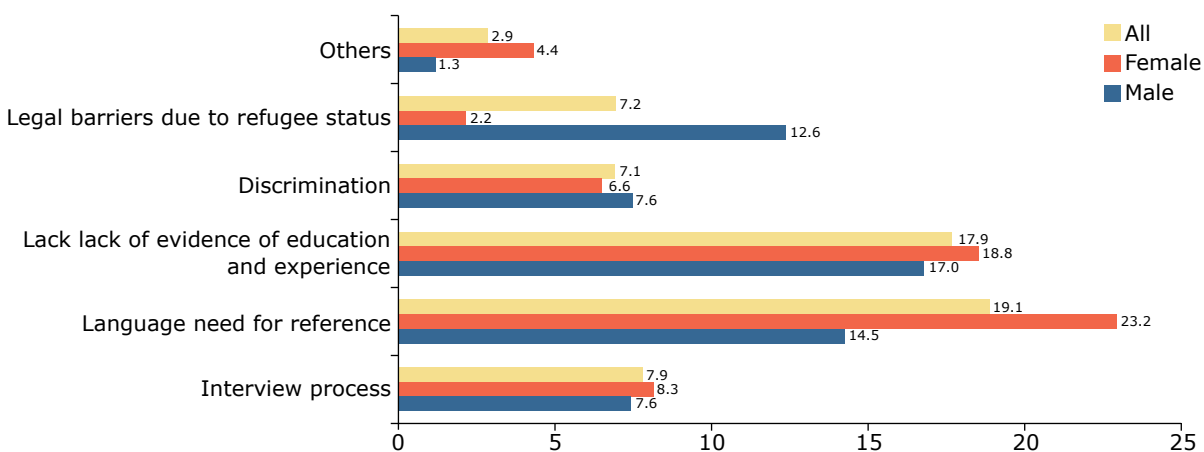
An analysis of the barriers faced by refugees looking for jobs (figure A.6) reveals that the language barrier is the main obstacle to recruitment at 23 percent among women and 19 percent among men, followed by a lack of academic evidence at 19 percent among women and 18 percent among men. The least-cited reported factor is legal

**Figure A.5. Distribution of Employment Status (percent)**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.6. Analysis of Barriers Faced by Refugees to Job Recruitment by Gender (percent)**



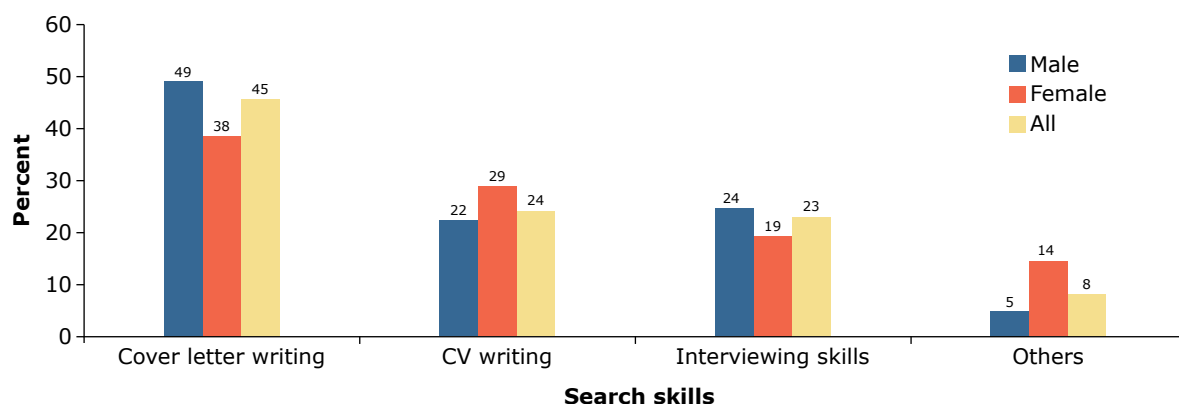
Source: Field Survey June 2015.

barriers among women at 2 percent and among men at 7 percent.

Figure A.7 presents the distribution by gender for different job search skills acquired by respondents. Cover letter writing was the most commonly acquired skill, followed by CV/resume writing and interviewing skills.

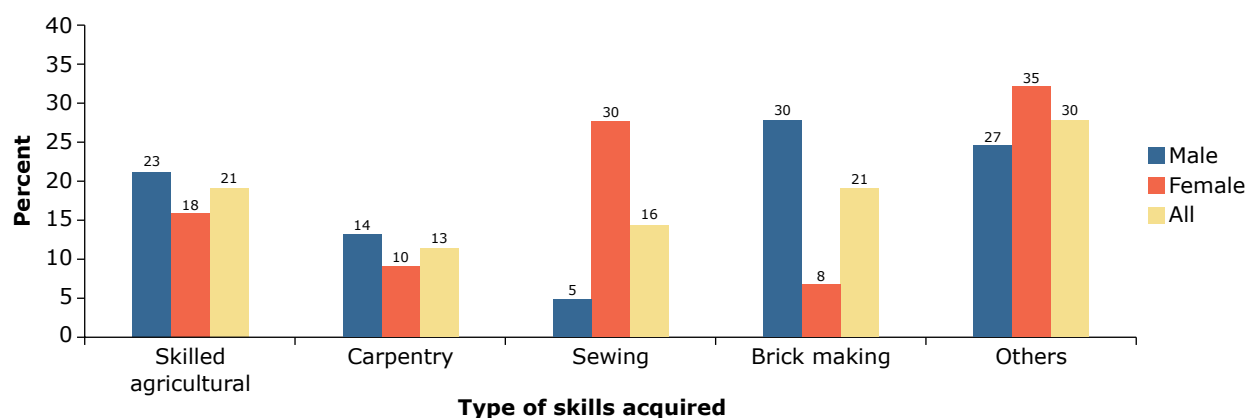
Figure A.8 shows that 30 percent of women acquired sewing skills, while 30 percent of men acquired skills in brickmaking. Twenty-three percent of men and 18 percent of women acquired agricultural skills, and 14 percent of men and 10 percent of women acquired carpentry skills. Thirty-five percent of women and 27 percent of men acquired other skills, such as bookkeeping, arts, and design.

**Figure A.7. Job Search Skills by Gender (percent)**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.8. Employability Skills Training Acquired**



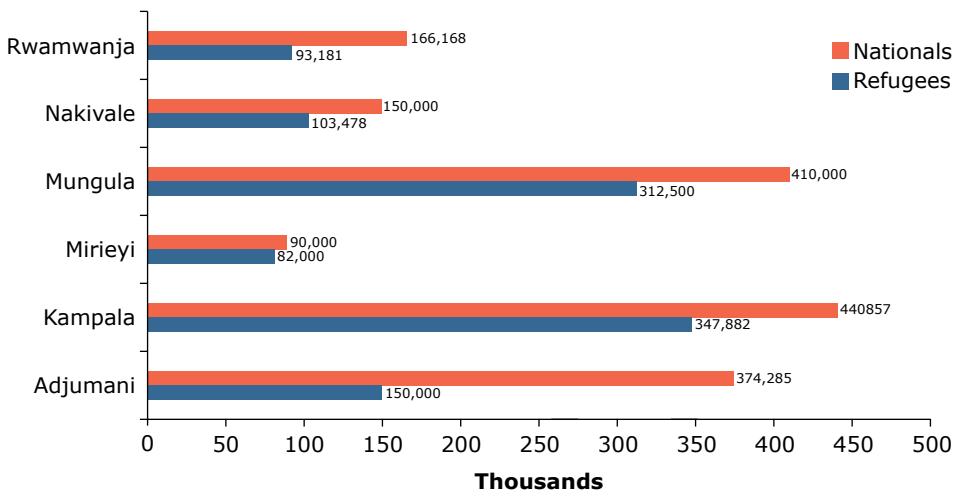
Source: Field Survey June 2015.

### Wages and Benefits

Figure A.9 presents average monthly income by settlement area and refugee status. Overall, Ugandan nationals have higher average monthly incomes than refugees across all settlements. Kampala reports the highest average salary of Shs 440,857 for nationals and Shs 347,882 for refugees.

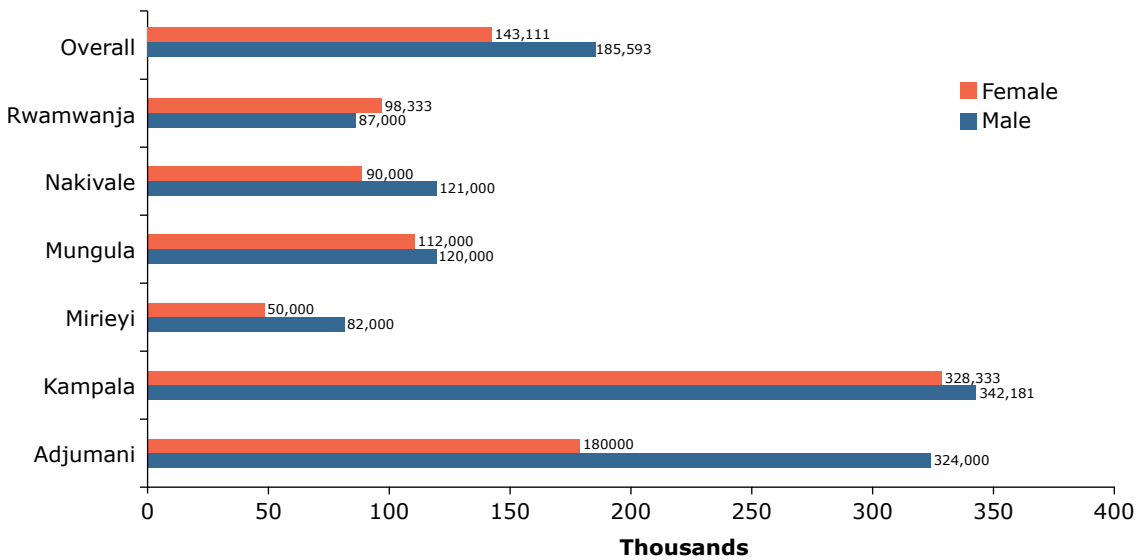
Looking at average wages from a gender perspective by settlement (figure A.10), results show that urban refugees in Kampala and Adjumani earn more than their counterparts in rural settlements. In addition, average monthly wages are lowest in the Miriyei settlement, with female refugees being paid less than their male counterparts.

**Figure A.9. Average Monthly Income of Refugees by Settlement Area and Refugee Status (in Shs)**



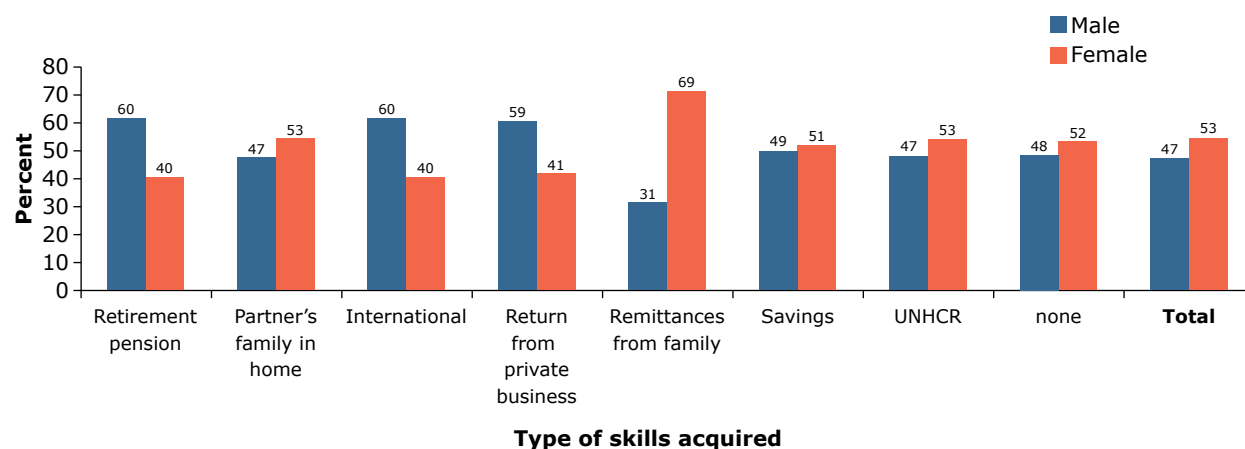
Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.10. Average Refugee Monthly Earning by Gender and Settlement Area (in Shs)**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.11. Percentage of Household Receiving Additional Income by Source of Income and Gender**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

The low wages of refugees are often complemented with alternative sources of support (figure A.11). Overall, 53 percent of female refugees reported additional sources of income compared with 47 percent of male refugees. Around 69 percent of female refugees and 36 percent of male refugees stated that they get additional income from remittances from their families. Sixty percent of male refugees and 40 percent of female refugees reported retirement pensions and internal organizations as additional sources of income. More female refugees (51 percent) than male refugees (49 percent) reported savings as additional income.

### Livelihoods Activities

Refugees in Kampala are engaged in a wide range of economic activities, including petty trading of accessories, selling clothing materials, retail trading, brokering with their country of origin, tailoring, and running mini-restaurants and bars. The Congolese and Rwandan refugees are mainly involved in the running of mini-restaurants and bars. Refugees who are mostly from Eritrea run Internet cafes and money transfer services; Somali

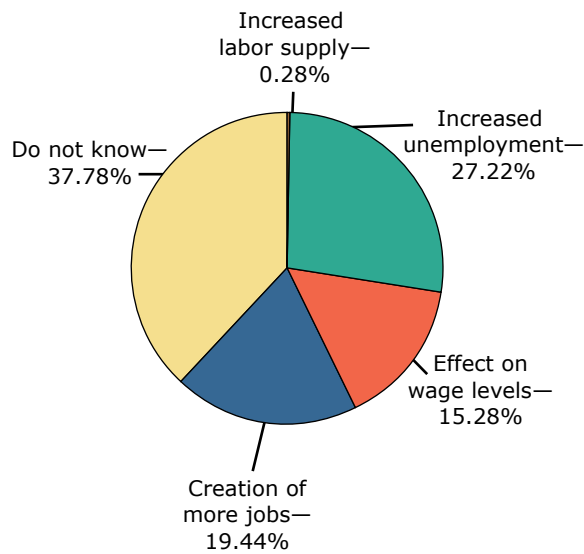
refugees are often involved in large-scale businesses, such as mini-super markets, restaurants, transportation services, foreign exchange bureaus, hair dressing saloons, auto repair shops, and guest houses. Most vulnerable refugees are involved in less-lucrative businesses, such as domestic work, mainly in the homes of fellow refugees. The main conclusion from this finding is that richer refugees come into exile with a clear livelihood plan and with good access to livelihood resources.

The main crops grown by refugees are maize, beans, sorghum, cassava, potatoes, groundnuts, and bananas. Animals reared include goats, cattle, pigs, poultry, and rabbits. Plot farming has been promoted in all the rural settlement areas as a self-reliant strategy because within five years, refugees are expected to sustain themselves with agricultural crops grown on individually allocated plots provided by the Office of the Prime Minister.

Figure A.12 presents the effect of refugees on local labor markets. Overall, 27 percent of respondents reported that the refugee influx has escalated the unemployment problem, 19 percent



**Figure A.12. Effect of Refugees on the Local Labor Market**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

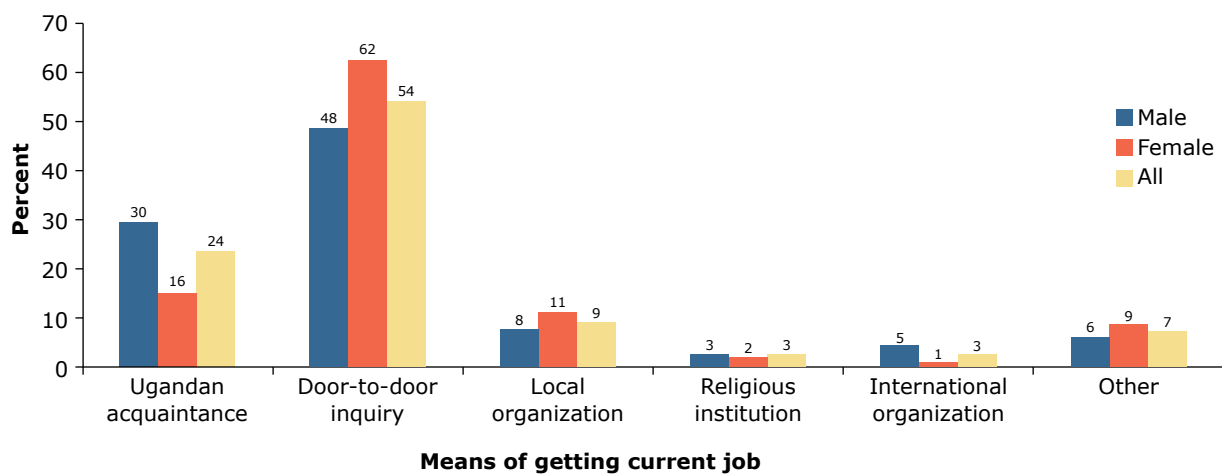
believe refugees may lead to the creation of new jobs (especially among NGOs), and 15 percent believed that refugee influx impacts wages. Thirty-eight percent say that they do not know.

Survey results reveal the ways that working refugees acquired their current positions. The most common method reported by respondents for searching for a job was a door-to-door search, followed by a Ugandan acquaintance. Local organizations and religious institutions are also important. Only 3 percent found work through international organizations.

In addition to health problems and exposure to risks at the workplace, surveyed respondents reported a number of unfair job circumstances that they were forced to tolerate, including pressure to accept low wages, long working hours, working without breaks, and late payment of wages (figure A.14). Only a very small number of respondents report being physically abused at work.

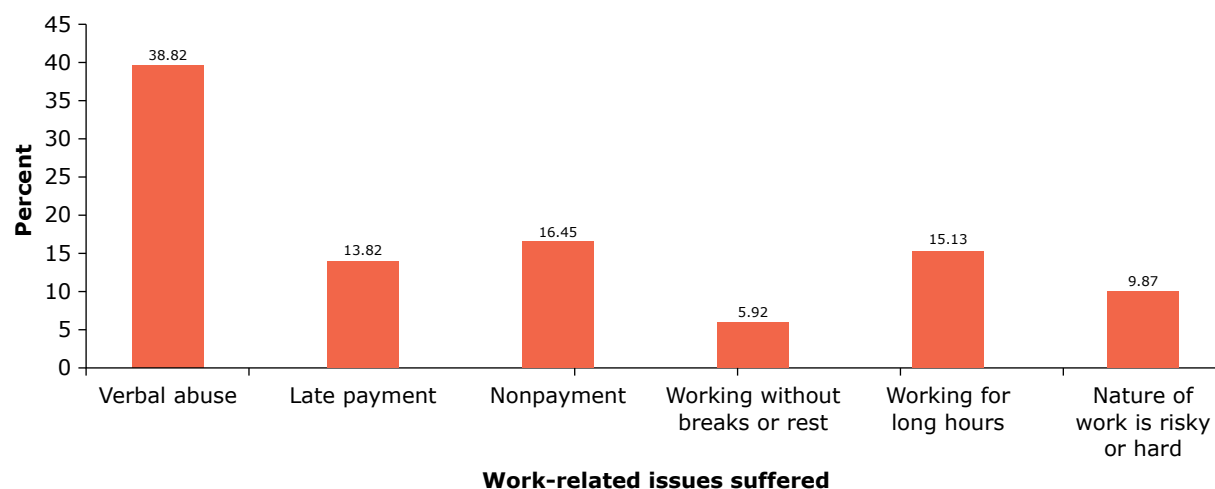
Statistics on refugees victimized by crime across the different settlements is presented in figure A.15. Overall, 73 percent of respondents reported having been the victim of a crime. By settlement, 78 percent of respondents from Nakivale reported

**Figure A.13. Means of Job Search Used to Get Current Job**



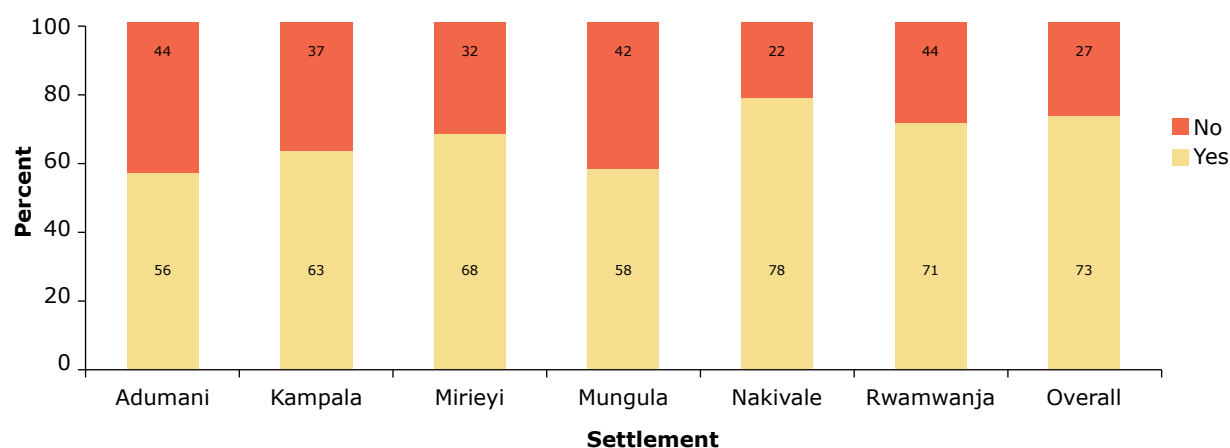
Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.14. Refugees Suffering from Work-Related Issues (percent)**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Figure A.15. Distribution of Crime and Safety by Settlement Area (percent)**



Source: Field Survey June 2015.

**Table A.7. Reported Violence Across Settlement Area (percent)**

	Adjumani	Kampala	Mirieyi	Mungula	Nakivale	Rwamwanja	Overall
Burglary	33	14	47	38	19	52	30
Mugging	0	9	7	25	0	5	6
Assault	33	18	25	25	22	10	19
Fraud	0	5	8	0	0	10	3
Sexual violence	33	45	11	13	56	24	39
Other	0	9	2	0	3	0	3

Source: Field Survey June 2015.

being the victim of a crime, followed by 71 percent of respondents from Rwamwanja, 68 percent from Mirieyi, and 63 percent from Kampala; the lowest rates of crime are in Adjumani.

Table A.7 summarizes the evidence on reported violence across the settlement areas. Overall, sexual violence was the crime reported the most at 39 percent, followed by burglary at 30 percent; fraud was the least-reported crime at 3 percent. By settlement, burglary rates are highest in Rwamwanja at 52 percent, followed by Mirieyi at 47 percent, and Adjumani at 33 percent. Sexual violence is worst in Nakivale at 56 percent, followed by Kampala at 45 percent, and Adjumani at 33 percent. Muggings are most common in Mungula at 25 percent; assault is most common in Adjumani at 33 percent; and fraud is most common in Rwamwanja at 10 percent.

## Ethical Considerations

Because of the somewhat sensitive nature of this research, researchers took steps to address potential ethical issues. Respondents and participants were fully informed of the entire purpose of the research, and their consent was received in advance of conducting interviews. When necessary, the reporting of the findings (verbatim data) were treated confidentially. Permission was sought from the Office of the Prime Minister and protocols were strictly followed in the field to ensure that all authorities involved were comfortable with the researchers' presence.

## Presentation of Findings

The study findings were presented at a stakeholders workshop organized in Kampala with UNHCR staff, UNDP, the Office of the Prime Minister, World Food Program, the World Bank, refugee representatives, and members of the Ugandan parliament.



# APPENDIX B

## Literature Review

### Origins of Uganda’s Progressive Refugee Policy

Uganda is lauded as having one of the best refugee regimes in the world (Owing and Nagujja 2014): “Both in policy and practice, there is a conducive environment for refugees in Uganda which deserves recognition” (Jallow et al. 2004). One explanation given is historic—Uganda hosted refugees during World War II (Jallow et al. 2004), reflecting the country’s long tradition of hosting refugees.

The often-described openness and generosity of local communities toward refugees is related to the fact that many Ugandans have themselves been refugees or internally displaced in the past, including people in government positions, such as President Museveni (Jallow et al. 2004). There are also cultural and ethnic affinities between Ugandans and many of the refugees from neighboring countries, facilitating the integration of refugees into Ugandan society (Jallow et al. 2004).

The Office of the Prime Minister is in charge of refugee affairs in Uganda, reflecting the national importance of the issue by the government. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) serves as the international lead agency, supported by numerous implementing partners, including nongovernmental organizations.

### Protracted Refugee Situations and Durable Solutions

Uganda is faced with a large number of refugees caught in protracted situations, unable to return to their countries of origin, sometimes for decades. Three main durable solutions are described in the literature for protracted refugee situations: repatriation, integration, and resettlement (Svedberg 2014). In the case of many of the Somali and Congolese refugees residing in Uganda, repatriation is not an option due to continued instability in their home countries. Resettlement to a third country, often in the West, is the preferred option for many refugees (Faigle 2015), however, as Svedberg writes:

“this is the most expensive option and due to the low percentage of the total number of refugees resettled to a third country, not a viable large-scale solution.” (Svedberg 2014)

The best examples of integration in Uganda are self-settled refugees living in the vicinity of Ugandans. Many have established businesses and are able to support themselves (Omata and Kaplan 2013). However, these refugees are self-settled because integration beyond the refugee settlements is not government policy. Refugees unable to return to their countries of origin or resettle elsewhere continue to live in refugee settlements, each equipped with a plot of land and tools. Ideally, they are self-sufficient and their

health and education services are provided by the Ugandan government and aid agencies. What these refugees lack is a long-term vision for their futures. Many refugees were born in Uganda into refugee families, making them second-generation refugees (Faigle 2015). They are unable to obtain citizenship because the Ugandan constitution prohibits the naturalization of the offspring of a refugee, even if born in Uganda and even in the case of Ugandan–refugee mixed marriages.<sup>29</sup>

Providing long-term solutions for refugees in protracted situations is enormously challenging, particularly for countries adjacent to countries experiencing conflict, where the number of refugees is overwhelming.

## The Policy of Self-Reliance and Local Integration and Critiques

By the late 1990s, Uganda’s refugee policy embraced the concept of self-reliance, defined as:

“to find durable solutions to refugee problems by addressing refugee issues within the broad framework of government policy and to promote self-reliance and local integration of refugees through promoting social development initiatives in hosting areas.” (OPM and UNHCR, 1999)

A conscious effort was made to move from relief to development programming. The goals of the Self-Reliance Strategy were described as:

“to empower refugees and nationals in the area to the extent that they will be able to support themselves; and to establish mechanisms that will ensure

integration of services for the refugees with those of the nationals.” (OPM and UNHCR, 1999)

## Reduction in Humanitarian Funding

In 2005, UNHCR published the *Handbook for Self-Reliance* as part of a global policy of pushing for durable solutions for refugees (UNHCR 2005). Self-reliance is described as developing and strengthening refugee livelihoods and reducing their vulnerability and dependency on external aid (UNHCR 2005). However, Hunter (2009), Meyer (2006), and Kaiser (2005, 2006) describe the motivation behind the push toward self-reliance and the development of the Self-Reliance Strategy and the Development Assistance to Refugee Hosting Areas program in Uganda as two-fold: a policy decision by the government of Uganda and UNHCR that considers what is in the best interest of the refugees and an acknowledgment of the reality that funding for protracted refugee crises has been decreasing since the late 1990s.

“One of the major difficulties UNHCR faces in prolonged displacement is diminished donor interest in supporting these long-term refugees.” (Jacobsen 2005)

UNHCR funds have been declining since the inception of the Self-Reliance Strategy so the previous system of hand-outs could not be continued. Therefore, some saw the Self-Reliance Strategy as an offloading and exit strategy on the part of UNHCR (Jallow et al. 2004).

## Integration of Local Services

Another important innovation that the Self-Reliance Strategy aimed to bring about was the integration of local services. Previously, the services for refugees and the local population ran in parallel. Unlike the local population, refugee

29. [http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution\\_1995.pdf](http://www.statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution_1995.pdf).

populations were cared for by aid agencies, which often had more resources than local governments. Many refugee settlements are located in poor and remote areas in Uganda, and at times this has led to local populations having poorer access to and delivery of services than refugees. Orach and De Brouwere (2004) observed maternal mortality in the host population in the Adjumani district of northern Uganda being 2.5 times higher than among refugees settled in the same area (Orach and De Brouwere 2004). This led to tensions among the groups because local Ugandans were envious of refugees when they saw World Food Program trucks loaded with relief supplies drive past them and into the refugee settlements (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2004). By integrating the two systems, the government of Uganda was also hoping to benefit from the aid flows to refugees through the strengthening of the local systems rather than the building up of parallel structures.

### **Successful Cases of Service Integration: Education and Health Care**

Orach and De Brouwere (2006) describe examples of successful integration in the health sector, where care significantly improved for the local population. However, for refugees, they observed a significant reduction in referrals (Orach and De Brouwere 2006). Possible reasons for this are a change in the referral guidelines under the new management since the systems were integrated, or human, financial, transportation, or logistical resource limitations associated with the process of restructuring health services and catering to both populations (Orach and De Brouwere 2006). Dryden-Peterson and Hovil (2004) describe successful integration in the education sector in primary schools, where refugee children and host population children are educated together.

However, the midterm review of the Self-Reliance Strategy (Jallow et al. 2004) points out that such successes are conditional based on the continued support of government institutions by relief agencies to provide for the additional demand; otherwise, districts would be left with additional responsibilities and no additional resources. The midterm review was also positive about the effects that service integration can have on reducing tensions between refugee and host populations:

“In fact there is evidence to suggest that cohesion and cooperation has increased since the introduction of service sharing. It is reported that nationals now have a greater feeling of ownership and right of use [of the facilities built and maintained with funding support of UNHCR].” (Jallow et al. 2004)

### **Successful Cases of Self-Reliance**

In the early 2000s, after the implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy had begun, the midterm review found increased self-reliance among refugees in the northern region with regard to food self-sufficiency (Jallow et al. 2004). Refugees were provided with agricultural land by the Ugandan authorities and given training, tools, and seeds by aid agencies. There was an increased emphasis on self-reliance, paired with a gradual reduction of food rations. In addition, to earn additional income, refugees could apply in groups for larger plots of land. Furthermore, there were initiatives to train refugees in nonagricultural income-generating activities, such as vocational training for hairdressers and tailors, as examples, but the focus was on agricultural activities (Svedberg 2014).

## **Critiques of the Self-Reliance and Local Integration Approach**

In its early stages, the Self-Reliance Strategy was criticized for being too focused on agriculture, with not enough effort toward developing alternative livelihoods (Jallow et al. 2004). Providing every household with a plot of land did not automatically lead to self-reliance if the refugee had no agricultural background, if the plot was too small due to rising numbers of refugees in the area, or if the soil was too degraded due to overuse and lack of space for crop rotation (Werker 2002). The success of the approach also varied depending on the quality of soil available in the different geographic locations of Uganda. Critics of the Self-Reliance Strategy and Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas approaches are often associated with the Refugee Law Project of Makerere University. Authors such as Werker (2002) and Meyer (2006) see the system as flawed for multiple reasons, one of them being the settlement policy: the settlements are often remote, making trade difficult due to high trade transaction costs. In the view of Meyer (2006) self-reliance and local integration is impossible as long as refugees are grouped together in settlements separated from the host population, often in remote locations a long distance from outside markets and trade opportunities beyond the settlements, but there are also nationals living in such areas. Self reliance and local integration are not concomitant aspects in refugee management.

## **Freedom of Movement and Critiques of the Settlement Approach**

Uganda is one of the only countries with both a legalized UNHCR-sponsored refugee settlement policy and a self-settlement policy (Bonfiglio 2010). Opinions differ as to whether freedom of

movement exists for refugees living in settlements. According to Hovil (2014), freedom of movement exists, but Norris (2013) observes restrictions. In the Kyangwali and Nakivale settlements, Norris (2013) observed that refugees registered within the settlements required permission from the camp commandant of the Office of the Prime Minister to leave the premises, regardless of reason—such as work, education, or trading. Uganda is generally lauded as having one of the best refugee regimes in the world. The Refugees Act permits refugees to settle anywhere in the country, but the UNHCR humanitarian assistance programs are still pegged to the settlements (Owing and Nagujja 2014), which means that if refugees want access to the support services of relief agencies, they have to settle in one of the designated settlements. Critiques against the settlement approach comes from Meyer (2006), Kaiser (2006, 2005), and Hovil (2014), who states, “Refugee settlements are expensive and inefficient, and restrict the ability of refugees to enjoy their rights while in exile.” Hovil suggests a deepened local integration approach in which humanitarian assistance is provided through local government structures “in order to promote rather than undermine the organic process of interaction between refugees and host communities.” However, to date, solutions to the logistical challenges of such an approach have not been developed.

## **Relief to Development: The Need for Organizational Change**

Another critique of the implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy and the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program was that the relief agencies assigned with the task lacked the necessary capacity and qualified personal to make the shift from relief to development



work. The midterm review of Self-Reliance Strategy points out that UNHCR—the initiative’s main implementation and steering partner—did not have the required development expertise; it continues to employ experts in relief and humanitarian work rather than development (Jallow et al. 2004). This also points to a structural problem with regard to how to move from relief to development in terms of organizational expertise and capacity of partners and involved institutions. Another challenge at the outset of the Self-Reliance Strategy was that bilateral donors and the United Nations system had parallel systems for the support of refugees and support to Uganda’s national development, while a key assumption was that for the Self-Reliance Strategy to be successful, support from traditional development partners would take the place of UNHCR’s relief-oriented funding (Jallow et al. 2004). After some initial problems in the first years (Jallow et al. 2004), the two systems have also become more integrated on the donor side as they and the United Nations development system include refugee populations in their development planning (United Nations 2009).

## Refugee Economies in the 2000s: An Optimistic Outlook

In recent years, a new body of literature has evolved from the Oxford University Humanitarian Innovation Project focused on “refugee economies.” The concept of refugee economies is used to represent the entire resource allocation system relating to a refugee community. It looks at refugees’ economic lives holistically and from the standpoint of the people themselves (Betts et al. 2014). Studies by Betts et al. (2014) and Omata (2012) depart from the traditional “refugees as a burden for the host country” narrative and come to the conclusion that refugees in Uganda

contribute positively to the economy and create jobs for the local Ugandan population.

“We show a refugee community that is nationally and transnationally integrated, contributes in positive ways to the national economy, is economically diverse, uses and creates technology, and is far from uniformly dependent on international assistance.” (Betts et al. 2014)

Betts et al. (2014) describe how some refugee farmers produce food surpluses, which are sold beyond the camps and even to neighboring countries, contributing to Uganda’s exports.

### Refugees as Entrepreneurs

The studies of Norris (2013), Betts et al. (2014), Omata and Kaplan (2014, 2013), and Omata (2012) further highlight the entrepreneurial potential of refugees. Drawing on cross-border trade connections or seed funding received through remittances from relatives abroad, there are many examples of refugees turning into entrepreneurs. Betts et al. (2014) show that refugees not only play an important role in cross-border trade, but also trace their trade networks of import and export as far as China and Dubai. On the Ugandan market, refugee entrepreneurs are valued providers of goods and services, positively contributing to the economy. Refugees’ consumption further stimulates domestic demand in Uganda (Betts et al. 2014). In addition, quantitative work by Betts et al. (2014) provides evidence that refugee entrepreneurs not only create jobs for fellow refugees, but in many cases also employ locals. Among urban refugee entrepreneurs, 40 percent of those they employ are Ugandans, countering the myth that refugees only employ fellow refugees from their home countries (Betts et al. 2014).

## The Role of the Private Sector

Omata (2012) and Omata and Kaplan (2013) focus on the role of the private sector for refugees achieving self-sufficiency—an often-neglected area of research on refugees. The authors point out that settlements do not exist as autonomous systems; they are integrated with the local and wider national economy. There is evidence that, even in the settlements where refugees have been deemed self-reliant through agricultural subsistence, farming alone appears to be insufficient at enabling refugees to achieve economic sustainability (Omata and Kaplan 2013). Omata and Kaplan describe the case of Kyangwali settlement located on fertile land:

“often described as the ‘food basket of Hoima’, refugees nonetheless emphasized the limited income-generating capacity of their farming activities. They instead highlighted the centrality of nonfarming livelihoods and of linkages with the Ugandan private sector as a key differentiating factor in improving their economic status.” (Omata and Kaplan 2013)

Therefore, other businesses, such as small shops or garages, are also found in the settlements. Omata and Kaplan (2013) observed a lively interaction between Ugandans and the refugee community, with Ugandans coming to the refugee settlements to sell products, purchase produce, or shop for other items.

## Remittances

Remittances received by refugees from relatives abroad are a form of foreign direct investment that helps Uganda with its trade balance. Betts et al. (2014) found that 30 percent of Kampala-based refugees interviewed were receiving remittances.

Among the Somali refugees interviewed in Kampala, this number was even higher at 54 percent, with a monthly average sum per household receiving remittances of US\$115 (Betts et al. 2014). Many refugees use this capital to start their own businesses. This is particularly significant in light of the fact that remittances—not only from the home countries of refugees but also from Ugandan’s working abroad—have surpassed Uganda’s main export—coffee—to become the greatest source of foreign exchange (Mulumba and Olema 2009).

## Different Degrees of Self-Reliance among the Diverse Refugee Populations

An abundance of studies exist on the different subgroups among Uganda’s refugee population, charting out significant variations concerning the degree of self-reliance achieved (Norris 2013; Omata and Kaplan 2014).

## Self-Settled Refugees

Early research about refugee economies, such as by Omata (2012), focused on self-settled refugees in Kampala. Meyer (2006) and Kaiser (2006) describe the self-settled refugees as those most successful at integration and self-reliance, but many still barely make ends meet (Omata 2012). These refugees must be self-reliant because they live outside the system, leaving them no choice. If they are not registered, they are drawn to urban areas despite the lack of support from UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister due to the more diverse opportunities for income-generation activities beyond agriculture and shorter distances to markets. Furthermore, in many cases, self-settled refugees in Kampala and other urban centers have an urban, more educated background or possess

stronger social networks to draw on (Kaiser 2006), and they see themselves as having more opportunities in cities than in the rural settlements.

### **New Arrivals**

Omata and Kaplan (2014) published a study comparing a relatively new settlement, the reopened Rwamwanja, with older more established settlements—in this case Kyangwali. They conclude that newly arrived refugees are less self-reliant and that their livelihoods lack diversification. They describe a process by which refugee livelihoods become more diversified over time.

### **Differences among Nationalities**

Studies by Norris (2013) and Betts et al. (2014) describe noticeable differences in the livelihood strategies of different refugee nationalities and their degree of success in achieving self-reliance. In her fieldwork, Norris (2013) found the Somali refugee population to be the most successful entrepreneurs, followed by Eritreans and Ethiopians, who run small shops or cafes. Betts et al. (2014) found the South Sudanese, Congolese, and Rwandans were more involved in agricultural activities. Omata and Kaplan (2013) describe the wide social networks Somali refugees often have to be among the factors contributing to their success, including in many cases receiving the seed capital for opening a business from abroad in the form of remittances from family and friends in industrialized countries.

### **Continued Support for Vulnerable Populations**

Despite the successes of the Self-Reliance Strategy, refugee populations still suffer from a higher degree of fragility due to lower levels of resilience. In most cases, unlike the host

population, refugees do not have extended family networks to fall back on during a crisis, nor do they have much in the way of assets to buffer external shocks, such as a house, animals, or land. Support is therefore still needed in cases of external shocks, such as droughts, floods, and conflicts. As the midterm review of the Self-Reliance Strategy points out:

“A major limitation in the conceptual approach [of the Self-Reliance Strategy] is to assume that progress towards self-reliance was a linear process over time and it did not factor in the effects of drought and other shocks.”

(Jallow et al. 2004)

In addition to times of external shocks and crises, there are certain subgroups of refugees, such as female-headed households, the disabled, the sick, and the elderly, who need continued support because they cannot provide for themselves. In Omata and Kaplan’s study (2013), disabled people, orphans, elderly people, the chronically ill, widows, female-headed households, and recent refugee arrivals were consistently identified by respondents as the “poorest” and least self-sufficient groups (Omata and Kaplan 2013).

### **Gender Aspects**

Omata and Kaplan (2013) describe how the poorest groups are often forced to employ negative coping strategies. For example, among the Congolese, Rwandan, and Burundi refugees they spoke with in Nakivale, widows were identified as the key group involved in commercial sex, while orphaned children typically either begged or pursued small errands (Omata and Kaplan 2013). Norris (2013) describes extensive sexual violence faced by refugee women in settlements,

particularly if widowed or unmarried. Sebba (2006) describes early marriage or prostitution as common survival strategies.

### Refugees with Disabilities

Conflict often leads to more people being affected by a disability as a direct or indirect consequence of war. In addition, conditions for people with disabilities tend to worsen through displacement. The social support network they normally depend on is no longer there. Omata and Kaplan (2013) found people with special needs and the elderly to be heavily engaged in begging. According to their findings, these vulnerable refugees are not able to meet their basic livelihood needs: "This is often directly tied to their limited access to internal and external markets and a limited capacity to diversify their income sources" (Omata and Kaplan 2013). Owing and Nagujja (2014) quote a refugee saying, "Being a refugee with a disability is almost a sure sentence to a life of poverty." Often they are even worse off than local people with disabilities since in many cases they cannot rely on a big family or community network for support. In addition, national federations or help groups are often designed to help nationals with disabilities, not refugees (Owing and Nagujja 2014). On the other hand, the midterm review of the Self-Reliance Strategy found that, in rural settings, due to existing support services provided by aid agencies, vulnerable groups inside refugee settlements are better cared for than those from the local population (Jallow et al. 2004).

Despite provisions for vulnerable groups (Jallow et al. 2004), the Self-Reliance Strategy is described in some of the literature as having had a negative effect on the livelihood situation of refugees with disabilities. In the words of a refugee with disabilities:

"The talk about self-reliance when the people are not equipped for that living is a hoax. For PWD [People with Disabilities]'s self-reliance is a far dream." (Owing and Nagujja 2014)

According to Owing and Nagujja (2014), there was a decrease in support for refugees with disabilities since UNHCR handed over some of the services to local institutions. For people with disabilities, land provision is insufficient, especially if they cannot farm it themselves. Difficulties in accessing jobs and employment also persist. Depending on the disability, refugees with disabilities might require continued support to obtain clean water, firewood, and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. Long distances to obtain such vital resources can pose insurmountable challenges to refugees with disabilities, reducing the length and quality of their lives.

### Geographical Spread of Studies

The studies of the late 1990s and early 2000s assessing or critiquing the self-reliance approach mainly focused on the South Sudanese refugee population in the area of Moyo in northwestern Uganda (Meyer 2006; Jallow et al. 2004). This was the geographic focus area of most studies at that time because the Self-Reliance Strategy approach started there, targeting the South Sudanese refugees.

In more recent studies, the Oxford Humanitarian Innovation Project (Betts et al. 2014) and researchers such as Omata (2012), Omata and Kaplan (2013), and Norris (2013) focused on self-settled refugees in Kampala and refugee settlements located in the conflict-free and more fertile south. The question is: to what extent have these factors

influenced the findings of the recent studies in being more optimistic (Murray 2015)? Likewise, the studies must be considered in the context of their time. At the time of the Self-Reliance Strategy midterm review, northern Uganda was still plagued by insecurity:

“The northern districts of Uganda are poorer than the rest of the districts, are marginalized and plagued by insecurity, displacement and under-development” (Jallow et al. 2004)

Ten years later, Uganda has become more secure and has experienced stable economic growth. The success of the Self-Reliance Strategy and the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas program also depends on such external factors.

## Methodology of Studies

The majority of studies used literature review, observation, interviews, key informant interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions (Kaiser 2006; Meyer 2006; Jallow et al. 2004; Owing and Nagujja 2014). Orach and De Brouwere (2004, 2006) used data from health facilities. Omata (2012), Omata and Kaplan (2013, 2014), and Betts et al. (2014) used extensive quantitative surveys, the latter collecting answers from more than 1,500 refugees.



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