

Youth Strategy Kakuma Refugee Camp Kenya

Introduction

Adolescents and youth form a substantial proportion of the refugee population in Kakuma refugee camp and as of 16 August 2017, there were a total of 39,960 registered youth of whom 14,546 were female and 25,414 were male. Within the context of this strategy, adolescents and youth in Kakuma refugee camp are defined as persons of concern ranging in age from 15 to 24 years old¹. Almost one fifth of the camp population is refugee youth and UNHCR with all partners should recognize and build the youth-specific programs on the existing knowledge, skills, capacities and qualifications of youth like through youth-led initiatives. Youth are full of energy, enthusiasm and lots of good ideas, open to new technology and networking that UNHCR and partners should proactively work with to identify ways for them to actively participate and response the humanitarian protection and assistance.

This strategy is informed by the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) Strategy report covering 2017-2019 period and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) monitoring reports and outlines key issues relating to the delivery of services. It takes into consideration these issues in formulating the most suitable direction for youth programming in Kakuma refugee camp².

Guiding Principles

UNHCR action to protect refugee adolescents and youth is guided by the following principles:

- **Systems approach.** Strengthening adolescent and youth programs, systems and services in line with UNHCR's Global Framework for the Protection of Children and designing holistic programming that address the full range of youth protection risks.
- **Partnership.** Working in partnership with the national and county governments, communities, youth, and other youth protection actors to develop a comprehensive interagency youth protection response that maximizes resources and the complementary of all partners' contributions.
- **Urgency.** Ensure prioritization of and immediate response to protection risks for adolescents and youth including prioritizing those who are most at-risk.
- **Family and Community Based Approach.** Families and communities are central to the care and protection of youth in need. It is important to understand support and build upon existing community mechanisms to protect adolescents and youth as well as to address harmful practices.
- **Participatory.** Promote the participation of adolescents and youth in their own protection and in all matters affecting them in accordance with their age, gender, maturity and capacity.
- **Equity.** Promote a non-discriminatory approach to the protection of refugee adolescents and youth, irrespective of their nationality and background.
- **Inclusivity.** Address the specific risks that adolescents and youth of specific ages face, as well as those with specific needs.

¹ In this document, adolescents refers to children aged 10 to 17 years. The term young people encompasses both adolescents and youth, and thus refers to refugees aged 15-24. The terms "young refugee" and "adolescents and youth" are thus used interchangeably in this document.

² Child and Youth Protection: Kakuma and Kalobeyi Strategy report, 2017-2019

- **Best Interests of the Child.** The best interest of the child is a primary consideration in all decisions and actions undertaken for and with children, including adolescents, during all protection procedures.
- **Do No Harm.** Conduct actions, procedures and programmes in a way that does not place the adolescent or youth at further risk of harm, including as a result of unintended consequences.

UNHCR further recognizes the ‘*Seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth*’ that were formulated by the youth on a global scale and are intended to act as a framework to help humanitarian actors in working with, and for refugee youth, and to shape youth-specific policy, guidance, and programmes³.

Action 1. Empower refugee youth through meaningful engagement

Action 2. Recognize, utilize and engage refugee youth capacities and skills

Action 3. Ensure refugee-youth focused protection

Action 4. Support refugee youth physical and emotional well-being

Action 5. Facilitate refugee youth networking and information sharing

Action 6. Reinforce Refugee Youth as connectors and peace builders

Action 7. Generate data and evidence on refugee youth to promote accountability to youth

UNHCR will place emphasis on the following six strategic objectives that serve to protect refugee youth in Kakuma refugee camp.

Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: Increase the number of youth and adolescents who are actively participating in their own protection through targeted programmes

Due to lack of programs specifically targeted towards adolescents and youth in the camp, this group continues to face many challenges which may drive them to engage in risky behaviours such as survival sex and drug and alcohol abuse. In contrast, with increased responsibilities on their part due to cultural and social pressures, youth are increasingly exposed to violence and exploitation in the workplace, at home or in the community. The youth in Kakuma refugee camp are willing and keen on actively participating in their own protection. UNHCR recognizes the importance of engaging the youth through various activities and other community structures to ensure early interventions for those at risk.

The activities that UNHCR and partners will undertake may include:

- Supporting youth-led protection initiatives including, focus groups and discussions on harmful cultural practices;
- Identification and referral mechanisms should be strengthened with the participation of youth leaders ;
- Raise awareness among youth through advocacy strategies aimed at reducing harmful practices such as early marriage, FGM, survival sex, recruitment into armed groups and substance abuse;
- Raise awareness on harmful practices through on line and social media and/or organize discussion sessions in youth community/business centres;
- Increase the number of youth community/business centres to raise awareness through unique but accessible platforms, including social media;
- Support youth to develop advocacy materials on risks such as production of a film on early marriage;

³ Global Refugee Youth Consultations: Final report, September 2016.

- Develop youth creative arts and talent shows that create awareness on various issues including negative activities such as survival sex, modes of HIV transmission and early/forced marriage;
- Build the capacity of adolescents and youth to attend to respond and report on protection issues through appropriate channels including iMonitor, WhatsApp communication tree, and Field Post Counselling;
- Reinforce youth connectors and youth peace builders on protection awareness activities;
- Map out the national youth activities and advocate to engage in participatory dialogue between refugee youth and national youth protection systems, services through Ministry of Public Services, Youth and Gender Affairs especially for access to specialised national youth's services, including youth with specific impairments;
- Encourage and support the youth-led initiatives to design project proposals on protection of refugee youth under the Global UNHCR Youth Initiative Fund.

Objective 2: More adolescents and youth benefit from sustainable livelihoods programmes

According to the 2017 Livelihoods Strategy for Kakuma and Kalobeyei, in 2015, 4,778 youths have been supported for vocational skills provided by implementing partners, Don Bosco, NRC, DRC, LWF and Swiss Contact, representing a 34% increase from 3,132 in 2014. Access to vocational and non-formal education opportunities remain limited for the large number of adolescents and youth out of school with only 2 vocational training centres providing access to less than 10% of eligible population. Many youth in the camp have demonstrated through various programmes great resilience and capacity to take charge of their lives. However, additional opportunities to leverage youth creativity and talent is needed to develop a sense of hope, resilience and coping mechanisms to face particular challenges faced by the youth, including lack of access to education and jobs, workplace exploitation and survival sex. Government encampment policy, lack of access to work permit and skills mismatch whereby youth work in jobs that are contrary to their specializations, remain key constraints to refugee access to sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance. Further, youth engagement in livelihood activities will inevitably curtail risky behaviours associated with idleness that lead to security problems.

The activities that UNHCR and partners will continue to undertake and enhance may include:

- Encourage the participation and involvement of youth through forum discussions, youth connector, peace builder who will design and promote activities;
- Establish additional youth development /innovation centres where youth have access to safe spaces;
- Support skills development opportunities and availability of information on language, literacy and numeracy classes, bridging courses to access TVET, business skills and entrepreneurship courses, business incubation, ICT and connected learning opportunities, recreational and arts activities (for example sports, film or performing arts clubs);
- Promote sports development, creative arts activities and talent shows as livelihood activities;
- Support mentorship and peer education to create awareness on various issues including negative activities such as survival sex, modes of HIV transmission and early/forced marriage;
- Empower adolescent girls and young women through peer guidance forums and develop teenage mother peer support forums;
- Advocate for vocational and life skills training, scholarships and livelihood opportunities with particular emphasis on learning marketable skills;
- Assist the Government with advocacy forums and strengthening protection mechanisms particular to the youth to address the problem of exploitative labor amongst the host community;

- Advocate for inclusivity for refugee youth in the national youth development fund which provides access to financial/loan services, mentorship, business/skills trainings and life skills trainings by the national government.

Objective 3: The number of adolescents and youth accessing secondary and tertiary education gradually increases:

Secondary and tertiary level schooling and training provides a crucial stepping-stone in the continuum of education and are key to building resilience for all possible durable solutions. Whilst secondary school enrolment in Kakuma has significantly increased, 94% of eligible secondary school aged children are still out of school and female students only constitute 22% of the overall enrolment in the camp's 5 secondary schools. The quality of learning needs improvement addressing the low number of qualified teachers, insufficient learning materials and overcrowded classes. Existing tertiary level opportunities include WUSC and DAFI scholarships and on-site scholarship programs as well as a number of certified connected learning programs offered by local and international universities. However, these opportunities provide access to less than 1 percent of eligible refugee youth. High cost of tertiary level study, insufficient availability of scholarships as a solution strategy and issues with equivalencies remain key bottlenecks.

The activities that UNHCR and partners will undertake may include:

- Advocate for increased expansion of secondary education infrastructure, associated facilities and provision of scholastic materials;
- Support community led initiatives such as schools managed by refugees with technical and curriculum advice, infrastructural support, capacity building and support to enhance the quality of provisions;
- Integrate life-skills training in school programs and curriculum to meet the diverse needs of overaged learners and vulnerable youth especially around behavioral change, sexual abuse, HIV and peace education;
- Promote safe school practices that addresses the specific accessibility and protection needs of girls, youth with disabilities and those with other vulnerabilities;
- Support the mainstreaming an integrated protection framework for schools including training on code of conduct, confidential safe reporting, and referral systems;
- Design a school behavior change program that will allow girls and boys to increase their knowledge around their rights, adolescent health, build their self-confidence and aspirations to learn;
- Provide technical and financial support to eliminate barriers related to cost, language and documentation including providing assistance with regard to equivalencies of certificates and qualifications;
- Explore double shifts and 2 schools in one option;
- Explore opportunities to increase in-country tertiary level scholarships, connected learning programs and scholarship schemes in third countries.
- Support programs offering complementary pathways that are effective and meet minimum protection considerations.

Objective 4: Adolescents and youth with specific protection risks receive quality specialized protection services

As with other persons of concern, lack of safety and security continues to be a challenge for adolescents and youth in Kakuma, specifically for those who are unaccompanied whether they range

in age from 15 to 17 (child) or 18 to 24 (adult). UNHCR and partners programmes will continue to provide response services for adolescents and youth who are at risk of or victims of violence, neglect, abuse or exploitation or who have specific needs that require an urgent response. UNHCR with partners will provide specialised programmes to ensure that at a minimum all refugee adolescents and youth who are identified as unaccompanied, part of a child-headed household, experience or are at risk of domestic abuse, all forms of sexual abuse, child recruitment, and/or early marriage receive immediate quality services in line with their best interests.

The activities that UNHCR and partners will undertake may include:

- Undertaking efforts to prevent young girls and women from engaging in survival sex through empowerment, advocacy and awareness with community members, and referral for specialized assistance (*refer to SGBV strategy*);
- Preventing, intervening and responding to early marriage through various channels including, empowerment of vulnerable groups through socio-economic activities;
- Protecting children at risk of detention through advocacy with the appropriate authorities on promoting alternative detention including community-based foster care/community-based alternative to detention possibilities;
- Protection from exploitation by raising awareness on different type of exploitation and establish mechanisms to safely report sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Establishing additional youth protection outreach offices and improve the existing youth safe centres;
- Streamlining protection processes and provide clear information on support and protection for adolescents between the ages of 15 to 17 and youth between the ages of 18 to 24;
- Strengthening identification and referral pathways for all youth survivors of SGBV to access appropriate specialized care like psychosocial and medical.

Objective 5: Improve data and information management responses

UNHCR will work in partnership with government actors, civil society and UN actors to advocate for policy and legal reforms, improved knowledge and data and greater resources needed to protect refugee adolescents and youth. Comprehensive assessments on refugee youth needs and responses including the specific needs of adolescents and youth will be undertaken at least once a year through inter-agency processes and regular updates will be provided on new developments. Through a multi-sectoral approach and with data sharing agreements, UNHCR seeks to harmonize existing information systems, including ProGres, Education Management Information System (EMIS), Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) and Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) to capture categories of abuse and improve reporting mechanisms.

Strategic Approaches

Coordination

UNHCR and partners will strengthen the existing multi-sectoral nature of youth protection management systems which will improve access to services for adolescents and youth in the camp and in the host community.

Advocacy

UNHCR and partners will work with States and other relevant national partners to include refugee youth in national youth strategies and action plans. Link with the national youth organizations and engage with Kenyan youth on developing strategies for refugee youth in the national level.

Linkages between Youth, Children Protection Framework and Education, SGBV and Livelihood Strategies

Youth and Child protection mainstreaming in the Education, SGBV and Livelihood thematic areas is essential and can only fully be effective, in tandem, in order to ensure protection and other service delivery to adolescents and youth in the camp.

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UNHCR Kakuma