



International
Labour
Organization

PROSPECTS



► Comprehensive rapid assessment of public employment services in Uganda

With a special assessment in two target host community refugee settlements for the PROSPECTS programme



Kingdom of the Netherlands

► **Comprehensive rapid assessment of public employment services in Uganda**

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► Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abbreviations	v
Executive summary	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction and overview: Comprehensive rapid assessment of public employment services and key related active labour market policies	1
2.1 National employment context for design and delivery of employment services	3
Chapter 2: Public employment services and active market policies: review and assessment	3
2.2 Public employment services: assessment of policy, structure, organization, service delivery and performance	6
2.3 Active labour market policies, labour market information systems and public employment services: a selective review	16
2.4 Additional Key topics of employment services and active labour market policies performance	20
Chapter 3: Refugee and host communities: analysis and recommendations	25
3.1 Rapid assessment of employment and institutional context in the target host communities and refugee settlement	26
3.2 PROSPECTS proposal and recommendations	32
Chapter 4: Key recommendations and action plan	42
4.1 Overview: public employment services modernization plan for Uganda, with complementary advances in employment prospects in two host communities	43
4.2 Proposed action plan to implement a phased strategy for public employment services modernization in Uganda	52
Bibliography	58
Key interviews and consultations	59

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► Abbreviations

AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Regional Development	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ALMP	Active labour market policy	USSIA	Uganda Small Scale Industries Association
DLEOSH	Directorate of Labour, Employment, Occupational Safety and Health	WFP	World Food Programme
DRDIP	Development Response to Displacement Impact Project	OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
ENABEL	Belgium Development Agency	RWC	Refugee Welfare Committees
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	ReHOPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
FUE	Federation of Ugandan Employers	SACCOS	Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Development)	SAGE	Social assistance grant for empowerment
HTS-Union	Hotels, Food, Tourism, Supermarkets and Allied Workers Union	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IFC	International Finance Corporation	TIN	Tax Identification Number
ILO	International Labour Organization	TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
JMD	Job-matching database	TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority	UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
LMIS	Labour market information system(s)	UN	United Nations
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	UNCCI	Ugandan National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NVI	Nakivale Vocational Institute	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
NGO	Non-governmental Organization	UNHS	Uganda National Housing Survey
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister	URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
PES	Public employment services	URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
SDF	Skills Development Fund	VAT	Value-Added Tax
ToR	Terms of Reference	VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	WENIPS	West Nile Private Sector Development Promotion Centre
UAERA	Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies	WFP	World Food Programme
UGVS	Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme		
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme		
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund		

► Executive summary

Uganda's labour market faces both challenges and opportunities. It has to incorporate one of the world's largest youth populations into an economy which is not expanding sufficiently to provide enough jobs, let alone quality jobs, for its citizens. This same large workforce, matched to better jobs and supported by more comprehensive employment and economic growth strategies, however, offers great potential for the future. It has the potential to propel Uganda more significantly ahead of its neighbours, particularly as a leader in agriculture and agro-industry. To do so, as called for by Uganda's Prime Minister, requires an integration of employment throughout all ministries and the modern systems to carry it out.

This document was developed with the support and guidance of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The rapid assessment is based on a mission to Uganda from 28 February to 12 March 2020, the review of key reports, an ILO scoping mission in February 2020, and video consultations with Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

The assessment is intended to offer the MGLSD an opportunity to look forward and consider how to plan for a better employment future that includes more effective employment services. The document provides a comprehensive assessment of public employment services (PES) in Uganda, proposing a three-phased multi-year strategy for the modernization of public employment services and support to active labour market policies (ALMPs). The recommendations are accompanied by a detailed action plan sequencing an implementation and resource mobilization plan.

The assessment includes a specialized review of two host community refugee settlements: Arua-Rhino Camp and Isingiro-Nakivale. These two communities have been selected by the multilateral PROSPECTS partnership for potential grant assistance. As requested by the ILO, the report makes specific recommendations for financing in these two communities that is complementary to the proposed PES modernization plan.

The strategy and action plan proposed is intended to build, overtime, a PES that is highly adapted to Uganda's challenges and its rural-dominated economy. It must be built, as all PES modernizations are around the world today, by smart partnerships with employers, universities, and non-governmental agencies. While this review was conducted just prior to the global COVID-19 lockdown, COVID-19 restrictions, particularly through early 2021, have been incorporated into the design. This means emphasizing the development of efficient computer-based systems, web access, video-conference counselling and interviews, on-line appointments and mobile services that can be delivered outdoors with social distancing. Overall, starting PES investments now should be helping Uganda better meet not only the current challenges of jobs lost and jobs changed under COVID-19, but building a stronger service infrastructure that can be put to work in future crises, enabling Uganda to adapt when shocks arise, as they will.

Employment services modernization plan proposal for Uganda

Tailoring employment services to the Ugandan context

Uganda's highly informal economy, with a dominant role for agriculture and a large rural population, is not a typical platform for PES modernization. The principal functions of employment services are to improve the speed and quality of matching workers to jobs. But in developing countries, if designed correctly, employment services can play a wider connector role linking workers from training into employment, signalling where jobs can be found, and helping employers articulate and expand the number of vacancies they openly post.

In Uganda's case, this will mean experimentation with service models in rural areas. simultaneously with building institutional capacity and knowledge from Kampala outwards. It should be recognized that the complex demands for services in rural areas over large distances will never be ones that can be provided

by single labour officers financed only in some districts with no accompanying services. Better integration of the Ugandan economy requires more nationally developed services and greater presence in the rural areas.

A PES model for Uganda should also learn from the best public employment service models. None of them acts as a single public provider, but rather they modernize by taking on a role as part provider, part market leader, engaging the private sector, non-profit organizations, schools, and universities to evolve towards a national “system” in which the public sector leads a wider range of institutions into better preparing, placing, and training the workforce through multiple job changes.

Creating a Uganda-tailored national employment service means starting with the right building blocks first – gaining credibility and support from employers, adapting in each stage to changes in the Ugandan economy to direct more citizens into better quality jobs. International best practice makes clear that not only must PES modernization be a phased strategy, but it must also be a flexible one: changing and reprioritizing services along the way to take advantage of changing employment trends and new sources of financing and collaboration.

Summary of proposed strategy for PES modernization in Uganda

The proposed strategy, in three stages, includes the following key features:

- ▶ First, building and making much more efficient the current small public employment service within the Internal Employment Services Division. This can be done first by expanding through a **vacancy-driven public employment service**, focusing on the formal sector around Kampala and then rolling out to smaller cities. To achieve more placements for more firms quickly in current services, however, will mean a major leap in efficiency, internal staff changes, process, and equipment in a first phase. In the second phase, expansion leaps can include **partnerships with the private sector**, with **on-line services** and more significant investments in offices, staff, and equipment.
- ▶ As quality placements will be limited in Uganda, the PES must look to serving as the placement officer or linking service to key national programmes, technical and vocational educational and training (TVET) institutions, and universities. There is a large market of programmes in Uganda which would benefit from better placement results of their graduates.
- ▶ The strategy includes **piloting a rural employment services model** in Arua, seeking funding under the PROSPECTS partnership. A Uganda-relevant rural employment model would test out new methods of mobile employment services, direct support to private sector associations, provide a walk-in service and require building networks with small employer associations, local district governments and technical and vocational schools, quite distinct from a classic PES model. In Stage 2, LEOSH will have established new working relationships in rural areas and will have tested methodologies to extend its more efficient Kampala-oriented employment service nationwide, as well as providing more systematic services to rural areas.
- ▶ **Skills deficits** and poor educational preparation are so substantial in Uganda that a public employment service can only go so far in job placement, and thus the strategy in Stage 2 posits moving to linking a wider range of active labour market policies and training with job placement directly by MLGSD and in partnership with other providers. Right now, Uganda has a confusing mix of distinct donor and government-led programmes which only have strong links to job placement in certain cases. The strategy posits improving and tracking labour market placements of key ALMPs in Stage 1 then moving more systematically to better connections between education, training institutions and employment services in Stage 2, with the labour market information to support and shape skill and employment policy.
- ▶ Expanding **labour market information systems** managed by MGLSD's Directorate of Labour, Employment, Occupational Health and Safety in coordination with the various governmental agencies doing surveys, such as the Bureau of Statistics. The strategy needs to be phased in and focused on the most readily needed information for each stage of PES development: in Stage 1 to improve employment trend knowledge to assist the private sector, educational institutions and MGLSD, and in Stage 2 to go

deeper into the labour market information needed for skills analysis (for example, skills content of jobs and future employment projections) and realigning education and training programmes to the demands of the Ugandan economy.

- ▶ **Employment revitalization post-COVID-19** may be a particular priority for Uganda. An effective PES with national reach has been a key delivery agent for responding to national employment emergencies in many developed and developing countries. A PES modernization can be shaped to assist short-term employment programmes, including temporary and public works employment. A modernized PES should be building the infrastructure for enabling Uganda to deliver employment support more systematically for future crises.

Proposals for PROSPECTS Partnership

The PROSPECTS partnership is an initiative of the Government of the Netherlands in collaboration with five international agencies: the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).¹ The host community resettlement camps of Arua-Rhino Camp and Isingiro-Nakivale were selected by the partnership for support in Uganda among advancing stronger social and economic approaches to community development. As requested, the two communities were visited during the rapid assessment mission for an assessment of employment conditions and for recommendations for potential grant financing that could support or contribute to innovative methods in PES and active labour market policy. PROSPECTS is a grant programme of relatively limited size across many countries, so planned interventions need to be strategic and contribute towards building larger scale operations in future years.

Rural employment services are limited or non-existent in most of Uganda, but of the two communities, Arua offered a wider range of youth-training donor initiatives; it is a small enterprise community that is a viable base for experimenting with the pilots proposed on a) rural employment services, and b) agricultural value chains. Youth in the Isingiro-Nakivale community have not had the advantage of more contemporary youth programme models that impart a new vision of the future and support quality youth job placement. They face a community of a much longer history (Nakivale was founded in 1958) with, as reported to the mission, concerns that the youth lack a strong vision of a positive future. The report suggests that two innovative international youth employment programmes be assessed for application to Isingiro-Nakivale. Both models combined soft skills, self-esteem, and community building, with skills development leading to employment placement. The report proposes that Uganda take advantage of the financing offered by PROSPECTS for these two communities with proposals as follows.

1. Rural employment services pilot

Given the great distances and unique demands of refugee and host community labour market needs based largely on microbusinesses, Uganda will need to develop employment services that fit its rural and informal employment context. The proposed rural employment services pilot could develop and test a range of services including a consolidated area job bank, direct assistance to business associations to expand vacancies, traineeships for youth, support for human resources, expansion. A key innovation would be to develop and deliver mobile employment services via a converted van that would bring staff and services to distinct communities including “open-air” training seminars, job registration, work permit registration (typically agriculture and construction), counselling sessions and job fairs. Specialized service days could bring employers directly to communities to interview candidates, to local district offices, and to market areas where jobseekers can be found. A walk-in service would be introduced gradually in Arua once COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. The pilot would include joint capacity-building of staff in MGLSD as well as in Arua, including joint training and learning exchanges.

¹ “Expanding Economic and Social Opportunities in Refugee and Host Community”, Uganda Country Vision Note, Government of the Netherlands.

2. Agro-processing value chain

Moving host and refugee community farmers up the value chain from primary and subsistence farming to agro-processing is a particularly relevant market upgrade needed in host communities where there is a great oversupply of farmers growing crops. More and more refugees come into communities trying to make a go of farming with increasingly smaller plots of poor land.

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) Director Alfred Lakwo was asked what he considered the most significant missing piece in value-chain development for the poor in host and refugee communities. He argued that it was making viable that next step up in the value chain to agro-processing in demand products. The four products identified as most in demand in local value chains are peanuts, hibiscus, cassava, and rice. AFARD (West Nile) is the largest Ugandan non-governmental organization (NGO) in the West Nile and operates only in that subregion.² It is highly experienced in working in host community or refugee projects on a 50:50 basis.

As AFARD is the leading, most experienced NGO in value-chain small scale development, the proposal is that they be contracted to test out a model of value-chain addition in one to four sectors in the West Nile. The term “value-chain addition” in this context refers to adding value from primary production, in terms of greater income returns and contribution to a value chain of the final product. The step-up agro-processing sectors are identified as those that current farmers in the West Nile can be trained in and supported to undertake a collective agro-processing business, and specifically that capital requirements are manageable, there is ready local supply and the ability to connect the value chain to sell their processed product. The project would finance the technical assistance and training for the farmers in cooperative groups of one to five depending on the level of capital investment needed. Training is done by a local master craftsman. AFARD provides support marketing and value-chain assistance as well as training and support for savings instruments to sustain the agro-processing firm.

3. Local value chains pilot to complement World Bank, IFC Investment and Public Works³

The National Development Plan 3 and the World Bank’s recent Jobs Diagnostic for Uganda are among the most recent analyses indicating the need to focus on the lack of labour demand to meet ever-growing labour supply. Recent policy attention has focused on whether major investments from international donors and international firms in Uganda could be structured in a way to better advance local value chains and local small producers. The predominant focus of the refugee crisis on getting large numbers of youth employed in some fashion and establishing working community-level associations neglected attention to youth (and adults) working in low productivity and precarious positions, ironically, the microfirms (both farm and non-farm, nearly all informal) that are hoped to be absorbing huge influxes of youth.

The proposal is that PROSPECTS test an approach to microfirm expansion, specifically in line with meeting demand for an identified donor investment, of which some element could be undertaken by local contractors or suppliers. It is understood that these are largely low-productivity firms or self-employed personnel, so the choice of demand sector – or rather segment of a new demand sector – would need to be specific and tailored to the local labour market, such as rapid housing, rural roads or water projects (for instance, construction, carpentry demand from labour-intensive public works), an IFC sectoral investment, or a World Bank investment.⁴ In particular, the World Bank has cited its operations under the Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) and the Skills Development Fund (SDF) for incorporation in PROSPECTS. There was great frustration expressed in both communities that humanitarian assistance, particularly in food donations, has not led to any sustained utilization or stimulation of local markets, even in the case of Nakivale that was established in 1958. The proposal is to pilot, measure and, importantly, learn under what circumstances can the use of local suppliers yield, in

2 AFARD has a 92-member staff spread among several offices and does leading value-chain work with local farmers in both farm and non-farm production.

3 The term “labour-intensive public works” is not utilized here, only to avoid confusion with this term applied to the World Bank’s component of Social Assistance (54 days in off season).

4 There is a range of options in the current World Bank portfolio, for example, in the social area, or the future portfolio such as secondary education.

a complementary fashion, positive impacts on the labour market without significant impacts on service delivery. Drawing on international best practice in microbusiness support, comprehensive services with a technical support mechanism would need to be designed for the pilot. Key elements to consider are as follows: (i) the combination of small one-on-one technical assistance to the firm, enabling them to assess how to meet upcoming demand (for instance, transport needs, additional workers, partnering with other microfirms); (ii) short-term technical training specifically aligned with the technical assistance identified to fulfil new demand (for example, lessons from Mexico-CIMO programme, South Korea SME assistance); (iii) identification of credit constraints and resource strategies; and (iv) sector specialists hired for continual monitoring and support to firms, evening or community-based meetings.

Finally, two distinct types of youth employment models could be considered for piloting in Isingiro-Nakivale. In both cases, as PROSPECTS funding is too limited to finance complete six-month programmes with significant requirements, it is suggested that funds be directed to finance a scoping mission if an appropriate and interested donor accompanies the mission as a potential financier of the pilot. The two distinct youth models are both unique approaches to advance skills-building with employment placement.

4A. Arts-based youth employment model

This youth employment model took very poor, out-of-school youth from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in an intensive, six-month arts-based programme (five days a week), designed to build life and vocational skills as well as remedial education.⁵ Music, theatre and other arts are built into the programme for team building, self-esteem and social or life skills. It used personalized job placement services at the end of the six months to remarkable results: 33 per cent increase in the probability of being employed over the control group (other poor children from the same favela), 23 per cent increase in earnings.⁶

While this model has not yet been tried in Africa, the arts have a particular resonance with the refugee population in Nakivale and in other refugee communities in Uganda. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and community leaders stressed to the ILO mission the current interests of the youth community in the arts and music. The training in Galpão Aplauso was not linked directly to the employer but was focused rather on basic skills-building, attitude, and motivation, which is what made such a difference in employment results over a control group of similar youth. The placement worked so well thanks to the connections that the single placement officer had with local employers, being willing to vouch for and back up particular youth who had been through the programme and who otherwise would have been considered too risky to hire. Potentially, an arts-based curriculum could be applied within an alternative secondary education setting, and a return to schooling could be a desired outcome given the high dropout rates in Nakivale.

4B. Youth employment model – YouthBuild International

YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth employment programme that targets dropout youth, many ex-offenders, for a combination of schooling alternating with community-based construction and technical skills. Youth learn technical construction skills by undertaking community projects such as housing, youth centres and local roads, along with basic schooling. The alternation of academic and technical skills to support the community is intended to build self-esteem and community attachment, as well as technical work skills. Youth get specialized job placement help as part of the programme. The model, first developed in the United States, has now been adapted in more than 19 countries, including South Africa.

YouthBuild International always works through a partner NGO in the host country. YouthBuild started working in South Africa in 2001 with a partner NGO, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA, formerly Umsobomvu Youth Fund), a government institution. The first group of 189 unemployed school dropouts in Ivory Park completed the construction of 194 units of affordable housing, accomplished 32,000 hours of community service, with 100 per cent completion rates and 54 per cent placement rates

5 <http://aplauso.art.br/>

6 Carla Calero, et al., *Can Arts-Based Interventions Improve Labor Market Outcomes for Youth? Evidence from a Randomized Trial in Rio de Janeiro?* IZA, May 2014.

in jobs, self-employment, or further schooling.⁷ From this initial pilot, the NYDA adopted the YouthBuild model as its principal model for skills development, education, and youth service. The model has expanded to the first private-sector-led youth build model, the Saint Gobain YouthBuild Academy, offering demand-driven skills training, entrepreneurship in training by the South African division of Saint Gobain, a French company.

As in the first youth model proposed, PROSPECTS funding would be used to support an initial scoping mission by YouthBuild International to assess potential partners, the scope for intervention, interaction with the host community and refugee institutions along with potential interested donors. It is understood that this scoping mission would only be undertaken in conjunction with a committed potential donor team, as investment in the pilot and then the programme would exceed the timeframe and budget of the PROSPECTS programme. As a result of the scoping mission, the expectation would be a proposal submitted by YouthBuild International, together with a partner Ugandan NGO for donor financing.

► Overview of the proposed PES modernization by stages

Modernization of a PES must build sequentially over time, expanding from a more efficient base of services to serve more and more jobseekers, reach a wider range of employers across the country, and expand the range of services offered. The draft proposed strategy demonstrates how this can be accomplished in Uganda using three stages (1, 2 and 2+). The modernization proposal encompasses and integrates the three policy areas requested by Director of Labour Martin Wandera. Mr Wandera made a request to the ILO in a meeting on 5 March 2020 that the overall strategy for PES modernization in MGLSD should encompass the following three key areas: a functioning job-matching system, robust labour market information systems (LMIS), and strengthened labour market adjustment programmes to achieve better employment outcomes.

As discussed in the meeting, these three areas of labour policy modernization will necessarily interact and advance sequentially as one is needed to further another. Each stage below lists the key outputs and goals. The larger report provides a detailed action plan for MGLSD, particularly the DLEOSH, demonstrating the specific tasks for each stage and when it is sequenced in the development of the PES, as well as the collaborative role that social partners can play.

Stage 1: Key outputs and goals

Employment Services

Targets: Expanded vacancy-driven PES based in Kampala, with rural services developed in a pilot phase under PROSPECTS financing.

Two key initiatives of Stage 1 contain a range of actions:

- a. Redesign the current activities of the Internal Employment Services Division to increase the volume and quality of job placements and create a more efficient platform to assist more workers through the PES based in the Internal Services Division, including the following tasks:
 - ▶ develop and implement computer-based job-matching and placement system or jobs bank
 - ▶ create a computerized intake process

7 www.youthbuild.org/southafrica

- ▶ reassign and expand core PES staff with new staff training
- ▶ redesign and open national walk-in PES office
- ▶ expand job bank strategically, increasing vacancies by targeting new groups of employers
- ▶ roll out specialized job search services.
- b. Develop and implement a pilot for rural employment services to test out a Uganda-specific model supporting employment expansion in microfirms in agriculture, agro-processing, and services. The challenges of high informality, small and weak firms, and limited market connections in rural areas, will require adapting and trying new methods to help microfirms to add workers and improve employment linkages through TVET and traineeship programmes.

Delivering employment services for rural areas in Uganda will require a period of experimentation, particularly in the case of host communities, to test the most effective of multiple methods to reach rural workers. It will then have to be determined how to link the modernization of the PES at the national level to one rural pilot, and afterwards, based on the results, to a larger number of rural areas in Stage 2. The employment services model that will work for rural areas in Uganda cannot possibly be a single labour officer, particularly one with the current multiple responsibilities.

Key elements of a pilot adapted to the host community or refugee settlement environment include:

- ▶ technical assistance to private sector associations and firms to identify traineeships, support employment expansion, and list and fill specific vacancies
- ▶ employment services delivered by mobile vans which circulate to market areas and refugee settlements, including open-air public workshops
- ▶ central office functions in Arua in partnership with local NGOs that lead the development of an area online, and ensure a walk-in service after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted
- ▶ joint capacity-building and training with MGLSD as well as local associations
- ▶ greater job search services between different rural areas and to Kampala by branching out after local operations have been established.

Associated labour market programmes: ALMPs and LMIS

Targets: Establish a core LMIS and employment portal keyed to PES needs and develop select training plus placement and training referral services.

The proposed strategy for the PES is to concentrate on creating and improving a market for combining training with improved employment services in two related areas, with a focus on two macro-level market-improving initiatives:

1. creating a link with selected ALMPs to assist and improve placement results
 2. initiating training referral services under the PES
1. Pilot combining PES placement services with training. In Stage 1, the PES would be seeking to expand demand for its services by partnering with existing ALMPs whose performance and outcomes could be strengthened with closer links to job placement. The form of the partnership – or pairing between a training programme and services of the PES – necessarily depends on the market problem being addressed. A public works programme with assistance for post-programme placement in employment may also be a priority, as Uganda seeks employment revitalization after COVID-19. An alternative would be a partnership with an existing programme to provide placement support. If continued to scale, the Uganda Volunteer Graduate Scheme (UGVS) is one example of a programme that might be willing to partner with the PES, providing placement services for those trainee graduates who do not proceed to employment in their UGVS placement.

2. Develop training referral and information services. Given the large numbers of low-skilled labour in Uganda, many more jobseekers are likely to need some form of training before being ready for a quality placement. While there have been comprehensive mapping reviews of groups of training programmes in Uganda, there is no centralized information resource tool that could be consulted by a jobseeker or a PES staff person to find a programme's availability for enrollees or to link graduates with open jobs in real time.⁸

The second ALMP tool recommended for Uganda's PES is to develop a databank of existing training programmes accepting candidates, their schedules, and requirements, that can be referred to jobseekers by PES counsellors. The first step of a referral and information service can be as simple as a training job board in PES offices, opening PES offices on certain days to permit training providers to screen and recruit candidates, and a database of the two or three programmes the PES is supporting directly.

Labour market information systems: Stage 1

It is recommended that the development of LMIS capabilities be phased to direct application by the PES, employers, and universities at each stage.

- ▶ Develop and implement Stage 1 labour market information. It is suggested that the PES focus first on *employment* supply and demand, with the first target users being employers, jobseekers, and training providers. Stage 2 labour market information can go further in specific skills and career trends, widening the user base to educational institutions and a larger training network. There is a distinction between LMIS administrative data – placement rates in the PES, analysis of vacancies and job registration versus trend data of places across the nation where employment growing or diminishing. Administrative data, particularly when PES operations are too small in the initial stages to be indicative of national employment trends, should be directed more to PES performance management systems, not LMIS.
- ▶ Establish DLEOSH national employment portal. Once the LMIS system is operational, a web-based portal, a Jobs-Uganda, can serve to make labour market information easily available to the public and provide a central location for communicating PES activities – its job announcements, seminars, services to the public. This could be on the MGLSD website or, depending on system capabilities, on an independent site with a link featured prominently on the MGLSD website.
- ▶ Initiate labour market studies collaboration and capacity-building. The first stage of building analytic capabilities within DLEOSH should include: (i) assessment of existing information and data availability – both governmental and from international or local agencies – (ii) identification of immediate "holes" in existing information in which DLEOSH can make a more strategic impact with its LMIS; (iii) exploration of joint needed studies and collaboration with any of the key providers, Bureau of Statistics, universities, ILO, World Bank, and surveys conducted by private employer associations; (iv) initial staff recruitment, or secondments to begin with, of specialized personnel.

Institutional development

Stage 1 targets: internal (MGLSD) institutional restructuring for better service delivery, advances in linkages and capacity-building at local level, expansion of partnerships.

- ▶ Internal restructuring of MGLSD to carry out first phase of public employment service modernization:
 - ▶ create the formal position of director of the National Employment Service, to ensure a head of the PES with knowledge of other competing DLEOSH responsibilities
 - ▶ establish position descriptions specifically associated with the PES and its newly designed intake process

⁸ A number of mapping exercises have been performed in Uganda which will be very useful, but one-moment-in-time reports cannot keep pace with the current set of programmes on distinct opening and closing schedules.

- ▶ assign staff to work formally and exclusively for the PES under these position descriptions, including counselling and guidance division staff who are placed officially within PES offices
- ▶ establish clearer lines of collaboration and responsibilities regarding research and statistics or labour market information, counselling, and guidance
- ▶ develop proposals, in line with national legislative processes, for PES modernization, including the separation of employment services and labour administration functions of labour officers.
- ▶ Working group with local districts and partners on delivering effective local employment services: legal structures, capacity-building, and service delivery. As discussed on page 10, the institutional and legal framework for delivering employment services in local districts has weakened over time as the employment needs have increased. The rural employment services pilot combined with selected partnerships in Stage 1 are intended to build new examples of effective local-national-regional collaboration. A more extensive mapping of local providers could support such an initiative.
- ▶ As part of the PES modernization and in the context of other legislative proposals to promote employment that are in process, it is recommended that the Director of DLEOSH lead a working group to develop a wider consensus on the delivery of employment services at the local level. Phase 1 activities of this initiative could include:
 - ▶ orientation training and workshops for local leaders to build capacity, knowledge of PES national modernization, transfer of tools;
 - ▶ mapping exercises of employment needs of key local districts, if possible, with joint local district MGLSD participation;
 - ▶ expanded linkage with other MGLSD services and use of its online tools;
 - ▶ stakeholder dialogue with social partners and local districts to advance a long-term institutional model.
- ▶ Staff training and capacity-building programmes developed and provided regularly. Shared staff training and workshops, exchanges with rural pilot, KCCA, and other key providers to share Ugandan and international best practices.

Stage 2: Key outputs and goals

Employment services

Stage 2 targets: expansion of PES offices, partnerships, or rural services

- ▶ Extend stronger national PES to smaller cities and rural areas. Key for Uganda in Stage 2 is for the PES to help support a national jobs market that shares information, vacancies, and training more efficiently from and between urban to rural markets. This will require the extension of services and office design (both walk-in and mobile) stepwise to those areas with the greatest need, and with collaborating partners and local district governments. A National Employment Service seated in MGLSD and operating with strong partners would include the following services:
 - ▶ walk-in offices with mobile services, with a One Stop Centre in Kampala
 - ▶ local access to national vacancy databases, information, or databases of vacancies in other Ugandan markets
 - ▶ referral and recruiting services for training, public works and ALMPs
 - ▶ workshops and counselling to assist job search and career development.

- ▶ Evolution to a publicly available online job-matching system. During late Stage 1, the MGLSD vacancy database should be evolving to a wider range of employers who will list jobs with the service, as well as a standard skill classification that accurately works for employers and jobseekers (that is, tested over time) so job-matching better fits the Ugandan context and is more widely recognized. The PES employment portal should also be a potential co-listing of online job listings of private agencies. On this basis, DLEOSH will decide whether to launch a national online job-matching system strategically. Even if not online externally, the database being used by the PES in Kampala can grant access to select users in local governments, rural areas, and particularly to private employers.
- ▶ More extensive promotion and branding of PES

Associated labour policies and programmes

Stage 2 targets: advanced LMIS or employment portal, online job-matching systems

- ▶ Advanced and systematic linkages between skills development and training for better job placement, including with MGLSD ALMPs. Building on the partnerships with ALMPs and TVET institutions in Stage 1, the PES would evolve to more systematic relationships with ALMPs. Which model, or models, will be the best to advance forward in Stage 2 will not only depend on the results in Stage 1.

Rather than script what Stage 2 might look like in terms of PES operations with ALMPs, below are some feasible targets for advances in Stage II:

- ▶ more streamlined management of currently diverse range of ALMPs throughout the ministry, driven more to job placement goals and outcomes
- ▶ PES serves as the entry point reception for key MGLSD active labour market programmes.
- ▶ Move to advanced LMIS that serve a range of needs for labour market and national data inputs.
- ▶ Advances in national employment portal. At a second stage, an employment portal can provide a site for the leading information on employment trends in a nation. When ready for an online job-matching platform, the employment portal will have already been a key site for employment information.

Institutional development

Stage 2 targets: institutional consolidation of a PES model, advance of service delivery model to national, local, and social partners.

- ▶ Evolve internal employment services unit into MGLSD-led national public employment service:
 - ▶ more effective service establishing linkages between employment information, connections between rural – urban – capital city markets (key methods: employment portal, network of partners);
 - ▶ principal clearinghouse of national information on job vacancies, skills development programmes, referral information services for youth
 - ▶ major hardware, software, and staff expansion
 - ▶ national centre established – more on lines of one-stop centre with training space, co-located partnerships, mobile provision of one-stop linkages to rural, smaller urban centres.
- ▶ Budget requests for substantial PES expansion can now be made based on a more sound platform of services.
- ▶ Advancement of rural models for more systematic delivery to local districts.
- ▶ Professionalization of employment services staff – public and private.

Stage 2+ to Stage 3: Key outputs and goals

Employment services and associated labour policies and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

Stage 2+ targets: advancement to comprehensive national employment service, ALMPs with more strategic direction towards economic development.

- ▶ Expand public employment service into a multi-service “national employment service”:
 - ▶ service establishing linkages between employment information, connections between rural – urban – capital city markets (key methods: employment portal, network of partners)
 - ▶ principal clearinghouse of national information on job vacancies, skills development programmes, referral information services for youth
 - ▶ major hardware, software, and staff expansion
 - ▶ national centre established – more on lines of one-stop centre with training space, co-located partnerships, mobile provision of one-stop linkages to rural, smaller urban centres.
- ▶ Advance ALMPs to address skills gaps more strongly. As skills gaps are so great nationwide, PES will eventually need to move to more skills training and placement programmes to have a more significant impact.

Institutional development

Phase 2+ targets: major institutional change, solidify model and supports within the ministry.

- ▶ New institutional model. In advanced stages, many PES are poised to launch a new institutional model with a strong sustainable source of financing, drawing on evolving partnerships with social partners. Particularly important will be joining an employment services model in support of national economic and skills strategies.

> 1

Introduction and overview: Comprehensive rapid assessment of public employment services and key related active labour market policies

This report provides a comprehensive rapid assessment of public employment services (PES) in Uganda, as well as key active labour market policies which directly relate to or give lessons for the provision of effective employment services. The report also contains a review of and proposals for the host and refugee communities of Isingiro-Nakivale and Arua-Rhino Camp, as they are the selected target communities for grant assistance under the PROSPECTS programme, a partnership of five major international organizations. The paper concludes with an extensive set of recommendations and a proposed action plan to implement the recommended strategy for modernizing employment services in Uganda. This topic has become even more relevant with the Prime Minister's call for the mainstreaming of employment in all public ministries.

The report reflects the principal findings of the rapid assessment mission that was undertaken from 28 February to 12 March 2020, as well as results of the comprehensive scoping mission undertaken by ILO-Geneva in February 2020. Further comments have been incorporated following a consultation meeting with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) Directorate of Labour, Employment, Occupational Safety and Health (DLEOSH) on 26 May. The rapid assessment mission included meetings with government officials and key social partners including MGLSD, the private sector organizations, trade unions, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), and key NGOs undertaking youth training programmes. Field visits were undertaken to two selected refugee host districts (Arua and Isingiro) – with meetings with local government and core social partners. Additionally, the report incorporates key reports on Uganda listed in the bibliography and draws on international best practice in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America as relevant to Uganda to formulate the recommendations.

The report and appraisal were requested by the ILO to “determine the feasibility, nature and scope of employment service strengthening and modernization in the country and in the PROSPECTS target districts in particular”.⁹ As requested, the report is intended to provide practical recommendations to the MGLSD, the ILO and its partners for strengthening employment services and improving employment linkages for the two selected refugee hosting districts.

The recommendations, stemming directly from the rapid assessment and document review, are sequenced into a **staged, Uganda-specific strategy for employment services modernization**. International best practice has made clear that – particularly for developing countries – employment services modernization must be built in stages, adapting to poor employment conditions, and building institutional capacity to reach greater coverage and effectiveness.

Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of employment services and active labour market policies in Uganda as a foundation for the recommended plan. **Section 3** presents a review of the two target host communities-refugee settlements with specific recommendations for the PROSPECTS programme. **Section 4** provides recommendations and the action plan to correspond with the staged long-term strategy for the modernization of employment services. Key ballpark estimates and a resource mobilization plan are also integrated. While the PROSPECTS recommendations and proposals are described separately in **Section 3**, as they respond to multi-donor considerations, they also contain supportive roles for MGLSD and are reflected again in the action plan and recommendations, with a specific recommendation to test a rural model of employment and skill services delivery.

This report is presented with particular thanks to MGLSD, the ILO and its Uganda-based team, and a wide range of national and international specialists, all whose insight and dedication made these recommendations possible. DLEOSH provided detailed comments and review, for which special thanks are in order.

⁹ International Labour Organization, Assessment of Public Employment Services and Active Labour Market Policies in Uganda, Terms of Reference (ToR), February 2020a.

► 2

Public employment services and active market policies: review and assessment

► 2.1 National employment context for design and delivery of employment services

The model of public employment services, and the term itself, has its origins in a developed country model for older (post-WWII), diverse, and predominantly formal employment contexts. It evolved from concentrating on urban industrial unemployment and unemployment insurance administration to supporting a wider range of job transitions (between jobs, from school to work) in more modern economies with growing services, agriculture, and high-tech manufacturing sectors. Over time, the model of PES has evolved worldwide to adapt to different economies and an increased rate of job changes, developing a wide range of core and support services, as well as partnerships with private employment services.¹⁰

An assessment of the requirements of PES today, particularly in developing countries, needs to begin with a look at what type of employment a nation is facing, in what type of economy and what base level of human capital. This assessment report for PES in Uganda first reviews the key employment features that are most relevant to the design, functionality, and strategy of PES development. It corresponds directly to the ILO functional framework under the governance category or overall economic and employment situational analysis.¹¹

2.1.1 Key Ugandan national employment characteristics

Through discussions with MGLSD, private sector associations, the Hotels, Food, Tourism, Supermarkets and Allied Workers Union (HTS-Union), and other key social partners, it is important to lay out key features of the Ugandan economy that must be considered for Uganda-tailored public employment services with support from social partners and private sectors.

10 International Labour Organization, "Capacity diagnostic tool for PES quality improvement," ILO, forthcoming.

11 Ibid.

It is worth beginning by determining how Uganda's employment base is distinct from the "typical" employment base of more advanced countries, on which they evolved many of the key systems of PES. These features, less present in Uganda, are as follows.

- ▶ Most advanced PES reforms were based on **exclusive focus on formal employment**, where benefit and income levels of vacancies are easily verified, and formal sectors are large enough to be the sole focus of a PES. This is true, even in many developing countries such as those in the Middle East, where the PES system does not register informal employment or list vacancies that are below the official minimum wage. Informal firms, in Mexico, for example, are not eligible for training programmes run by the National Employment Service despite informality levels over 50 per cent.
- ▶ **Predominant focus on manufacturing and services employment** with agricultural employment, when listed, focused on specialized programmes or agro-processing. These sectors are more readily adapted to standard vacancies and recruitment methods.
- ▶ **Strong utilisation of private employment services and private sector associations** which typically have a relatively strong presence in job placement for the mid and upper skills levels in urban areas. All modern PES have greatly increased coverage and efficiency by diverse forms of partnership or collaboration. Key PES have expanded their reach by contracting out employment services to private and non-profit services in partnership (for example, Australia, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia).
- ▶ **Technological modernization**, particularly computer-based registry of jobseekers and vacancies, has been a key factor in increasing the efficiency of PES and their ability to reach greater numbers of jobseekers. Online private services and online job-matching for developing PES, however, needs to reflect development alongside public online capabilities, in combination with the growing use of online technologies by an increasing majority of the workforce.
- ▶ More sustained **employment problems for disadvantaged groups** (for instance, long-term unemployment, skills, and education deficits), which became the specialized attention of developed country PES.
- ▶ Several African PES modernizations have created free-standing institutional structures which report to the Ministry of Labour. Specifically, the Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Togo, and Niger created separate and independent public agencies with sole responsibilities for delivering employment services that are directly responsible to the respective Ministry of Labour.

Uganda's economic or employment characteristics, as well as its institutional characteristics, are quite distinct from those noted above, particularly the following.

- ▶ **Formal employment** (with contracts with or without benefits) **is very limited and concentrated in Kampala and other urban centres**. The World Bank Jobs Diagnostic for Uganda finds that only one in four employed Ugandans (24 per cent) engage in some form of wage employment; the vast majority work for themselves or for their families.¹²
- ▶ **Growing "informalization" and deterioration of work quality.** "Casual labour" in Uganda, day work paid in cash, is a troubling trend noted in the construction sector and services sector, not only in the rural areas, but also in Kampala. Informal work is also deteriorating, surveys found that 30 per cent of informal workers in microfirms were paid in food and accommodation, not cash.¹³ Mauku Moses of the HTS-Union pointed out that even in international hotel chains, workers are increasingly informal, being hired through service firms without benefits, security or even a predictable work schedule.¹⁴
- ▶ **The bulk of employment is rural and informal** (estimates 89 per cent). Rural employment is based predominantly in small-shareholder farming, casual labour, and low-productivity services.
- ▶ High demographic rate yielding a **disproportionately high youth population** with clearly **insufficient new job creation** to accommodate large yearly entrants into the labour market.

12 Dino Merrotto, *Uganda: Jobs Strategy for Inclusive Growth*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

13 World Bank, *Systematic Country Diagnostic*, 2015, 25.

14 Moses Mauku, Director, Planning and Operations, HTS-Union, interview with ILO mission, 4 March 2020.

- ▶ **Major skills deficits compounded by the poor preparation of youth for the labour market.** The combination of high dropout rates, low average years of education and poor education quality dramatically affects the quality of labour supply, not only of youth but also of adults.

Institutional characteristics:

- ▶ **Private sector not yet highly organized to articulate employment demands.** No private sector business associations maintain their own active vacancy bases or standardize vacancy postings. Not unusual for Africa, there is no national skills framework for professions, articulating skills-level requirements for fields such as carpentry, plumbing, hospitality, and construction.
- ▶ **Online private employment services are limited but growing and are focused principally on Kampala.** The report details the online services available to the public which appear to be growing and may be a source for future partnership and collaboration.
- ▶ **Use of private employment agencies for formal (domestic) placement is evolving** although the precise dimensions and sectors of private agencies, particularly if one includes online services, is not known in detail. MGLSD registers private agencies annually and processes annual fees for the government. Overseeing does not include verification of whether workers are placed by firms or the fields of placement. The large portion of this appears to be unskilled work for overseas migration. There appear to be no major international agencies specializing in formal, skilled job placement (such as Manpower or equivalent) operating in Uganda, unlike in other developing countries, and this is an indication that the bulk of the registered agencies work either for external migration or lower skilled placements.

It is important to bear in mind that Uganda's economic and employment characteristics as a low-income, principally rural economy, are distinct from the fundamentals in place to help shape PES in more advanced economies, when progressing to the review in [Section 2.2](#) of the current functioning of public employment services in Uganda under MGLSD.

2.1.2 Particular considerations in the current COVID-19 environment

In the weeks following the end of the rapid assessment mission held from 28 February to 11 March 2020, the spread of the COVID-19 virus had a major impact on living conditions, health, and employment worldwide. For Uganda, also having to face the locust plague sweeping East Africa, projecting a US\$700 million loss in 2020, it is truly "a crisis within a crisis," as described by the World Bank.¹⁵

The country-wide lockdown was lifted in late May 2020. As of the end of 17 June 2020, there were 732 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Uganda,¹⁶ with a confirmed, now recovered, case in the Adjumani District in West Nile. During the lockdown period, there was a nationwide restriction on large community gatherings and movements between urban and rural areas. The government closed all schools, which affected approximately 15 million children, 600,000 in refugee settlements. The Government suspended the intake of new refugees to prevent the spread of coronavirus, while the movement restrictions affected refugees in Kampala, some of whom were caught trying to return to settlement communities.

On the labour market side, there have been no explicit policies to support retention of jobs. The Minister of State for Labour, Employment and Occupational Safety has urged employers not to lay off workers unnecessarily without contacting the Ministry of Labour, but there are no specific incentives or support provided to prevent layoffs.¹⁷ As in other East African countries, the key sectors affected included hospitality, transport, and small businesses. A local press report from Arua,¹⁸ in a refugee subcommunity of Rhino

¹⁵ World Bank, *The Locust Plague: Fighting a Crisis Within a Crisis*, April 2020.

¹⁶ Uganda Ministry of Health, *Coronavirus (Pandemic) Covid-19*, 17 June 2020.

¹⁷ DLA Piper, *Employment Alert: Coronavirus COVID-19 Outbreak in Uganda*, March 2020.

¹⁸ Andrew Kyamagero, "How Refugees are Coping with the Covid-19 Lockdown", *Daily Monitor*, 27 April 2020.

Camp, indicates a series of worsening conditions in the camps. In mid-April, the World Food Programme (WFP) had reduced food rations by half owing to a funding shortfall, just as poor rain conditions were making it difficult to grow short-term crops. Children were not permitted to go to school, including the early childhood development programmes at the camps. This affected an estimated 30,000 children in the camp. Markets, according to the press report, were not operating, and sometimes regular travel by refugee family members from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was no longer taking place.

Early 2020, Uganda received a US\$491 million loan from the IMF to partially restore fiscal balance, to address COVID-19-related healthcare costs and to reinforce lending of the Uganda Development Authority for small businesses. By mid-2020, there was evidence that COVID-19 was resurging in countries that had taken lockdown steps but reopened in stages, such as the United States (early opening states in the South and West) and China (markets in Beijing), and the worsening contagion in developing countries, make it clear that Uganda, along with the rest of the world, will need to adapt labour market practices at least through 2020 into early 2021 to reduce the spread of the virus in the absence of a widely available vaccine. The recommendations for PES modernization incorporate modified practices and scheduling to take account of the prolonged time period for social distancing.

► **2.2 Public employment services: assessment of policy, structure, organization, service delivery and performance**

This assessment and analysis of public employment services in Uganda is divided into two broad sections. Section 2.2 is an analytical review to define PES structure, organization, legal framework, human resources. Section 2.3 provides a functional analysis of the structure: how the PES functions in practice, who is served, what types of employment are covered, and which major gaps exist. PES, online job-matching services, and even services provided by employers to their members outside a role with the public sector appear to be quite limited, but what is known about them is integrated into this analysis.¹⁹

The analysis reviews all the aspects requested by the ILO but integrates them into a more Uganda-specific context as also requested, so it reflects the most significant features and deficits in PES development without undue attention to less relevant aspects. The assessment then informs the recommendations and strategy (Section 2.4) on how to modernize the current PES, building progressively from what operates currently.

2.2.1 Review of PES structure, organization, and legal framework

The following review of what is in operation in Uganda in terms of public employment services is drawn from the scoping and rapid assessment missions, a document review and key input from MGLSD, and DLEOSH and the personnel department. It covers not only the legal and institutional framework for PES but also, and more importantly, which services and operations function under this institutional framework, and in which ways.

The review of the MGLSD principal organizational units and functions of public employment services includes private employment services in Section 2.4. Section 2.3 thereafter reviews, as requested, active labour market policies and labour market information systems (LMIS), as this division of the report

¹⁹ This corresponds to the partnerships category under the governance category of the ILO Capacity Diagnostic tool; however, in the current form only a few of these relationships constitute an informal input to governance.

conforms more closely with the ILO requested structure for this assessment.²⁰ As relevant, this analysis brings out comparisons to other PES systems to contrast how the specific organization within Uganda may relate to functionality. This organizational review does not examine the political labour structure: the Permanent Secretary, Commissioners, Assistant Commissions to conform with the ToR.

PES organizational and legal structure within MGLSD

The predominant legal and organizational model for public employment services, whether in developed or developing countries, is an “employment or public employment services division” within a labour ministry or a separate public agency that reports to the ministry of labour. Uganda did previously have a separate labour ministry but, following structural reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, several ministries were merged under the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD). All national labour functions are carried out by the Directorate of Labour, Employment, Occupational Safety and Health (DLEOSH). Of the three directorates – LEOSH, Gender, and Social Protection – LEOSH has the smaller budget and fewer national level programmes.

Uganda is relatively unusual in comparison with other African nations by not having a separate Labour Ministry or a separate entity for its public employment service. In the Ivory Coast, the PES is a separate public agency responsible to the Ministry of Labour with 260 staff, 100 at its headquarters and 160 in its 12 regional offices.²¹ Mauritania, Togo and Niger have their PES as a public agency responsible to the Ministry of Labour.

Figure 1 demonstrates the three directorates under MGLSD, of which Labor, Employment and Social Protection will be the subject of this assessment. As depicted in the organizational chart and confirmed by personnel at MGLSD, DLEOSH has four divisions. “The Department of Employment Services is made up of four divisions: Internal, External, Research and Statistics and Counselling and Guidance.”²²

The Director of Labour, Employment and Occupational Health has the mandate to implement PES. There is no specific division which has PES in its title; in Uganda different responsibilities are assigned to various departments. As described in written comments to this report: “The department of Employment Services has the core responsibility to implement the Public Employment Service functions. PES is therefore a function of the Employment Services and therefore, all the four divisions (Internal Employment, External Employment, Research and Statistics and Counselling and Guidance) all perform their functions of PES in Uganda.”²³ This section examines each of these four divisions, focusing specifically on tasks related to PES as well as other related responsibilities.

This structure is a major constraint to having an efficient and effective set of employment services. All the four divisions under the Employment Services Department are tasked to deliver employment services among their different duties and perform their PES functions collaboratively. The External Employment Services Division operates separately to support the specific task of external migration with support from Counselling and Guidance. Each division operates in a stand-alone fashion but works closely under the supervision of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner. Also unusual is the lack of a single unified name and logo presenting a service to Ugandan citizens.

As part of the structural changes implemented in the 1980s and 90s, responsibilities for employment services and labour inspection were devolved to the district level in the form of Labour Officers, should they be requested by the districts. This also includes responsibilities for labour inspection. The implications from this decentralization for the lack of a public sector presence in employment services in Uganda is discussed later in this section.

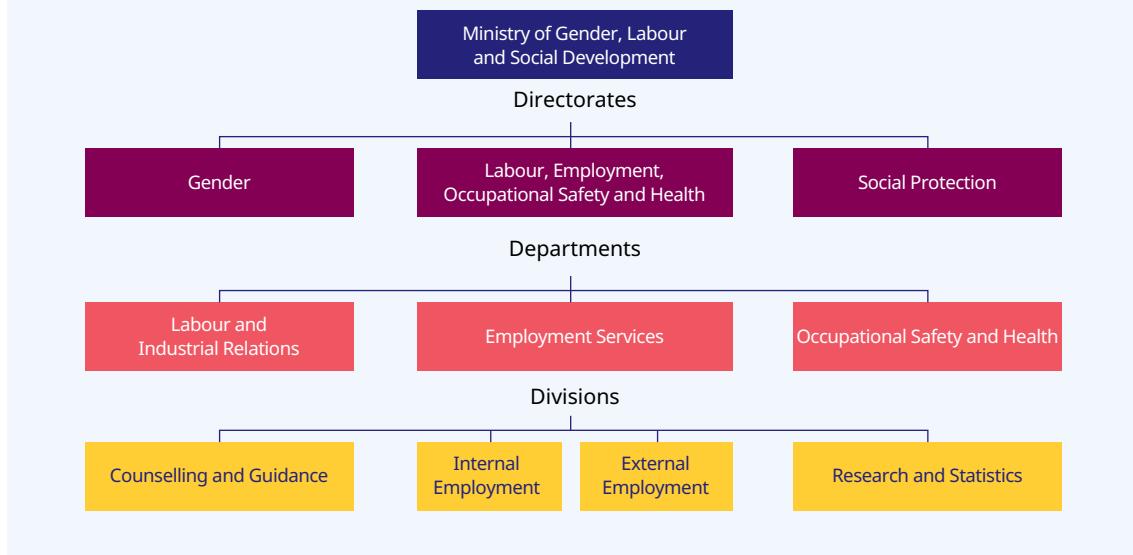
20 The ILO definition of core employment services includes labour market information systems.

21 IDB, OECD and WAPES, *The World of Public Employment Services*, 2017.

22 Written comments of MGLSD personnel to consultant draft, 11 June 2020.

23 Ibid.

► **Figure 1. Organization of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development**



Internal employment

The heart of what is, and more importantly, what would be, future modernized PES in Uganda lies institutionally in the Internal Employment Division. The other three divisions each have specific activities and responsibilities that support the provision of employment services in a cooperative fashion. The division helps walk-in jobseekers to access information on the available job opportunities and assesses skills required by the employers before the formal registration process and entry into the internal employment database in preparation for job-matching and placement.

The principal functions performed by Internal Employment are direct employment services for employers requesting placement services. The division advertises for open positions, reviews candidates who come to MGSLP offices and fills an application form for each candidate. The candidates receive advice from the Counselling and Guidance Division, and placement and referral are then made to the client. These services are currently free of charge. In Kampala, in March 2020, the division was working on orders from Carrefour, an international grocery chain: one for 34 jobs and another for 26. The division is setting up a job-matching database, but currently job-matching is done by hand (that is, paper applications). Internal Employment has applied this form of client-based public employment service to other private sector clients and to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by performing outreach with employers, particularly through employer-based organizations.

The mission was informed that two people were performing these client-based employment activities, one of whom was a volunteer through the Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme. Even these two identified staff were performing other functions beyond the client-based employment matching.

With an appreciative thank you, the Internal Employment Division provided the following description of their services, operations, and benchmarks of delivery as well as proposal for a National Job Centre. "The Internal Employment Unit, through its defined mandate of enhancement of access to employment opportunities, carries out a number of activities directly related to, including but not limited to; registration and placement of jobseekers, employers' mapping, registration, inspections and monitoring of Private Employment Agencies, Job Canvassing, among others. However, these services are largely manually operated as there is no clear or systematic system that can enable easy implementation of this core mandate."

"The Internal Employment Unit also runs a computer-based job-matching database (JMD), which is operated using Excel, to register and place jobseekers into identified vacancies. Between July 2019 and April 2020, the Unit registered over 1,500 jobseekers under various professions such as engineering, business administration, social work, information technology, among others. The Unit therefore established partnerships with various companies such as Carrefour supermarket, Ruparelia Group, and others, through which 102 jobseekers were successfully placed."

The Internal Employment Division also provided the following explanation. "Given there is no online digital job matching platform, the division operates a physical walk in of jobseekers where CVs and other documents are physically received, input made into the Excel job-matching database and manually filtered for matching and placements. The division closely works with the counselling and guidance division to screen jobseekers' CVs. Those with CVs that do not meet employers' demands are then taken through basic training on CV writing, to ensure that every jobseeker holds a competitive personal resume."

Internal Employment indicated: "Once CVs have been entered into the JMD, they are matched with available employers, through preliminary shortlisting and interviews. The division then recommends the most qualified candidates to the employer for the final selection. This is then followed by a pre-deployment workshop where jobseekers are taken through basic positive work habits."²⁴

Physically, these client-based services operate on distinct floors in MGLSD headquarters with prospective job applicants standing or sitting on chairs in the hallway or in a crowded office. There are no public signs or indications that an employment service is located at the building. Because of these physical constraints, there is no place to fill out applications, no receptionist to receive jobseekers.

In recognition of the constraints of poor physical space and service delivery, Internal Services also provided the following summary of a current proposal. "As a result of limited space to enable the implementation of the PES functions, the Division or Unit has planned for the establishment of a separate national job centre (NJC), which can provide jobseekers with timely registrations and placement. The job centre is envisaged to offer critical services such as mentorships, on spot recruitment by invited companies, training, psycho-social support, among others. The National Job Centre proposal would further support the expansion and proper use of a national digital job-matching platform which is planned to cover the entire country and accessed by anyone anywhere."

In terms of human resources functions, while there is an identified Chief of the Internal Employment Division, the Chief is not given the title and responsibilities of a Director of a National Employment Service, which would be comparable with the terms of international best practice. Defining a single head of a public employment service is essential in a reform of the system, as a Director must have responsibilities over the cooperation and roles of other staff if they are to provide an efficient service. A survey conducted by ILO and GIZ for the YouMatch projects indicated that a total of 30 staff, including labour officers, worked on employment services, principally at ministry headquarters. This number is not only inadequate for a basic service but also deceptive. The rapid assessment mission did not detect a single staff member who was dedicated full-time to employment services, including the two in the internal employment services unit. Making a comparison to a much smaller country: in Gabon, the public employment service has 82 employees and is located within a separate Ministry of Labour facility. Of the 82 employees, 26 are in the central office and 56 are divided among 5 regional offices.²⁵

Section 4 provides an extensive series of specific recommendations, with the objective of making this core, client-based public employment service more systematic. This is the most efficient way of providing employment services with so few staff and infrastructure investment. Starting with specific vacancies to fill, rather than registering jobseekers, is the foundation for building outwards, now and in the immediate future. This strategy is far preferable in the early development of a PES. In contrast, Namibia's PES was created in 2011, but an ILO analysis found that in 2016 the service had registered 15,023 jobseekers and

²⁴ Direct quotations are from detailed written comments to the draft consultant report, 11 June 2020.

²⁵ IDB, OECD, and WAPES, *The World of Public Employment Services*, 2017.

had accomplished only 1,371 placements.²⁶ Right now, however, without a systematic intake process, a computerized database, or trained and assigned staff, the service does not have the capacity to increase the level of placements or open its doors to a wider range of jobseekers.

The constraint on serving greater volumes can also be seen in the other responsibilities of the Internal Employment Division. It has produced an employment outlook publication utilizing detailed labour market administrative and programme data. It is also in charge of the licensing and fee collection of private recruitment agencies, both for internal and external migration. As of December 2019, 82 companies were registered. These licences expire every 31 December and require a lot of bureaucratic surveillance to keep up-to-date and collect the annual fee. As most of these firms are for external migration, it is highly inefficient for this function to be held within Internal Employment Services, for monitoring. As discussed below, one recommendation is to move this, and other functions, out of Internal Employment Services so that it can concentrate more on public employment services delivery.

The modernization plan to be suggested for Uganda would include establishing a more defined walk-in facility that can attract and serve both jobseekers and business clients, not dissimilar from the National Job Centre proposal. As PES are modernized, most provide a bank of computers for independent job search and self-registry for job vacancies, some with a training room for providing classes on job search. Job counselling services are provided in a space within the PES.

Counselling and guidance

The Counselling and Guidance Division has a wide range of activities and responsibilities, including two main ones that directly relate to functions of a PES. First, the division is responsible for providing counselling and guidance to jobseekers as a core function of a PES. The rapid assessment mission observed that jobseekers who came to the MGLSD offices in Kampala would be received by one of the counselling and guidance staff and then be sent to another staff member in internal employment services to apply for job vacancies listed by the internal services. A counselling and guidance division separate from an employment division is rare compared with other nations and constrains the ability of the MGLSD to serve jobseekers efficiently. International best practice in all public employment services is to provide counselling and guidance services *after* a jobseeker has been screened by an employment service division. Why? Because some jobseekers are ready for immediate placement, and it gives counselling and guidance staff more time to concentrate on the jobseekers who need more advice. Also, efficient PES do not put the burden of administrative registry on counsellors, so that the counselling and guidance function can become more specialized and effective over time. Uganda has no computerized or self-registry function for jobseekers; this will be part of the recommendations and will improve the streamlining of the process.

The following additional information given in inverted commas, and the chart (table 1), were provided by the Counselling and Guidance Department.

"The practice noted here is due to the fact that the education system in Uganda has over time been based on qualification and less attention given to competence development. Therefore, when we [Counselling and Guidance Unit] look at the demand side where employers are interested in hiring jobseekers with specialised skills to have a quick fix, the counselling and guidance Unit had to provide job counselling to the jobseekers at the earliest stage possible through Mentorship training sessions where jobseekers are provided with soft skills training sessions in CV writing, Interview preparations: what to expect before, during and after the interview and placement, presentation, communication, etc. The assumption is that the information obtained by the jobseeker who has undergone this training could be useful to him or her even when they are to apply for jobs in any other employer organisation since competence-based training in preparation for the labour market for most jobseekers is lacking as this is not taught in school and yet vital in the labour market. Hence a gap between the demand and supply side that we still advocate to achieve. However, the principal to meet international practice will late be realised especially with the proposed modern PES."

²⁶ Michael Mwasikakata and Pedro Martins, *Assessment of Public Employment Services and Active Labour Market Policies in Namibia*, ILO, 2017.

► **Table 1. Statistics for jobseekers**

SN	Month	Number of jobseekers mentored	Mentored for pre-interview sessions	Jobseekers mentored and placed by internal employment unit
1	September 2019	30	70	25
2	October 2019	20	98	35
3	November 2019	45		
4	December 2019	24		
5	January	36		
6	February	26		
Total		181	168	60

Note: The table was provided by counselling and guidance staff to the draft consultant report, 11 June 2020.

The second Counselling and Guidance Division responsibility that relates to PES is supporting the school-to-work transition, that is, for students from secondary school to work, and from university education to work. If one compares this function internationally, school-to-work transition programmes are more typically based in schools (for example, Education Ministries), as they are the key point of contact for this population and for intervention. Those students who are already out of school but not yet working, that is, searching for their first jobs, are more typically candidates for school-to-work transition programmes run by Labour Ministries or Departments. Few PES, even in advanced countries, run school-to-work transition programmes. It is more typical for PES to provide labour market information or conduct specialized outreach to schools as in the Bahamas (for instance, career orientation programmes). Specialized school-to-work transition programmes are often needed for youth populations that are harder to place, those lacking basic soft skills, who need addiction treatment or violence reduction interventions. Addiction and violence reduction services are best treated outside a PES framework.²⁷

On this second function concerning schools, the Counselling and Guidance Unit provided the following written input. "What is done currently is attending School Fairs and Exhibitions in secondary schools, Universities this is done through invitation, field visits or existing school events targeting school leavers (Senior four, senior six, University finalists and the first-year students joining Universities). However, with the limited staffing gap it has been challenging but with some results."

A third function of Counselling and Guidance is to work with students, domestically and those who want to go abroad, which does not directly correspond to a function of a public employment service. It was outside the scope of this review to explore how this function coordinates with those of the Education Ministry. The Counselling and Guidance Division is working with the Association of External Recruitment Agencies in providing counselling to return migrants at a reception centre.

The Counselling and Guidance Unit provided table 2 and an explanation to supplement the description of its work, particularly with return migrants who were domestic workers in the Middle East. "In this regard, the unit receives monthly reports from the UAERA reception centre that are analysed for follow up specifically for returnee migrant workers."

²⁷ Jacqueline Mazza, *Labor Intermediation Services in Developing Economies*,

► **Table 2. Counselling provided to returnee migrant workers (domestic workers): 2019**

SN	Month	Female	Total
1	June	26	26
2	July	61	61
3	August	25	25
4	September	41	41
5	October	53	53
6	November	29	29
7	December	11	11
Total			246

Source: This table was provided by the Counselling and Guidance Unit in written comments, 11 June 2020.

In light of these functions, the counselling and guidance staff appear insufficiently resourced to undertake all these functions well. The scoping report found the division had motivated, but relatively new, staff who had not been trained, and there was an absence of systematic counselling and guidance protocols or referral systems. As it is atypical among labour ministries worldwide, it would be interesting to trace the reason why the counselling and guidance function is a separate division in MGLSD, as there are such small staff numbers associated with the counselling and guidance and internal employment services divisions.

Research and statistics

The Research and Statistics Division was visited on the scoping mission but discussed on the rapid assessment mission only as part of a meeting of the various departments in DLEOSH. At the time of writing, MGLSD was recruiting for the head of the department, which once accomplished would shape a future direction and workplan for the division. The division told the ILO scoping mission that it was developing structures for the collection and analysis of labour market information. It provided the following written additions to the description of its activities. “The division has supported in the development of the External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS) module, which has already been operationalized and currently in use. Other core modules of the LMIS such as Internal Employment Management Information Analysis System (IEMIS), Occupational Safety and Health Management Information System (OSHIMIS), Labour Officers Information System (LOIS), and the informal-Jua Kaali Management Information System are also planned to be developed.”²⁸

However, there is a wider institutional context in Uganda for labour market information, including the National Bureau of Statistics, which conducts labour force surveys that are the subject of internal governmental meetings. In developing countries, if there is limited professional staff with training on survey techniques and methodology, it is not unusual for this responsibility to be centralized in a national bureau of statistics. What is important is how, and if, these surveys are regularly shared with those who need this information, in the private sector and especially the DLEOSH.

The Research and Statistics Division also said that it was developing a job-matching module for Internal Services Employment Management. This diffuse approach to the elements of a public employment service in different departments is particularly inefficient and will work against providing an effective employment service in Uganda. The job-matching module should be developed and tested by the staff carrying out job-matching, using consultations with stakeholders.

As Labour Ministries or Directorates mature and install capacity in the form of labour economists and statisticians, labour force survey responsibility can be transferred to a Labour Ministry or Directorate, but the foundation is laid only through provisions for the sharing of information and collaboration on

28 Written input provided to supplement the description of Research and Statistics activities and plans, 11 June 2020.

studies between Labour Ministries and Bureaus of Statistics. There was no indication of collaboration, joint publication, or temporary assignments of specialized staff with the Bureau of Statistics, unlike in other developing countries, such as Jamaica.

Additional written input provided by Research and Statistics stated the following. "The division has led the employment diagnostic analysis study which was carried out 'to understand the nature of the deficiency of productive employment and to identify the constraints on and opportunities for enhancing inclusive job-rich growth'. The purpose of this study was 'to provide a sound knowledge base for effective policies, institutional reforms and other interventions aimed at reducing deficiency of productive employment. As a recommendation from the employment diagnostic study (EDA), the division with support from the ILO is also currently finalizing the sectoral employment diagnostic analysis study, whose purpose is to analyse sectors with employment potential for Uganda."²⁹

External employment

The External Employment Services Division was not reviewed during the rapid assessment mission as it was not part of the requested meeting list from ILO. The Internal and External Employment Divisions are under the Department of Employment Services in the official organizational chart, but everything indicates that they operate as distinct units. For example, there is no "Employment Services" chief with responsibilities over units or divisions.

The figures obtained by the scoping mission were that 53,399 migrant workers were recruited via external firms, mainly to the Middle East, and 60 per cent female for domestic work.³⁰ The predominant focus on low-skilled, low wage labour for external migration was observed to be an area of controversy in the country, raising the question of whether the government service provided any substantial oversight or protection of workers.

Functionally, no interaction was observed or discussed between the internal and external employment departments. The registry of internal and external employment services firms, to keep track of the annual collection of fees, was in fact being carried out by the few people of the Internal Employment Services Division who also work directly on job placement under the PES.

The assignment of the registry function does not appear to be a sound bureaucratic division of labour. Given that most firms are involved in external employment, this function corresponds more to the external employment services unit. Was it transferred more appropriately to the external migration division, there would be gains to efficiency and the ability to use more readily the existing knowledge of these firms?

The names of firms, whether they were involved in internal or external placement services, and whether for unskilled or skilled labour, were published in the new labour market information publication of the Internal Employment Services. Both types of migration are listed; however, there does not appear to be any data analysing the proportion of skilled to unskilled or internal to external employment.

The process for registering a firm with the MGLSD does not include a verification of its legal status, nor does it verify if migrants have lodged any complaints against specific firms. In short, there appears to be no formal process for flagging firms and returning the fee, and not permitting them to operate in the case of complaint, a key functional role for the Directorate's mandate for Ugandan workers. Were this function transferred more appropriately to the external migration division, there would be gains to efficiency and the ability to benefit from any existing knowledge of these firms. During the rapid assessment mission and thereafter, several newspaper articles revealed abusive working conditions for low-skilled Ugandan migrants abroad.

29 Ibid.

30 ILO, "Draft report of the scoping mission to Uganda on employment services within the scope of the PROSPECTS project", 3 March 2020b.

The scoping mission noted that there is a separate external information management system, administratively distinct from the fee payment and official annual registry of firms, and a migration reception established in collaboration with the Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA) which provides counselling to return migrants. However, from a structural and organizational standpoint for public employment services, this structure is not the most efficient or effective, as return migrants should be counselled and received directly by those working with placements for all Ugandans, rather than migration specific.

Finally, a news story review during April-May 2020, including on the MGLSD website, indicates the recent recovery of funds from labour export firms who were found to have extorted fees from young Ugandans to obtain jobs in the Middle East. The State House Anti-Corruption Unit states that 1 billion shillings were recovered from labour export firms (those on the MGLSD registry) for illegally charging young people to get them jobs in the Middle East.³¹ Another firm was cited for human trafficking. According to the MGLSD website, the firms that returned the fees were able to stay in the national registry, but the two that did not comply were dropped from formal registration.

Decentralization and local district government role

As previously discussed, the implementation of employment services outside Kampala's MGLSD national offices has been decentralized to the regions, and then to local districts. From administrative, financial, and operational standpoints, Uganda's mode of decentralization of public employment services has been detrimental to the provision, let alone quality, of employment services, and this is analysed further in [Section 2.4](#).

Regions and local districts are responsible for staffing, organization, and delivery of any services in their respective localities. However, to date, it appears the only recognized form of delivering local employment services is to request and finance a labour officer. Labour officers have dual responsibilities: to implement labour laws, particularly occupational, health and safety, *as well as* employment services. There appears to be no guidance to labour officers on providing employment services. Most importantly, the labour conditions in Uganda's rural localities are so poor, and in many cases alarming – workers and refugees who are not paid, dangerous working conditions – that the limited labour officers de facto do not implement employment services nor receive national level support to do so (as it is a local government responsibility). The labour officer interviewed in Isingiro made it clear that the principal demand on him is "the inspection of firms", and that he receives reports on work accidents and on workers who are not paid.

Uganda's decentralization model deviates from international best practice in another important way, that is by combining in the same person the responsibilities for sanctioning and inspecting employers and gaining their trust in registering vacancies. International best practice throughout the developing world is to separate labour regulatory oversight functions from employment service functions. This separation does occur at the national level in Uganda but is a fundamental organizational and legal constraint to effective employment services at the local level.

The total number of labour officers, and how many provide any form of employment services (since this is determined at the local level), does not appear to be known by the Employment Services Division in Kampala. As noted in the scoping report, a survey conducted by ILO and GIZ's YouMatch Project indicated that only 12 districts had labour officers. Given the demands noted above, it is not clear if any are providing employment services. The two districts subject to the rapid assessment mission, Isingiro and Arua, had labour officers, but there was no indication that employment services in any form were being delivered.³² In both districts, there was no physical space in the local government officers for receiving jobseekers or systematically listing openings. In both cases, there were job bulletin boards with no more than three jobs listed, but principally for local government rather than private employers.

³¹ <https://www.independent.co.ug/ugx-1-7bn-recovered-since-establishment-of-state-house-anti-corruption-unit/>.

³² In the case of Arua, the mission made four visits to the labour office in two days but was not able to secure a meeting. There were no noticeboards or any indication at the labour office that employment services of any kind were being provided.

Local government model: KCCA

The KCCA, established in 2014, and its sister Kabalagala One-Stop Youth Centre are examples of local employment services that work by going outside the decentralization framework established at the federal level. Their funding is driven by the local government, combined with outside donor and programme financing. No connection was noted between these services and the labour officer framework established at the federal level. The Kabalangala One-Stop Youth Centre provides vocational skills training for self-employment. It was not visited by the rapid assessment mission.

The KCCA, visited by the assessment mission in early March 2020, operates in excellent facilities leased to them by the local (city) government. It has a reception area, a bank of computers for online job searching, which was heavily in use when visited, active training classes, facilities that can be rented out for training, and staff assigned to managing a job bank. It provides job-search assistance, skills training, select entrepreneurship development and life-skills training. Simply put, it has the facilities, the diversity of ALMPs – related to developing country markets – and the institutional linkages of a modernized developing country employment services office.

In terms of human resources, the KCCA has developed the category of “employment counsellor” which assists youth in counselling, job matching and outreach to employers. The centre’s Director indicates that the KCCA has facilitated 865 placements since 2014, mostly university graduates. They also do specialized placements, such as for call centres. The centre’s employment counsellors estimated that approximately 17,000 young people have been served in various sectors, including guidance, specialized skills and life-skills training, job matching and labour market information. Refugees who migrate to Kampala are served through KCCA.

The KCCA has evolved to internal benchmarking of its staff and its methods of reaching out to employers, including the use of social media. It has demonstrated the capacity to run a range of donor-financed active labour market programmes as well as outreach to local employers, universities, and online services.³³ Digital skills development has been of particular interest to youth, along with specialized training in online job search such as the use of LinkedIn. The mission observed a large, active class learning ICT skills, which the mission was told included refugee youth.

The KCCA and MGLSD have established a range of partnerships and technical exchanges with other programmes, especially with the Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme, a training programme financed by the Swedish government providing career counselling and benchmarking of services. As in the Internal Employment Services Division of MGLSD, a graduate volunteer in KCCA was also attending to jobseekers. KCCA also reports to the Ministry. There was a prior effort at a common job online portal with MGLSD that seems to have fallen by the wayside.

There remain, of course, many resource and service challenges in a country with such an excess of youth labour supply. Relevant to building towards a national PES, there could be more joint capacity-building, sharing of domestic and international best practices – particularly regarding enterprise development – and developing a core of experienced human resources professionals working at the national and local levels.

³³ The ILO scoping report indicates more than 72 partners and employers.

► 2.3 Active labour market policies, labour market information systems and public employment services: a selective review

To make employment connections in the more skilled and information-driven economies of today, modernized PES all have strong relationships with labour market information and a wide range of active labour market policies. Under the ILO framework, LMIS constitute a core service of PES. There is no single model to implement; the best LMIS are tailored to local economies and institutional contexts to serve and guide employment growth. Even more so, ALMPs need to tailor national employment needs to the human capital base. ALMPs are and should be delivered by a diverse range of providers, from national and state governments to the private sector and training institutions, only some with direct relationships to PES.

This section, as requested in the terms of reference, contains a selective review of key training and skills-development programmes and LMIS in Uganda, with an eye to shaping the relationship of both to a modernized public employment service that grows with the country's employment needs

2.3.1 Training and skills development ALMPs and PES

The ToR request a review of "selected key active labour market policies (ALMPs) implemented in Uganda in the past two decades or so". They also call for opening the selective lens wider than ALMPs to investigate existing and potential links with ALMPs and other policies, so that the recommendations for modernizing the PES can have a more catalytic impact on national development.

Lest we forget, employment services are one of the four principal active labour market policies.³⁴ This selective review focuses on the best known and largest of the four – training and skills development – as this is the most relevant to Uganda, it has the widest range of experience in this field, and it is the one that should be the next step of connection of a modernized PES to the policy world.³⁵

Training and skills-development programmes are particularly relevant to Uganda and lower-income developing countries. The poor level of human capital means that often jobseekers cannot make successful connections to the labour market as long as they cannot improve their skills and capacity to perform better quality work. On the other hand, the poor quality of work, with its low level of labour productivity, requires simultaneous investment in both the job and the worker to advance in employment-poor countries.

This review examines how closely a skills or training programme can fit a jobseeker to a job in Uganda – as this will be the standard to engage ALMPs with a modernizing PES. Many training programmes in developed and developing countries may spend time and resources without making significant employment impacts. The cost-effectiveness of even the best training programmes has shown, in fact, no short-term impacts, but they can be found over the medium-term.

To the outsider, Uganda has a diverse assortment of training and skills-development programmes, with titles and institutional affiliations linked variously to youth, gender, universities, microenterprise, or farmers. This diversity can also be seen in donor-financed programmes, both nationally and in the

34 ILO's ToR for this report define ALMPs as employment services, labour-market training, entrepreneurship and self-employment support, subsidized employment (public works, wage subsidy, and so on). Wage subsidies were not observed in Uganda, entrepreneurship and self-employment are not always considered ALMPs in other contexts as they require more than labour market interventions to be successful (for instance, credit, finance, marketing).

35 This assessment, as in Uganda, utilizes a wide definition of what constitutes ALMPs, encompassing a range of interventions to support employment, employability, and skills development. Self-employment and microenterprise are included, even though they are often packaged with other, non-labour market forms of assistance such as credit and technical business assistance.

host communities, with an understandable focus on self-employment and microenterprise. MGLSD runs several such programmes, or more often plays a coordinating role in donor financed ALMP programmes spread all through the ministry.

There is no overall institutional framework for the development and operation of ALMPs. No systematic monitoring and evaluation appear to exist across these programmes of placement and employment outcomes, nor is there an institutional place within MGLSD to consolidate programmes and operational experience, no ministry-wide evaluation and monitoring unit or methodology.

This review looks first at the Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme (UGVS), because of its focus and measurement of job placement. The Employment Services department does not run an active labour market programme, or any coordinating function with ALMPs.

Uganda Graduate Volunteer Scheme

UGVS is a UNDP-funded national programme to provide work experience to university and diploma-level graduates in the form of a structured, one-year non-paid internship. The programme targets a particular employment problem in Uganda, which is that despite having a university degree, graduates have trouble finding work, even in entry-level positions. Because there is such a large supply of young candidates, employers give their preference to those who already have some work experience.

The programme placed 98 volunteers in its first year but aims to reach 130,000 per year after the pilot phase. It covers not only university graduates (bachelor's and master's levels) but also those with post-secondary diplomas and certificates. Candidates must be between 18 and 35 years of age and can apply up to four years after completing education. The pool of volunteers must be, in total, half male and half female, 10 per cent with disabilities, and from all regions of Uganda.

The volunteer programme is a one-year contract with induction training. There is a monthly stipend that covers a living allowance, accommodation, meals, and daily transportation cost to the work site. Volunteers get one annual leave, health insurance, a settling-in grant and repatriation to their home community.

The programme uses online applications and reviews the background of each candidate thoroughly to make appropriate placements. These are in four host categories: UN agencies, public sector organizations, private companies, and civil society organizations. The three-year programme 2018–2020 placed its first volunteers in November 2018. The largest number of placements in the first year were in the public sector (70 from December 2018–19) and private sector (50 from December 2018–19). A total of 33 organizations hosted volunteers in 2020. Some examples of placements include the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA), Hima Cement, IAA Health Care, and MGLSD.

From the first year of 90 volunteers, the results showed that 40 were retained in their placements, which is quite strong. As for gender balance, 56 per cent of the volunteers were female; only 6 per cent had disabilities, which was below the 10 per cent target. This first group was dominated by graduates with bachelor's degrees (81 per cent), master's degrees (14 per cent), and diplomas 5 per cent. The second year's programme of 210 volunteers is managed by UNDP.

The mission attended a review meeting of UGVS held by MGLSD and observed UGVS working in employment services, one at the Internal Services Department and one at KCCA. What was impressive was the connection between UGVS volunteers across different sectors (WhatsApp group), meetings organized by the programme, creating an informal job networking forum. As one of its recommendations, this report suggests increasing the use of UGVS volunteers in the expansion of the public service, particularly as they have direct knowledge of job hunting in Uganda.

The impressive first-year placement results of 44 per cent may be higher, as volunteers not retained in their original placement may have used the experience to help them find a job outside their host placement; there has been no tracer study to ascertain the total placement rate.

At the time of writing, the three-year programme was in a moment of decision as the cycle of placements was due to end in 2020. There appears to be clear consensus on interest in expansion to 130,000 a year, but it is not known who will fund this next stage, and under what organizational structure. The MGLSD clearly has an interest in taking over management of the programme, but it has not mentioned securing any national or international funding to do so, nor under what institutional framework. There is a great possibility of losing the success of the pilot version once it has gone to scale, if the process of matching candidates to host positions is handled in a more politicized way, rather than the transparency and skills-matching of UNDP management. Taking over management without providing for a skilled team of placement officers to oversee monthly placement and ensure that the volunteers are working actively would guarantee the politicization of the programme in its next phase. Simply transferring the online system from UNDP to MGLSD without a sound and independent management and financing plan in place would constitute a case study of how to kill the results of an excellent pilot programme in its expansion phase.

Should a good independent management model with appropriate financing be secured, this is exactly the type of programme that would be a good partner for a modernized PES to link with in the proposed four-year PES modernization plan (see [Section 4](#)). A PES could serve as an agent to serve volunteer jobseekers who were not retained by the host institution after the one-year volunteering period. They could also serve as the tracer study mechanism, with follow-up employment services to improve even further the results of the UGVS over the medium term.

2.3.2 LMIS and PES

In today's skills and information-driven global economies, LMIS have become important tools for governments, the private sector, schools, universities, educational and training institutions to achieve better macro policies in human capital-led growth, as well as encouraging better micro decisions by jobseekers, students, hiring managers, and schools to seek and tailor education and employment in line with growing labour demand, particularly better-paid jobs.

There is great international variability, not only in the content of a LMIS, but also whether it is run or housed within a PES. The content must fit usability and the quality of the data entered the system. What is most important is how and whether a PES utilizes relevant labour market information to drive ever more efficient and effective services – counselling jobseekers into demand occupations and careers, conducting outreach to the private sector to obtain vacancies, providing services of quality to the private sector and education institutions.

LMIS are often developed and ultimately linked to online vacancy databases, but it is important to clarify that they are not synonymous and must first be built separately. They provide broader trend information about the demand and supply of jobs, skills, and often economic development trends that signal where employment is going (or being lost). A good vacancy database, if it is broadly representative of the way jobs are advertised and understood in an economy, can grow over time to align well with an LMIS. The administrative data from a vacancy database, especially if it is just getting underway and building users, should not be termed labour market information. A vacancy database needs to reach a high volume of listings and representative and a diverse range of jobs before it is ever an accurate source of information about labour demand, and only if it integrates both public and online private databases.

As both LMIS and online databases evolve in developing countries, the smart approach is to build an employment portal, a website, where LMIS and online employment services in their initial stages can be brought together but not integrated until the system evolves. Private online services can be linked via partnership agreements once a certain level of confidence in their quality is reached. Mexico's National Employment Portal, *Empleo Portal* (www.empleo.mx), one of the best among developing countries, was built in stages with the LMIS in the Labour Ministry's research division³⁶ which was separate from the PES vacancy databases. There was no national database for many years, but each state-level PES linked its own vacancy base to the national portal, which facilitated job searches across wide distances in Mexico,

³⁶ Of note for Uganda, Mexico had just two labour economists designing their LMIS. Only as the system evolved were more staff needed to maintain the databases.

something that had not happened until the creation of the portal. All major private online systems had links to the national portal, as this became the principal place to look for jobseekers. Only in its later stages was there a merger of regional job sites, and the LMIS was integrated to show career tracks and the evolution of employment. The use of an employment portal to grow with a country's labour market information capacity is among the LMIS recommendations given for Uganda in [Section 4](#).

Governmental LMIS sources

In Uganda, as in many countries, responsibilities, technical capacities, and legal mandates for the pieces that comprise an LMIS are often diffused not only within the MGLSD but also to other agencies, most importantly to bureaus of statistics. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics publishes periodic reports using labour force surveys.³⁷ A review by the World Bank and other international studies reveal the use of labour market data questions from the Uganda National Household Survey. The World Bank study was able to analyse labour market transitions from 2000 to 2016, tracing informal to formal transitions and urban or rural trends.

The organizational review of the Employment Services Division in Section 2.2.1 indicates that the Internal Services Department has been collecting administrative data on labour market functions. It has recently published this information in a labour market information publication which includes, for example, a list of registered internal and external private agencies. The role and direction of the Research and Statistics Bureau was unclear at the time of writing as they were awaiting the recruitment of the head of the department. One would anticipate their responsibilities to be on research and studies on trends in labour market developments, particularly in the bigger employment challenges of agricultural productivity, informality and the growth of manufacturing and service sectors. As in many countries, the Bureau of Statistics is directly responsible for labour force surveys, although how that information is used and shared, particularly electronically, within the government, is a fundamental element in a unified labour market information system.

As detailed in the scoping report,³⁸ a specialized online National Oil and Gas Talent Register is run by the Petroleum Authority of Uganda and updated three times a year. Oil and gas companies can register their vacancies, and jobseekers can self-register their candidacy; the matching is done on the online platform by employers and jobseekers. As it is not connected to any other platform, this specialized job board does not have a wider forum for communicating where its skill shortages lie. The Federation of Ugandan Employers (FUE) indicated to the ILO that the sector faces some skill shortages, for example, in the area of fabricators.³⁹

Private sector and non-governmental LMIS sources

A substantial number of labour market studies and mapping analyses of labour market provision are carried out by donors and international institutions such as the World Bank and ILO. In February 2020, the World Bank released a comprehensive Jobs Diagnostic analysing key trends in employment, with a proposed strategy.⁴⁰ This type of report is of great use to a modernizing PES as it identifies key strategies, in particular the focus on agricultural productivity and the transition to off-farm employment in secondary cities, which could become a rural model for employment services. As Uganda already has a set of international institutions and donors that work on labour market-related reports, this asset should be taken advantage of in the development of its own LMIS, such as collaboration with international institutions on specific studies to build its own national capacity, collaborative events to promote and make use of labour market information, and shared staff temporary placements.

37 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Market Transition of Young People in Uganda: Highlights of the School to Work Transition Survey 2015*, May 2016.

38 ILO, "Draft Report of the Scoping Mission to Uganda on Employment Services within the scope of the PROSPECTS project", 3 March 2020b, p. 3.

39 Ibid.

40 Dino Merrotto, *Uganda: Jobs Strategy for Inclusive Growth*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

► 2.4 Additional Key topics of employment services and active labour market policies performance

This section provides information and assessments on three key topics central to the performance of modernized PES. These topics are:

1. local employment service delivery in the currently decentralized framework;
2. role and importance of social partners: private sector, trade unions, NGOs; and
3. private employment agencies.

1. Decentralization – local provision analysis

The future vision of a modern public employment service in Uganda is that it serves a national market, and that jobseekers in each of the districts will be able to seek employment commensurate with their skills, whether it be in Arua or Kampala. This, however, will mean the development of a common set of efficient services, connections between local offices that use a common information system, and professionals trained and able to work in different localities in the country.

Will the current decentralized legal framework established in the early 1990s be able to deliver on the needs for creating a national, interconnected labour market? The mission was informed that there are 102 districts and municipalities, some with sub-municipalities. There are fewer than 60 labour officers.

Today, is there even one example that a single labour officer model works for any locality in Uganda? There is no evidence that employment services are being delivered at the local labour level by labour officers. A European Union analysis of the national development plan found that: "While employment services fall under the services that have been decentralised, it became clear during interviews that the employment service function was virtually non-existent in districts".⁴¹

The KCCA model in Kampala is an example of a local employment service, but it is only for youth, and it is viable precisely because it grows outside and despite the single labour officer model. Employment services require a range of skilled staff in physical, online, and mobile facilities, as well as wide connections to local employers and training institutions, incompatible with the supermodel implicit in Uganda's employment law. Simply put, encouraging local districts to add a labour officer to handle employment services will only ensure that neither a local nor a national employment services model gets off the ground.

Several PES in developing economies have been decentralized, but only once was there a central service to decentralize and always with a provision for shared financing and systems. There is a range of models that include contracting out to local employment offices. Saudi Arabia has contracted out its public service to a private British provider, Ingenuis. Brazil has contracted out one of its PES in the Northeast to be run by an NGO. Mexico combines a strong federal and state-level PES, where individual state governments support additional staff and programmes at the state offices while still being part of the national system. Costa Rica has decentralized PES authority to local governments but provides services and technical support from the centre. It is not known if there is an example of Uganda's model, as the country decentralized to a single person model prior to having an established federal service, without providing legal authority for the national government to support services, even to the one labour officer.

The KCCA model, which contrasts with this model, is legally and operationally viable within Ugandan law. The KCCA model shows: a) the local governments do put in resources but not in the form of a single officer who also has responsibilities for labour inspection; b) local employment service delivery requires

⁴¹ European Development Fund, "Diagnostic Studies N 2.1 to 2.5 to Support the Mid-Term Review of NDP-2: Draft", European Union and Tieg, November 2018, p. 12.

a wider range of institutional partners and greater connections with employers which are incompatible with the single officer operating out of a district office model; c) there is an adequate legal framework to permit local employment services financed by local governments and donors, but currently there are no established responsibilities or assistance for national (MGLSD) support which would be necessary to move to a national system that connects local employment services models. As Kampala is the local government with the strongest access to a formal market, resources, donor financing, and even a public building to donate, it is unlikely that further local models would have similar viability and success.

Uganda's rural economy, especially in the areas of host communities and refugee settlements, has two challenges for rural public employment services: the local economy is predominantly poor; and self-employment or microfirms and local districts are inundated with a range of urgent needs, making the building of employment service models over time harder to achieve.

This assessment recommends the development of an innovative rural employment services pilot model to test out how best to adapt employment services to the Uganda rural context, and as a demonstration effect, at the national and local levels, for the creation of a future system. Assuming the success of a stronger national PES in Kampala and the pilot proposed for Arua in [Section 4](#), what would be a potential decentralized model for Uganda? And would it require substantial changes to current employment law?

The key to the answers lies in reliable and sustainable sources of financing, along with the ability of the MGLSD to deliver high-quality services with strong partnerships, which would lead to national support for a national system. One could imagine a model of quality local employment services that operates only in informal collaboration with MGLSD – islands of local employment innovation – which would require only minor changes to employment law. However, such a model would be weak regarding the creation of a national employment market, and the poorest localities would end up with the poorest and most limited services.

The stronger decentralized model for Uganda to consider in a later phase would be to continue the labour officer framework only for labour inspection and administration, and to establish a decentralization model for local or state level employment services, clearly affiliated with the MGLSD. A recommendation would be to consider a mixed model – with national employment services and standards set by the MGLSD, but diverse cost-sharing and service-sharing arrangements, where the localities with greater needs receive a greater share of technical support and financing. In Mexico, for example, there is a formula for apportioning resources to states and localities based on the difficulty of the employment context. Hence the poorer localities with a greater need for training and job placement services receive more federal help, but with ample opportunities to add their own resources, their own separately financed donor programmes, and their own personnel. Local PES offices in Mexico have the logo and association with the national system but a separate regional identity in the title, for example, State Employment Service of Chiapas.

2. Role or potential for private employers, trade unions and NGOs

In every PES, particularly those advancing to more modern forms, private employers and their associations, trade unions and NGOs play a strong and fundamental role, varying from clients (private employers, NGOs seeking employees and jobseekers for programmes), to providers (such as contracted special services) advocates, promoters, and stakeholders. In addition, partnerships between PES and private and trade union organizations and NGOs are a principal way to expand the resources dedicated nationally to the provision of employment services.

Employer organizations and associations operate in Uganda at the national and regional (district) levels. The FUE is keenly interested in the advancement of employment services and better skills development for its members. The federation could be a major future conduit for promoting client-based employment services in partnership form. Even beyond supporting placements, Dan Okanya expresses the need to advance on skills assessment tools, soft skills development of youth, and better TVET or university

transition to the workplace.⁴² The FUE chairs the Skills Uganda task force but does not yet have a defined role in the modernization of employment services. Along with USSIA, the federation has a cooperative participation in KCCA. The USSIA, which represents small businesses, has a wide membership, including agro-business, services, and light manufacturing.

In 2015, the FUE tried to launch a private sector-based online job platform which focused on youth with university-level diplomas and degree holders.⁴³ At first, demand was substantial – more than 1,000 graduates registered, although only 100 jobs were posted. However, the hosting company closed down, and the platform could not be maintained. The FUE is interested in reviving the portal, and this is a promising area for MGLSD collaboration in the future development of the vacancy database.

Trade unions are currently, and understandably, concentrating on their roles of supporting members in labour disputes. This has been made even more difficult by the lack of a single Labour Ministry and the decentralization of labour officers to the district level. The Hotel Association trade union said that there were delays for obtaining redress on cases for its workers, and that major efforts were needed merely to follow cases within the MGLSD, which is understaffed and subject to massive delays at ministry and labour court levels. Trade unions in Uganda have an added value in a future employment services delivery in firms where employment services could better order a market and can also support the movement from casual labour to formality, a key target in assisting Uganda's labour market.

NGOs and foreign donor organizations support a wide range of programmes in Uganda, linking skills training with traineeships and then with job placement. Given the nature of the Ugandan economy, these organizations place an emphasis on self-employment and microenterprise, as well as providing tailored support to disadvantaged groups, including refugees and those with disabilities. The very nature of the need for multiple services to support informal, micro, and small businesses with skills challenges will mean that PES modernization in Uganda will have to be open and established over time, to expand the range of its partnerships with organizations that can provide tailored support to specialized groups.

The trade unions and private sector officials interviewed for this report, as well as citations in additional reports, have expressed concerns that the MGLSD is hindered in working with social partners by not having a separate Labour Ministry and more specialized staff in employment and labour.⁴⁴

3. Private employment agencies and online services

Private employment agencies in Uganda fall into two broad categories: those that provide online job listings and those that are more formal recruitment agencies seeking to find and place candidates for a private sector client.

Recruitment agencies are specifically licensed by the MLGSD. The Employment Act of 2006 and Uganda's Employment Regulations 2011 govern and provide for the operation of private employment agencies, registered as serving internal or external markets (or both) in skilled or unskilled labour. The "licence of operation to private employment agency" currently retained by the Internal Employment Services Department lists the company name, location, type of recruitment (skilled, unskilled) and district. The termination date is December 31 of the year registered. The Internal Services Division keeps track of the registry and the annual payment of a registry fee.⁴⁵

42 Interview with Dan Okanya, FUE, 29 February 2020.

43 ILO, "Draft Report of the Scoping Mission to Uganda on Employment Services within the scope of the PROSPECTS project", 3 March 2020b, p. 3.

44 European Development Fund, "Diagnostic Studies N 2.1 to 2.5 to Support the Mid-Term Review of NDP-2): Draft," European Union and Tieg, November 2018, p. 15.

45 A small note: the annual fee is for a calendar year. So, if a firm is registered in November, they are technically delinquent for the following year, from January. The registry is not well automated, and efficiency could be gained to reduce the staff time needed to process and keep track of fee payments.

How do we assess the role, size, nature, and vibrancy of private employment agencies in Uganda in relation to the possible modernization of PES? The scoping report cited 190 firms registered, of which 65 mentioned internal work.⁴⁶ If a firm pays the fee for an annual licence for both external and internal placement, information is given, or verification is made on whether it does operate internally, but not on what percentage of the business is internal. Every specialist consulted, including those from the private employment agencies, believe that most of these registered firms operate overwhelmingly for external, unskilled recruitment. There is no indication of the size of the firms, or the number of jobs placed – internal or external – that are managed by private employment agencies, nor is there any control of whether such firms offer a minimum wage or minimum health and safety conditions.

Online services. The rapid assessment mission met with a representative of Brighter Monday, an online job platform based in Kenya. The representative noted that the firm had 352 job listings, 95 per cent in Kampala, and believed they were the second-largest online service in Uganda.⁴⁷ Job Connect, like several other online services, had no provision for dropping unreliable or bad employers should there be complaints about the job not paying what was advertised or not.

A computer-based search in May 2020 found the following information. It was not clear whether some vacancies were posted on multiple websites, but this would not be uncommon:

- ▶ **Great Uganda Jobs:** 18,804 jobs listed in a large range of professions: accounting or finance; administration; computers or IT; corporate or organization officer; middle management; data monitoring and research; health or medicine; human resources; junior or entry level; education or academia teaching. The website made no mention of any employment changes related to COVID-19.
- ▶ **Brighter Monday:** 183 jobs listed. A brief review demonstrates the following key professions with the majority based (135) in Kampala: IT and software; legal services; accounting, auditing, and finance; management and business development; agriculture and farming; research, teaching and training. They have a webpage for COVID-19 support <https://www.brightermonday.co.ug/unity-in-adversity>
- ▶ **Job Connect:** no recent job vacancy listings. The most recent listing was on their job page that expired in 2018. <http://jobconnect.co.ug/jobs/>. The last news posting was December 2017.
- ▶ **Fuzu:** there was no listing of the total number of jobs on the site, but it seemed that there were many jobs available. This site appeared to have international NGOs (IRC) and UN agencies recruiting, but also jobs like the categories on the other websites, such as finance and administration, human resources, and marketing. Their “United Against Coronavirus” portal has links to different supports: https://www.fuzu.com/corona_updates.

From the above observations, online domestic job listings carried by private services appear to offer the potential to expand, over time, the PES outreach in Uganda, particularly in the mid-to-upper skills range.

To date, except for the Counselling and Guidance Division's work with the Association of Private External Agencies in the reception centre for return migrants, no other collaboration was observed between the MGLSD's internal or external employment services. This is not unusual in developing countries prior to a modernization of their PES. What will be recommended to the MGLSD as part of their strategy for PES modernization is to carry out a more systematic analysis of the sectors, skill categories and geographic presence, not only of private employment services but also the wider range of NGOs, technical schools and local governments potentially doing placement work. In that way, a more systematic assessment of demand for employment services and viable areas of collaboration can be made. There appeared to be only limited monitoring, and no evaluation systems in place, for the employer-driven placements carried out by the Internal or External Employment Divisions.

46 ILO “Draft report of the scoping mission to Uganda on employment services within the scope of the PROSPECTS project”, 3 March 2020b.

47 This online service had no physical presence in Kampala, but met us in a job-sharing office space. The representative also had her own private employment agency, indicating that some of those registered in the MGLSD are one-person shops, or contractors for firms that have a physical presence outside Uganda.

Key indicators of dynamic internal private employment services in developing countries operating across skilled and unskilled categories include: the presence of leading international firms that do placement in domestic growth sectors; an analysis of online services, the volume, and proportions of publicly available jobs at higher income or skills levels, expansion to non-traditional actors –universities, non-governmental organizations; the presence and role outside the capital city. It was outside the scope of the assessment report to explore all these aspects, but a few observations and analysis will serve to support later recommendations.

Of note, on this list there appear to be no major international placement agencies known for skilled placement, for example, at the level of Manpower Inc., another indication that the bulk of those agencies registered work for external migration, as the internal market for skilled labour may be limited.

► 3

Refugee and host communities: analysis and recommendations

Uganda is home to the largest refugee population in all of Africa, an estimated 1.2 million. It is the third-largest refugee host in the world. Remarkable, as despite its own economic and social challenges, it has one of the most humane and open policies towards refugees. About 92 per cent of this refugee population live in settlements alongside local host communities, most of them in the northern region and in West Nile.

The Office of the Prime Minister manages and coordinates the 11 refugee settlements (plus Kampala) with the active collaboration of the major UN relief agencies, as well as a host of individual country and EU donor aid agencies and domestic line ministries. At these camps, refugees are received and processed, given daily food aid, plots of land, with diverse support services in distinct subcommunities. These camps are all associated with local host communities in which refugees are free to work and sell in local markets. Under the Ugandan Refugee Act of 2006, refugees are guaranteed fundamental rights, including the right to participate in gainful employment; freedom of movement; the right to property; the right to establish businesses; and the right to belong to association such as trade unions.⁴⁸ Refugees are also guaranteed access to education and healthcare. Overall, it has been called “one of the most progressive refugee hosting policies in the world”.⁴⁹

In addition to assessing public employment services in Uganda, the ToR asked the consultant to visit two target districts – Arua-Rhino Camp and Isingiro-Nakivale – and hold consultations with relevant district administration and district partners,⁵⁰ and based on these consultations to make proposals for potential financing under the PROSPECTS programme. These two host communities and resettlement camps have been selected for grant assistance under the PROSPECTS programme, which is a collaborative assistance programme of the Government of the Netherlands with five international agencies: the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).⁵¹

48 Refugee Act of 2006, Article 29.

49 *Expanding Economic and Social Opportunities in Refugee and Host Community*, Uganda Country Vision Note, Government of the Netherlands, p. 1.

50 ILO, Assessment of Public Employment Services and Active Labour Market Policies in Uganda, Terms of Reference, February 2020a.

51 *Expanding Economic and Social Opportunities in Refugee and Host Community*, Uganda Country Vision Note, Government of the Netherlands.

► 3.1 Rapid assessment of employment and institutional context in the target host communities and refugee settlement

Both labour markets in the selected areas for PROSPECTS face multiple challenges, most importantly: fundamental distortions of highly informal, poor agriculture-based economies with poor market linkages, and mass refugee influxes interacting with large numbers of new (local Ugandan) entrants into the local labour force each year. Employment challenges also come from the market distortions arising from years of humanitarian aid using products from outside the region, the poor organization of the private sector, and poor infrastructure and isolation from other regional markets. Employment services, public or private, barely exist in either host community or refugee settlements, even to serve highly limited economic opportunities.

While there are similar employment challenges in both target host communities, the proposals for the PROSPECTS programme take into account different institutional contexts the market coverage of international and national agencies and programmes to capture the seeds of the different market dynamics and distinct employment needs in the communities. This section provides a rapid assessment of key employment and institutional contexts, with specific proposals listed in [section 3.2](#), indicating which ones better fit each of the target communities and settlements. As requested under the ToR, several donor led ALMPs carried out in the target communities are reviewed as to their relevance to the proposals made for PROSPECTS. The proposals also show key roles for the MGLSD, including learning functions to apply across a range of ALMPs, joint training and capacity-building and testing methods for the expansion of the PES to rural areas.

This analysis and the recommendations were formulated based on a pre-COVID-19 environment (early March 2020), though work under COVID-19 restrictions, particularly in late 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 have been incorporated into the analysis. At the time of publication, schools continue to be closed in the countryside and travel is limited between urban and rural areas; in addition, all new refugee admissions were halted because of the crisis. Mobile employment services were provided under social distancing guidelines, early emphasis was placed on internet-delivered information and promotion of activities, and walk-in services were modified.

► **Table 3. Uganda refugee-host communities' profile**

District	Refugee population	% of refugee population	Host population (in these regions)	% Of host population
Yumbe	232 710	16.3	663 600	10.8
Adjumani	214 479	15.1	235 900	3.8
Arua	185 949	13.1	915 200	14.8
Isingiro	140 440	9.9	596 400	9.7
Kyegegwa	123 300	8.7	441 000	7.1
Kilcuube	123 020	8.6	358 700	5.8
Obongi	122 825	8.6	48 300	0.8
Kampala	80 257	5.6	1 680 600	27.2
Kamwenge	72 659	5.1	513 500	8.3
Kiryandongo	67 727	4.8	313 800	5.1
Lamwo	53 806	3.8	143 800	2.3
Koboko	5 439	0.4	258 000	4.2
Other	1 129	0.1	-	-
Total	1 423 740		6 168 800	

Source: OPM, UNHCR, Government of Uganda, 30 April 2020, as reported on <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>.

3.1.1 Arua and Rhino Camp assessment

Arua is the second-largest refugee hosting district after Kampala in all of Uganda (915,000 host population). As Kampala does not have an associated refugee settlement camp nearby (refugees live in the large city), some important distinctions need to be made about the employment market with regards to the refugee community. Arua has an estimated refugee population of 185,949 (13.1 per cent of the national official refugee total) who live in small organized communities, mainly at resettlement camps, the principal one visited being Rhino Camp. In addition to almost one million residents in the host community, daily commuters for casual labour and market work travel to Arua from the camps as well as from the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, Arua swells during the day in terms of commerce and then recedes, only relatively, at night.

Strengthening the employment market was of great interest and need to all partners in Arua. Interventions, however, should reflect the challenging conditions of a rural employment market featuring large distances and important skills deficits. The employment market is highly informal, well over 90 per cent, based on self-employment, farming and microfirms (less than 5 persons). There is a growing importance, as nationally, in non-farm employment that is often related to agriculture (for example, transport, services). The small number of formal jobs are principally with international hires and local government. Owing to its location, trade with South Sudan has become increasingly important. There is a range of products considered to have market potential such as honey, sesame, and hibiscus, but they require interventions across a range of factors (for instance, transport, processing, marketing) to make them commercially viable.

In discussions with the USSIA, it was made clear that the organization of the private sector was relatively weak and in need of business skills development. The USSIA is present in a few districts outside Arua, but the connections to USSIA organizations around the country were limited and could be better exploited for market connections among members. They indicated a current membership of approximately 1,500 small firms who pay a one-time entry fee, and they provide an annual subscription. Key sectors are agro-business, metal fabrication, woodworking, and carpentry, with most of their members dealing in the food and beverage industry. The USSIA is currently profiling their membership. The Uganda Manufacturers Association also has a presence in Arua, but they could not be visited on the rapid assessment mission.

The host community is quite a distance from Rhino Camp, over a difficult road. This needs to be borne in mind when developing employment services that fit the population movements and in combination with training or other interventions addressing skills deficits. Dormitory accommodation is available for refugee youth who cannot feasibly commute from refugee settlements to follow TVET and other training programmes.

Employment services and ALMP market. In both PROSPECTS-selected areas, poorly equipped message boards, sharing limited openings on the radio or by WhatsApp (Arua only) were the principal methods of information for a limited number of jobs. Spirit FM in Arua is known to announce job listings regularly. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) for Rhino Camp indicated there was some work at the camps, mostly low-skilled, including cash for work⁵² (local construction projects), translation, volunteer work as teaching assistants. These notices would normally be listed on community boards.

The Rhino Camp commander indicated that every village (42) had a community and job board⁵³ and that international scholarships to study were of particular interest to youth. The community boards⁵⁴ are an important feature in the various communities of Rhino Camp. Camp staff indicated that the community groups (Welfare Councils) were the major source for transmitting information, for instance, from the community head to the community group. Recruiting for donor-led programmes was also done by radio, as well as through loudspeaker announcements from cars driven through the settlement camps. USSIA

52 Programmes of UNDP (15,000) and World Vision are included.

53 The job board observed at the head camp in Rhino Camp in early March 2020 listed a few jobs for the international agencies; some of the communities had boards but it was clear that the notices from the major international NGOs were not necessarily repeated on local community boards.

54 It was observed that some community boards did not have the listings from the head camp, probably giving the impression that it was necessary to travel to consult other community boards.

said that one of the main recruitment methods for their members are public notices and newspaper advertisements. Many indicated there was widespread scope for more systematic communication of job opportunities, particularly in the camps because of their physical isolation.

The local Arua district office does not serve any current function in terms of employment information. There was a noticeboard in the local government offices in Arua, but it only had business contracting notices. The scoping mission was able to meet with the labour officer in Arua but was told that the office "is overwhelmed by industrial relations and dispute settlement functions".⁵⁵ The rapid assessment mission made appointments over two days but was unsuccessful in meeting this labour officer.⁵⁶

Everyone interviewed spoke of a need for better employment connections and several ALMPs that provide accompanying employment services or would be aided by stronger links with employment services. ENABEL, the Belgian Development Agency, informed that it has carried out a mapping exercise of local NGO programmes, doing placements as part of their training programmes. The following continues a selective review of ALMP programmes, focusing on those with key relevance to the PROSPECTS programme. This review takes care not to duplicate the ALMP programmes that are well represented in the scoping mission report. The national Graduate Volunteer Scheme is present in Arua but is discussed in [Section 2](#).

Non-governmental and donor-financed programmes. Of the two PROSPECTS target communities, Arua has the larger number of international donor- and NGO-led interventions that are particularly relevant to advancing the employment prospects of youth. This difference is most likely because the rate of inflows of refugees is higher and more intense in the northern camps. The review in this section concentrates on several interesting programmes. For example, in Arua-Rhino Camp ENABEL-GIZ are linking skills training with two-month traineeships in local businesses, a promising approach to improve placement results. This ENABEL programme ended in May 2020 with tracer studies done for another 18 months, but more service support could help the labour market outcomes for the trainees in different phases over this period.⁵⁷

Even now, there is a risk that these promising initiatives in the Arua-Rhino Camp region will overwhelm a weak private sector, yet unready to train thousands of young people and rendering it more difficult to achieve the placement results desired. Vocational and technical schools, which are more numerous in Arua than in Nakivale, are typically poorly connected to employment afterwards and use outdated methods. For this reason, the skills development training now under way within the ENABEL-GIZ framework will probably lead to greater knowledge about which sectors or types yield better placement results for youth.

ENABEL/GIZ. A large (7,000+) youth-training programme is now in place (in phases), combining key elements of international best practice in youth employment. The programme encompasses six months of non-formal training typically delivered in local TVET institutions⁵⁸, providing refugee youth housing and training in non-farm (for now) sectors including construction, carpentry, and bakery. The candidates are 50 per cent from refugee settlements and 50 per cent from host communities (Arua and surrounding host communities). A separate component described below focuses on agriculture. At the completion of the TVET-based training, youth are placed in two to three months traineeships with local firms; two months is the minimum. The traineeship is followed by mentorship support for an additional three months. This programme follows international best practice, combining training with traineeships and mentorship to better guide youth through precarious work environments and job change.

55 ILO, "Draft report of the scoping mission to Uganda on employment services within the scope of the PROSPECTS project", 3 March 2020b.

56 Four separate appointments were made over two days in which the labour officer did not show. The office where the labour officer sits was not appropriate for receiving jobseekers or even posting information. The office, behind the local district offices, had signs outside indicating "no hand-shaking Ebola".

57 These include the Norwegian Refugee Council (particularly a vocational institute in Rhino Camp), Rhino Camp initiatives for former groups or schools.

58 Estimated 80–100 hours.

The ENABEL Director explained that 9 million euros was set aside till the end of June 2020 and would be disbursed in phases by different NGO sub-grantees and distinct calls for proposals. The monies were combined with 2.5 million euros from GIZ from March 2019. There were five grantees from Call One, four additional in Call Two. ENABEL was just about to begin a tracer study on the first group of trainees from Call One.

The programme works through at least seven partner NGOs rather than a single executing institution. This decentralized execution framework is more compatible with making close matches between youth and specific traineeships. The partner NGOs go in search of the traineeships and often rely on their own local contacts to do so. They also promote their own programmes with specific sets of training, recruit candidates, and do placement in traineeships. They use noticeboards in the refugee communities as one method for recruiting youth trainees.

GIZ and RISE. The German International Training Agency, GIZ, is a major partner in the ENABEL Skills Training and Vocational Programme described above, and a major actor of key programmes in the West Nile region, which include building local government capacity and promoting agriculture and agro-processing sectors, in which AFARD, described below, works directly with groups of agricultural cooperatives. GIZ works on the larger framework of the RISE programme to support economic opportunities in Northern Uganda.

Anchor.⁵⁹ The mission spoke with Anthony Komakech Paklawk of Anchor, an interesting NGO working mainly in the bakery sector. Most of their placements are in small bakeries outside Arua. Anchor's grant serves 360 youth, 180 nationals and 180 refugees; 244 are in bakery training, and the second-largest group is in carpentry and joiners. The director said he had 1,225 applicants for the 360 trainee positions. They used radio announcements as the principal means of recruitment. He reported that bakeries were of particular interest to the female applicants. Anchor plans to work with three large bakeries located outside Arua in the traineeship stage. Housing would need to be provided to the trainees, as it is in TVET. It was conceived that some of the women following the bakery traineeships would ultimately be forming their own businesses. From TVET practice, some trainees can sell their bakery products back at Rhino Camp. In fact, storefront bakeries could be viewed and linked to TVET programmes in the main Rhino Camp.

NIRC. This is another of the smaller partner NGOs. They have a target of 300 youth beneficiaries in the first year. They execute six months of training, with two months of traineeship planned for the end of the six months. NIRC's fields are tailoring, carpentry and plumbing. They work in communities typically outside Arua such as Bidi-Bidi.

The programme, appropriately, is phased among the seven NGOs, so the trainees do not all come on the market simultaneously. ENABEL is in the traineeship stage, for example, while Anchor was to be reaching the internship stage around May.

In view of the large number of traineeships associated with the programme, concern was raised about the unsystematic approach made by multiple NGOs to a similar set of microfirms which themselves did not have any experience in supervising traineeships. In a later discussion with USSIA, NIRC said they had been approached by different NGOs asking for referrals for their members. USSIA explained that there was a great need for basic skills training among their members and questioning to what extent skills could be imparted via traineeships with firms that were also operating in a low-productivity local economy. The agricultural component has 5,000 youth assigned; it focuses on increasing agricultural productivity and does not have a skills-training phase.

AFARD. The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development is the largest Ugandan NGO in the West Nile. It was founded in 2000 and has grown to an active staff of 92. It works 50/50 with host communities and refugees, with most projects integrating both populations. Its staff has a range of specializations in agricultural and non-farm products and production, including specialists in marketing and local finance. The head office is in the Nebbi municipality with satellite offices in Zombo, Maracha and Yumba town

⁵⁹ www.anchor-africa.org.

councils. AFARD handles a range of projects with international donors,⁶⁰ mainly organizing cooperative groups, typically of five people, that act as a trading block to participate in farm or non-farm value chains. Training is provided by certified master-trainers from the population who work directly with the cooperatives. Under a current EU-Ugandan government-Plan International project, 708 cooperative groups were formed, including farming, a small animal sector and agro-processing.

3.1.2 Isingiro and Nakivale assessment

Nakivale is among the oldest refugee settlements in Uganda, established in 1958 and operational by 1960. As shown in table 3, its 140,440 refugees constitute 9.9 per cent of the refugee population in Uganda, ranking it the fourth-largest settlement, just after Arua, although Arua's host community is one and a half times larger. Nakivale had a surge in refugees from Burundi in 2015 and has remained at high levels since then. The UNHCR carried out a survey of Nakivale refugees in mid-2019 and found that 67 per cent were families with female-headed households, with an average family size of seven members.⁶¹

Those interviewed noted diminished aspirations and prospects for people of working age, both in Nakivale Camp and the host community. What were to have been temporary stays had become long-term residency at Nakivale, with limited employment alternatives for youth and adults alike. The survey notes that only 5 per cent of the refugees questioned expected to leave the camp in the next year, and the highest aspirations of men were for casual labour (100 per cent), farming (34 per cent) and driving (28 per cent). For women, they were tailoring (39 per cent), farming (35 per cent) and livestock (24 per cent).⁶² The Refugee Welfare Committee in Nakivale noted a particular problem with youth dropping out of school. The multiple languages spoken at the camp discouraged young people, who would be placed at lower grade levels than in their home countries, and translated materials were rare. Language training in English was also quite limited. The meeting with the local district committee leaders also indicated serious deficits in the education of youth, with high teacher to student ratios, schools with no running water and many dropouts.

The UNHCR had financed three youth centres. The one at Base Camp is the one most frequently in operation and was visited by the rapid assessment mission. Its Youth Centre's Director, Sani Birik, said that the centre was open 24 hours a day, and has become a meeting place for the wider community, being one of the few places of any size for community gatherings. He also expressed concern about rising idleness and crime among youth and the need for greater youth community projects, especially in the arts through rap music, cultural dance, and story writing. The centre will be opening a language laboratory for training 25 youth, two hours a day, three times per week.

Overall, interviews with the refugees and the local district office showed the interactions between youth from the refugee camp and youth from Isingiro to be limited. The joint interests that were mentioned were the arts, music, and rap, and singing. The arts are the focus of annual fairs and exchanges, as are joint football games. Host Community Days are held, when refugees try to market their products, and there are joint celebrations on International Youth Day. About a third of UNDP projects were estimated to be shared ventures between the refugee settlements and host communities.

Employment services and ALMP market. Sara Makukunda, Director for Community Services at the Nakivale OPM reported that there was no centralized job information centre or services in the camp or in the host community. The refugee communities were organized into Refugee Welfare Councils, which are the main sources of information. There were listings for specific UN agencies, but no consolidated listing, either online or on any community board. Job vacancies that were known generally appeared in newspaper advertisements. There is only limited information online for youth, and the Nakivale

60 Including Caritas, GIZ, the Austrian Development Cooperation and Danica. See AFARD, Annual Report, 2018.

61 UNHCR, "Refugee Access to Livelihoods and Housing, Land and Property", Survey of Nakivale residents, May 2019.

62 Ibid.

community committee said that young people had major problems with internet access. One of the major draws of the one operating youth centre in Nakivale (near the OPM office) was that wi-fi was available in and just outside the centre.

The Isingiro district office said they have a job board but only for public sector jobs. There was high demand for these positions, as many as 300 applicants; no refugees work in the public sector.

According to the Labour Officer, his principal demand was for the inspection of firms and serious labour violations, such as accidents or non-payment to workers. He did say there was a demand for employment services that he was unable to serve. For example, the projects of local public works were not using enough local labour and could be encouraged to expand access. The oil and gas industry complained that the local Ugandan youth cannot compete in terms of skills and was bringing in non-locals. The Labour Officer thought that a range of efforts could be made to employ local youth, both refugees and from the host community. The local district office does review CVs for local public sector jobs.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has a livestock programme which was noted to include refugees and host community farmers. Ms Makukunda said there was only one TVET institution for refugee youth and the host community, run by the Nakivale Vocational Institute (NVI). A small crafts factory with two sewing machines was visited as the only other example of youth engaged in economic activity in the camp.⁶³ The Nakivale refugee governing committee pointed out the great need for additional vocational training institutions within the refugee committee.

Sara Makukunda revealed that UNICEF was about to start an extensive profiling of the skills and backgrounds of an estimated 120,000 refugees, which would yield important information on the skills base of the refugees for future programming.⁶⁴

Nakivale Vocational Institute. On the recommendation of the OPM at Nakivale Resettlement Camp, the ILO mission visited the NVI on 3 March 2020. This vocational training school was established in 2012 by UNICEF and is the only vocational training school at the Nakivale resettlement camp.

Its three tiers of programmes in eight courses are divided between formal training in the profession (that meets a formal education requirement in basic academic subjects) and informal training. The programmes run from one to three years, with no availability of shorter skills-based training courses. The vocational training seems designed more as vocational education than an active labour market policy, but as there was no other systematic work-oriented training⁶⁵ being conducted at the resettlement camp.

The NVI has 11 teachers or trainers and 387 students. The director said that attracting quality teachers is a particular issue, and that the equipment provided is limited and out of date. It was observed that during an IT class, most of the 40-plus students were using pen and paper; only three had computer screens. The ILO mission noted that when the tailoring teacher was explaining techniques for making pockets, four sewing machines were visible but only two were working, with the students taking turns between them.

The school director kindly provided a table showing the number of male and female students following each of the eight courses, which reveals that 46 of the 387 students were nationals from neighbouring host communities. While this represents only 12 per cent of the student body, it was the only programme observed during the mission that integrated Ugandan nationals with the refugee population, potentially an interesting feature for the PROSPECTS programme. The OPM staff member consulted did not mention any other existing programmes with joint host community and refugee community participation.

⁶³ Moddashlys' founder and director is Speciose Mauwa, who spoke with the mission.

⁶⁴ This interview took place on 1 March 2020, it was not known if it was interrupted by COVID-19.

⁶⁵ The mission observed a short (6-month) training course in handicrafts (for example, pocketbooks and belts made with fabric or beadwork using sewing machines) for a small number of women. As this course was not part of a larger programme, it was not reviewed here as an ALMP.

NVI's Principal, Paul Rubaure, said that no tracer studies were conducted in its eight years of existence, to determine if any of the youth from the school were employed in the sector they had been trained in, or even if they were employed at all. Distinct from international best practice, NVI's vocational training programme had no internships, work experience or even work orientation features (such as bringing students to actual workplaces in, say, automotive mechanics, mentoring functions or even in agriculture). Students are free to choose whichever of the eight courses they prefer, but again distinct from international best practice, the students receive no information on the employment prospects in these professions, let alone assistance in job placement or even a seminar or orientation upon graduation.

When asked which of the eight courses were a better fit to the market, the director suggested woodworking and technology, for which there were only four students, and salon and hairdressing (80 students). Even more incompatible with a local labour market, that is more than 85 per cent agriculture, was that only five students were taking agriculture skills training.⁶⁶ Overall, the lack of guidance was evident in the gender imbalance, with the highest concentrations of females in traditional female occupations (salon and hairdressing, and fashion) and the same for men (auto mechanics and building construction). There were only two females out of 40 in the ICT training course.

Educate. An international NGO has signed memoranda of understanding with ten host community schools to run the Educate after-school curriculum, starting at 2:55 p.m. Educate works out of schools with a skills-based curriculum running after-school clubs and businesses. Mr Gedrey, the local education officer, said that he hoped to spread this curriculum to many more local schools in Isingiro.

► 3.2 PROSPECTS proposal and recommendations

A host of donor, international and national humanitarian and development projects are under way in the two PROSPECTS target host communities and refugee camps. Therefore, the recommendations here are intended to identify discrete interventions based on the rapid assessment and scoping missions that can complement and support better labour market outcomes among current programmes, as well as offer new approaches to pilots to test out methods that could improve labour market outcomes over the medium term.

The four proposals are divided into two groups. The first two proposals could be implemented relatively quickly through a contract or memorandum of understanding with a Uganda-based non-governmental agency or donor agency with field operations in the settlement areas; for instance, development and implementation within one year. The second two proposals would require more project design and development for application in the medium term to change the approaches to employment programming in the region. The proposals for immediate development contain specific consideration for social distancing under COVID-19 guidelines.

For immediate development (within a year)

1. Rural employment services pilot for Arua-Rhino Camp region

Background. While there are no traditional private or public providers of employment services, employment connections are greatly needed, but in non-traditional formats that can be applied to a rural context with high levels of informality. There is a need in the private sector for self-employment and microfirm support for advancing job and market connections. It is proposed that a first pilot be tested in Arua-Rhino Camp as there is a stronger foundation there, in terms of an employer association

⁶⁶ This may also be related to the course content, as the director said that students joked about why should they practise digging in school when they can do digging at home?

appropriate to the youth base, the interest of the local government, and a wider range of NGOs and TVET institutions⁶⁷ where this type of rural model can be tested. A range of NGOs, donors and public offices are experimenting with performing an intermediary placement function via traineeships. Information on vacancies could be provided more systematically, which would expand access to employment, especially for the most disadvantaged. As traineeships are being now used by NGOs participating in different phases of the ENABEL-GIZ programme, a more systematic approach and technical support to microfirms by an employment services office could help advance placement results for everyone.

A rural employment services pilot could test out a range of alternative services that would best suit the host community-refugee settlement context, starting with Arua as there is nascent demand from the traineeship model and private sector associations. Alternative services could be designed to use walk-in, more mobile services to attain rural and refugee communities that are hard to reach.

Mobile employment services units are converted vans that bring services, including open-air seminars, job registration, work permit registration (typically agriculture and construction) and job fairs, to remote areas, particularly when travel is difficult. Mobile services in Jordan,⁶⁸ financed with the support of the Government of the Netherlands and the ILO, and partnered with local trade unions, go to rural worksites to register construction and agricultural workers directly for permits. They are also used to provide specialized gender-based training to rural women farm workers on such topics as occupational safety and health. A mobile employment services van in Sinaloa, Mexico, visits different rural towns on market days, delivering job-matching services via portable computer terminals, providing open-air seminars on available listings, and, as demand permits, bringing local employers to interview rural candidates on site. Mobile units are typically an extension of physically based walk-in services.

But are there not too few jobs to make rural employment services work? What international best practice has found, however, is that even in employment-poor environments, early services can help make previously hidden hiring more public, with open vacancies increasing labour market fairness, and a better fit of workers to the skills needed for the job. They can also provide better market signalling to youth of demand occupations, and in many cases pry open new vacancies by giving them more efficient means of finding workers. A rural model for Uganda would need to adapt quickly, beyond using vacancies, to provide direct support services to employers and connect with local TVET institutions, both of which would serve as different doors into supporting more and better job placements.

Preliminary proposal. The proposal would create the foundations of local employment services adapted to Arua, testing out methods for rural delivery of employment services which would be applicable not only to other host community refugee camp areas, but also other Uganda rural areas that need to build better market and employment connections. The proposal would be made up of two small components: 1, development of services and local employment market information, and 2, improving the local service delivery and connections to regional markets.

The three-year pilot would build capacity over time, using a small staff working with a range of partners. The key services and activities would include the following:

- ▶ **Consolidated local job and training information.** A fundamental service to be developed in the first year is collecting, systematizing, and expanding a new vacancy job bank uniting the host community and refugee settlement labour markets. Training is interlinked with placement opportunities in Arua, so that, based on a first-year mapping exercise, the pilot service would move to assisting training and traineeship placements. One of the initial service targets would be to develop a host community-Rhino Camp consolidated listing, which would be used to keep active communication with the new rural employment services project. Partnerships between the private sector and local TVET institutions should be facilitated, particularly the TVET institution at Rhino Camp which requires more direct market links, according to recent studies.

67 Since only two host communities-refugee settlements were selected for PROSPECTS funding, the comparison of employer and NGO base was carried out only with Isingiro-Nakivale. As discussed in this section, a different type of youth intervention is proposed as being more relevant for Isingiro-Nakivale.

68 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4GVKMFjvLs>.

- ▶ The limitations of open listings are well known, and the partial, unsystematic announcements and occasional advertisements on the radio or in newspapers, contribute towards the sense of exclusion of the local poor populations who have to rely on their connections to obtain even the lowest jobs. In Year 1, the project would consolidate and make more systematic listings, providing common distribution sites and mobile van delivery of information, with public workshops and one-to-one counselling or referral services. A walk-in service will be developed as quickly as possible, even if it functions only on specific days of the week, or mornings only at first. In Year 2, the project would seek to expand and assist skills training programmes in placement and screenings, building clients over time.
- ▶ **Dual services delivery: mobile van and phased in-person walk-in.** Core employment services – job matching, access to a vacancy database, counselling, and labour market services – would be delivered in two in-person formats: a dedicated van and a walk-in service, each on a specific schedule. To enable the employment service to communicate with the different and distant communities in the Rhino Camp and Arua areas, a van would be equipped with staff (job counsellor, trainer), laptops for online access to the vacancy job bank, chairs, tents, and other equipment to deliver outdoors seminars, job fairs (with employers present) and counselling sessions. Employers, trainers, and special speakers could travel separately to the scheduled on-site employment services delivery. Mobile services delivery has been used for similar purposes in South Africa, Tunisia, and the State of Jalisco in Mexico. It is used to visit remote communities and take advantage of population gatherings such as market days or community events. Its advantage is to try and reach populations that would find it difficult to travel substantial distances, and to introduce populations to the service. Based on audience and need, on-site open-air seminars can range from writing CVs, internet search or introducing employers to supporting self-employment (such as basic business skills, marketing opportunities for key in-demand crops). During the first year of the programme, a walk-in service would be established with a specified set of hours after a locational and client-use assessment has been made.⁶⁹ The combination of walk-in and mobile services would increase over the three-year period, reflecting the annual reviews of pilot usage and performance.
- ▶ **Employment support services to private sector.** The private sector in the West Nile is comprised predominantly of microfirms (one to three people) that are poorly organized among themselves, have high rates of failure and very little skill development once they have started their businesses. These are the same businesses that hoped to offer internships for youth under the key donor programmes now in operation in the region. The project would provide a full-time employment specialist to work particularly with USSIA⁷⁰ firms, as this is the larger association and a target for youth internships.
- ▶ The specialist would assist firms in writing vacancy descriptions that fit their skill needs, help pre-screen candidates for firms, help identify those firms that could use youth interns, provide workshops for firms in human relations and business practices, and target for support sectors (for example, food and beverage) that may be seeking to expand employment with support. Past international best practice has demonstrated that small and micro businesses may defer to hiring a friend of a friend or, in Africa, via kinship, and that these practices have contributed to great inefficiencies and discriminatory labour markets. These practices can be entrenched, but the demonstration effect on changing to hiring based on competence and fairness is important, particularly for lower-income economies.
- ▶ Working through an association, support services can help advance common local job descriptions (such as entry-level carpenter), which eventually, along with job turnover, helps to open up vacancies more consistently and supports a tighter connection between VocTech schools, skills development programmes and jobs.
- ▶ **Linking local labour markets: training and expanded links to Kampala and regional markets.** For rural labour markets to function even slightly more efficiently, there must be better linkages between employers in regional markets, information about regional labour market opportunities for jobseekers (without migrating), and internships or positions for skills trainees. After the first 18 months, the

⁶⁹ Before opening a walk-in service, key procedures and systems would need to be in place with support from the national PES in Kampala and a survey or assessment of alternative locations. As the staff in the pilot is too limited, choosing mornings or afternoons on certain days would be the most feasible way to start. It may be best to operate out of a local government office or another central location, even a market.

⁷⁰ USSIA informed the ILO mission that it has great interest in technical support to strengthen the quality training and technical assistance to its own members, which could itself be a service of the Arua model.

project would seek to make select inroads into information and linkages with other regional markets (Adjumani, for example). Again, the volumes of job connections will be limited, but rural employment services in a market such as Arua-Rhino Camp are first concerned with creating incentives for more transparency and access, and fitting services to the market.

- ▶ Also, by working through USSIA, the private sector specialist would connect with other USSIA offices and then progressively to other employer associations, helping to identify opportunities in other regional markets in Uganda, particularly for youth traineeships. This component would also build local labour market capacity by creating training exchanges on key types of services: support to employers, counselling youth, information systems with specialists at MGLSD, local government (KCCA), and emerging specialists in the NGO community and community leader in Arua-Rhino Camp.
- ▶ **Building strong MGLSD and local government connections.** From the outset, this proposal, while designed to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the PROSPECTS programme and the role of the ILO as one of the five partners, is intended to facilitate strong links with MGLSD programming, the local Arua government, and the modernization of the public employment service being launched simultaneously from Kampala. The intention is that technical assistance, systems, training, and standards set the work in a complementary and interactive manner to develop synergies and maximize innovation and learning. For example, the vacancy databases are developed on similar platforms or information requirements to permit sharing between the Arua pilot and Kampala-based PES modernization within a short period, so that their eventual merger will be as seamless as possible.
- ▶ Staff training and capacity-building exercises should involve the staff on both sides as much as possible, including joint participation in ILO training. Additionally, the local government, led by the labour officer, can host job fairs and mobile services in communities, supporting the pilot and MGLSD PES modernization in expanding the role of labour officers.

Proposed project human relations and execution structure

To support the service delivery outlined above, the proposed budget includes two specific full-time personnel⁷¹ plus a full-time administrator or receptionist. One position would be the project director in charge of initiating and systematizing rural employment services, working with partners in the donor and NGO communities, local government and the MGLSD. The project director's responsibilities would include development, supervision and then expansion of the area job bank, leading mobile service delivery, directing job counselling, promotion of the service and community or local government coordination and outreach. The services manager would run the development of the pilot services, including the schedule and operation of mobile and in-person services, deliver or contract short-term orientation, training, and counselling, including support to youth for job applications, and information sharing. The administrator would be skilled in maintaining the vacancy database, financial records, and fielding phone calls from jobseekers.

Another position is proposed for a private sector specialist to work directly with the private sector, currently suggested to be USSIA. The private sector specialist's principal tasks would include assisting local businesses on announcing and filling vacancies, identifying small firms capable of providing good quality internships for existing programmes, and conducting on-demand consultations with firms on human resources management and training. This specialist would probably be placed with USSIA, through a memorandum of understanding. USSIA is one of the few business associations with a presence in Arua. Its large membership of small firms would be a key target for vacancy registration and support for human resources management and expansion.

The project manager would be placed with the NGO or donor agency in Arua who would be contracted directly to execute the pilot. While the private sector specialist would be technically housed with USSIA, they would be frequently on site at the host NGO or participating in mobile services. It should be recognized that the fundamental nature of rural employment services is diversifying the location of service delivery to fit the needs of local employers and jobseekers and expanding to new clients. The idea is to create

⁷¹ These would be local experienced staff, hired in a competitive process in the form of consultants. The competitive process would be run by the contracted NGO with technical support from the ILO.

a mobile employment services unit, notably present in South Africa, Tunisia, and the state of Sinaloa in Mexico,⁷² adapted to a rural context with substantial distances between employers and jobseekers. In the second year, specialist would initiate contacts with potential employers outside the Arua-Rhino Camp region and create training and learning sessions, linking the Arua-Rhino Camp region with employment services in Kampala, with the MGLSD and KCCA.

The pilot would maintain systematic measurement of the growth of its client base and the methodologies most successful in reaching and improving outcomes for employers and workers alike. At least every 12 months, there should be a systematic review of the service utilizing external expertise, with a review of services, outreach and surveys of clients, and planning for service adjustments. Experimentation, learning, and applying what has been learned to adjust service delivery should be the basis for the evolution of the pilot.

Future perspectives. While employment services are, at best, a small part of the policy and market policies that have to change in Uganda to advance to a higher functioning labour market, this pilot would initiate learning and services to the largest, and least served, employment services market in the country: populated but relatively isolated rural communities integrating and serving refugee communities. This pilot is intended to create a major learning function and exchange with the MGLSD, as they seek to build from their Kampala-oriented PES, providing more employers with a national employment service that connects disparate labour markets in Uganda.

2. Piloting value-chain addition in agro-processing

Background. In both refugee settlement regions, land is a major constraint for current and incoming refugee populations to develop stable livelihoods, beyond survival and subsistence. These constraints derive from a myriad of factors: increasing refugee populations forcing smaller plot size; lack of mechanization and modern methods; climate conditions rendering certain land less usable; inappropriate crop or livestock choice. Of special concern to the ILO mission in the West Nile is that the increasing refugee population faces ever more limits on the amount of land that can be distributed amid the growing size of the camps themselves.

Moving up the value chain away from primary and subsistence farming is a particular interest of the PROSPECTS partners, already seeing the limitations of increasing numbers of subsistence farmers coming onto the market with poorer land. There are still major value-chain constraints throughout Uganda, with poor infrastructure, transport, and standard-setting, but much has been learned at the small holder farmer level about the need for support services ad cooperative marketing.

AFARD Director Alfred Lakwo was asked what he considered the most significant missing piece in value-chain development for the poor in host and refugee communities. He argued that it was making a first step-up viable for the host and refugee farmers who, when grouped appropriately together, could move up the value chain to basic agro-processing of crops in demand in the market. This would require directing group savings to the purchase of agro-processing equipment, training to go along with the use of the machines, plus marketing support to connect appropriately to local value chains. This step-up would reduce pressure on the surplus of smallholder farmers selling unprocessed agricultural crops.

This proposal focuses on a particular value-chain constraint in the West Nile – too many primary producers and the need to move up to first-level agro-processing in key demand products. AFARD is the largest Ugandan NGO in the West Nile and operates only in that region.⁷³ It is highly experienced in working in host community or refugee projects on a 50/50 basis.

⁷² This concept was tried in Sinaloa, Mexico to reach remote areas and had a great impact. The van can be equipped with chairs for impromptu training and consultations, laptops for skills sessions and online access.

⁷³ AFARD has a 92-member staff spread among several offices and does leading value-chain work with local farmers in farm and non-farm production.

Preliminary proposal. As AFARD is the leading, most experienced NGO in value-chain small- scale development, the proposal is that they be contracted to test out a model of value-chain addition in one to four sectors in the West Nile. AFARD identified the four sectors in the region that would be the most promising for the refugee or host community to try the one step up processing: peanuts, hibiscus, cassava and rice, the products the most in demand in local value chains. The term “value-chain addition” in this context refers to adding value from primary production, in terms of income returns and contribution to a value chain of the product. The step-up processing sectors are identified as those that farmers in the West Nile can be trained and supported to undertake (for example, capital requirements are feasible, and there is ready local supply and ability to connect the value chain to sell their processed products).

The design of a pilot would ask AFARD to submit a proposal to apply its tested methodology of small group investment and business support to identify groups of farmers for joint investment in the equipment and business skills needed for the one to four sectors that have been agreed upon. The beneficiaries would receive from AFARD the appropriate complementary services, including:

- ▶ technical skills on maintenance and operation of the machines;
- ▶ business input and output, record-keeping;
- ▶ savings instruments to manage the businesses;
- ▶ marketing support; and
- ▶ developed and tested peer and master training modules.

As a pilot for PROSPECTS, emphasis would be placed on the learning functions for replication to other refugee or host communities and local sectors. Key indicators would be the pilot’s results in terms of employment and income stability, income increases over former subsistence income, beneficiary and community attributes, productivity or efficiency gains, value or quality of skills acquisition, importance and role of follow-up technical support, barriers to entry for specific sectors, gender considerations.

Post-project implications. The Jobs Diagnostic of the World Bank cites agro-processing as one of the highest potential programmes for creating new employment demand. Yet, for a predominantly agricultural economy of small farmers, Uganda has struggled to form even a few working local value chains. This pilot offers a chance to test a discrete “one step up” agro-processing strategy, but to carry it out with support for the farmers to link to buyers while remaining in their communities at more survivable incomes, and to work with refugee and host communities, are areas of great needs. The use of the model could be expanded to apply to more sectors and other host community refugee settlements.

For medium-term development (1 year+)

3. Supporting investment-led value chains to advance employment

Local value-chains pilot to complement World Bank, IFC investment and public works⁷⁴

Background. To confront a clear crisis, donor programmes have needed to focus first on humanitarian interventions, improving the stability of basic livelihoods and basic farm and non-farm skills, credit, and tools principally for self-employment. The National Development Plan 3 and the World Bank’s Jobs Diagnostic for Uganda are among the most recent analyses describing the need to focus on the lack of labour demand to meet the ever-growing labour supply. With such limited labour demand, Uganda has seen an overall deterioration in the quality of work of casual day labour. Major investments in analysis and support for developing export-oriented value chains are beyond the scope of PROSPECTS, particularly for the two refugee regions, which would require major investments in infrastructure, electricity, water, and communications to make such competitiveness viable. However, even the most minor local value

⁷⁴ The term “labour-intensive public works” is not used here, to avoid confusion with the same term applied to the World Bank’s component of Social Assistance (54 days in off season).

chains do not appear to be working in agriculture or in non-farm services, for instance where to sell products, transportation networks, trading missions of groups of firms, sectoral associations to advance collaboration when profitable. The predominant focus on the refugee crisis, concentrating on getting large numbers of youth employed in some fashion and establishing working community-level associations, neglected attention to the youth (and adults) working in low productivity and precarious positions – ironically, those microfirms (both farm and non-farm,⁷⁵ nearly all informal) that are hoped to be absorbing the huge influxes of youth.

Preliminary proposal. The proposal is that PROSPECTS test an approach to microfirm expansion in line with meeting demand for a simultaneous donor investment, of which some element could be undertaken by local contractors or suppliers. It is understood that these are largely low-productivity firms or self-employed personnel, so the choice of demand sector – or rather a segment of a new demand sector – would need to be specific and tailored to the local labour market, such as rapid housing, rural roads⁷⁶ or water projects (for instance, construction, carpentry demand from labour-intensive public works), an IFC sectoral investment, or a World Bank investment.⁷⁷ The World Bank has cited its operations under the Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) and the Skills Development Fund (SDF) for incorporation in PROSPECTS. Great frustration was expressed in both communities that humanitarian assistance, particularly in food donations, has not led to any sustained utilization or stimulation of local markets, even in the case of Nakivale. This proposal would be to pilot, measure and, importantly, learn under what circumstances the use of local suppliers can have a positive impact on the labour market in a complementary fashion, without significant impact on service delivery.

The instruments supporting microfirm response to a stimulus on local demand would necessarily be designed once the appropriate subsector, demand specifications and timing of delivery have been applied to one of the two refugee camps and host communities identified by PROSPECTS. Drawing on international best practice in microbusiness support, comprehensive services with a technical support mechanism would need to be designed for the pilot. Key elements to consider are:

- ▶ provision of small one-on-one technical assistance to the firm to enable them to assess how to meet upcoming demand (such as transport needs, additional workers, partnering with other microfirms);
- ▶ short-term technical training specifically aligned with the technical assistance identified to fulfil new demands (for instance, lessons from the Mexico-CIMO programme, South Korea SME assistance);
- ▶ identification of credit constraints and resource strategies;
- ▶ sector specialists hired for continual monitoring and support to firms, evening and community-based meetings.

What would be studied under the model? Which and how many microfirms could provide products to meet demand? What supports proved decisive? Was the sector an appropriate one for support for microfirm expansion, and what attributes did or did not make it so? What changes did microfirms make to align with demand? Were they sustainable in the absence of the demand infusion, for instance, expand labour, make changes to product quality, join with neighbouring microbusinesses? Were there any policy or implementation changes (or not) that affected the outcome?

⁷⁵ It is understood that UNHCR and WFP have quality, regulatory, volume and donor constraints to the use of local markets, but the length of the temporary delivery of aid has impacted local agricultural markets with poor alternative market connections, and there has not been the experimentation of local market development by WFP that has occurred in other refugee areas.

⁷⁶ In Rhino Camp, there are “cash for work” programmes by individual donors largely for road construction by refugees within the camps. There was no time in the rapid assessment to explore the record of cash-for-work programmes. What is being proposed here is different, to expand microfirms to improve short- and medium-term business performance and employment. Cash-for-work programmes are essentially a form of social assistance, and international literature demonstrates that only certain design features lead to positive labour market impacts.

⁷⁷ There is a range of options in the current World Bank portfolio, for example in the social area, and in the future portfolio, such as secondary education.

Post-project application. The intention of the pilot would be a learning function with the potential of indicating policy changes, skill and capacity deficits, and support mechanisms or instruments that could be brought to greater scale in future investment. The learning function would be on the combination of policy or procedural changes needed, with technical assistance and skills-training supports to microfirms that could be expanded and tested on a wider range of multilateral donor investments.

4. New youth training model for Nakivale

Background. Despite continuing to receive new influxes of refugees from the South and West, there was a noticeable difference in the range of donor programmes focused on youth employment offered in Arua-Rhino Camp versus Nakivale. There was just one poorly equipped vocational-technical school at Nakivale, and it offers young people absolutely no connection to the labour market. This was the only intervention observed at Nakivale that included both refugee and host community youth, although host community youth were approximately 20 per cent of enrolment.

In both communities, but particularly in Nakivale, the young people do not see their future outside the refugee settlement. Dropout rates from school are high, and discouragement is leading to idleness and drug and alcohol abuse. International best practice on youth employment has demonstrated that with particularly tough populations, longer-term (more than six months) interventions that integrate building self-esteem, basic work readiness and community-building have more a significant impact on employment rates than short-term technical skills training in low-employment environments, which is the only type of youth programmes now in operation in both target areas of PROSPECTS.

In Nakivale, only one of three UNICEF-built youth centres is in operation, but its programmes and operations are highly limited, with free wi-fi being the key attraction for youth. With so much discouragement, community-building and attachment are key features to incorporate into a new intervention. The youth's interest in the arts was frequently mentioned in Nakivale, and this was one of the few areas of exchange with the host community.

Preliminary proposal. It is proposed that PROSPECTS support the adaptation of one of two successful comprehensive international youth employment models to the Ugandan youth in refugee and host communities, piloting first in Nakivale. The models, YouthBuild International and Galpão Aplauso have been subjected to rigorous impact evaluations and shown to yield significant employment effects among disadvantaged youth populations in employment-poor contexts. YouthBuild International was set up in South Africa since 2001, while Galpão Aplauso, literally "Shed Applause", provides arts-based youth training in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and has an excellent job insertion rate of 30 per cent. Both models offer more comprehensive services, focus on building youth self-esteem and changing their aspirations in terms of education completion and work. Given the cost of introducing a new programme type to Uganda, PROSPECTS funding would be directed more feasibly to preliminary design and scoping missions, with potential donors for funding full implementation of a pilot, as explained further.

Youth model A: arts based Galpão Aplauso, Rio de Janiero

This youth employment model enrolled impoverished, out-of-school youth from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in an intensive, six-month arts-based programme (five days a week), designed to build social, life, and vocational skills, increase self-esteem and provide remedial education.⁷⁸ Music, theatre and other arts are included the programme. It used personalized job placement services at the end of the six months to remarkable results: 33 per cent increase in the probability of being employed over the control group (other poor children from the same favela), 23 per cent increase in earnings.⁷⁹

78 <http://aplauso.art.br/>

79 Carla Calero et al., *Can Arts-Based Interventions Improve Labor Market Outcomes for Youth? Evidence from a Randomized Trial in Rio de Janeiro?*, IZA, May 2014. It should be noted that these results were collected at a time of economic growth in Brazil (2012-13).

As mentioned, the arts have a particular resonance with the refugee population in Nakivale. The OPM and community leaders stressed to the ILO mission the interest of the youth community in the arts and music; they form a key link in the annual exchanges between the host community and refugee settlements and offer the possibility of travelling within the communities for performances, thus encouraging community-building between the host communities and refugee settlements; they could serve to join the disparate communities in a joint project.

The training in Galpão Aplauso was not linked directly to the employer but was rather focused on basic skills-building, attitude, and motivation, which is what made such a difference in employment results over the control group. Placement worked so well thanks to the connections the single placement officer had with local employers, ever willing to vouch for and back up young people who had been through the programme and who otherwise would have been considered too risky to hire. If the model were adopted for Nakivale, there would need to be someone who could play this key intermediary role, a professional from the host community who had connections with local employers. An arts-based curriculum could be applied within an alternative secondary education setting, so that return to schooling could be a desired outcome, given the high dropout rates of concern in Nakivale.

This model is being applied in other locations in Brazil; it is not known if there is any similar youth model functioning in Africa. Galpão Aplauso's attributes for success include daily separation from the poor living environment, the use of an intensive full-time model to impart a change of motivation and aspiration, and the use of an arts-based curriculum to build teamwork. In Nakivale, self-esteem and aspirations are of particular concern, and dropout rates of youth are high. As previously noted, UNHCR's survey of May 2019 found that only 5 per cent of the population planned to move off the settlement in the coming year, and 57 per cent aspired only to casual labour.⁸⁰

The Galpão Aplauso model educated 1,400 young people at any point in the cycle. The costs per participant, if applied to a similar-sized Nakivale population, would probably be beyond the financing of PROSPECTS. What is suggested is that PROSPECTS fund a project design phase and scoping mission to assess the capabilities of partner NGOs to execute a pilot in Nakivale. This could be done in coordination with potential donors who would be interested in funding the execution of the youth pilot.

Youth Model B: YouthBuild International

YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth employment programme that targets dropout youth and many ex-offenders for a combination of schooling alternating with community-based construction and technical skills. The community projects (such as housing for the elderly, youth centres) are intended to build self-esteem, community attachment as well as technical work skills. The model, first developed in the United States, has now been adapted in more than 19 countries, including South Africa (the only African case, second-stage project), Iraq (second stage) and 11 pilots in developing countries.

YouthBuild International usually works through a partner NGO in the host country. YouthBuild started working in South Africa in 2001 with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA, formerly Umsobomvu Youth Fund), a government institution. The first group of 189 unemployed school dropouts in Ivory Park completed the construction of 194 units of affordable housing, accomplishing 32,000 hours of community service, with 100 per cent completion rates and 54 per cent placement rates in jobs, self-employment, or further schooling.⁸¹ From this initial pilot, the NYDA adopted the YouthBuild model as its principal model for skills development, education, and youth service. The model has expanded to the first private sector-led youth build model, the Saint Gobain YouthBuild Academy, offering demand-driven skills training and entrepreneurship in training by the South African division of the French company, Saint Gobain.

As for the first proposed youth model, PROSPECTS funding would be used to support an initial mission by YouthBuild International to assess potential partners, the scope for intervention, interaction with the host community and refugee institutions. It is understood that this scoping mission would be undertaken only

80 UNHCR, "Refugee Access to Livelihoods and Housing, Land and Property", May 2019.

81 www.youthbuild.org/southafrica

in conjunction with a committed potential donor team, as the investment in the pilot then the programme would exceed the time frame and budget of the PROSPECTs programme. A proposal submitted by YouthBuild International, together with a partner Ugandan NGO for donor financing, would be expected as a result of the scoping mission.

Post-project application. The purpose of piloting either of the two new types of youth employment models is to test the impact of a more comprehensive intervention for youth in the host community-refugee settlement context in Uganda. The models could be expanded to suit larger youth populations, or elements of the curriculum on life-skills and personalized job placement services could serve as input for a range of other donor projects in these communities.

► 4

Key recommendations and action plan

With the support of the ILO, this assessment provides the MGLSD with a moment to look into the future, an opportunity to visualize and review the steps needed to create a more comprehensive PES for Uganda, supporting better employment outcomes for more of its citizens in more parts of the than it reaches at present. How could Uganda build PES that will best fit its challenges and help more Ugandans get jobs, particularly decent ones?

International best practice is unequivocal: modernization of PES can only be successful if pursued in stages. Each stage needs to build institutional capacity and adapt to the local economy, and forge the private, public, and non-profit links needed to support expansion into the next stage.

In today's economies of rapid and more frequent job changes, the best PES assumes a role as part provider-part market leader, engaging the private sector, non-profit associations, schools, and universities to evolve towards a national system in which a wider range of institutions are better preparing, placing, and training the workforce. Like all other countries, Uganda needs to resist the temptation to think they should do the whole job or use technology to catch up before having a market for that technology or initiate too many services too prematurely.

Uganda has tremendous employment challenges as well as opportunities. With the world's youngest population, the country is facing a massive influx into the labour market of new, often poorly schooled entrants while job growth is limited and deteriorating. Stronger, more modern employment services should be helping Uganda better meet these challenges, in addition to the newest ones incurred by the impact of COVID-19.

► 4.1 Overview: public employment services modernization plan for Uganda, with complementary advances in employment prospects in two host communities

In the best of circumstances, modernized employment services are just one element of a complex jobs challenge faced by Uganda, but thankfully it is an element that can make quick gains with the right strategy and staging. This section provides an overview of the recommended strategy for PES modernization in Uganda, based on an analysis of the ILO-supported scoping and rapid assessment missions in early 2020 detailed in this report.

Before pushing the “go” button, it is recommended that this strategy and set of recommendations be examined under a local microscope, adjusted, and verified by an MGLSD workshop held with ILO and invited experts. A finalized and verified strategy would be the key product of this workshop, with the modernization to be led from beginning to end by an internal working team within the DLEOSH, as described in the action plan in Section 4.1.⁸²

International best practice also makes it clear that not only must PES modernization be a phased strategy, but also be a flexible one, changing and reprioritizing services along the way to take advantage of changing employment trends and new sources of financing or collaboration. The DLEOSH should be careful not to overbuild services and labour market information systems without learning from its early experience. There is a steep learning curve ahead as the MGLSD experiments with the type of employment services best adapted to a highly informal, heavily rural economy, so that flexibility with on-going learning should be the rule.

4.1.1 Key Ugandan labour market features incorporated into PES modernization design

The proposed strategy calls for the following considerations.

- ▶ First target the expansion of vacancies and placement in the **formal sector around Kampala**, and then roll out to smaller cities. The formal sector, while small in Uganda, is the most natural target for a PES, and in Uganda there is plenty to be gained by improving hiring and access to jobs in the formal sector. This means building on the employer-vacancy driven service delivered by the Internal Services Division ([Section 2.2](#)), but key changes are needed to achieve an increased volume of workers placed in more formal businesses. To acquire more placements for more firms, internal staff, process, and equipment changes would be needed in the initial phase. Working first in this area will also position the DLEOSH to have an impact in transitioning current casual labour into more formal employment.
- ▶ Uganda's mostly informal and rural economy coexisting with its unique refugee and host communities poses great challenges for adapting employment services to work in rural areas, particularly with long distances over poor infrastructure to engage in poor-quality employment. The strategy posits piloting mobile employment services for the **informal agricultural and agro-processing sectors** in the refugee and host community of Arua, applying those lessons to additional rural markets and, through the pilot, building greater rural-urban market exchanges. A Uganda-relevant rural employment model will require more mobile than walk-in services and building networks with small employer associations, local district governments and technical and vocational schools quite distinct from a classic PES

⁸² The action plan in this document proposes a strategy workshop between MGLSD and the ILO in one to three months to amplify, revise, and verify a ministry-led strategy.

model. In Stage 2, DLEOSH will have established new working relationships in rural areas and tested methodologies to extend its more efficient Kampala-oriented employment service nationwide, as well as providing more systematic services to rural areas.

- ▶ **Skills deficits** and poor educational preparation are so substantial in Uganda that a PES can only go so far in job placement, and thus the strategy posits moving in Stage 2 towards linking a wider range of active labour market policies and training, with job placement directly by MLGSP as well as in partnership with other providers. Uganda has a confusing mix of distinct donor and government-led programmes which only in certain cases have strong links to job placement. The strategy posits improving and tracking labour market placements of key ALMPs in Stage 1 and moving more systematically to better connections and programmes between education, training institutions and employment services in Stage 2, with the labour market information to support and address skill and employment needs.
- ▶ Expanding **labour market information systems** managed by the MGLSD's DLEOSH in coordination with the various governmental agencies carrying out surveys, such as the Bureau of Statistics, needs to be phased in and focused on the most readily needed information for each stage. In Stage 1, this information would be to improve employment trend knowledge to assist the private sector, educational institutions and MGLSD, and in Stage 2 to delve deeper into the labour market information needed for skills analysis (for example, skills content of jobs and future employment projections) and better realigning education and training programmes to the demands of the Ugandan economy. It is recommended that labour market analysis (distinct from the LMIS itself) and key studies be contracted out to universities in the first two stages, as it is part of the strategy of engaging universities and colleges to train labour market analysts, and signal to universities where to revise their curricula for labour demand.
- ▶ **Employment revitalization post-COVID-19** may be a particular priority for Uganda. An effective PES with national reach has been a key delivery agent for responding to national employment emergencies in many developed and developing countries. PES modernization can be shaped to assist short-term employment modernization and, importantly, build the infrastructure for enabling Uganda to deliver employment support more systematically for future crises.

4.1.2 Overview of the proposed PES modernization by stages

Building towards a modern PES system led by the DLEOSH

Following is an overview of the draft proposed strategy organized into stages 1, 2 and 2+. The modernization proposal encompasses and integrates the three policy areas requested to the ILO by Martin Wandera, Director of DLEOSH, in a meeting on 5 March 2020: a functioning job-matching system, robust LMIS, and strengthening labour market adjustment programmes to achieve better employment outcomes. As discussed in the meeting, these areas of labour policy modernization will interact and advance sequentially, as one is needed to further another.

The strategy is also driven by key features of the Ugandan economy discussed above, building the foundation from what is currently in operation in the country, however limited, rather than the wishful thinking of building every piece of the PES anew.

Each stage begins with a one paragraph summary, might we even dare to say vision, of what the changes would look like by the completion of the stage. Then is a summary of the principal tasks or activities needed to arrive at the proposed goals. This summary is divided into three categories: those activities or changes needed to achieve the employment services targets; the labour policy and information systems targets; and the institutional changes needed to bring about the employment services, labour programmes and information systems. This division is intended to help the MGLSD see how these operational changes break down more concretely. However, we do not want to give the false impression that one category, say labour market information systems, can be divorced from the other changes and pursued separately.

Stage 1. Key outputs and goals

Stage 1: Employment services

Stage 1 targets: expanded vacancy-driven PES based in Kampala with rural services developed in a pilot phase

Two key initiatives, with many activities needed to realise them, are recommended for Stage 1:

1. Redesign the current Internal Employment Services Division to dramatically increase the volume and quality of placements in businesses. To create a more efficient platform to serve more workers through the PES based in the Internal Employment division, a series of systems, personnel, and administrative changes will be necessary early on in Stage 1. This involves simultaneous changes during Stage I, including the following.

- ▶ **Develop and implement computer-based job matching and placement system or Jobs Bank.** In this first phase, the job-matching system is designed and tested to serve known vacancies being filled by the Internal Employment Services staff. Make the largely paper-based candidate applications and job vacancies fully computerized and standardized, to speed the intake of data and matching of candidates. This will require creating a standard, Uganda-relevant format with skills categories recognizable and useable by the private sector (for example, developed in consultation with employers).⁸³ Such a system can be designed to input and track placements in the first stage, with more sophisticated tracking of the length of placements at a later stage. The design of the system should be consulted with employer organizations, not only for its format, but to determine whether elements can be developed in partnership or collaboration to expand its utility to employers.
- ▶ **Intake process revamped.** A standardized intake process of the steps taken for job applicants and vacancy registration is needed, so that administration can be made more efficient and more volume can be handled per staff. This will create a first-line reception staff so that job counsellors can support jobseekers in a more focused and efficient manner, rather than the current systems of guidance and counselling seeing jobseekers first. The creation of an intake process will require the development of job descriptions for PES staff to aid recruitment and professional development within the PES.
- ▶ **Staff training and capacity-building sequenced.** With a streamlined process, a computerized registry, and clear job positions, the PES will be ready for its initial external training and capacity-building support, so that training and capacity-building are integrated to implement the new processes, services, and information systems.
- ▶ **Reassignment or expansion of core PES staff.** The current staffing,⁸⁴ plus assistance from the guidance and counselling division, is insufficient for efficient functioning under the current workload and a major constraint to modernization of the PES. It is recommended that an initial staffing plan be developed in the first two months, with high consideration given to the temporary reassignment of staff within MGLSD and additional UGVS hires.
- ▶ **Redesign and open a national walk-in PES office.** The designation of a small number of offices for an MGLSD national walk-in office should be initiated early, with planning for a grand opening of a remodelled office sequenced with new equipment purchases and staff additions, as detailed in the action plan below.
- ▶ **Strategic expansion of Jobs Bank clientele.** As Stage Expansion of client base accomplished by identifying key sectors in Kampala, by Internal Services staff outreaching to businesses.

⁸³ While one standard job registry form is fundamental, more specialized questions can be added when working with firms needing more specialized reviews of candidates.

⁸⁴ From the assessment phase, current staffing is estimated at two plus one UGVS youth.

- ▶ **Rollout of specialized job-search services.** With employer demand, and the need to prepare jobseekers for growing vacancies, specialized PES should aim to support even greater placement rates and the impact of the PES. Such specialized services need not be costly and can, in Stage 1, often be delivered by existing staff. These could include CV preparation or interview preparation group workshops, delivery of PES, job fairs, on-site recruitment at universities for specialized positions.

2. Develop and implement a pilot for rural employment services to test a Uganda-specific model supporting employment expansions in microfirms in agriculture, agro-processing, and services. The challenges of high informality, small and weak firms, and limited market connections in rural areas will require adapting and trying new methods to assist the microfirms to add workers and improve employment linkages through TVET and traineeship programmes. Delivering employment services for rural areas in Uganda will require a period of experimentation, particularly in the case of host communities, to test the most effective method to reach rural workers, and then how to link the modernization of the PES at the national level to a first rural pilot and then, based on the results, to a larger number of rural areas in Stage 2. The employment services model that will work for rural areas in Uganda cannot possibly be a single labour officer, particularly one with multiple responsibilities. The institutional development section includes the evolution of an institutional model that accompanies the modernization of the national PES.

The PROSPECTS programme may offer a potential source of funding and technical assistance for such a pilot in Arua. The ILO is supporting the development of a proposal for a rural employment services pilot to submit it to the PROSPECTS program, together with the proposed modernization plan of the PES. Key elements of a pilot adapted to the host community and refugee settlement environment include:

- ▶ technical assistance to private sector associations and firms to identify traineeships, support employment expansion, and list and fill specific vacancies;
- ▶ mobile van-delivered employment services which circulate to market areas and refugee settlements, including delivering open-air public workshops;
- ▶ central office functions in Arua, in partnership with local NGOs that lead the development of an area online and walk-in service;
- ▶ joint capacity-building and training with MGLSD as well as local associations;
- ▶ after local operations have been established, branching out services to enable greater job search between rural areas and Kampala.

Stage 1: Associated labour market programmes: ALMPs and LMIS

Stage 1 targets: establish a core LMIS and employment portal keyed to PES needs, develop select training and placement and training referral services

Sections 2 and 3 examined key selected active labour market policies and labour market information systems, with a focus on assessing their current and, more importantly, potential role in the modernization of Uganda's public employment services.

Following are recommendations for Stage 1 for the MGLSD, especially for the DLEOSH, divided into the two associated policy areas.

ALMPs and PES: Stage 1

Uganda has a wide range of active labour market policies,⁸⁵ encompassing training, microenterprises and skills-oriented programmes. To date, very few have traineeship components or mechanisms to track and improve the chances of the intervention resulting in self- or wage employment. The proposed strategy for the PES is to concentrate on improving and creating a market for combining training with better employment services in two related areas, with a focus on two macro-level market-improving initiatives:

- ▶ creating a link with selected ALMPs to assist and improve placement results
- ▶ initiating training referral services under the PES

Perhaps stating the obvious, in the current environment and with such limited resources available, it is not recommended that DLEOSH invest in running its own AMLP, particularly in this early stage of modernization. As discussed under Stage 2, there may be opportunities to consider at a later stage in the advancement of PES. The two advancements recommended in Stage 1 are discussed further here.

1. Pilot combining PES placement services with training. In Phase 1, the PES would be seeking to expand demand for its services by partnering with existing ALMPs whose performance and outcomes could be strengthened by closer links to job placement. The form of the partnership – or pairing between a training programme and services of the PES – necessarily depends on the market problem being addressed. A public works programme with assistance for post-programme placement in employment may be a priority as Uganda seeks to revitalize employment after COVID-19. An alternative would be a partnership with an existing programme with placement support. If continued to scale, the UGVS discussed in [Section 2](#) would probably need support for those graduates who are not kept on for work in their current placement.

PES in Uganda may be well positioned to assist the private sector to identify and support placements, pre-employment orientation, CV preparation workshops, and job-hunting skills for youth completing training and about to enter the labour market. One such model, support services to the private sector to open traineeship positions with local firms, is already proposed under the rural services pilot for Arua. The relative strengths of each of the partners also helps to drive the content of the services developed. While the first few partnerships are often programme- or vacancy specific, a learning function will be piloted, and some of these services will naturally evolve into more regular PES offered to a wider range of jobseekers or employers in Phase 2.

2. Develop training referral and information services. Given the excess of low-skilled labour in Uganda, increasing numbers of would-be jobseekers will probably need some form of training before they are ready for a quality placement. While there have been comprehensive mapping reviews of groups of training programmes in the country, there is no centralized information resource tool that a jobseeker or a member of PES staff could consult to find a programme available for enrollees or to link graduates with open jobs in real time.⁸⁶

The second ALMP tool recommended for Uganda's PES to develop is a databank of existing training programmes accepting candidates, their schedules, and requirements, to which the PES counsellors could refer jobseekers. The first step of a referral and information service can be as simple as a training job board in PES offices, opening PES offices on certain days to permit training providers to screen and recruit in PES offices, and a database of the two or three programmes the PES is supporting directly.

⁸⁵ This assessment, as in Uganda, uses a wide definition of what constitutes an active labour market programme, encompassing a range of interventions to support employment, employability, and skills development. Self-employment and microenterprise are included, even though they are often packaged with other, non-labour market forms of assistance such as credit and technical business assistance.

⁸⁶ A number of "mapping" exercises have been performed in Uganda, which should prove very useful, but such momentary reports cannot keep pace with the current set of programmes on distinct opening and closing schedules.

As the database expands, it should open first to short-term training programmes (under a year) with open enrolments, that is, programmes seeking to fill trainee openings, not those affiliated directly with TVET, or school-based programmes of more than a year that take only trainees enrolled in the school. Even a databank for out-of-school programmes is not a minor undertaking in Uganda, so it should be advanced in partnership with the programmes for which the PES jobseeker database can be the most useful. The important barometer of growth is to ensure that the database is kept up to date, with programmes that are filled and no longer taking trainees automatically deleted from the system. If the database is reputed to contain out-of-date information, its utility will soon be lost. It is preferable to keep it small and current with demand. Further expansion can be designed and considered in Stage 2.

Labour market information systems: Stage 1

As discussed in [Section 2](#), like the case of other developing countries, responsibilities and legal mandates for the elements that comprise an LMIS are distributed in Uganda not only within DLEOSH as in MGLSD, but also to other agencies, most importantly to bureaus of statistics for conducting labour force surveys. As a result, there will need to be a process of inter-institutional exchange and collaboration to move forward with the design of an LMIS system within DLEOSH, in support of modernizing PES. LMIS need sustained, specialized staff, regularly updated systems, and outreach and promotion capacity to expand the use of the system outside MGLSD. As the creation of LMIS has already gone through fits and starts in Uganda, it is recommended that the development of LMIS capabilities be phased to direct application by the PES, employers, and universities at each stage.

- ▶ **Develop and implement Stage 1 labour market information.** From the employer's standpoint, Dan Okanya of the FUE explains that there is essentially no timely labour market information system in Uganda, and it is urgently needed.⁸⁷ The most important data to have on a systematic basis is on employment, by sector, industry, and geographic area, that will help the PES target the growing sectors for vacancies and the counsellors to direct jobseekers to the areas of demand. LMIS, if presented methodically, could help training and education to tend towards labour demand and support self-employment programmes, which are often executed with insufficient market information, particularly on a geographic basis.

It is suggested that the PES focus first on employment supply and demand, with the target users being employers, jobseekers, and training providers. Stage 2 labour market information can go further in specific skills and career trends, increasing the user base to educational institutions and a wider training network. There is a distinction between LMIS administrative data – placement rates in the PES, analysis of vacancies and job registration – versus trend data analysing where employment is growing or diminishing across the nation. Administrative data, particularly when PES operations are too small to be indicative of national employment trends in the initial stages, should be directed more to PES performance management systems, not LMIS.

LMIS should be developed with a continuous engagement and promotion activities with the range of users through forums, public information, even news stories, so there is continuous feedback about where to expand the system and where the data is most useful. For this reason, an employment portal should be considered by the PES after perhaps a year of development of the new LMIS.

- ▶ **Establish a DLEOSH national employment portal.** Once the LMIS is operational, a web-based portal, Jobs-Uganda, can serve to make labour market information easily available, and provide a central location for communicating PES activities such as job announcements, seminars, and other services, to the public. It could be on the MGLSD website or, depending on system capacity, an independent site with a link featured prominently on the MGLSD website. In either case, it should have a site name that is easy to remember, such as JobsUganda.gov.

⁸⁷ Interview, 29 February 2020.

In the first stage, existing and reliable online platforms such as the talent register run by the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, should be engaged for co-listing and useful linkages. Gradually, the portal could contain links to the private online sites discussed in [Section 2](#), such as Brighter Monday, in partnership arrangements. Care needs to be taken before establishing these links to ensure that workers are properly treated and that a form of the online service must be free: the government cannot advertise services that require a fee, but it can certainly provide an information base of all the private online services with their fees for higher-level services listed out front, thereby encouraging greater transparency and lower fees to be linked to the government's site.

- ▶ **Initiate labour market studies collaboration and capacity-building.** The first stage of building analytic capabilities within DLEOSH should include (i) assessing existing information and data availability, from governmental and international or local agencies; (ii) identifying immediate gaps in existing information in which the DLEOSH can make a more strategic impact with its LMI; (iii) exploring and undertaking collaboration of joint studies with any key providers, bureau of statistics, universities, the ILO, World Bank, as well as surveys conducted by private employer associations; (iv) beginning initial staff recruitment, or secondments to begin with, of specialized staff.

Select studies conducted by universities that complement the PES initiatives help to build the knowledge base of the DLEOSH and new collaborative partnerships which will stimulate greater visibility for DLEOSH in its role in labour market information. DLEOSH will need to make strategic decisions about which capacities or studies are better contracted out or performed with partner institutions, to make a jump start on analytic capabilities and provide a wider audience for its output. Completed studies, as well as those by outside institutions, can be made available on the portal.

Institutional Development

Stage I targets: internal (MGLSD) institutional restructuring for better service delivery, advances in linkages and capacity-building at local level, expansion of partnerships

- ▶ **Internal restructuring of DLEOSH to carry out first phase of PES modernization**
 - ▶ Create the formal position of director of the National Employment Service, ensuring there are no other competing DLEOSH, non-PES, responsibilities.
 - ▶ Establish position descriptions specifically associated with the PES and its newly designed intake process.
 - ▶ Assign staff to work formally and exclusively for the PES under these position descriptions, including counselling and guidance division staff who are placed officially within PES offices.
 - ▶ Establish clearer lines of collaboration and responsibilities regarding research and statistics or labour market information, counselling, and guidance.
 - ▶ Develop proposals, in line with national legislative processes, for PES modernization, including the separation of employment services and labour administration functions of labour officers.
- ▶ **Working group with local districts and partners on delivering effective local employment services: legal structures, capacity-building, and service delivery.** As discussed in [Section 2](#) and in the scoping mission report, the institutional and legal framework for delivering employment services in local districts has weakened over time as the employment needs have increased. The rural employment services pilot, combined with selected partnerships in Stage 1, are intended to build new examples of effective local, national, and regional collaboration. A more extensive mapping of local providers could support such an initiative.

[Section 2](#) also reviews some decentralized PES models that could work more effectively than the current model in Uganda, which results in virtually no employment services delivered at the local level. As part of the PES modernization and in the context of other legislative proposals to promote employment that are

in process, it is recommended that the DLEOSH lead a working group to develop a wider consensus on the delivery of employment services at the local level. The following activities could be part of Phase 1 of this initiative:

- ▶ orientation training and workshops for local leaders to build capacity, knowledge of PES national modernization, transfer of tools.
 - ▶ mapping exercises of key local districts, if possible, with joint local and MGLSD participation;
 - ▶ expansion of linkage with MGLSD services and use of its online tools;
 - ▶ Immediate supports and linkages established between MGLSD with local districts, with consideration of collaboration with other MGLSD directorates in this outreach;
 - ▶ stakeholder dialogue advanced to propose new frameworks, including those that require legal or regulatory changes, to improve delivery of employment services for local districts.
- ▶ **Staff training and capacity-building programmes developed and provided regularly.** Shared staff training and workshops, exchanges with rural pilot, KCCA, and other key providers to share Ugandan and international best practices.

Stage 2: Key outputs and goals

Employment Services

Stage 2 targets: evolution to a national employment service, expansion of PES offices to rural areas and small cities, reinforcing partnerships with social partners

- ▶ **Extend stronger national PES to smaller cities and rural areas.** Key for Uganda in Stage 2 is for the PES to help support a national jobs market that shares information, vacancies, and training more efficiently between urban and rural markets. This will require the gradual extension of services and office design (both walk-in and mobile) to those areas with the greatest need, with collaborating partners and local district governments. Local models should vary, taking into account the strengths of local partners and local district governments. A national employment service seated in MGLSD and operating with strong partners in key areas would provide the following services:
 - ▶ walk-in offices with mobile services as appropriate;
 - ▶ local access to national vacancy databases, information or databases of vacancies in other Ugandan markets;
 - ▶ referral and recruiting services for training, public works and ALMPs;
 - ▶ workshops and counselling to assist job search and career development.
- ▶ **Evolution to a publicly available online job-matching system.** During late Stage 1, the MGLSD vacancy database should be evolving to a wider range of employers who will list jobs with the service, as well as to a standard **skill classification** that accurately works for employers and jobseekers (tested over time) so that job matching better fits the Ugandan context and is more widely recognized. The PES employment portal should also be co-listing online job listings of private agencies. On this basis, the DLEOSH will decide whether to launch a strategic national online job matching system. Even if it is not online externally, the database run by the PES in Kampala can grant access to select users in local governments, rural areas, and particularly to private employers.
- ▶ **More extensive promotion and branding of PES.**

Associated labour policies and programme

Stage 2 targets: advanced LMIS and employment portal, online job-matching systems

- ▶ **Advanced and systematic linkages between skills development and training for better job placement, including with MGLSD ALMPs.** Building on the partnerships with ALMPs and TVET institutions in Stage 1, the PES would evolve to more systematic relationships with AMLPs. Which model, or more likely models, will be the best to advance in Stage 2 will depend not only on the results of Stage 1, but also where Uganda is institutionally⁸⁸ and economically; whether, for example, key partnerships will give rise to nationally recognized programmes or growing sectors, which, paired with key training institutions, would be able to utilize the PES for major expansion.

The MGLSD will seek to reconfigure its delivery of ALMPs, gender, and social policies to achieve better employment results. Such realignment would presume an expanded role for the PES and DLEOSH. Rather than script what Stage 2 might look like in terms of PES operations with ALMPs, feasible targets for advances in Stage 2 are given below:

- ▶ more streamlined management of currently diverse range of ALMPs throughout the ministry, driven more to job placement goals and outcomes;
- ▶ PES serves as the “entry point” reception for key MGLSD active labour market programmes.
- ▶ **Move to an advanced LMIS** that serves a range of needs for labour market and national data inputs.
- ▶ **Advances in national employment portal.** At a second stage, an employment portal can provide a site for the leading information on employment trends in a nation. When ready for an online job matching platform, the employment portal will have already been a key site for employment information.

Should the MGLSD feel confident of the quality of leading private services, the portals can provide links to major online job services in the country and those of local government services, aiding more information exchange on employment across the nation. In its later stages, training opportunities and announcements of training programmes can be integrated into the portal. Specifically, the training referral service being provided by the PES can be more systematic on the employment portal as well as on university-run programmes.

Institutional development

Stage 2 targets: institutional consolidation of a PES model, advance of service delivery model – national, local and partners

- ▶ **Evolve internal employment services unit into MGLSD-led national public employment service**
 - ▶ More effective service establishing linkages between employment information, connections between rural, urban, and capital city markets (key methods: employment portal, network of partners).
 - ▶ Expand as a clearinghouse of national information on job vacancies, skills development programmes, referral information services for youth.
 - ▶ Major hardware, software, and staff expansion.
- ▶ **Budget requests for substantial PES expansion** can now be made based on a sound platform of services.
- ▶ **Advancement of local district launching of more systematic delivery to local districts.**
- ▶ **Professionalization of employment services staff – public and private.**

⁸⁸ How the Ugandan government, private and educational sectors are configured for labour market policies and national economic strategies, including the extent of centralization and decentralization will affect the most effective way for a PES to advance training and skills policies aligned with job placement.

Stage 2+ to Stage 3: key outputs and goals

Employment services and associated labour policies and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

Phase 2+ targets: greater integration of employment services, ALMPs with more strategic direction towards economic development.

► **Expand PES to a wider national employment service framework**

- ▶ Service executed with national standards but allowing variation for regional economies and local government participation.
- ▶ Service becomes the established national clearinghouse of information on job vacancies, skills development programmes.
- ▶ National centre develops along the lines of a one-stop centre with training space, co-located partnerships, mobile provision of one-stop linkages to rural, smaller urban centres.

► **Advance ALMPs to address skills gaps more strongly.** As skills gaps are so great nationwide, PES will eventually need to move to more skills training and placement programmes to have a more significant impact.

Institutional development

Phase 2+targets: major institutional change, solidify model and supports within the ministry.

► **New institutional model.** In advanced stages, most PES are poised to launch a new institutional model with a strong sustainable source of financing, drawing on evolving partnerships. It is premature to predict what would be the model for Uganda in a later stage. Particularly important will be how advanced Uganda is towards national economic and skills strategies.

► 4.2 Proposed action plan to implement a phased strategy for public employment services modernization in Uganda⁸⁹

The ILO requested that the specific tasks and activities for PES modernization, together with those for PROSPECTS financing, be integrated into an action plan for implementation over a four-year period.

Also included in this action plan are key activities for resource mobilization, both internal and international. If PES modernization in other developing countries is a guide, resource mobilization is directly related to demonstrated success – more resources can be garnered or directed to specific elements of the action plan with visible success.⁹⁰ It affects decisions by governments, multilateral development banks and international donors about the gains from specific investments, what financing is available and when it affects the sequencing of any elements of an action plan.

⁸⁹ The ToR for the consultant in the rapid assessment requests specifically “key action points for PES work in the next four years of the project that should be included in the Project Plans expected by the donor as of 1 March 2020”.

⁹⁰ Fiscal and health crises, of course, can greatly affect the ability to raise resources, irrespective of PES success.

This action plan should be seen to be flexible in nature; it can and should be continually revised to respond to new information about methods to reach workers and firms, changes in the local economy, and the application of best practices garnered from international exchanges and training and staff development in the MGLSD. It was recognized in the meeting of 5 March with DLEOSH Director Mr Wandera that any strategy on the nature of PES and the action plan that accompanies it must be growing and evolving, a strategy that incorporates lessons learned and adapts to yearly changes in the Ugandan economy and labour force, as well as global market forces.

Months 1 to 4: early Stage 1

Key planning, organizational and technical tasks

Planning and organizational tasks

- ▶ **Hold a strategic planning meeting.** It should be held as early as possible, in months 1 or 2. The planning meeting would include the ILO and other relevant external experts.
- ▶ **Initiate key internal assessments and plans and assign an internal team.** As described under each category, the modernization of Uganda's PES will require an active planning and execution process so that innovations are properly phased in, outreach to employers is accomplished, based on tangible improved services ready to be delivered, and lessons learned are quickly incorporated into the modernization, with needed course correction including those to mirror changes in the economy. The COVID-19 global crisis has made it clear how quickly employment conditions can change; recovery from the crisis will require new types of vigilance. It is suggested that a small task force based and led from the Internal Employment Services Department be created, to include at least one representative from the research and statistics and counselling departments. It is also suggested that there be regular private sector and trade union consultations, as their buy-in and suggestions will be critical in keeping the new PES of relevance to its principal users.

Employment services

- ▶ **Design a systematic intake process and the standard formats for a computer-based registry of vacancies and jobseeker profiles.** Included should be an internal step-by-step procedural manual, detailing which staff member does what and when (by the middle of Month Two). The format should be tried out for more than two months, with a final version standardized and implemented. The formats should foresee a section B, should a single employer require more job-specific information on skills or education.
- ▶ **Reconfigure existing office space** to provide a clear waiting area with informational signs and a reception and information point. Ensure adequate equipment for staff. If COVID-19 restrictions are still in place, videoconferences can be used for interviews, and online appointments to eliminate jobseekers waiting in hallways.
- ▶ Once designed, the new **intake process should be applied to vacancies** by months Three to Four.

Associated labour policy and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

- ▶ **Comprehensive review of data availability in labour market information sources, as well as online services.** This assessment of both government and non-governmental data sources is needed to identify: i) the key data gaps where the MGLSD/DLEOSH system is needed to fill a market niche; ii) reliable information that could be consolidated or made available to the public through an MGLSD system; iii) which partners, such as FUE, are ready to start collaborating with MGLSD to give an LMIS a jump start. The review should assess the human resources and budgets needed to maintain the system, the preferences for contracting out, and the design features to be built in stages.

- ▶ **Identification and temporary transfer of personnel to augment internal employment division.** Modernization will not be possible without staff increases, but measures will have to be made in the short term. The value of increasing personnel will need to be demonstrated by identifying MGLSD staff who can be transferred temporarily to the Employment Services Division, the assignment of potentially new youth volunteers, and requesting secondments from donor PES (MGLSD).

Months 4 to 18: Stage 1

Key operational, organizational, and technical tasks

Employment services

- ▶ **Full implementation of systematic intake process for vacancies and jobseekers.** A process of periodic review and follow-up with employers should be introduced to refine the intake process. This includes developing and implementing a specialized staff training module on the use of new intake process and computerized job matching. During months 12 to 18 the module can be placed online, or one-to-one short training for new staff can be developed.
- ▶ **Renovate physical offices at MGLSD for walk-in services of new PES.** A plan for a formal reopening of the improved Stage 1 service should include larger office space within the MGLSD, with an easier walk-in capacity for jobseekers, a more active lobby with information on a range of resources, chairs in the waiting room, and equipment for each of the staff. This can be delayed to coordinate with conditions under COVID-19.
- ▶ **PES performance management system – Phase 1.** Set targets and increase the number of private sector employers and vacancies listed with Uganda PES, align staff goals and processes to achieve them.
- ▶ **Identify and initiate partnerships** (one or two to start), particularly with the private sector as a foundation for increasing vacancies and specialized services to employers. Key possibilities to consider are existing business organizations, to achieve a wider presence with employers such as the Uganda Manufacturer's Association, FUE, USSIA. Partnerships can start as simple presentations, or on-site services during association meetings.

Months 8 to 16

- ▶ **Redesign plan for PES at MGLSD** (months 8 to 12). Design a plan for a more efficient service delivered at the MGLSD offices, including a defined reception area, bank of computers, equipment, and staffing needs.
- ▶ **Opening of re-designed walk-in service offices at MGLSD** (months 12+). Consideration should be given to including a bank of computers that permit online job search by walk-in users as well as sign-up for individual counselling sessions. Ability for self-registry of jobseekers should be considered.
- ▶ **ILO capacity-building support programme** developed to deliver on-site training to staff (including local employment services pilot and non-profit private services) and incorporate leading staff in ILO training in Turin and Geneva as appropriate to system development.

Associated labour policies and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

- ▶ **Identification of key ALMPs with referral needs for pilot partnership** (months 6 to 8, implementation months 8 to 18). One ALMP needing placement support or screening candidates for enrolment should be sought for a pilot partnership, moving to further partnerships using the model developed with a systematic evaluation and assessment process.
- ▶ **Mapping exercise of key training programmes and design of training referral database.**

- ▶ **Identify and initiate key partnership on ALMPs.** Partnerships to deliver ALMP with placement supports should be considered, as outlined in Stage 1 targets. Key possibilities to consider are existing business organizations, to achieve a wider presence with employers such as Uganda Manufacturer's Association, FUE, USSIA. Partnerships can start as simple as presentations, or on-site services during association meetings.
- ▶ **Design and rollout of employment portal.** The launching of the employment portal should be accompanied by an outreach and promotion plan in Kampala and secondary cities.
- ▶ **Rollout of specialized PES services.**

Institutional development

- ▶ **Regular advancement of technical knowledge for staff through international partnerships and forums** (continuous Stages 1 and 2).

Participation in the WAPES Forum, Tunisia, 25–26 June 2020, Rethinking the Role of Human Resources in the Digital Age for the Development of PES. As part of any WAPES forum, MGLSD attendees would also tour the employment services offices of ANETI, the National Employment Agency and Self-Employment of Tunisia. Tunisia has specialized youth PES centres which may be of particular interest to the MGLSD (<http://wapes.org/en/events>).

- ▶ **Human resources plan – MGLSD.** A human resource staffing plan to accompany the development of all components of the PES modernization is critical to achieve implementation benchmarks for each stage. The plan should have: i) short-term quick start-up staffing targets through reassignment, transfer within the MGLSD, secondments from international donors, international PES, short-term technical assistance; ii) medium-term planning for consultant and staff positions; iii) provision for complementary local government support in terms of positions and assigned staff in later stages with expansion of the PES.
- ▶ **Development of LMIS plan and regular outputs of system.** Agreement on phased output (for example, reports, online data availability, regular quarterly LM reports).
- ▶ **Initiate staff training with ILO support** in areas of employment counselling and guidance functions, based on new intake process, counselling, guidance and labour market information. Expand training and learning conducted through international exchange.
- ▶ **Specialized staff training to implement new intake process, use computerized job matching.**
- ▶ **Development of budget and planning for Stage 2, including assessment of equipment, facilities and staff needs.** This will include proposals for increased staffing of services and the development of a one-stop services centre, starting in Kampala.
- ▶ **Target one secondary city for pilot or key sector for expansion of services.** Assessing where the most promising area is for job or vacancy growth, the MGLSD would seek to expand the provision of employment services, either to sectoral employment growth (such as the oil and gas sector, a key city with an active host government in tourism, and so on).

Months 18 to 30: advanced Stage 1 to Stage 2

Key operational, institutional tasks

Planning

- ▶ **Redesign plan for Kampala-based PES**
- ▶ **Design of expansion of PES to rural areas and small cities**

Employment services

- ▶ **Establish a more full-service MGLSD centre.** It is hoped that the growing PES will outgrow its physical facilities at the MGLSD, upon which a new location, more central for walk-in users, or a major renovation of the existing facilities, would support expanded and more efficient operations. Important features would be a bank of computers for jobseekers to use, a room for job training and on-site interviews, as well as the potential co-location of partner organizations offering ALMPs to jobseekers.
- ▶ **Expansion of coverage throughout Kampala via satellite and extension services.** A single office in a large city may require supplementary or temporary additional sites.
- ▶ **Systematization of results from rural PES pilot and initiation of one to five additional rural centres.**
- ▶ **Evolution to an online national job-matching system and/or mobile-friendly PES app.**
- ▶ **Initiate and implement partnerships with key universities for enhanced placement and career guidance services.**
- ▶ **Introduce select and mobile services for rural areas.**
- ▶ **Develop a staff performance system.**

Associated labour policies and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

- ▶ **Advancement of regional training process to involve partners, local governments, to enhance development of network.** Regular staff training with modules adapted to skill needs for employment services.

Institutional development

- ▶ **Planning for evolution of rural areas, consolidate and expand national service based on assessment of Phase 1 strategy and economic developments.**

Months 30 to 48: advanced Stage 2 to Stage 2+

Key operational, institutional tasks

Planning

- ▶ **Expanded national PES institutional design with resource mobilization strategy.**

Employment services

- ▶ **MGLSD centre evolves further into a client-friendly one-stop centre in Kampala** with co-location of partners and key ALMPs.
- ▶ **Evolution to an online national job matching system and/or mobile-friendly PES app.**
- ▶ **Institute PES services on a client-management basis.**
- ▶ **Initiate and implement partnerships with key universities for enhanced placement and career guidance services.**
- ▶ **Introduce select and mobile services for rural areas.**

Associated labour policies and programmes: ALMPs, LMIS

- ▶ **Advancement of regional training process to involve partners, local governments, to enhance development of network.** Regular staff training with modules adapted to skill needs for employment services.

Institutional development

- ▶ **Advanced professionalization of employment services staff – public and private (Stage 2+).** At an advanced stage, the MGLSD would be moving from ministry-led training and support services, in collaboration with the ILO and international supports, to institutionalizing the profession of employment counselling with key universities, such as the Makerere University. At this stage, the expectation would be professional guidance and employment services staff moving between local employment services and the public and private sectors.

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► Key interviews and consultations

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