

REFUGEE ENGAGEMENT FORUM (REF)

The 21st REF Meeting Report:

REF Meeting happening from 18th – 20th Sept 2024 at Silver Springs Hotel in Bugolobi, Kampala-Uganda.

Day 1: 18th Sept. 2024

Session I title: Self-introduction and Opening remarks

Session time: 0935hr-0950hr

Session Objective: To bring the house to order and know each other.

Presenter name and organization: Ms. Milly Lagu-REF member.

The meeting was opened with a word of prayer led by a volunteer REF member (Pasquale-RWC III C/P Lamwo). Thereafter, the participants introduced themselves by name, position, and settlement/organization. They also hinted on what they like for instance sharing ideas, socializing, meeting new friends, stress management, learning new things, gospel music, teamwork, networking, advocacy, sharing experiences, consultation, peaceful coexistence.

The REF members then suggested the house rules such as having mobile phones on silence, good time management, active participation, one meeting, equal participation, respecting one's opinion, every answer is correct

Ms. Teddy - REF co-chair (CRRF/OPM)

- Welcomed all the participants for the meeting especially the new members who have just joined from Bidibidi, and Kiryandongo refugee settlements. She then spearheaded the introduction of the partners present (U-Learn, UNHCR, GIZ, OPM)
- She also thanked the REF members from Bidibidi Refugee Settlement for being part of the organizing Committee that led to the Successful REF and DEF interface meeting that was hosted by Yumbe District Local Government
- She also informed that the Task Team Coordinated by CRRF Secretariat will organize for the DRF and REF Interface for the Southwestern Uganda after the 22nd SG

Session II title: Opening remarks from Ms. Agnes – DoR/OPM

Session time: 10:15-11:00am

Session Objective: To officially welcome and open the meeting

Key points presented:

- Welcomed all the participants to the 21st REF meeting, and expressed her gratitude for being part of the REF
- Informed the meeting that Uganda refugee policy prioritizes self-reliance and resilience of the refugees and hence urged them to encourage their community members to embrace the various initiatives on becoming self-reliance.
- She expressed her gratitude on the increasing number of women in leadership from the different settlements indicating active women empowerment. She emphasized the need for cohesion and peaceful coexistence between the refugees and the host community members as this promotes the peaceful sharing of the resources in those communities.
- She stated that though the mission is challenging, it is fulfilling at the same time. Therefore, she encouraged the leaders to actively participate in the discussions to find durable solutions for the challenges facing refugees in Uganda.

Julian Ateeme- UNHCR

- Acknowledged the presence of the partners and leaders during the event and expressed her gratitude to them all for making the 21st Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) happen. Informed the leaders that because the REF TF values their feedback, the venue of the meeting is much better compared to the one for 20th REF.
- Thanked the refugee leaders for ably representing their communities and shared some of her experiences on the journey of the Refugee Engagement Forum in Uganda from its inception to roundtable discussions that are exhibited currently by the REF members. She acknowledged that there is a marked positive change in how REF members present issues and advocate for their communities.
- Emphasized that the issues discussed do not stop at the REF but goes far and beyond to inform policy making decisions.

Session III title: Action points and key decisions from previous CRRF SG meeting

Session time: 11:00am- 11:22am

Session Objective: To review progress against action points from the 21st CRRF SG meeting held in April 2024

Presenter name and organization: Teddy-CRRF Secretariat

SN	SG Decision	Progress on Implementation
1)	The 20th SG Minutes were adopted with no amendments	Minutes of the 20th Signed by SG Chair
2)	Escalate Decisions from the Steering Group meetings to higher Political level to draw more attention to Refugee Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-ministerial meeting Scheduled for 17th September 2024, to be chaired by the 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African affairs • High level National Partnership Forum with a focus on Refugees is scheduled for November 2024, to be chaired by the Rt. Hon Prime Minister
3)	CRRF Secretariat to roll out consultations on developing the Strategic Direction	Work in progress. Some stakeholders have been involved in discussions on SD pillars and engagement on inclusion of refugee issues in the NDPIV process
4)	Follow up GRF implementation with MDAs and Partners and develop a pledge tracking tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRRF Secretariat developed and shared the GRF Pledge tracking tool with all pledging Entities • CRRF Secretariat and UNHCR have undertaken bilateral engagements with pledging entities to further analyze the Pledges (Where and how pledges will be focused) • Development of Transition Strategy is on course. ECASA consultants have been hired. • Under MOLG, Localization field engagements undertaken, and national stakeholder GRF feedback meeting planned
5)	REF pledged to plant 7.5 m trees but lacked land	Discussions between REF and DEF on how to achieve this pledge are ongoing
6)	Uganda's progressive Refugee policies of hosting refugees which should be well articulated in the NDP4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDAs in charge of GRF pledges and Response Plans have participated in the NDP4 Program Working Groups
7)	Organize REF/DEF interface engagements to enhance coordination and Mutual coexistence of Refugees and Host communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress. First phase of West Nile took place in the week of 10th-11th September 2024 • Second phase of Interface engagements for south and Midwest to take place after 22nd SG (Date will be communicated) • A detailed report to be presented at the 22nd SG under the SG Agenda

Suggestions from the REF members.

- Refugee youth representatives request that all REF youth representatives from the 13 settlements be allowed to participate in all the quarterly REF meetings not on rotational basis as is being practiced.

Session IV title: Highlights of the 22nd SG meeting Agenda and progress since the last SG

Session time: 11:22am- 11:35am

Session Objective: To provide key highlights on the 22nd SG Meeting Agenda and progress since the last SG

Presenter name and organization: Teddy-CRRF Secretariat

Key highlights on the 22nd SG meeting Agenda focused on International responsibility sharing and sustainable solutions which covered areas of post GRF expectations and upcoming events, tracking and analysis of 2023 GRF pledges by government and partners, progress updates on the Refugee Response Plan implementation, Fostering Peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities, update on the development of the Draft National Refugee Policy, and highlights on the planned Nov.2024 high level National Partnership Forum on refugees.

Session V title: Key takeaways and action points from the previous REF meeting – review.

Session time: 12:00pm- 1:30pm

Session Objective: To provide status updates on the implementation of the key takeaways and action points from the 20th REF meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Brian Matsiko-Ulearn

Key points presented.

NO	Action Point	Responsibility	Progress /Update
20th REF Meeting- 17th-19th April 2024.			
1	CRRF Secretariat to plan for 2 DEF and REF interface in the field sites geared towards sharing on opportunities and collaborations between the	CRRF secretariat	One REF-DEF interface was conducted in West Nile for West Nile and North. It was more practical, and discussions were based on the findings from the joint monitoring field visits. It was beneficial. The team that went to Obongi visited two RLOs. District were able to confirm the number of

	<p>two structures. The field meeting will give room for a joint monitoring exercise</p>		<p>trees planted. Palorinya so far planted 500 tree seedlings and received more 300 tree seedlings. Discussions were focused on land.</p> <p>Yumbe: visited health center which was transited to the government. There was a gap of refugees challenged when it comes to accessing employment. In the farmer block-farming, there was challenge of peaceful coexistence evidenced by the separate farmer groups for refugees and host communities. Still on the block farm, the landlords took 80 acres of land back. Need to expand the youth activities (SINALOKETA) in other settlements.</p> <p>Visited a woodlot planted and maintained by the refugees and host communities. The refugees are deriving very little support from the woodlots (only when the trees are pruned in terms of firewood). Need to have exchange visits for people to learn from other settlements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sites selected were in the improved sites. Presentations were done by the partners not refugees (opportunity should be given to the project participants to talk about their projects) - Funding challenge was identified in the women group visited. - More time reactions on the findings from the field, allow more time for interactions on the issues identified at the field. - Agreed to involve the district leaders on the land arrangements, - Tracking the pledges especially the trees planted is challenging. The REF members to work with the leaders on the ground to track the implementation of the GRF pledges, - Include as an agenda item presentation on the GRF pledges at settlement level. Create awareness on the need for the local leaders to track the GRF pledges. <p>Responses from the OPM- CRRF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On the facilitation, she clarified that if you are the host, you cannot receive facilitations.
--	---	--	--

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraged the REF members from Southwest to encourage the community members to actively participate in the presentation.
2	Continuous lobbying by UNHCR at the steering group meeting for support to livelihood partners that can support REF members achieve the Refugee pledges.	UNHCR & CRRF Secretariat.	<u>This is an ongoing initiative.</u>
3	REF members to share with the community information regarding the health referral processes to enable community members meet their planned schedules.	REF Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>More</u> fuel to be given to the health partners to facilitate the movement of the ambulances. - <u>Cold cases are not paid attention to by the health partners.</u> - <u>There</u> are issues of attitudes from the partner staff.
4	UNHCR, CRRF secretariat and REF taskforce to meet with RSEAT on discussions regarding the REF funding gap and required support.	UNHCR, CRRF Secretariat & Taskforce.	This was done, and RSEAT was requested to channel their support to the REF instead of initiating something different.
5	CRRF Secretariat to present on GRF matching pledges during the next REF	CRRF Secretariat, UNHCR	
6	REF members to champion community mindset change towards self-reliance and resilience.	REF members.	This is an ongoing process. The REF members will continue to champion community mindset change towards self-reliance and resilience.
7	The umbrella water system operators to improve visibility within communities and respond to community concerns.	Ministry of Water and Environment, GIZ and Northern Umbrella.	Northern Umbrella has established an office in Bidibidi. Transition of some of the water systems is still on process. The staff of Northern Umbrella are not visible on the ground (particularly in the West Nile settlements).

			<p>There is still water challenges across the West Nile settlements. Bidibidi team to find out more information in relation to the activities of Umbrella. Reported delays by northern Umbrella to connect the refugee HHs after collecting money from them.</p> <p><u>Responses- by GIZ</u></p> <p>- whereas northern umbrella is not visible, they have an agreement with Water Mission for operation in settlements meaning, in the settlements where Water Mission Uganda operates, it's the same as Northern Umbrella. The delays in connecting the refugee households is because they first need to have more people registered for connection for them to connect them once to minimize costs.</p>
8	To enhance participation of refugees in annual and strategic planning processes.	GIZ	
9	Plan for visibility of new REF members to support identification and representation.	U-LEARN	This is ongoing. Continuous lobbying is being done to streamline this with the election of new REF members.
10	REF members to sensitize community on the cash prioritization category appeals process.	REF members	This was done across the various settlements but there is need for continuous engagement of the community by the REF members to create more awareness on the cash prioritization.

Session VI title: Progress updates on Refugee Response Plan Implementation

Session time: 2:42pm-3:50pm

Session Objective: To provide updates on the Refugee Response Plan Implementation (Education response plan II, Health Integrated Response Plan, sustainable Energy Response Plan, Jobs and livelihoods response plan, water and environment)

Presenter name and organization: Dr Michael Kibule- Ministry of Health

Key points presented

- Started by thanking the REF members for turning up and requested them to introduce themselves by names/title/address,
- Following the largest refugee influx in 2016 in Uganda's history, the Uganda Government decided to bridge service delivery gaps by developing Refugee Response plans (RRP) with the rationale of resource mobilization, frameworks for partner alignment, tools for financing tracking, and overall purpose for refugee welfare and dignity.
- Highlighted on the RRP development timelines: 2018-ERP1, 2019-HIRP, 2021-WESRRP, 2022-JIRP, ERP2 and SERP.
- The expectations by then were smooth Humanitarian to development transition, on-budget financing, Alignment of partners to RRP, and
- Uganda is a world model when it comes to refugee response with more than 1.5 million refugees
- Hinted that he was happy when he found the leaders talking about self-reliance and resilience.
- The presentation covers sector update on Education, health, gender, Water and environment,
- Gave a brief background of how the Refugee Response Plan came into place.
- The response plan is to aid smooth transition management from Humanitarian owned to Government owned.

Observations/constraints from the funding Analysis

- ERP 2 is almost ending, but at only 24% funding status
- JLIRP ending with almost zero funding
- Government financing in ERP2 and HIRP is majorly capitation grants to schools and PHC grants to Health facilities
- Government financing in ERP2 and HIRP provides for coding of schools and health facilities-Gov't approaches to transition
- Donor funding is commendable but inadequate. On the other hand, government funding is through loans from World Bank, a signal of shifting responsibility to Uganda

Key Asks

- Call for funding of the refugee response plans,
- Calls for OPM to require partners in MoUs to align interventions to RRP and GRF thematic areas.
- Need for sustainability and exit plans to mitigate transition challenges

Issues from the REF members

- **On coding the schools.** How can the government support in ensuring that the schools are properly coded and not abandoned?
- What happens when one is asked to pay 15 million to access treatment outside the country? Where do refugees get the money?
- Thanked the government for all the supports

- Need for electricity extension to the settlements which can address the energy challenges
- On Education: differences in the grading system, how do the refugees get support to equate their papers. The age limit also hinders some refugees from going back to school. Extend study centers to the refugee settlements to improve on meaningful access,
- Water shortages across the settlements- implication on the refugees- Some areas in Nakivale has stayed for 3 months without water.
- Involvement of the refugees in the planning process,
- In Kyaka II, some of the health facilities transitioned to Gov't at the standard of H/C IV, have not standby generators and yet they do minor operations,
- Issues of scheduling the health referral where the cold cases are put on hold for so long because of fuel shortage
- Need for the Health partners in the settlement and those at the national referral level to work together to ensure that they improve on the way services are delivered.
-

Responses from DR. Michael/Michael Ayimasibe/Peter N

- UNHCR to task the implementing partners to offer service at a particular level
- H/C IV is ideally a community health center, and it is true that the structures are in sorry state
- The government has procured some ambulances, but they are not enough because of the funding challenges,
- Acknowledges that there are some health services which require advanced tertiary care even for Ugandans. Services which require millions of shillings. However, there is a system for the refugees (referral) which is handled by AHA
- Under the energy response plan, there is a plan to extend electricity to all refugee settlements and there are also initiatives to promote clean cooking
- The Ministry of water and energy is working on the Kagera water system which will help to provide sustainable water supply.
- On the education grading system, there is a move to establish a bias system that would favour the refugees
- On the coding of the schools, the government policies may not work with circumstances, but it is on guiding policies
- Urged the leaders to write some minority paper through the structures which can be discussed at ministerial level.
- Tentatively, it has been agreed by the partners and gov't to use the Ambulances to transport dead bodies to the settlement.
- Postmortem is part of care and is supposed to be done whether the owners of the dead body agree or not. There are people who are health workers but do not have the skills and mandate to carry out postmortem

UNHCR

- On grading, this is done according to the set standards already in place in the various countries. Urged the REF members to adjust to the policies.
- On the schools and ECDs left by the partners- the UNHCR and partners initially opened these as a protection tool but as the community stabilizes, and the reduction in the fundings, these places are handed over to the community. The education partners to have in place an exit plan,
- Health bills- she urged the REF members to tell the Dr. to document the bill and then share it with UNHCR, and the health partner at the settlements.
- Urged the REF members to encourage their community members to hold onto the originals of their health documents
- In case they have not been supported by the partner, let them report to the UNHCR for further support.

Action points

- UNHCR to Organize health training for the REF members in the next REF meeting
- REF members to Encourage community members to embrace change and adjust accordingly,
- OPM to require partners in MoUs to align interventions to RRPss and GRF thematic areas.

Session VII title: Formulation of Key messages to the SG

Session time: 3:50pm- 5:45pm

Session Objective: To guide the REF members in generating the key talking points and messages for the CRRF SG

Presenter name and organization: Mathew -Ulearn & Jerry-UNHCR

Key points presented

- The REF members agreed on the underlisted as they key messages which informed their presentation at the CRRF SG on the 19th Sept.2024. These were highlighted according to the Sectors as below.

Education

Issue

- Overcrowding in schools, few classrooms, high pupil to teacher and desk ratio. There has been a significant reduction in the number of teaching assistants.

- **Example:** Kyangwali Primary School, Lokopio Primary School in Yumbe, Bidibidi, both over 1500 learners but with only about 20 teachers, 6 classroom blocks and a limited number of desks.
- The current age limit for admission into vocational training is 35 years and below. Most of the bread winners in refugee settlements are above 35 years; this cuts molarity of the refugees out of the skills training programs, thereby hindering their self-reliance.
- The duration of the vocational skills training run by NGOs are below 3 months, in most cases from our observation, the participants are not able to effectively deliver in the training areas, their level of proficiency is low.

Prayer

- The Development Partners and Government of Uganda should provide support to the schools facing the challenges highlighted. Construction of classrooms, recruitment of teachers and teaching assistants, procuring desk and other study equipment.
- Revising the age limit for vocational training from 35 to 45 years and increasing the duration of the training to at least a minimum of 6 months.

Health

Issue

- Inadequate medical supplies, staffing equipment and infrastructures (including accommodation for the staff) to serve the catchment populations. **Example:** Yayari Health Centre III in Bidibidi, they have only 14 technical staff for over 25,000 people.

Prayer

- Increases funding to the health sector for recruitment of staff in the already burdened refugee hosting health centers, equipment and medical supplies.

Water and Environment

Issue

- Inadequate access to land to refugees for tree planting and crop production, which affects the implementation of pledges on self-reliance and the planting and growing of the 7.5 million trees.

Prayer

- Improved access to land for crop production and tree planting and growing.

Jobs and livelihood

Issues

- Limited funding for Jobs and Livelihood SRP, this plan would enhance refugee self-reliance.

- There are several qualified refugee personnel who can serve in the various sectors but have limited access to employment opportunities especially in public institutions.

Prayer

- Prayer to both GoU and Development Partners for increased funding to the SRP to enhance the fulfillment of the refugee commitment on self-reliance.

Session VIII title: Election of Woman Representative to the SG

Session time: 5:45pm- 6:30pm

Session Objective: To elect the woman representative to the CRRF SG

Presenter name and organization: Julian Ateme-UNHCR

Key points presented

- Shared the rules and regulations regarding the election,
- Urged those elected not to run away
- The participants then nominated three women leaders for the positions, and these included: 1). Sandrine Sirwuka, 2). Anna Isimbua, and 3). Sandra Nsimire. The others stepped down for Sandra Nsimire, who was unanimously seconded by the house.
-

Day 2: 19th. Sept. 2024

Session I title: Feedback Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM) – V3

Session time: 0900hr-11: 25hr

Session Objective: To orient the REF team to the FRRM- V3.

Presenter name and organization: Ms. Achika Abigail, Madhan.

Key points presented

- Welcomed the team to the meeting and introduced the team that came with her to deliver the presentation. Went ahead to form groups for the participants.

- Took the participants through the basic understanding of FRRM. It's a toll-free number with no charges which allows callers to speak in their own language and get feedback.
- There are different mechanisms of communication with FRRM that include community structures, protection desks, Help page, Email, toll feedline and Suggestion boxes.
- Shared some benefits of the Helpline such as enhance integrity and accountability, diversity of languages inclusion, amplify the refugee voice, access to reliable information, affordable to user, and it is inclusive with 38 languages, and over 800 focal persons,
- Systematic call categorization from request for information to sensitive life threatening/ security related cases.
- FRRM V3 engagement roll-out: through the Protection desks, partners, help line, and protection staff amongst others. The FRRM V3 has enhanced features like technical enhancements which meet today's business needs, enhanced security and access controls and enhanced case management features.
- The leaders in the group had a practical session on how to register complaint/feedback on the system using the FRRM V3 app.

Action points:

- The FRRM team conducts field awareness activities on the FRRM V3 in the various settlements before rolling it up.

Session II title: Accountability to affected Populations

Session time: 1140hr-1243hr

Session Objective: Introduce members to the AAP core concepts.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Mathew Okot- Ulearn

Key points presented.

- **The REF members expressed their understandings of Accountability to affected persons (AAP) as:** Amplifying refugee voice, Evidence of what has been done, Inclusion of refugees, and active commitment by actors to meet the needs of the affected populations.
- They brainstormed on the causes of power imbalance in the community as: Resources, Access to information, and Decision making.
- AAP is defined as “an active commitment to use power responsibly, taking account, giving account and being held accountable by key stakeholders primarily those we seek to serve”.

- Ways the REF members as community leaders practice Accountability to affected persons, and how they are held accountable by the community members they lead?
- The enabling factors for Accountability to affected persons such as the attitude, the availability of resource (materials & personnel).

Issues raised by the REF members:

1. Material support to do communal work.
2. Partners working without involving RWC's.

Action point:

- REF members to provide avenues in their communities for their community members to provide feedback on their work.

Session III title: MSNA and Climate ABA.

Session time: 12:43hr-13:20hr

Session Objective: to familiarize the REF members with the process of the Multi sectoral Needs Assessment and Climate ABA.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Theodore Jaspers- Ulearn (IMPACT)

Key points presented

- MSNA is a large scale and comprehensive assessment that aims to estimate the pervyance and severity of sectoral and humanitarian needs, to inform humanitarian decision making.
- MNSA is done to inform prioritization and targeting of humanitarian aid, and to compare status of humanitarian needs.

Feedback from the REF members

- Gaps in the recruitment process for enumerators.
- Involvement of the leaders in the activities was not handled properly.
- When will the findings be shared for people to receive feedback? *On this, the leaders were informed that early November 2024, the team expects to have preliminary results which will be reviewed and then disseminated to the various stakeholders.*

Session IV title: Presentation by Learning Hub

Session time: 1435hr-15:00 hr

Session Objective: to create awareness on what the Learning Hub does.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Sanad- Ulearn (Learning Hub)

- Desk review on climate smart agriculture approaches used in Uganda refugee response.
- Challenge mapping on how to increase agriculture outputs of smallholder farmers through CSA.
- Digital visualization of climate actors working in Uganda refugee response.

Response.

1. What is the intended result of SLAM.

Session V title: Feedback from the 22nd CRRF SG held on the 19th Sept.2024

Session time: 15:00hr- 15:30hrs

Session Objective: To provide feedback and updates to the REF members on the discussions from the 22nd CRRF SG.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Peter Gift and Sandra Simire.- the CRRF SG representatives

Key points presented.

- The male rep to the CRRF SG started by informing the meeting that the CRRF SG meeting started with the adoption of the previous meeting that was followed by accepting IGAD as a member of the Steering Group.
- The current population of refugees in Uganda is standing at 1.7million and is expected to hit 2 million by Dec 2024 because of the continuous influx of refugees from South Sudan and DRC due to the ongoing insurgencies in those countries. “Every day for the last 3 years, Uganda receives 100 new arrivals”, stated the UNHCR Country Rep.
- The CRRF was tasked to develop a tracker of all resources that come into the refugee response.
- Calls to the local governments to strengthen the existing peaceful coexistence among the refugees and between the host communities and the refugees,
 - Call for the refugees to abide by the law as they are hosted in Uganda while in Uganda
 - Call on UNHCR to open up access center for refugees within Kamapala to facilitate them in accessing services and to address some of the issues coming from the refugees.
 - Call for durable solutions to some of the refugees who have been in Uganda for almost 20 years. There is a need to find alternative ways of supporting this category. The better option is to integrate these refugees in the host communities.

- The Uganda called upon to support the response in consideration of sustainable approaches and different Parth ways for the refugee response.
- On the GRF 2023, it is noted that most of the pledges are not coordinated, and hence there is need to develop tools for tracking the achievement of these pledges
- There is great progress in self-reliance initiatives across the refugee response. WFP has supported the process of self-reliance leading to the realization of the national indicators.
- On durable solutions for refugees, the CRRF SG urged government to engage the various countries of origins so as to allow safe returns of the refugees.
- Currently, more than 3800 refugees have been granted Conventional Travel Documents (CTDs) which permits them to travel outside Uganda but to the country of origins. This has made them improve their livelihoods.
- Funding is still a challenge with only 17% of the funding received in the 2nd quarter.

Session VI title : Consultation on Localization:

Session time: 1535hr-17:35hr

Session Objective: To generate ideas from the REF members on what they think about localization (focusing on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats)

Presenter name and organization: Racheal Mayer- BHC

The facilitator started by thanking the REF members for working closely with the BHC. Informed them that the BHC has supported the refugee work through the ULEARN project in the last 5 years and they are currently in a consultation process to inform their planned next 5 years intervention on the different they can focus on. The REF members in four five groups discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Localizing the refugee response in Uganda with a special focus on Community-based organizations (CBOs) and Refugee lead Organizations (RLOs). They then made presentations which informed further discussions.

Responses from the REF members- Group presentations

Strength: They cited easy accessibility of services, availability of local resources, and better or improved delivery of services to the communities as some of the strengths of Localization.

Weaknesses: They cited inadequate knowledge, limited capacity, nepotism, limited funding, poor documentation and record keeping, poor systems, and poor coordination as the major weaknesses of localizing the refugee response.

Opportunities: The group that presented on opportunities identified capacity building opportunities, improved access to job opportunities, Inclusiveness, Community development, Networking, Volunteerism, Community involvement in solving their problems, Access to resources, and Advocacy and influence as major opportunities offered by localization.

Threats: However, they identified too many registration requirements, Dependency on external aid, lack of trustworthiness, Organization composition (family based), inadequate academic qualifications, lack of peaceful co-existence amongst others as the major threats to localizing the refugee response in Uganda.

Conclusion:

The REF rep to the CRRF thanked the BHC for facilitating the REF for the five years and prayed that if it's in their capacity they should continue supporting. He continued by encouraging CBOs to work in a consortium with the bigger organizations for them to learn and their capacities.

Day 3: 20th Sept. 2024

Session I title: Recap of day 2

Session time: 08:35-09:00am

Session Objective: To recap on the discussions from day 2

Presenter name and organization: REF member

Key issues from the REF members

- Inquired on the airtime to the REF members,
- New REF members do not have visibility (jackets and T-shirts).

Session II title: Presentation on the REF presenter's guide

Session time: 09:00am-10:27am

Session Objective: To empower the REF members to conduct community feedback & consultation meetings in their settlements

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Brian Matsiko- Ulearn

Key points presented

- Brief background on the Refugee Engagement forum (REF) which is an initiative to operationalize the commitments of the Global Compact for Refugees
- The composition of the REF Taskforce (chaired by OPM and co-chaired by UNHCR). The members include ULEARN, GIZ, (Oxfam), NRC, CARE, and we highly appreciate them for directly supporting in the convening of this meeting and making it a success.
- REF feedback cycle
- Why does the REF matters?
- The Composition of the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF)
- Summary of how to conduct community feedback and consultation meetings starting from Self-introduction to session overview (agenda)

Action points

- **REF members to** on timely basis organize REF community feedback and consultation meetings. Ensure the participants are representative enough.
- **REF members to** popularize the refugee GRF pledges, and work with their communities to meet these pledges,

Session III title: Localization agenda-feedback from field consultation

Session time: 10:27am-11:00am

Session Objective: To introduce the REF members to the localization agenda and disseminate feedback from the field consultations on localization,

Presenter name and organization: Sentamu JB- OPM/DoR

Key points presented

- Origin of localization which is traced back to the engagement in Turkey
- The Grant Bargain which focused on bring onboard the national actors/local actors for them to be part of the intervention since they understand the local environment better than the international actors. Localization is aiming at promoting a sustainable operation (humanitarian)
- Aim to make more efficient, and effective in the response,
- Refugees who have started refugee led organizations can benefit from the localization agenda.
- Some of the challenges affecting the refugee led organization (documentation, networking, inadequate capacity, funding challenge)- lack of human resource capacity, lack of donation requirements (the academic qualification of the staff), lack of financial resources, many refugee led organizations but without address (most of the RLOs are at HH level), apathy-not knowing how to make the others people know about them), mistrust (fear that the refugees might run back to the countries of origin), - the REF members agreed with the challenges

Solutions (suggested by REF members)- the REF members suggested the under listed solutions to the localization challenges. These include: -

- RLOs to be inclusive and apply diversity in their staffing,
- RLOs to open websites and share widely
- RLOs to use the existing community structures that were built by partners who have already exited
- Promote the spirit of voluntarisms in the refugee communities
- Include the host communities in the staffing to bridge the skills gaps
- Partner with the international organizations who will also help in further building the capacity of the RLOs,
- Encourage the RLOs to work in consortium as this encourages learning from each other and sharing experiences
- Address the mindset that it is a business entity and adopt the humanitarian perspective,

- Build capacity of the RLOs in developing proposals,
- Conduct mapping of the RLOs- as this would facilitate
- Committee to evaluate the administrative structures of the RLOs/CBOs before registration at the district level. OPM to first evaluate and recommend

Solutions from the consultation

- RLOs need to start small by voluntary work, partnering with existing organizations as this helps to build their capacities,
- When starting the RLOs, it is needed for them to conform and abide by the laws of the land.

Session IV title: Focus Group Discussion by ECASA Consultants on Transition Framework

Session time: 11:30am-2:00pm

Session Objective: to get the perspectives of the Refugee leaders on what transition means, and how they would want it to be done.

Presenter name and organization: **Samson (GIZ) working with ECASA**

Key points presented

- With over 1.7 million refugees, Uganda is Africa's largest refugee-hosting nation. With a protracted refugee situation and many social service facilities in operation for decades, Uganda is focusing on transition management-shifting from partner-managed services to government-managed, sustainable systems.
- Led by respective Ministries, and coordinated through multi-stakeholder Sector Steering Committees, Sector Response Plans are in place to facilitate integrated service provision for both refugees and host communities.
- Uganda, as co-convenor of the Global Refugee Forum 2023, has pledged to integrate infrastructure and services in health, education, and water sectors in alignment with government standards, and come up with a transitional strategy and guidelines.
- Currently, there is no formal way of transitioning partner facilities to government. Infrastructure that is handed over to government without proper planned arrangements risks being underutilized with poor quality services.
- However, Current development support from partners is both on and off-budget, leading to fragmentation and inefficiency, particularly when interventions are not aligned with the government's National and District Development Plans
- As the transition of infrastructure and services created by partners progresses in the education, health, and water sectors, there is an urgent need for the government to have a clear understanding of the mechanisms already in place Therefore, a well-

structured and phased transition strategy is critical at this stage, to provide a clear framework to guide the complex process of transitioning partner facilities to government planning and management.

The strategy will;

- Identify gaps, key steps, timelines, and resource requirements.
- It will address challenges and risks associated with the transition, like funding gaps, technical capacity, service delivery standards and quality, and infrastructure and possible ways to address these (?).
- It will outline roles and responsibilities for the various actors to ensure that all stakeholders are working towards a common goal.
- The strategy will provide sector specific transitional roadmaps with a clear implementation and results framework.

Transition discussions- issues from the REF members

- Differences in the prices charged by Umbrella (host are charged less than the refugees)
- Is localization or policy related?
- Why is gov't very concerned about transition than integration (durable solutions)
- Fear that the quality of service will decline
- How will the PSNs be supported?
- Education: - the government schools are doing badly, and they are also worried the standards will also drop. There is also fear that the refugee parents may not manage to pay school dues,
- Landlords fear that if they give more land to refugees, the refugees will not go back. Government to continue engaging with landlords to lobby for more land for refugees.

Action point:

- REF members to support mobilization for the forth coming localization field consultation in the various districts.

Session V title: Open discussions and issues arising from the REF members

Session time: 3:40pm- 6:15pm

Session Objective: To allow room for open discussions and to generate issues from the community.

Presenter name and organization: Teddy- CRRF Secretariat (OPM)

Major Issues arising from the community

- Water shortage coming from delays in delivering fuel to the points on generators
- Delays by the health partners in handling referrals especially the cold cases mostly due to fuel shortages
- Those having equity cards reporting who is withdrawing their money. Need to reverify the cards to address these
- New arrivals are lacking pit latrine slabs,
- Need to registration of the asylum seekers (especially in Kyaka)
- Poor telecommunication networks
- Kyaka II farmers association, lost 500million- money disappeared from the SACCO
- Promised motorcycles for the RWC3 C/P, not given
- Increasing cases of theft across the settlements for instance in Rwamwanja they stole a motorcycle
- Need of a standby generator in Kyaka H/C IV
- Drug abuse eg people taking marijuana at the basecamp
- Poor conditions of the roads across the settlements,
- Why have they faced off the recruitment of teaching assistants?
- Handover of the gadgets from old REF members to new REF members is challenging.
- Need for water in the block farms.
- Transitioning from cash in cash to cash in sim has made people not to receive their cash for almost three months,
- Drug stock outs in the various health centers at the settlement level
- Flooding due to the heavy rain.
- Sand mining leading to many school children leaving school preferring to be in the sand mines. Also, the mine is eating away a big portion of the settlement land.
- DRDIP retained 1000/= from the participants in their Cash for work program as savings but upto now the money is not paid even after the project has ended.
- PSN houses are not being renovated.
- Increasing cases of suicide in Kyangwali and other settlements
- Projects that target out of schoolgirls has led to increasing cases of school dropouts for example this came out strongly in field visits in Bidibidi.
- Burundian refugees who are returning after being repatriated have issues with documentation. OPM to find a durable solution for the Burundian refugees returning to the settlements.
- Lack of registration documents for refugees in Kampala.
- Difficulty by refugees to access their NSSF money
- Acknowledging the work of leaders- certificate for the REF members,

-

Closing remarks and responses from the REF CRRF SG rep

- Thanked the REF TF for the improvements on the organization the REF meeting,
- Urged the REF TF to plan for the certificates for the REF members
- Need to have a standby nurse to provide first aid to REF members

Remarks from the Global fund rep

- Urged the new REF members to share their contact information for the CCM coordinator to reach out to them when planning.

Responses from the OPM (Aggie & Teddy)

- On the verification- the Protection office of the UNHCR and OPM is conducting continuous verification at the various settlements. More feedback will be provided in a week's time.
- The registration process for the Somalis have been put on hold because of the huge influx from Kenya. Preparations are ongoing to see to that and appropriate response will be done within the year.
- Checking of the phones of the Somalis by Police, - will follow up with police to find a durable solution to the same but they also informed them to always abide since it's a litely security measure by polic,
- Merging and splitting- this is done with evidence of a proof of documentation
- On the repatriated Burundian refugees who came back, there is an ongoing discussion to see how they can be brought back onto the systems,
- Encourage the PSS partners on the ground to work with the community leaders to support people facing mental challenges. Also invite them in the next meeting
- On the 500million lost from a SACCO, will follow it up to ensure the issue is resolved,
- On the DRDIP retaining 1000/=, they will follow up. DrDIP is coming back in phase II and will provide feedback on the same. CRRF will invite DRDIP in the next REF meeting to clarify on this.
- Assured that the REF members that the REF TF will continue to lobby for funds,

AHA- Daphine

- Delayed medical referral from settlement and kampala- there is a systematic referral system being handled by AHA and the partner at settlement. The partner at settlement informs AHA and arranges their transportation to kampala,
- It's the responsibility of the patient to renew his/her travel permit to allow them not to miss their referral.
- Encouraged patients to frequent the AHA access centers for support,

- Shortages of fuel for ambulances to transport patients and dead bodies, this is because of fund cuts. Kampala operation has only two ambulances
- Medical stockouts- this is a crosscutting issue across the settlements. At kampala, AHA has just received the medical supplies. Urged the refugees in Kampala to continue they visit the Government health centers.
- Urged them to inform their community members that treatment in Kampala is done on referrals only. Let them first go through the health partners at settlement level. Discouraged self-referrals.

UNHCR- Julian Ateme

- UNHCR is conducting a continuous information awareness with the refugee communities in Kampala for them to get the right information. UNHCR will continue to work closely with OPM and partners to support with the right information,
- UNHCR will work closely with OPM to streamline the refugee leadership in Kampala,
- On the delay to transport dead bodies, this will be discussed further to ensure that the cases are handled on a case-by-case.
- On the issues of increased suicide-will escalate to a different forum
- Urged the leaders to raise the issues early and not wait for the REF meetings,
- PSN shelters issues will be discussed further. Through the CBP approach, the PSNs will be supported.
- Resettlement is free of charge. Urged the leaders to sensitize the communities on the same.
- Urged the REF members to continue advocating for their communities.
- Concluded by thanking them for being resilient and

Meeting closed at 6:15pm with a review of key takeaways and action points.

Partners present: OPM, UNHCR, Ulearn, GIZ, Care, AHA,