

Refugee Engagement Forum (REF)
The 12th REF Meeting Report
7th – 9th December 2021



Figure 1. REF members following a presentation by a U-Learn staff at Eureka Place Hotel.

Day 1: 7th December 2021

Session I title: Opening remarks

Session time: 9:15 – 9:45 am

Session Objective: To officially welcome all participants and open the meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Ms. Brigitte Mukanga Eno – Deputy Representative - UNHCR

Key points presented:

- Welcomed all REF members from the various settlements.
- Thanked the Ugandan government for creating an enabling environment for refugees to be involved in the decision-making processes.
- Encouraged everyone to utilize the three days' meeting to put forward the best ideas to find solutions to the community concerns.
- Also welcomed the newly elected REF members and encouraged them to meaningfully participate.
- Congratulated the 2 REF representatives to the CRRF Steering Group (SG) for being elected and encouraged them to present all REF members' concerns.

Session II title: Review of action points from the REF 11 Meeting

Session time: 9:45 – 10:30 am

Session Objective: To review progress against action points from the 11th REF meeting

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Raphael Okoropot – U-Learn

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- REF members requested for more livelihood interventions to respond to reduced food rations.
- Government, partners, and refugees must have a common agenda, importantly on how to strengthen self-reliance.
- WFP, UNHCR and OPM to hold joint community engagement and awareness to ensure that refugees understand why and how WFP's food assistance rations will be prioritised.
- Health partners need to ensure that Covid-19 vaccines are brought closer to the communities.
- Protection partners (Care & IRC) should strengthen accountability of legal practitioners to ensure access to justice for the survivors of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV).
- Protection partners to strengthen follow up of SGBV cases and ensure logical conclusion.
- Care and IRC to Support community leaders to formulate and enforce by-laws/guidelines against early marriage and teenage pregnancies.
- REF requested UNHCR, OPM and partners for more secondary schools' infrastructures (classrooms, teachers houses) and examination centres in settlement schools.
- REF members requested UNHCR, OPM and education partners to recruit education assistants (interpreters) in schools.
- Requested UNHCR and education partners for more scholarships for professional courses like nursing, etc.
- REF TF need to strengthen community feedback through meetings and reports sharing.
- REF requested Care to support them in developing advocacy plans.
- REF requested protection partners (IRC & Care) for training on land laws and policies.
- U-Learn to support refugees to systematically express their opinions and perceptions through AAP indicators.

Session III title: Livelihoods Opportunities and self-reliance in the context of food ration reduction.

Session time: 10:45 am – 12:50 pm

Session objective: To share information on available livelihood opportunities and self-reliance initiatives supported by Jobs & Livelihood Sector working group.

Presenter name and organisation: Ms. Damalie – UNHCR.

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- The sector aims to stabilize and build sustainable and resilient livelihood.
- Supports and targets new refugee arrivals and vulnerable long-term refugees and host community members.
- Emergency livelihood interventions are aimed at lifesaving and enhancing food and nutrition security.
- Diversification of household livelihood strategies is essential in building resilience
- Refugees have considerable capacities and skills that would permit them to become more economically self-reliant to benefit country of asylum.

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- A REF member noted the lack of skills and knowledge on proposed approaches like block farming.
- Kiryandongo: noted the challenge of pests and crop diseases.

- Another member said that partners have a number of initiatives that have potential to employ a huge number of refugees, but they tend to recruit non refugees.
- One REF member added that refugees are involved in production and service provision, but partners identify suppliers outside the settlement.
- A participant further noted that partners train refugees in different skills but do not empower them to start their own income generating activities (IGAs), leading to loss of knowledge and skills acquired. She reiterated that the training period is usually short-2-3 months, adding that the trainings are limited to tailoring and hair dressing.
- Other issues raised by REF include low produces prices, late supplies of agricultural inputs, lack of access to markets, among other.

Action points:

- Strengthen engagement with local governments and host communities to promote peaceful coexistence and access to land for cultivation
- Need to transition from humanitarian assistance to development-oriented approaches that promote resilience and self-reliance, for example, productive/income generating activities.
- Livelihood partners to adopt market-driven activities and increase linkages to private sector especially formal financial service providers.
- The Refugee Livelihoods and Resilience sector working group to review the skills training activities in consultation with the refugees.
- Livelihood interventions issues raised by REF will be escalated to the upcoming national/settlement livelihood sector working group meeting. UNHCR to give feedback at the forthcoming REF meeting.

Session IV title: Decisions from the last CRRF SG Meeting

Session time: 12:53 – 1:06pm

Session objective: Update members on the progress on the decisions of the 14th CRRF SG.

Presenter name and organisation: Michael Geoffrey Bruce – CRRF

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- The minutes from the 13th CRRF SG meeting and the 2021 CRRF April-September 2021 progress report were adopted by the CRRF Steering Group.
- SG Co-Chairs and UNHCR to review operational modalities of the CRRF Secretariat to strengthen and consolidate efforts of the comprehensive refugee response.
- Humanitarian and development partners to adhere to the Public Finance Management Act 2015 and GOU requirements for reporting by providing inputs into the Aid Management Platform.
- SG members agreed to have a dialogue to clarify on the process of transition planning and to agree on actions and responsibilities moving forward.
- Building on the existing systems, the SG tasked the CRRF Secretariat to develop ToRs for the DEF in cooperation with key stakeholders to be presented at the next SG
- WFP to provide a status report through CRRF secretariat on reduced food rations.

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- Rhino: Support the formation of the district engagement forum to handle local level issues, for example, land allocation and ownership.

Session V title: Briefing on the agenda items for CRRF SG meeting.

Session time: 1:06 – 1:28pm

Session objective: Inform REF members of the agenda items for the 15th CRRF SG Meeting.

Presenter name and organisation: Michael Geoffrey Bruce – CRRF

Key points presented:

- Agenda for the 14th SG meeting scheduled for the 8th December 2021 was presented.
- Key agenda items include: Communication from the Co-chairs, Minutes of the 14th SG meeting, Sustainable Energy Response Plan, Fourth quarter CRRF Progress Report and progress on implementation of response plan and strategic exchange on issues critical for Uganda's refugee response.

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- Bidibidi: A member asked why the 2 REF representatives are not included in the agenda. The presenter told REF representatives to use discussion sessions to present refugee's concerns and issues.
- Kiryandongo: A member requested the presenter to lobby for REF to be included in the agenda for the CRRF SG meetings.
- Presenter proposed the following actions to REF representatives: 1) Progress report session – use it to raise refugee concerns. 2) Put your concerns in writing as a formal letter from the REF and circulate it to all the SG members. 3) Invite SG members to participate at the REF meeting before the SG. Engage directly with the SG members.
- Imvepi: A member requested that LGs be represented at the SG meeting. REF advised to forward this concern to the SG meeting.

Action points:

- An action be proposed for presentation at the SG meeting to lobby REF representation at the High-Level Officials Meeting in Geneva.

Session VI title: Group work to formulate key messages for the CRRF Steering Group.

Session time: 2:30 – 4:00 pm.

Session Objective: To prepare key messages to be presented by the REF representatives in the next CRRF SG meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Perez – CRRF.

Key points presented:

The presenter facilitated the breakout sessions during which the following sector areas were discussed and REF members made plenary presentations.

- Group 1: "Health"
- Group 2: "Jobs and Livelihoods"
- Group 3: "Education"

Health

- Inadequate supply of drugs and health equipment in health facilities.
- Delays in referrals. Increase the number of ambulances to support referral of critical cases.
- Need for construction of more IPD, OPDs and maternity wards.
- Limited bed capacity in most maternity wards.
- Need to upgrade Health Center IIIs to Health Center IVs to reduce issues related to delays in referrals.

- There is need to recognise and certify medical qualifications of POCs.
- Strengthen the COVID-19 management.

Jobs & Livelihoods

- Allow private sector actors (banks, mobile money) to invest in the settlement.
- More business skills training opportunities and more capacity building for refugees.
- Need for more start-up capital especially at group level and improved agriculture.

Education

- More scholarships to be given to refugees at higher institutions of learning.
- Establishment of more vocational institutions, secondary schools and laboratories in the settlement
- Employ refugee teachers at different levels of learning and equate academic papers.

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- In Bidibidi, the persons with mental health and psychosocial concerns have limited supported. This category needs to be supported.
- In Adjumani, some incidences of poor management of expectant mothers are very common. There is need to employ competent medical personnel.
- In Adjumani, the refugees tried to register mobile money lines but failed. Pray that Government allows refugees to register their own mobile money businesses.
- REF representative from Kyaka reminded that most refugees are self-repatriating because of shortage/reduction of food.

Action points:

REF members agreed on the following key messages

General Prayers

- We pray that the Steering Group gives us an opportunity as the two REF representatives to have a slot in Steering group meeting agenda, so that we can ably present key messages from the REF members.
- We pray that the government of Uganda considers representation and participation of the 2 REF Representatives in the HLOM in Geneva.

Health

- Our prayer is for government and partners to consider upgrading lower health facilities in settlements and host communities to higher level. This will help to respond to the issues of inadequate infrastructures, health workers, ambulances, drugs and medical supplies.
- Pray that government and partners ensure regular supplies of drugs and other medical supplies. This will save refugees from the burden of buying drugs and supplies that are constantly out of stock.
- Pray that government recognizes the qualifications of refugee medical workers and allow them to access jobs.

Jobs and Livelihood

- Our prayer is for government to encourage refugee to participate in private sector and allow private sector companies to operate in settlements and host communities. Support refugees to register and operate mobile money business and SACCOs including provision of seed fund. This will provide job opportunities for the refugees.

- Our prayer is for Government and partners to scale up programmes that lead to acquisition of more skills, application of best agricultural practices and capacity building for sustainable jobs and livelihood.

Education

- Pray that partners lobby for more scholarship opportunities at higher institutions of learning
- Pray for government and partners to construct more A level schools, laboratory facilities and vocational institutions in refugee settlements and host communities.
- Our prayer is for government and education partners to support refugees to equate their academic papers to Ugandan standards.

Day 2: 8th December 2021

Session I title: Training on basics for advocacy

Session time: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Session Objective: To introduce REF members to the basic concepts of advocacy

Presenter name and organization: Jessica Abenakyo - CARE

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- Understanding advocacy
- The Advocacy in Action: Steps of advocacy
- Message development and work planning.

Key Feedback from the Group discussions:

REF members were divided into 4 groups to discuss the issues in the following four sectors and develop advocacy action plans.

Group 1: GBV

- Discussed the meaning of GBV and identified the causes of GBV as power imbalance which comes in all forms (physical, emotional, sexual, and economic).
- Drew a Problem tree for GBV. Identified causes of GBV as cultural practices, poverty, drug abuse, war, power imbalance, stigma, sex denial, personality differences etc.
- Discussed the effects of GBV as forced marriages, family neglect, family breakups, suicide, death, increased crime, mental disorder, school dropouts, etc.
- Noted that Men are the worse victims of GBV but partners in the field majorly focus on the women.

Group 2: Child protection

- Drew a problem tree that shows the causes of child protection issues as war, domestic violence, alcoholism, orphanage, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, cultural norms, exploitation, and abuse.
- Forms of child protection as child abuse, child neglect, exploitation,
- Effects of child protection as suicide, fear, isolation/loneliness, distrust, trauma, stress.

Group 3: Mental Health

- Discussed causes of mental illness as conflicts, disasters, war, childhood abuse and unemployment, substance abuse.
- Forms of mental illness as stress, trauma, anxiety, eating disorder, personal disorder, and depression.

- Effects of mental illness as suicidal thoughts, death, change in mood, impulsive action, sleep disorder, talking disorder.

Group 4: WASH challenges

- Shortages of water.
- Frequent breakdowns in the pipelines.
- Cutting of the waterlines by the local communities to water their animals,
- Inadequate materials for latrine coverage, i.e many uncovered pits.
- Effects of the WASH challenges included diseases, death, injuries for the children & adult when they accidentally fall into the open pits. WASH partners to support with logs and slabs,

Action points:

REF members then developed the following actions plans:

- To conduct continuous mental health awareness sessions and radio talk shows in the community involving the leaders, and the implementing partners. However, REF members require refreshments, writing materials, airtime, leaflets on mental health.
- Under WASH, members plan to create a continuous awareness session in the community involving community leaders, VHTs, and hygiene promoters. However, they require writing materials, visibility, posters/leaflets billboards.
- Under Child protection, the group plans to create awareness and dialogues on child protection issues with the RWCs, CP partners, CPCs, religious and cultural leaders. They encourage a multistakeholder approach to child protection issues.
- Under GBV, they identified one major problem (School dropout to combat) to focus on through community dialogues, radio talk shows, awareness creation sessions, and others. However, they require facilitations like refreshments, transport, airtime, etc.

Session II title: CRRF/Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) progress in Uganda and REF

Session time: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Session objective: To get REF members understanding of GCR & CRRF

Presenter name and organisation: Jerry Grants Anyoli – UNHCR

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- An evolution of refugee response in Uganda: the timeline.
- Objectives of the GCR and Strategic shift through the GCR
- Creation of governance structure
- CRRF/GCR strategic direction 2025

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- REF member from Kiryandongo asked the facilitator to explain why Uganda is more interested in integration of refugees instead of resettling them?

Action point:

- OPM to make a presentation to REF members about Refugee Rights in Uganda, In the next REF meeting

Day 3: 9th December 2021

Session I title: Feedback from CRRF SG meeting.

Session time: 9:17 – 11:40 am

Session Objective: To provide feedback on the discussions held during the 15th SG meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Noella Kabale and James Loro – REF

Key points presented:

- Informed members that the State Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees called for food security interventions and encouraged response actors to buy food from the host community to promote peaceful co-existence.
- Noted that CRRF is fast tracking the establishment of District Engagement Forum (DEF) and that the process is being led by OPM.
- Confirmed that the energy sector response plan and the 4th CRRF report were adopted.
- Noted that the Government of Uganda will be participating in the High Level Officers Meeting (HLOM) and the meeting will be virtual.
- REF members noted that the Minister of Energy was concerned about duplication of services and encouraged financial tracking system to be put in place to address the issue.
- Confirmed that Government of Uganda is committed to opening schools next year so that refugees do not return to their countries of origin illegally.
- Noted that the Government of Uganda is concerned about cross border movement, particularly by South Sudanese, and is interested in understanding the reasons for it.
- Noted that the verification exercise is ongoing in different settlements. Leaders need to encourage community members to register.

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- Bidibidi: the issue of self-repatriation is due to food ration cuts and limited livelihood options in Uganda. She also requested for direct feedback on some of the key messages developed for presentation at the CRRF SG meeting.
- Kiryandongo: interested to know the feedback from the SG on the issue of more scholarship opportunities for refugees which partly explains why some refugees illegally return to their countries of origin. He also emphasized the impact of limited land for agriculture on self-repatriation. In response, the REF representatives said that the SG requested district leaders to address the issue of land for farming in their respective districts
- Palabek: noted that some refugees move back to South Sudan to get land to bury their dead relatives.
- Kiryandongo: asked the two REF representatives to shade more light on financial tracking and duplication of services by partners. In response the REF representatives to the SG clarified that financial tracking was a call to ensure that donor funds are properly utilized.
- REF member from Adjumani noted that there was no feedback on health prayers submitted to the SG. In response, the two REF representatives said that the district authorities had already requested for more health infrastructure and more ambulances for refugee hosting districts. In addition, the refugee representatives informed the meeting that the REF prayers / key messages was submitted to the CRRF secretariat for follow up as requested by one of the Co-chairs.
- REF Member from Kampala noted that cross border movements/self-repatriation is partly due to lack of information on the implications of such actions. He called upon fellow leaders to sensitize community members on the dangers of self-repatriation.

- Youth representative from Kampala requested for more information to be shared with REF members on resettlement processes and procedures.
- REF member from Imvepi requested for more leadership training opportunities for REF representatives. In response, the UNHCR REF focal person said that OPM and partners usually support leaders' trainings in different settlements
- REF member from Palorinya noted that partners do not respect the culture of refugees. . She isolated a community in Palorinya settlement that bury their dead and after some time they exhume the body to perform certain rituals. A UNHCR staff member responded that some cultures infringe on individual human rights. So partners have to sensitize communities on legally acceptable human rights principles and practices.

Action points:

- Refugee leaders to advocate for a memorandum of understanding between Uganda and their countries of origin to ease equating of academic papers.
- The REF taskforce to invite the health sector working group lead to attend the 13th REF meeting to respond community concerns and issues.
- REF members, UNHCR, OPM and partners to continue advocating for increased funding for provision of health services.
- Livelihood partners need to support refugees with diversified economic activities to avoid reliance on rain-fed agriculture done on small plots of land.
- UNHCR focal persons for resettlement to conduct information sessions on resettlement.

Session II title: Key takeaways from the 12th REF meeting

Session time: 10:50 – 11:20 am

Session Objective: To share the key takeaways with meeting participants

Presenter name and organization: Geoffrey Okulo – U-Learn

Key points presented:

- Increase household food production for food security through intensive subsistence/commercial farming and block farming. Efforts will be made to upscale innovative approaches such as Optimal Land Use Model (OLUM) to respond to the reduced food rations. UNHCR and OPM need to engage local governments and landlords for critical success of block farming efforts.
- Meaningful engagement with local governments and host communities is critical in promoting peaceful coexistence and access to land for cultivation.
- Livelihood interventions issues raised will be escalated to the upcoming national/settlement livelihood sector working group meeting. Issues of late delivery of agricultural inputs, poor quality seeds (expired seeds), low produce prices, short livelihood training durations/low skill sets, and few vocational training institutions will be presented at the national livelihood sector working group meeting. UNHCR will give feedback at the forthcoming REF meeting.
- Leading by example increases the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines. Communities get motivation for vaccination when they see their leaders getting the COVID vaccines. Refugee leaders need to get vaccinated to persuade other community members to receive the jabs.
- Continuous awareness raising on mental health, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) through information – education - and communication (IEC) materials by partners, REF, community leaders, village health team (VHT), hygiene promoters, religious/cultural leaders, and child protection committees.

- Multistakeholder monitoring and evaluation is key in determining the successes of child protection and GBV interventions at the settlement level.
- Developing advocacy plans is key to responding to critical community issues and concerns. The advocacy plans should be shared with the respective partners and government for support.
- Formation of the District Engagement Forum (DEF) to respond to refugee concerns at district level. The OPM is taking lead in the development of the terms of reference (TOR) for the DEF. The REF task force will ensure that REF members are included in the DEF.
- Awareness raising on refugee's rights and obligations including resettlement. REF should be oriented on the refugee laws and legal frameworks in Uganda during the 13th REF.
- Self-repatriation is on the rise especially among South Sudanese refugees. This is partly attributed to school closure, search for food, land for cultivation, and medical services. REF needs to educate the community on the laws concerning refugee status in Uganda.

Feedback on key takeaways

- Leaders should be involved in the inspection of the seeds and other agricultural inputs being distributed at settlement level to ensure quality seeds are distributed to communities.
- REF leaders to be oriented on refugee laws and legal framework in Uganda during the 13th REF meeting.

Session III title: Presentation from the Refugee Led Organization Network (RELON)

Session time: 11:25 – 11:50 am

Session Objective: To introduce RELON project to REF members

Presenter name and organization: Jerry Lukendo – RELON

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- The mission and objectives of RELON
- The ongoing projects.

Session IV title: Update from U-Learn SG meeting

Session time: 1:55 am – 1:00 pm

Session Objective: To provide feedback from the last U-Learn SG meeting to participants

Presenter name and organization: Neima Grace – REF

Link to the presentation:

Key points presented:

- Recap of progress from last 6 months
- Discussion Topic 1: Strengthening the REF
- Discussion Topic 2: Cash Deep Dive Assessment
- Discussion Topic 3: Learning Theme – Private Sector Engagement

Key concern raised by the REF:

- Lobule: sought for more information about the Cash deep dive assessment. The presenter responded that cash deep dive assessment was meant to explore the refugee's preferences for financial services.
- REF Member from Palabek appreciated U-Learn for the Cash deep dive assessment. However, she noted that some elderly persons or PSN may not have sim cards or even phones. She asked how the assessment will support those extremely vulnerable refugees. In response, REF was informed

that the assessment report would be shared and disseminated to all humanitarian actors to guide their actions.

- Kiryandongo: noted that some PSNs and illiterate POCs are not able to use phones.
- REF member requested for U-Learn support in advocating for the active engagement of the private sector like telecom companies to support the refugee especially in the digital financial era.

Action points:

- Leaders should actively be involved in the entire process of community sensitisation on cash distribution and encourage community members to sue mobile money services.

Session V title: Open Discussion with CRRF/DPG

Session time: 2:30 – 3:45pm

Session objective: To share information about the available long term development finance projects for refugee hosting Districts.

Presenter name and organisation: Ben – World Bank.

Link to the presentation:

<https://rescue.box.com/s/pqksqzvmby1l5gi5mqxuxebj2vv4pegc>

Key points presented:

- Took REF members through ongoing World Bank projects including Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development Project (USMID), Uganda Integrated Water Management and Development Project (IWMDP), among other.
- Projects in the pipeline include Uganda Investment for Industrial Transformation and Employment Project, COVID-19 Emergency Response Project - AF, Uganda Electricity Access Scale Up Project, Generating Livelihoods and Opportunities for Women in Uganda.
- Projects under discussion include the Roads and Bridges in Refugee Hosting Districts Project - AF

Key feedback raised by the REF members and responses:

- REF member from Kiryandongo noted that the major concern from refugee communities is congestion in schools and limited opportunities for secondary and higher education. He prayed for more funding to support more refugees to access tertiary education. In response the representative from World Bank said that some of the Projects like DRDIP will impact both the host and refugee communities.
- Another REF member from Kiryandongo requested to know how World Bank will ensure that money provided through DRDIP will benefit refugees? He also wanted to know whether the project to enhance access to electricity will reduce the cost of electricity so that refugees can access power cheaply. In response, the representative from World Bank said that DRDIP project is in two phases, the first phase was towards the host community, but the second phase will focus on refugee communities. He noted that there has been delay due to COVID 19. On the issue of electricity, the project is aimed at increasing access to electricity through government establishments.
- REF member from Imvepi asked for an explanation why some of the projects by DRDIP are taking long to get started.
- REF member from Kyaka noted that in their area some of the promises are unfulfilled and the work accomplished is not comparable to the amount of money received. The presenter responded that some procurement processes are already ongoing, but in case one has concerns, there are well laid out reporting procedures for any world bank related projects.

- Female REF member from Kiryandongo said that some of the women have organised themselves into groups, how can they ensure that women benefit from the women empowerment project. In response he noted that it's true there are gaps related to access to finance.
- Female REF member from Palorinya asked whether DRDIP project does not support construction of schools in the Settlement. He committed to follow up.
- REF member from Rwamanja noted that the refugee leaders were involved at the beginning, but when it came to implementation, leaders were put aside. He also raised concerns related to accountability and called for close monitoring of DRDIP projects. In response, the presenter noted that the Inspector General of Government is part of the DRDIP project and members.
- REF member from Adjumani asked for the duration of DRDIP Projects.
- REF representative to SG requested World Bank to support the REF leaders with computers to ease their work. The feedback from Work Bank representative is that all support goes through Government structures which is quite different from how other partners operate.
- REF member from Bidibidi noted that refugees have three priorities; education, health, and livelihood. She emphasized that there are a number of gaps along those key priority areas. She called for more funding to support the three sectors among refugee. In response, World bank has different projects that have potential to impact refugees.

Action points:

- Representative from World Bank to find someone from the project unit to come and listen from REF members during the 13th REF meetings.

Session VI title: 3 days meeting Evaluation

Session time: 3:46-4:30pm

Session objective: To understand what went well during the 12th REF meeting and what needed to be improved

Presenter name and organisation: Ann Mbeiza – U-Learn

Key points presented:

- Evaluation areas, how did the 3 days go? Do you think all your concerns were responded to? Any areas of improvement.

Feedback from REF members:

- REF member from Bidibidi raised that there is need to improve on the logistical support-it should be timely.
- REF member from Palorinya noted concerns around transport facilitation for their team that they have to go through the ferry. They leave home as early as 5:00am on the travel day and end up reaching late. They requested for additional support so that they can stop-over at Adjumani.
- A REF member from Oruchinga said that some questions were not responded to especially those related to health concerns. Additionally, she noted that in her settlement, persons with medical complications are encouraged to form groups but most of these groups are not supported – In response a UNHCR focal person acknowledged that there is a challenge when it comes to cold cases. These are cases that require a lot of financial support usually beyond 10M UGX. She called upon REF members to continue working with UNHCR focal persons in their respective settlements to ensure POCs with critical medical conditions are supported. On the issue of groups that are not supported and duplication, she encouraged REF members to Utilize settlement coordination meetings to deal with
- One REF member noted that the 3 days have been good but at times the meeting was deviating from the planned agenda. He called for strict adherence to the agenda.

- The REF member from Bidibidi emphasized the need for REF members to be supported on travel day so that they can have a stopover in Arua. The REF Task force Co-chair from UNHCR committed to follow up with the sub offices lead for a better solution.
- One REF member proposed that the REF meetings be done at regional/district level or virtually to avoid a number of challenges being experienced.
- REF representative from Ajumani requested for a REF phone survey to understand suggestions on the way forward for future REF meetings.

Session VII title: Closing remarks

Session time: 16:15-16:40

Session objective: Officially close the three days meeting.

Presenter name and organisation: Brigitte Mukanga Eno – Deputy Representative - UNHCR

Key points presented:

- Thanked all leaders for their active involvement.
- Appreciated REF members for consulting their communities before coming for the 12th REF meeting and encouraged all leaders to learn from this good example.
- Acknowledged receiving key priorities/messages from the REF members, for example request by REF representatives to the SG to be given a slot during the CRRF SG Meeting. She informed the REF members that the Minister requested REF members to officially write to CRRF secretariat.
- Noted the concerns related to health, education, jobs and livelihoods where acknowledged, and that a lot is already happening with support from different partners. She however cautioned REF members to be aware of the slow pace when it comes to development projects.
- Called for mind-set change among refugees. Refugees were encouraged to start seeing themselves as clients not as beggars.
- Noted that world bank intends to spend a lot of money in different development projects, and therefore, encouraged leaders to prepare their communities so that they can strategically position themselves to benefit from the projects
- Finally, she informed refugee leaders that UNHCR is expanding education opportunities and labour migration for durable solutions.

Annexes

List of members who attended:

<https://rescue.box.com/s/c2nwcxysu93by8m1u89zjjsi3ui4sqt7>

Meeting Agenda:

<https://rescue.box.com/s/0w4ubhaycjgfc1pnlcsuwg6z25v4299>