

**Minutes of Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group
Coordination Meeting held on 22 March 2022**

Agenda

1. Sectors updates and Co-chair updates
 - a) Sector Planning meeting- dates, locations etc
 - b) Proposed learning areas/ topics for 2022
 - c) Field LRSWG- quarterly sharing schedule
 - d) Quarter 4 reporting updates
2. VSLA Digitisation updates- U-learn
3. Knowledge sharing
 - a) Emerging Good Practices and Lessons in refugee livelihood activities-UNHCR
 - b) Refugee Financial Inclusion – overview and preliminary observations- UNHCR
 - c) Urban refugee market assessment – NRC
4. Partner announcements
5. AOB

1. Sectors updates and Co-chair updates

Lilian Otiego, co-chair of the sector:

- welcomed participants and thanked them for the good work done for the sector. She noted that for the last two years, there has been no physical meeting for the members due to the COVID-19 restrictions and promised to plan for one soon possibly in May 2022.
- The proposed meeting will discuss among others, the strategic direction for the sector and emerging issues.
- Encouraged partners to propose topics for discussion through the online tool which has been shared with LRSWG .
- As part of the effort to strengthen coordination between LRSWGs in the field and the national-level LRSWG, field-based LRSWGs will be encouraged to share their updates on a quarterly basis for discussion of field matters to bridge the gap.

Paul Mwirichia, co-chair),

- Informed participants that communicated that the study report supported by FAO delayed a bit and the timeline has been revised to after Easter break for sharing the findings.
- Thanked partners supporting an estimated 25,000 new arrivals, mainly from Democratic Republic of Congo, who are currently being settled in Rwamwanja, Kyaka, Imvepi and Kyangwali refugee settlements. He appealed to partners to continue supporting the new arrivals in the respective settlements.

d). Quarter 4 reporting updates

Bo Hurkmans – from UNHCR presented the updates on reporting. He noted that the partner reporting versus funding and achievements highlighted wider regional

differences with many donors directing funds towards South Sudan response. The table below summarizes the details.

	2019	2020	2021
South Sudanese	113,478 (>100%)	99,968 (>100%)	79,710 (>100%)
Congolese	28,837 (38%)	5,804 (11%)	22,843 (59%)
Burundian	7,563 (>100%)	N/A	N/A
Host community	22,881 (31%)	18,735 (51%)	21,944 (88%)
HC as % of total	13%	15%	18%
Total	172,759 ind.	124,507 ind.	124,497 ind.

- About challenges, he pointed out inconsistent focus on emergency, inadequate funding of programs and regional discrepancy between interventions across the operation.
- On priorities, he noted that there is need to improve self-reliance and increase productivity through market-driven interventions, private sector linkages, capacity building, investment in business, livelihood diversification, access to financial services and increased capacity of local government.
- He further presented that quarter one 2022 reporting will start on 4th April and close on 15th April 2022, and activities to be reported on will remain the same. He emphasized that reporting should be on new activities versus the existing beneficiaries to avoid cases of double counting.
- A training will be organized at the end of March 2022 for partners on reporting guidelines.
- He emphasized that funding will be a requirement for activity reporting in 2022.

Reactions on quarter 4 reporting updates

- There has been a lot of focus on South Sudan in terms of funding and other responses like DRC need more support from donors.
- There is need to conceptualize the business model and the private sector engagement towards refugee support and host communities, and how the engagement can be supported further.
- There was a concern on the food rations for new arrivals. It was clarified that new arrivals get their rations at 100% for the first 3 months and there after adjusting to the settlement specific rations as other PoCs.

2. VSLA Digitalization updates- U-learn

Marijke Deleu from U-Learn shared the updates on digitalization of saving groups (full presentation shared on the data portal – (<https://data2.unhcr.org>), and the following were the reactions after her presentation.

- Cash working group should work hand in hand given the fact that cash is used as approach.
- Synergies are very important in livelihood since the initiatives build on each other.
- BRAC is also working on VSLA digitalization and will be glad to work with U-learn.
- There is need for partners to learn from each other and benchmark best practices in other areas across the operation.

3. Knowledge sharing

a) Emerging good practices and lessons in refugee livelihood activities-UNHCR

Charles Alemi from UNHCR presented on the emerging good practices and lessons in refugee livelihood activities (full presentation shared on the sector data portal (<https://data2.unhcr.org>) The following were the reactions to the presentation.

- WFP is also looking at different initiatives on livelihood and resilience that can be delivered to refugees and host communities as well.
- Engagements with other partners like NURI should be strengthened.
- How do partners scale up successful concepts and replicate it to other areas in the operation.
- Best practices need to be shared with others to foster learning.
- Mask production was a good initiative to refugees and partners should look beyond that and see how to support the tailors to diversify and transition into other opportunities.
- Information sharing should be encouraged to foster learning and scalability.
- Mask production was a first response initiative and successfully contributed to the fight against COVID-19. UNHCR has continued working with tailors and ventures like undergarment production is on-going in fully operating centres in Nakivale and Rwamwanja.
- UNHCR is looking forward to getting more partners to support in form of social enterprise so that tailoring continues as a profitable business.

b) Overview of Refugee Financial Inclusion

Gerald Emoyo from UNHCR presented (full presentation shared on (<https://data2.unhcr.org>) and the following were the major highlights.

- A total of 5,711 VSLAs have been formed with a membership of 149,253 people. The females are the majority of members in the VSLAs accounting to 68% and male at 32%.
- Palorinya settlement has the highest number of VSLAs at 1,440 accounting to 25% of all VSLAs across the operation. Lobule has the least number of VSLAs totalling to 13, accounting to 0.2 % of the total number of VSLAs.

- The number of VSLAs has grown more than three times from 1,640 in 2018 to 5,711 in 2021.
- Rwamwanja has the highest number of VSLA savings at US\$1.2M, and US\$58 savings per member.
- Bidibidi has the largest loan portfolio estimated at over US\$687,000 followed by Palorinya and Adjumani with US\$569,000 and US\$259,000 respectively.
- Rwamwanja had a very small loan portfolio of US\$137,000 representing only 11% of the total group savings.
- In contrast, Nakivale and Oruchinga had limited savings, but with the highest loan to savings ratios with over 96 % of VSLAs' savings loaned out to members.
- From the presentation, key issues emerged including the safety of cash kept in boxes by VSLAs, low uptake of digitalization, poor training of VSLAs, slow investment capacity viz- avis the needs of members.
- As of Q3(September) 2021, partners supported refugees to open 48,789 bank accounts and 96,869 mobile money accounts.
- The merging issues for the attention of partners included: safety of cash kept in boxes by VSLAs, demand for digitalization of VSLA operations, low investment capacity of the groups and greater demand for multi-year programs.

c) Urban Refugee Market Assessment – NRC

Robert Dikua – from NRC presented the findings from the study titled; Market analysis of enterprises owned by people affected by displacement. In his presentation, Robert presented that the study was aimed at getting a clear understanding of the opportunities and barriers for refugees and host communities to engage with and within the market system.

- The study revealed that 33% of refugees are engaged in tailoring, 27% in mechanics, 25% in bakery, 15% are in briquette making, and 51% of which are women.
- The assessment found out that 39% of the refugees never attained any formal education and only 22% had completed primary level.
- The study also revealed that some refugees had experience in business prior to displacement, with 20% having some experience in tailoring; 17.1% in mechanics, 13.3% in bakery and only 6.7% in briquette making.
- In terms of access to financial services, 25.45 had applied and succeeded, 11.6% applied and were not successful, 63.4% had never applied.
- About the challenges, the study revealed the following challenges under bakery business:-COVID-19 reduced purchasing power, low skills for bakery operators, producing solely for country of origin, financing challenges, absence of business premises and general lack of transportation services.
- Under briquette making, limited command of local language, COVID-19 and related restrictions, lack of appropriate briquette producing equipment, demand for briquette is becoming slim, low profits associated with the business, and limited access to finance as major challenges.

- Mechanics was also greatly affected by COVID-19, semi-skilled personnel, limited access to finance, and limited marketing of the services offered.
- Tailoring registered COVID-19, limited access to finance, space challenges and limited skills in fashion and design as the major challenges.
- Partnering with financial institutions, skills transfer, institutionalizing market-based programming and investing in internal capacity building on market diagnosis were highlighted as the major recommendations for challenges studied.

Closure

Lilian thanked all participants for the good deliberations and requested them to share reports and information so that it can be shared on the portal. She also requested participants to reach out to colleagues and discuss on better practices, joint efforts among others.

Appendix 1: List of participants in the LRSWG meeting held virtually on on 22nd March 2022.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agnes Asiimwe, Jesuit Refugees Service. 2. Albert Gatibu Macharia, Humanity & Inclusion 3. Barbara Karungi 4. Bernard WYLER 5. Bo Hurkmans, UNHCR 6. Bockarie Kallon, UNHCR 7. Cathrine Meda, Country Rep, Caritas Belgium 8. Cecilie Gundersen, WFP 9. Charlene Kanyali, CARE 10. Charles Data Alemi, UNHCR 11. Charles Wabwire 12. Dikua Robert, NRC 13. Emmanuel Emorut Ekakoro, UNHCR 14. Eunice Mwendu - Inter Agency Cash Coordinator 15. Eva Baguma, WFP 16. George Agiro, CARE 17. Gerald Emoyo, UNHCR 18. Geremew Yadessa, LWF 19. Giulia Montisci 20. Grace Rwomushana, ILO 21. Irene Diaz, SCI, Netherlands 22. Isaac Kabazzi, UNHCR 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. James F.A Odongo, CARE 24. James Male Kiwalabye, UNHCR 25. John Baptist Acellam, AVSI Foundation 26. Kevin Aciro 27. Kullein Ankunda 28. Lilian Otiego, Co-Chair, UNHCR 29. Lincoln Opio, CORDAID 30. Marijke Deleu, U-Learn 31. Martin Okwir, BRAC 32. Martina, CESVI 33. Meda Christine, Caritas Belgium 34. Melle van Hilten, IMPACT/REACH 35. Mesele Fitsum, ZOA Uganda 36. Okello J.A 37. Patrick Phillips, DRC 38. Patrick Ssebbowa, Plan International 39. Paul Mwirichia, Co-Chair, WVI 40. James Kamukama, Consultant 41. Roberts-Reite, Bev 42. Roger Nyakahuma - Ensibuuko Tech Ltd 43. Rose Wilder, Trickle Up 44. Sahabo Michele, CRS 45. Sarah Rubereti, UNHCR 46. Thomas Akol, ICRC
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