UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

HOLDING THE LINE IN 2025

Delivering Protection in a Year of Hard Choices

Refugees lining up for a food distribution at the Palabek Refugee Settlement.

Photo credits

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Cover page

Sudanese refugee Nuralhuda Abdalaziz Abdalla shares a joyful moment with her son, Raid Mohammed, in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

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Foreword by the Representative

Uganda's open-door sustaining hope amid growing challenges

In 2025, Uganda reaffirmed its extraordinary solidarity, hosting 1.96 million refugees and asylum seekers, the largest refugee population in Africa and the third largest worldwide. Over the year, more than 150,000 new arrivals were welcomed, primarily from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, alongside smaller numbers from Sudan and other countries. Uganda's open-door policy continues to stand as a beacon of hope in a region scarred by instability and displacement.

While UNHCR remains grateful to the donors who continued supporting newly arrived refugees in Uganda, the fact remains that 2025 was one of the most severe funding crises in decades. UNHCR received only 36% of its $361 million appeal, while the broader Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan was funded at just 22%. The consequences have been stark: primary school enrolment fell to 79%; teacher support dropped from 4,216 in 2024 to 2,499 in 2025; and water access for new arrivals declined to just 7–8 litres per person per day. Mental health staffing decreased by 40%, while the child protection caseworker ratio worsened dramatically from 1:148 to 1:275 in a single year—despite rising needs.

Even under these constraints, Uganda and its partners have pressed forward with innovation and sustainability. The National Transition Strategy, adopted in March 2025, sets a clear path to fully integrate health, education, and water services into national systems by 2035, requiring $1.7 billion in investment. Evidence-based self-reliance approaches are being scaled up to help refugees move beyond humanitarian assistance and extreme poverty, supported by advocacy for access to land, work rights, and interoperability between national and refugee ID systems. Partnerships with government, UN agencies, and the private sector are expanding opportunities in agribusiness, entrepreneurship, and renewable energy. Settlement planning is being optimized to protect ecosystems and ensure dignified living conditions, while urban strategies strengthen resilience for refugees in Kampala and other towns. Localization efforts are empowering district governments and refugee-led organizations, embedding accountability and inclusion within national development plans. Advocacy to make naturalization more accessible continues.

Efficiency gains have also been prioritized to maximize impact amid declining resources. Administrative reforms and office consolidation by UNHCR have achieved major cost reductions—78% in mobile bills, 56% in internet, 50% in travel, and others while rationalizing staffing and reinvesting savings into essentials such as soap and sanitary pads for vulnerable refugees. These measures reflect a shared commitment to inclusion, sustainability, and accountability. Still, urgent investment is needed to safeguard hard-won progress and prevent the erosion of essential services.

Uganda has shown the world what shared responsibility looks like. Now, the world must show Uganda that it stands with them. Together, we can ensure that Uganda's model of solidarity endures as a global example of hope, resilience, and innovation.

Matthew Crentsil
UNHCR Representative in Uganda
31st December 2025

Barham Salih the 12th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was elected by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 2025, for a term of five years, and assumed office on 1 January 2026.

The High Commissioner

Barham Salih is the 12th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Barham Salih the 12th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was elected by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 2025, for a term of five years, and assumed office on 1 January 2026.

"As a former refugee, I know first-hand how protection and opportunity can change the course of a life. My foremost responsibility will be to refugees and others forced to flee – upholding their rights and dignity and advancing durable solutions so that displacement remains a temporary situation, not a permanent fate."

– Barham Salih, 12th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Before being elected High Commissioner, Salih served as President of Iraq (2018–2022). He also served twice as Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (2001–2004; 2009–2012) and as Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq (2004–2009), concurrently serving as Minister of Planning (2004–2006).

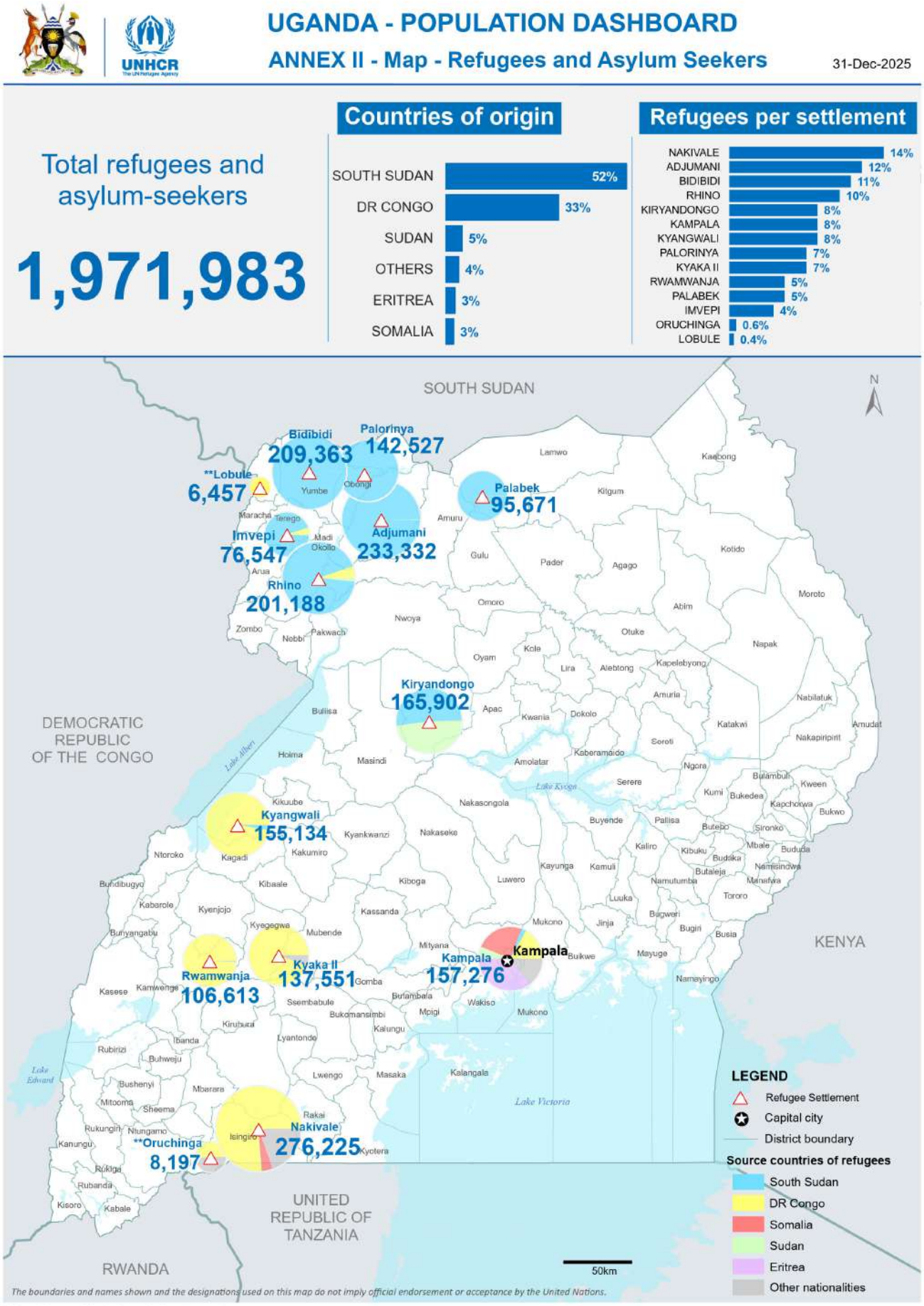
With a career spanning more than three decades of governmental service in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, Salih brings senior diplomatic, political and administrative leadership experience, including engagement with international and regional institutions, with human rights and humanitarian vision and experience, including as a refugee, crisis negotiator and architect of national reforms.

He served as a Senior Fellow (non-resident) at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, United States and as Leadership Fellow (non-resident) at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C, United States.

Founder and Chairman of the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS), he holds a PhD in Statistics and Computer Applications in Engineering from the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom and a BSc in Civil Engineering from Cardiff University, United Kingdom.

Barham Salih was born in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, in 1960. In addition to his native Kurdish and Arabic, he is fluent in English.

Refugee population statistics



** Oruchinga and Lobule symbols not to scale

Population data: proGres (OPM) **Author:** UNHCR Representation in Uganda **Feedback:** ugakaimug@unhcr.org **For more info, please visit:** https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga

UGANDA - OVERVIEW OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

as of 31-Dec-2025

Key Facts

Individuals 1,971,983
- Refugees 1,936,723
- Asy. Seeker 35,260

Households 531,364
- Refugees 507,365
- Asy. Seeker 23,999

Elderly 3 % 56,505

Women & Children 77 % 1,525,894

Under 18 52 % 1,020,498

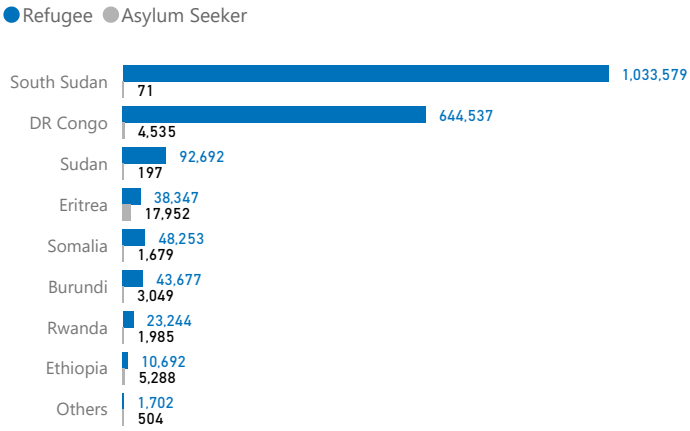
Female 51 % 1,008,164

Under 12 34 % 678,605

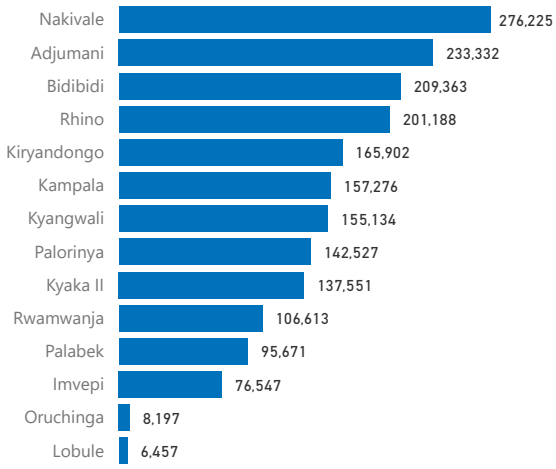
Youth (15-24) 25 % 499,692

Urban 8 % | Settlements 92 %

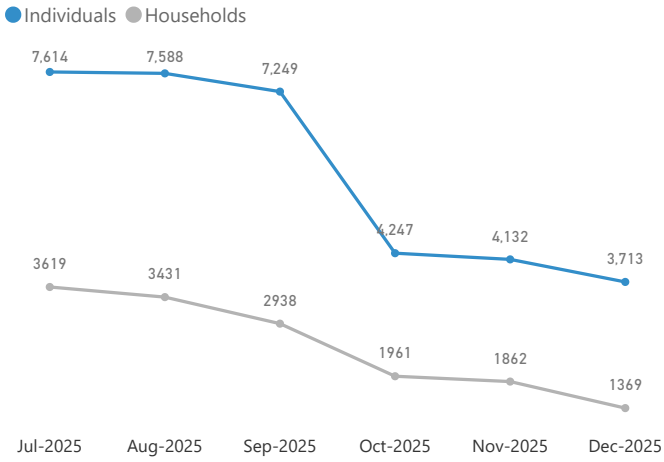
Country of Origin and Legal/Refugee Status



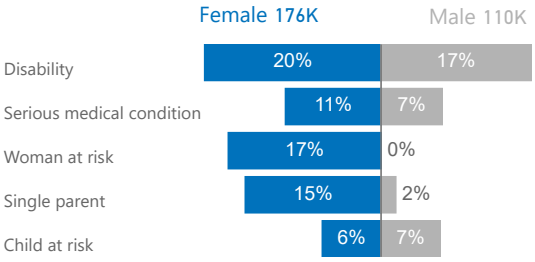
Population by settlement



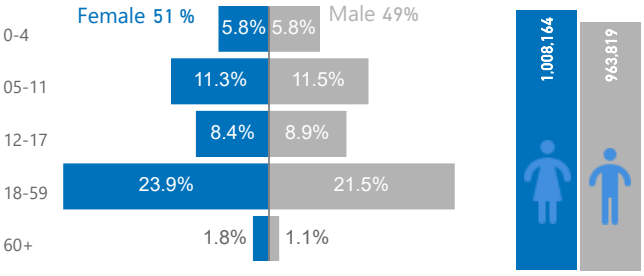
New arrival registration trend (last 6 months)



Most Common Specific Needs



Age & Gender Breakdown



Since the start of the year, 153,933 individuals seeking asylum, including 73,586 from the DR Congo, 47,804 from South Sudan, and 27,525 from Sudan have been registered in Uganda. 29,010 new births were also registered during the year. In total the population increased by 4,797 individuals (0.2%) from last month. Since the start of the conflict in Sudan in Mid-April 2023, 89,368 Sudanese fleeing the conflict have been registered in Uganda. Similarly, the situation in the DR Congo has resulted in increased arrivals into Uganda. There are currently 649,072 registered DR Congolese in Uganda, up 87,192 since end 2024.

Source: Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) / proGres

Creation date: 05-Jan-2026

Information management enabling UNHCR to fulfill its mandate in planning for refugees and the forcibly displaced

Uganda hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, and managing such a complex operation depends on information that is timely, reliable and actionable. At the heart of this effort is the Information Management Unit (IMU), which ensures that data drives planning, coordination and response across all settlements. By supporting the Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP), IMU helps government institutions and humanitarian partners align their interventions with real, evidence-based needs.

Through advanced tools in data analysis and visualization, Geographical Information System (GIS), and innovative technologies such as MS Power BI, ArcGIS, Artificial Intelligence, and other Microsoft tools, IMU provides weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports that offer insights into population trends, sector performance, and emerging challenges. Real-time tracking of new arrivals enables settlements to plan reception capacity and essential services effectively.

Underfunding dashboard

In response to the recent global funding reductions that significantly impacted the operation, the IMU developed an underfunding dashboard to provide clear, evidence-based insights on how these cuts affected service delivery within the refugee response while tracking a key indicators matrix, especially in the receiving settlements. This tool became instrumental in advocacy and fundraising efforts, enabling partners to visualize the scale of impact and strengthen the case for additional resources.

Impact of Underfunding Indicators Tracking Matrix
This dashboard provides a comprehensive view of key indicators affected by underfunding in Uganda as of Q4 2025, enabling stakeholders to monitor gaps and prioritize interventions.

Integration cost Analysis

To support Uganda's integration agenda, IMU collaborated with key stakeholders to analyze both immediate and long-term costs required to integrate essential services - such as health, education, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) into the national systems. These analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of the financial implications, helping inform planning and resource mobilization for sustainable service delivery within government structures.

Working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), United Nations (UN) agencies and partners, IMU transforms data into action, technology into solutions, and evidence into advocacy, making it the backbone of informed decision-making in Uganda's refugee response.

Water Transition Cost Plan - 2025 - *This document provides an overview of water integration costs for the refugee locations.*

Health Transition Cost Plan - 2025 - *This document provides an overview of the Health integration costs for the refugee locations.*

Education Integration Cost Plan – 2025 - *This document provides an overview of the Education integration costs for the refugee locations.*

UCRRP information center - *This info center provides access to key documents and resources related to the UCRRP.*

AIRD staff load relief items onto a truck at the UNHCR warehouse in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Importance of flexible funding

UNHCR is supported by dozens of States, hundreds of companies, and individual donors. What they share is compassion, generosity, and a desire to improve the lives of people who have been forced to flee or who are stateless. Many donors are motivated by a particular cause, something that touched them and spurred them to contribute, and they ask UNHCR to put their funds to good use in relation to that cause. In this way, many of the funds that UNHCR receives are "earmarked" or dedicated to a particular country or a specific project. This is a vital lifeline for millions of people who are in need.

But instead of earmarking their support to an emergency or operation or theme, many donors contribute "flexible funding" to UNHCR and its mandate as a whole: this is funding as an expression of trust in the Office; as an expression of solidarity with the people the Office serves; and funding which is reflective of good humanitarian donorship and other international principles and commitments. It allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how it responds to needs, and where.

As a humanitarian agency mandated to provide protection and assistance to forcibly displaced and stateless populations, UNHCR's impact is dependent on its ability to respond swiftly and flexibly. If UNHCR has to wait until resources are raised to respond, precious time and opportunities to make a difference and save lives would be lost. As a rights-based agency, UNHCR's ability to protect those most affected is core - and is deeply linked to its informed understanding of those who are most vulnerable and most at risk. Flexible funding enables needs-based programming and direction of resources based on a holistic assessment of the intersections of needs, vulnerabilities and risks, both present and future. This is because flexible funding supports all programmatic areas and allows for strategic and proactive planning and response.

During 2025 , flexible funding enabled UNHCR to respond to critical needs of refugees in Uganda in underfunded sectors such health, education and emergency response to newly-arrived refugees and asylum seekers, including through reception services and cash-based assistance.

UNHCR would like to express its gratitude to donors who provided unearmarked funding in 2025: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, España con ACNUR, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Private donors in Italy, Private donors in Sweden, Private donors in the Netherlands, Private donors in the Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (UK).

Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees Hon. Hilary Onek (centre), Commissioner for Refugees Patrick Okello, and UNHCR Representative Matthew Crentsil with other participants at the forum.

Uganda Hosts 11th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), spotlight on refugee economic inclusion

The 11th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-11) was held in Uganda under the theme, *"Driving Job Creation and Economic Growth through Sustainable, Inclusive Science and Evidence-Based Solutions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063"* from 9-11 April 2025. A key side event focused on refugee inclusion in Uganda and the region titled, *"Driving Job Creation and Economic Growth Through Evidence-Based Private Sector Solutions in Refugee-Hosting Areas."*

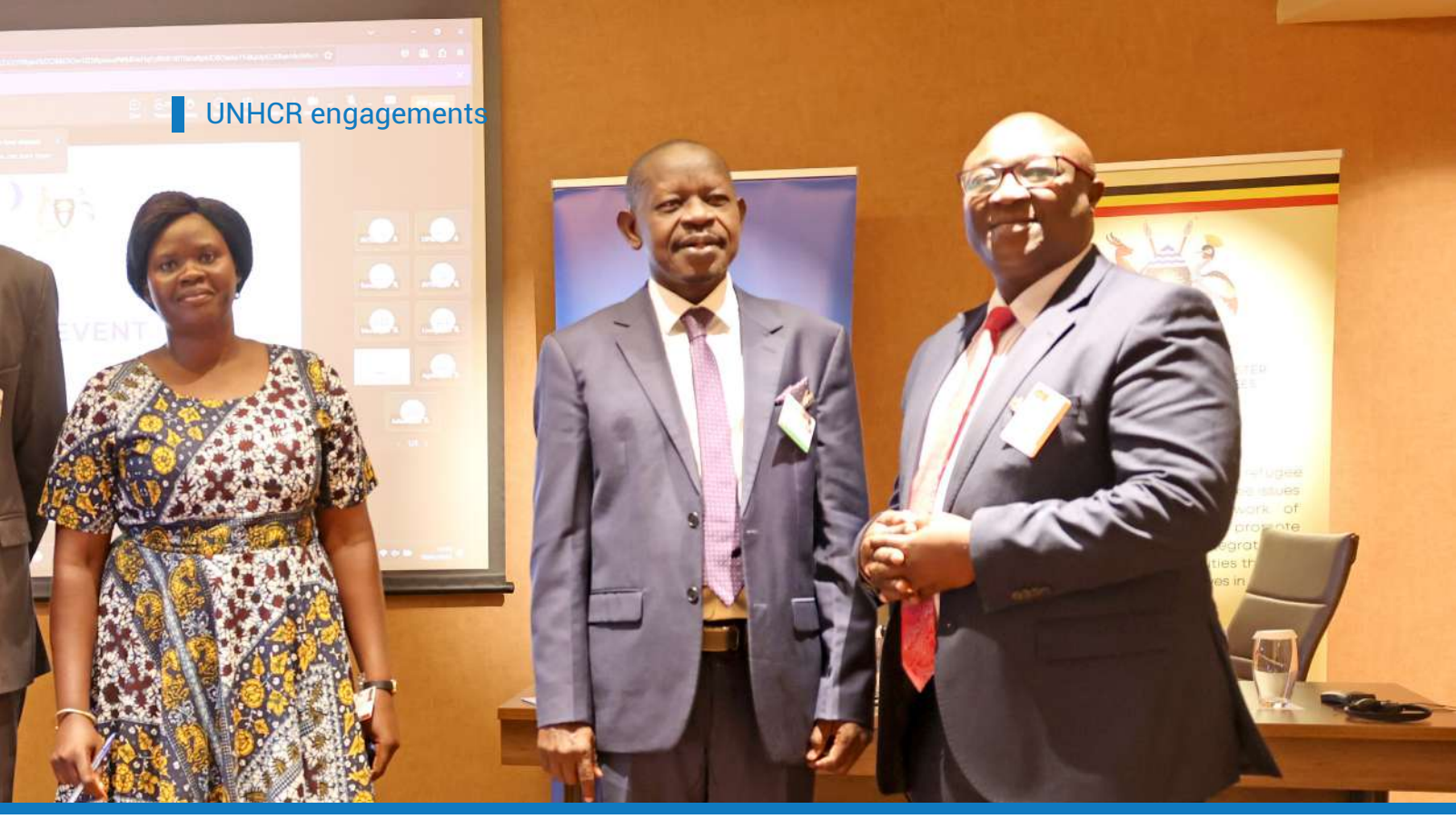
Moderated by UNHCR's Representative in Uganda Matthew Crentsil, the event brought together government officials, development partners and private sector leaders to explore strategies for economic empowerment in refugee-hosting communities.

Highlights included;

UN Resident Coordinator emphasized integrating refugees into national development plans and praised Uganda's open-door policy.

Honourable Minister. Hillary Onek, Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to granting refugees access to work and education, while warning of severe funding gaps amid rising refugee numbers.

Ms. Maja Lazic from the World Bank–UNHCR Joint Data Center delivered a keynote stressing the need for robust data to guide economic inclusion policies.



A dynamic panel featured the Commissioner for Refugees, Patrick Okello, Apollo Muyanja Mbazzira from the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and Nancy Jurua Mary, a refugee entrepreneur from Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, with strategic interventions by the Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees Hon. Hilary Onek.

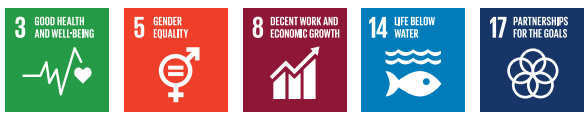
The discussion underscored the urgent need to integrate refugees into economic frameworks, foster private sector engagement, and strengthen collaboration between governments, humanitarian agencies and businesses. Inclusive refugee policies and harmonized socio-economic data were highlighted as catalysts for sustainable growth, directly contributing to SDG 8 on "Decent Work and Economic Growth."

Jointly organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Government of Uganda, in partnership with the African Union Commission, African Development Bank and UN agencies, the event showcased evidence of how private sector solutions can drive job creation and economic resilience in refugee-hosting areas.

"Within the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU), we are also working on our own private sector catalytic fund that will provide capital to businesses that are investing in refugee hosting areas" says Mr. Apollo Muyanja Mbazzira, Project Director PSFU.

ARFSD-11 offered a critical review of progress and challenges in advancing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, spotlighting five priority SDGs: Health (SDG 3), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work (SDG 8), Life Below Water (SDG 14), and Partnerships (SDG 17). These goals are not just targets, they represent the foundation for resilience, equity, and shared prosperity across Africa. As the region moves forward, collaboration and innovation will be key to turning commitments into tangible results for millions of people.

#ARFSD11#Agenda2030.



The Global Refugee Forum national stocktake meeting

Uganda is widely recognized as a global leader in refugee protection, hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world and maintaining a progressive policy framework that upholds the rights and self-reliance of those fleeing conflict and persecution. This leadership was reaffirmed at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), where the Government of Uganda, as a co-convenor, made ambitious and forward-looking pledges to strengthen the sustainability of its refugee response. These commitments were organized around five priority areas: Increasing Resilience and Self-Reliance; Addressing Environment, Climate Change and Energy Challenges; Localizing the Refugee Response; Securing Durable Solutions; and Transition Management.

To assess progress, the Government of Uganda, through the CRRF Secretariat and with support from UNHCR, held a National GRF Stocktake meeting from 4–6 November 2025 at Speke Resort Munyonyo. This first-of-its-kind regional exercise reviewed achievements made since the GRF 2023, identified implementation challenges, and outlined a collective way forward. It was complemented by a Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus Forum, convened by the Government, JICA and UNDP, to highlight Uganda's progress on the HDP Nexus and promote further collaboration. The three-day review also served as formal preparation for the GRF Progress Review Meeting in Geneva in December 2025.

Overall, Uganda is on track to achieve at least

50%

of its GRF commitments by

2027

with eight targets already met and 21 progressing well.

Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees Hon. Hilary Onek (centre, in light grey suit) with other participants at the stocktaking meeting.

UNHCR engagements

The Stocktake brought together government ministries, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, development partners, the private sector, and refugee representatives. Participants reviewed data, shared lessons learned, identified good practices, and agreed on key actions to accelerate progress.

Uganda has taken several notable steps since 2023. The Government launched the Uganda Self-Reliance Index (SRI) in November 2025, establishing a national minimum standard for measuring the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and partners established three Regional Job Centres in Mbarara, Arua and Lira, along with seven Satellite Job Stations. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and partners supported more than 103,000 smallholder farmers to adopt climate-smart agriculture practices and successfully established over 20 agricultural value chains, surpassing the initial target of 15. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives developed inclusive market access policies, contributing to an average refugee allocation of 39% in market stalls across hosting districts, well above the 10% pledge.

In the area of climate and environment, a major achievement was the launch of the Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan II (WESRRP II), which incorporates Uganda's GRF pledges. Work is ongoing to include refugee considerations in Uganda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0. Additional initiatives include an MoU between OPM, MWE and UNHCR to transition water supply systems from humanitarian to public utility management.

Progress has also been made in localizing the refugee response. A total of USD 73.3 million in programme funding has been channeled in 2024/2025 to national and local actors, and development of a National Localization Strategy led by the Government of Uganda is underway to embed localization commitments into national planning and operational frameworks.

Since December 2023, 25,240 individuals have accessed durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, complementary pathways and resettlement, representing around 2% of the refugee population. Voluntary return remains the preferred but most complex solution, relying on conditions in countries of origin.

Uganda has advanced in transition planning. The draft National Transition Strategy (NTS) and sector roadmaps were endorsed by the CRRF Steering Group in March 2025. The NTS sets out a pathway with preparatory, development, and sustainable operations phases for the transition of health, water and education to government systems.

Overall, Uganda is on track to achieve at least 50% of its GRF commitments by 2027, with eight targets already met and 21 progressing well. However, 14 targets are lagging and five show no progress, underscoring the need to accelerate implementation. Under the pledge on Increasing Resilience and Self-Reliance, Uganda has already achieved 79% of its target, with over 20 livelihood initiatives launched and 237,114 economic opportunities generated, benefiting 126,213 refugees and 97,296 host community members.

Since December 2023, 25,240 individuals have accessed durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, complementary pathways and resettlement, representing around 2% of the refugee population.

The access center supporting refugees living in Kampala

Mahda at the Kansanga Refugee Access Center.

"When I shared my struggles as a single mother, my caseworker listened and helped me access support through NRC. "

Mahda Salem Ali, a Yemen refugee living in Kampala.

In April 2025, a new Refugee Access Center opened in Kansanga, Makindye Division, Kampala District, providing a vital workspace for humanitarian partners supporting refugees. Key partners include the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), UNHCR's urban protection partner; Refugee Law Project (RLP) for child protection; African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD) for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) response; and Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) as the health partner. Together, these organizations work to strengthen coordination and collaboration in refugee interventions.

The Center serves thousands refugees living in urban Kampala. It is easily accessible to refugees across the city, primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi, Rwanda, and other nationalities.

The Center's establishment marked a major step toward easing long-standing tensions between refugees and host communities by creating a shared platform for meaningful engagement.

It brings together organizations such as REPSSI, Justice Centers Uganda, Local Council structures, Refugee-Led Organizations, and community members to address key refugee-related issues, including protection, education, livelihoods, business registration, counseling, mental health, women and children at risk, tenancy challenges, and access to justice.

Mbajja Christine Lydia, the Chairperson of Heritage Village, where the Access Center is located and a position she has held since 2009, explained,

Christine, Chairperson of Heritage Village.

"The establishment of the Access Center marked a significant milestone since the refugees got a place to raise their concerns directly. Local leaders, refugees and other residents have a direct link to information, guidance and support systems for refugee and host-community engagement. Through such efforts, peaceful co-existence is established."

Under the broader Spoke-and-Hub model, the Kansanga Hub coordinates protection services, health referrals, and case management for refugees across Kampala. It works closely with a network of community desks, the "Spokes", that bring services closer to where refugees live. These desks facilitate information sharing, early identification of protection concerns, vulnerability screening, and referrals to national service providers and the Hub

The Center hosts key outreach activities, including Eritrean and Ethiopian Town Halls convened by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to promote peaceful coexistence.

The Center has also significantly reduced the number of refugees waiting outside UNHCR's Kampala offices by providing many essential services on-site and compliments the works of other centers managed by operational partners.

The Center offers dedicated training space for partners, an increasingly valuable resource amid ongoing funding constraints. By hosting meetings, workshops, and capacity-building sessions on-site, organizations have significantly reduced venue hire costs while maintaining the quality and frequency of their trainings.

Refugees wait to receive services at the Kansanga Access Center in Kampala.

Community leaders interact with OPM and UNHCR staff at the Kansanga Access Centre during a child protection training.

Local Government dialogue sessions on child protection

To strengthen coordination and harmonization between Uganda's national and humanitarian child protection systems, a three-day capacity building training and dialogue was held from 8th–10th April 2025 in Kampala. The event brought together Local Council (LC1) leaders from Kisenyi wards in Kampala Central Division, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) child protection officials, refugee community leaders, UNHCR, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

Importance of LC Participation

The participation of LCs was essential as they serve as the first line of governance and play a vital role in identifying, referring and addressing child protection concerns at the community level. Their engagement bridges the gap between national policies and the day-to-day realities of refugee hosting areas, ensuring that child protection services are accessible and inclusive for both host and refugee children.

Dialogue Objectives and Topics

The dialogue aimed to align national and refugee child protection case management systems, improve coordination between government and humanitarian actors and equip participants with practical tools for effective referral, reporting and case management. Key topics covered included the Uganda National Child Policy (2020) pillars (prevention, response and reporting) and key mechanisms such as Sauti 116 and the Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM). Participants also analyzed challenges such as coordination gaps, unclear communication channels and mistrust between host and refugee structures.

Outcomes and commitments

Interactive sessions and group discussions encouraged leaders to develop actionable strategies for stronger collaboration and integration of services. By the end of the dialogue sessions, participants committed to promoting child rights, strengthening referral pathways and conducting awareness campaigns to improve the host community understanding of protection mechanisms. Overall, the session underscored that sustainable child protection requires shared responsibility, coordinated leadership and continuous capacity building to ensure that all children, refugee and host alike, are safe, included and supported.

Child protection explained

Child protection refers to the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. It ensures that every child's right to safety, dignity and development is upheld. In Uganda, child protection is particularly important within refugee-hosting communities where displacement and vulnerability heighten risks to children's welfare. In Uganda, refugee children constitute approximately **52% of the total population of about 1.9 million people.**

UNHCR in Uganda & Contacts

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, works to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees all over the world.

UNHCR's purpose is to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge from war and persecution. UNHCR also protects stateless persons.

In all its activities, UNHCR pays attention to the needs of children and seeks to promote the equal rights of women and girls.

The Government of Uganda leads the response to protect and assist refugees and asylum-seekers in Uganda. UNHCR provides direct operational support, capacity building, and technical advice to the Ugandan authorities.

As the refugee agency, UNHCR, jointly with the Government, also coordinates the efforts of UN agencies and partners to support Uganda's refugee response and to avoid gaps in assistance. In Uganda, UNHCR delivers services and assistance through partner organisations.

In Uganda, UNHCR has the following offices:

- UNHCR Representation Office in Uganda: Plot 11/13, Mackenzie Close, Off Mackenzie Vale, Kololo, P.O. Box 3813 Kampala
- Sub-Offices in Adjumani, Arua, and Mbarara
- Field Offices / Units in Kampala, Kiryandongo, Kisoro, Kyaka, Kyangwali, Lamwo, Moyo, Nakivale, Rwamwanja, and Yumbe

How to contact UNHCR in Uganda?

To get in touch with UNHCR or partners for any queries or requests for assistance and support, please call the toll-free inter-agency Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM):

*Please note that **ALL** services delivered by UNHCR and partners, including registration, are provided for **FREE.***

https://help.unhcr.org/Uganda
Helpline.uganda@unhcr.org

Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM)

Call the FRRM Helpline 0800 322 222

Operating seven days a week, the Helpline set up by UNHCR addresses urgent needs, offers guidance and connects individuals to essential services like child protection, ensuring that refugees receive the assistance they require to navigate challenging circumstances.

Managed by UNHCR and partners, the FRRM Helpline operates to support refugees and asylum seekers across Uganda. It provides accurate information, guidance and referrals to essential services such as child protection, education, legal aid and health. The system ensures timely assistance and helps individuals navigate humanitarian and government support structures effectively.

SAUTI 116 (Toll-Free Child Helpline)

Sauti
Report Child Abuse
CALL 116 TOLL FREE

Operated by the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the SAUTI 116 Helpline offers 24-hour confidential support for reporting child abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. It links callers directly to district probation officers and social workers, ensuring rapid response and protection for children in need.

Group photo of participants during the PROSPECTS study tour in Kampala.

Advancing refugee inclusion in national child protection systems

UNHCR–UNICEF workshop and study tour in Uganda

The inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems is a strategic priority for UNHCR globally and in Uganda. In line with this commitment, UNHCR and UNICEF jointly convened a Workshop and Study Tour on Inclusive Child Protection Systems in Policy and Practice in December in Kampala, Uganda.

Uganda was selected as the host country due to its progressive and inclusive refugee response model and its status as one of Africa's largest refugee-hosting countries. The country also reflects a long-standing partnership between UNHCR and UNICEF in advancing child protection and refugee inclusion.

The event was organized under the PROSPECTS initiative, a partnership funded by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank. It brought together 45 participants from eight PROSPECTS countries — Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, and Uganda — including government ministries responsible for child protection and refugee affairs, representatives of the Netherlands Embassy in Uganda, and UNHCR and UNICEF staff.

The engagement aimed to strengthen the inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems by connecting policy dialogue with practical field experience.

The workshop was officially opened on 1 December 2025 with remarks from Matthew Crentsil, UNHCR Country Representative in Uganda; Robin Nandy, UNICEF Country Representative in Uganda; Fred Ngabirano, Commissioner for Youth and Children Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Agea Sarah, Community Services Officer from the Office of the Prime Minister, Department of Refugees, and Her Excellency Frederieke Quispel, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Uganda.

The workshop provided a platform to exchange promising policies and practices, discuss challenges, and identify innovations to strengthen refugee-inclusive child protection systems. The study tour offered practical insights through visits to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and the Sauti National Child Helpline, where participants engaged with probation officers, para-social workers, community leaders, police, and other stakeholders. These interactions demonstrated how Uganda's child protection system serves both refugee and host community children.

On the final day, country teams developed action plans and reaffirmed their commitment to advancing refugee inclusion in national child protection systems.

Disability inclusion in Uganda

Leaving no one behind

Uganda hosts the largest refugee populations in Africa and faces persistent development and humanitarian challenges that disproportionately affect persons with disabilities. In this context, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) works to ensure that disability inclusion is a core principle across humanitarian and development responses. Grounded in a rights-based approach and aligned with national and international frameworks, HI's work in Uganda seeks to address systemic barriers while strengthening the participation, dignity and autonomy of persons with disabilities.

A beneficiary is assisted in fitting a prosthesis provided by the 3D Petra Project under Humanity & Inclusion.

A context of persistent exclusion

Disability prevalence in Uganda is significant, affecting more than one in ten people, with higher rates among older persons and populations affected by poverty, displacement, and conflict according to the Disability Status report 2019/2020-2021/2022. Despite a strong legal framework, including the Persons with Disabilities Act (2020) and Uganda's ratification of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, many persons with disabilities including refugees continue to face limited access to health care, education, livelihoods, and humanitarian assistance. Structural barriers, stigma, insufficient accessibility, and gaps in service delivery remain widespread, particularly in rural and refugee-hosting areas.

Strengthening inclusive services and social participation

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) addresses these challenges through an integrated and cross-sectoral approach. In the health sector, HI supports inclusive health systems by strengthening service accessibility, improving provider capacity, and addressing physical, attitudinal, and communication barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing care. This includes a strong focus on rehabilitation and assistive technology, where unmet needs remain extremely high and services are often centralized and unaffordable for most. Through partnerships with public institutions, non-state actors, and community-based rehabilitation networks, HI works to expand access to functional rehabilitation and promote independence and participation.

Importance of refugee registration

Refugee registration is a cornerstone of protection and assistance in humanitarian operations. For UNHCR, and especially the Government of Uganda (GoU), registration is not merely an administrative process, it is the primary protection tool that ensures Forcefully Displaced and Stateless Persons (FDSPs) are recognized and safeguarded under international law. By establishing a clear legal identity and status, FDSPs gain the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity and security.

OPM is responsible for the registration and issuance of documentation for all new arrivals while UNHCR provides advice including technical and financial support to all facilities. Maintaining up-to-date registration records and the continuity of registration and documentation play a key role in helping OPM, UNHCR and humanitarian partners to inform and design their programmes, protection, and solutions.

Through registration, the GoU, UNHCR and its partners can identify FDSPs, assess their vulnerabilities and specific needs and tailor interventions accordingly. This process generates reliable data that is essential for planning, programming and individual case management, enabling Implementing and operational partners to allocate resources effectively and design targeted assistance programs.

Registration also serves as a gateway to critical services and assistance. It can provide refugees with access to documentation, where refugee identity cards are issued to all refugees aged 16 and above, family refugee attestations issued to all registered refugee households and asylum seeker certificates issued to asylum seekers, all these are vital for legal recognition and protection against refoulement (forced return), arbitrary arrest, and detention. Moreover, documentation fosters freedom of movement, allowing refugees to become more independent and pursue education and livelihood opportunities.

Beyond immediate protection, registration opens pathways to durable solutions, such as resettlement or voluntary repatriation when conditions permit. In essence, refugee registration is the foundation upon which protection, assistance, and solutions are built. It transforms displacement from a state of invisibility into one of recognition, ensuring that every individual is counted, protected, and given a chance for a better future. Registration is vital to protect their rights in the host country, facilitate their freedom of movement, access to public services and to advance solutions.

General information about protection

UNHCR plays an essential role in supporting the international protection of refugees and others forced to flee their countries or habitual residences. UNHCR's mandate is rooted in international humanitarian law that ensures the safety, dignity, and well-being of refugees. UNHCR collaborates with host countries and humanitarian actors to uphold rights and seek practical long-term solutions to the prospect of protracted exile. As part of its global mandate, UNHCR advocates for safe and timely access to asylum. In Uganda, UNHCR works closely with the Government to strengthen fair, efficient, and protection-sensitive asylum procedures. This collaboration includes capacity building for asylum authorities, technical guidance on refugee status determination, support to registration and documentation and advisory engagement on legal and policy frameworks aligned with international standards. These efforts contribute to stronger national asylum systems, improved data management, and dignified access to protection for those seeking asylum.

Once refugee status is granted, a significant aspect of UNHCR's efforts is the provision of legal services to refugees including detention monitoring, access to mobile court services in settlements, sensitization on Ugandan and refugee law, counseling, and legal representation. These interventions provide an environment in which refugees can live productive, dignified lives while in Uganda. Additionally, by supporting community structures, UNHCR ensures a community-based approach to meeting the various protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers. In Uganda, with its progressive refugee rights regime, UNHCR is able to work with the Government to promote localization of the refugee response by engaging local actors to assume roles in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees.

Concurrently, UNHCR coordinates efforts towards voluntary return of refugees to peaceful countries of origin, local integration of refugees living in protracted exile, and the resettlement of refugees to third countries to provide durable solutions to the challenges of forced displacement. Recently, UNHCR's support to refugees seeking complementary pathways to socioeconomic opportunities and family reunification in developed countries has been added to traditional durable solutions.

UNHCR is the principal organization mandated to address the plight of stateless persons – individuals who are not considered nationals by any country under the operation of its laws. In this role, UHNCR has supported the Government to address the problem of statelessness among its population by providing technical guidance and resources to conduct research and a national census to identify persons affected by statelessness such that they can enjoy their fundamental right to a nationality. Refugee protection and the eradication of statelessness are the core mandates of UNHCR's and will remain the organization's focus until the plight of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons is resolved.

Strengthening MHPSS integration into refugee protection

Members of the Kampala MHPSS Technical Working Group, including UNHCR and partners, pose for a group photo at UNHCR office in Kampala.

A renewed focus on refugee well-being

UNHCR Uganda and its partners continue to advance efforts to integrate Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into programming across refugee settlements. This integration ensures that the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities is addressed alongside broader protection, health, and socio-economic needs. Guided by UNHCR's commitment to holistic, survivor-centered, and rights-based protection, the approach guarantees access to coordinated, culturally appropriate, and community-based MHPSS services. By doing so, it strengthens resilience, enhances coping capacities, and promotes overall well-being for all population groups of concern.

Integrating MHPSS into child protection systems

Building on UNHCR's commitment to holistic, survivor-centered, and rights-based protection, these efforts are guided by the MHPSS–Child Protection Framework, which emphasizes inter-sectoral collaboration across health, education, and protection sectors. Partners such as UNICEF, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Uganda, Save the Children, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Tutapona, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have led interventions including Child-Friendly Spaces, Psychological First Aid, peer support networks, and family-strengthening programs.

These actions follow UNHCR's Six Key Steps for integrating MHPSS in child protection: Coordinate, Disseminate, Orient, Provide, Support, and Promote—each reinforcing the next to ensure sustainability from coordination to advocacy.

Tackling GBV through sports and dialogue in urban settings

"True protection begins when every voice silenced by violence is heard, every survivor is empowered, and every act of courage sparks hope" – Chikuru Meshack, urban refugee in Uganda from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

UNHCR recognizes the participation of forcibly displaced persons as critical for sustained efforts towards gender equality and GBV prevention. In Kampala, UNHCR with funding from the "Safe from the Start" (SftS) initiative supported People for Peace and Defence of Rights (PPDR) to advance innovative programming and complement ongoing GBV prevention efforts that tackle harmful social norms.

Founded in 2011, PPDR is a registered nonprofit organization serving refugees and their hosting communities. Led by people with lived displacement experiences from DRC, South Sudan, and Somalia, PPDR advances refugee rights, dignity, and self-reliance through programs in education, livelihoods, advocacy, mental health, GBV prevention and women empowerment.

Operating at the intersection of humanitarian response and community leadership, PPDR bridges service gaps and champions refugee-led solutions. The organization's ethos is grounded in the belief that interventions should go beyond meeting immediate needs; those most affected must lead the change.

During the 16 Days of Activism campaign against GBV, PPDR harnessed the unifying power of sport and community dialogue to raise awareness on GBV in Kampala.

"Sport can be used as a tool to raise GBV awareness, this brings men and women together and in this we tell men that; Real men don't kick women; they kick the ball". Joyeux Mugisho, Executive Director – PPDR.

The activities were carried out in the vibrant communities of Makindye Division in Kampala, home to more than 75,000 urban refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, the DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Burundi, and other nationalities. Through spirited football and netball tournaments, the initiative bridged divides between refugees and host communities and fostered a shared commitment to safety and respect for all.

With 377 participants — teenagers and adults forming eight football and four netball teams — the tournaments went beyond sport to become vibrant community gatherings. Spectators engaged with GBV and child protection messages displayed on jerseys, banners, and placards, while commentators reinforced these themes through live sports commentary, extending the reach of each session.

General information about Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

With a focus on transforming harmful gender norms and behaviours, the GBV sector has prioritized strengthening an inclusive national system capable of effectively preventing and responding to GBV across refugee-hosting areas. By the end of 2025, a cumulative total of 5,189 GBV incidents had been recorded, representing a 26% increase compared to the 4,103 incidents reported at the end of 2024. While stakeholders acknowledge that reported figures do not fully capture the actual scale of GBV due to underreporting, the data nonetheless provides important insight into the prevalence and trends of GBV. The situation has been further exacerbated by reductions in food rations, which have contributed to a notable rise in incidents related to intimate partner violence and denial of resources.

Women and girls remain disproportionately affected, accounting for 98% of reported survivors, while men represent 2%. Reporting delays remain a concern, with 29% of incidents reported more than one month after occurrence and 23% reported within three days.

Despite significant challenges, including severe underfunding in 2025, the GBV sector continued to make progress through strengthened coordination and partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), UN agencies, and refugee women-led organizations. These efforts enhanced community awareness of GBV, reaching over 443,886 individuals by the end of October 2025. Improved access to GBV services was reflected in 1,476 satisfaction surveys, with 95% of survivors reporting satisfaction with the assistance received. Ongoing efforts to integrate humanitarian and national systems have contributed to greater sustainability and reduced fragmentation of services, thereby lowering barriers to access. UNHCR has also continued to engage men and boys as allies in GBV prevention, promoting positive behaviour change and challenging harmful social and cultural norms.

***By the end of* 2025**, a cumulative total of

5,189 GBV incidents had been recorded, representing a

26% increase compared to the

4,103 incidents reported at the end of 2024.

Abdalla Eisa Mohamed is a refugee, volunteer teacher, and translator who fled Sudan and now lives in Uganda. He currently supports his community through volunteer work in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

> *We have never had problems sharing services with Ugandan nationals.*
>
> *Grace Yangi*

Grace at Ocea Health Center.

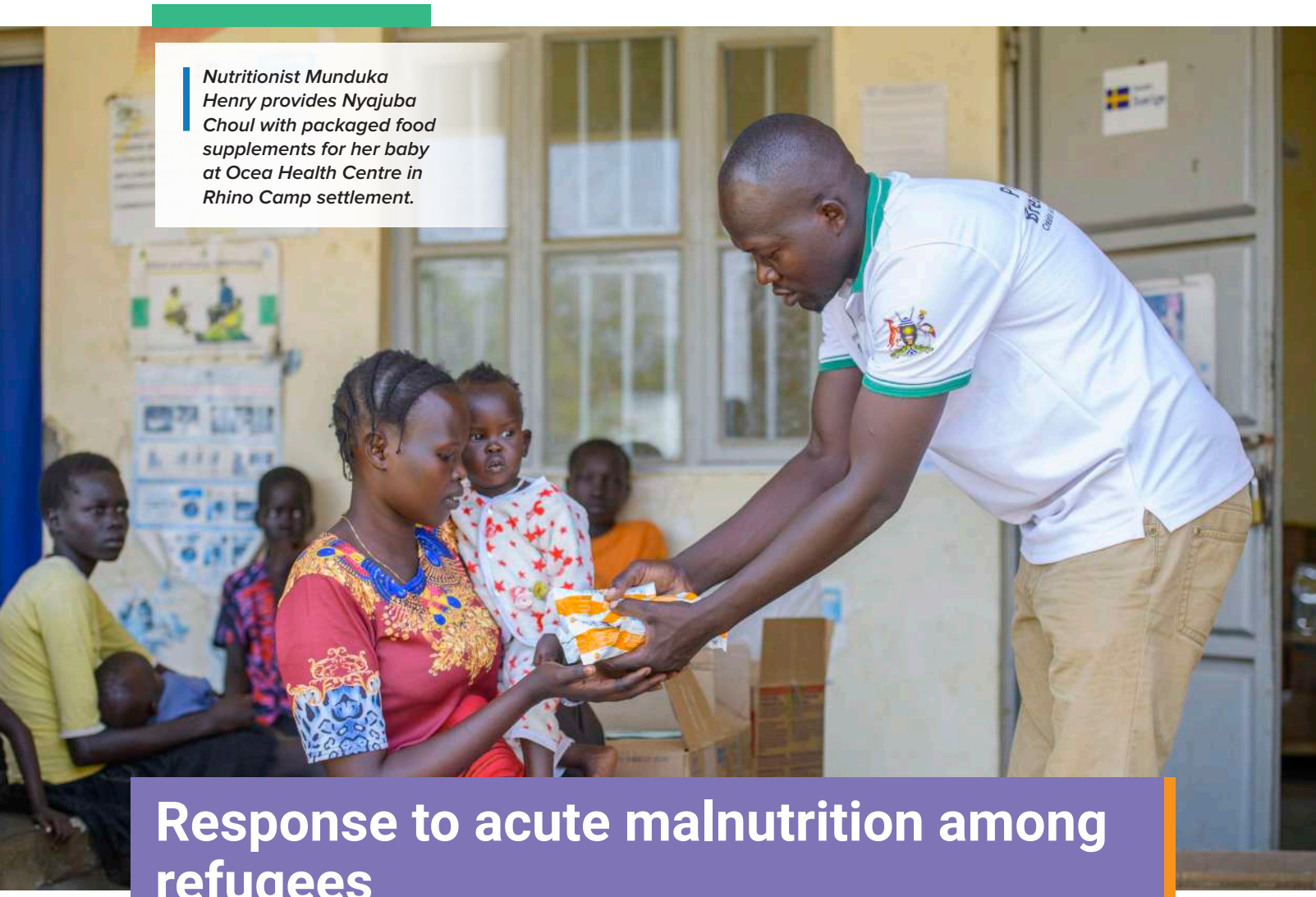
Health services uniting refugees and host communities

My name is Grace Yangi, a South Sudanese refugee living in Ocea C. I am 27 years old, a mother of four. I brought my baby to Ocea Health Centre for vaccination.

I first came to Ocea Health Centre when I was pregnant. I delivered my youngest child here three months ago, and the experience stayed with me. The midwife who attended to me was friendly and patient, and she took time to explain important pregnancy safety precautions. That care made me feel safe and respected. Today, I have returned with my son for his vaccination, confident in the services offered here.

Last year, I also brought one of my children here after he contracted measles. We were admitted, he received treatment, and he recovered well. I don't come to the health centre only for my children. I also seek healthcare services for myself. Even though the health centre has only a few staff, the services are good. They have proper machines for testing, and the health workers take their time with us.

We have never had problems sharing services with Ugandan nationals. We meet here often, sharing conversations as we wait for care. Our dialects are very similar to those spoken by the nationals in this area, so communication is easy. Because of my experience, I refer my friends to Ocea Health Centre whenever they have health issues, and I would encourage even more people to come. It is a place where refugees and nationals receive care side by side.



Nutritionist Munduka Henry provides Nyajuba Choul with packaged food supplements for her baby at Ocea Health Centre in Rhino Camp settlement.

Response to acute malnutrition among refugees

Acute malnutrition rates among children under five years and pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) rose to critical levels at transit and reception centers between March and May 2025, largely driven by the surge in new arrivals. The most affected sites included Kabazana Reception Center (RC), Nyakabande Transit Center (TC), Matanda TC, Nyumanzi RC, and Kiryandongo RC.

In response, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH), District Local Governments (DLGs), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners scaled up essential health and nutrition services. These interventions included the deployment of surge human resources, prepositioning of nutrition commodities and medicines, essential health services such as vaccination and referral services, and the distribution of hot meals. Point-of-arrival and bi-weekly mass nutrition screenings were conducted to rapidly identify malnourished children and women and ensure timely enrolment into treatment services for acute malnutrition.

Given the persistently critical malnutrition levels, UNHCR coordinated with WFP to ensure Blanket Supplementary Feeding (BSF) across five high-burden transit and reception centers, targeting all children under five and Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women. BSF aimed to prevent further deterioration of nutritional status while treatment services addressed both severe and moderate acute malnutrition. These nutrition-specific interventions were complemented by

nutrition counselling and support for breastfeeding mothers and caregivers, essential health services, including routine immunization, malaria prevention and treatment, hot meals, and expedited relocations to settlements.

By November 2025, notable improvements in malnutrition rates were recorded across the targeted sites: Kabazana RC declined from 21.5% in April to 7.2% in November; Nyakabande TC from 17.3% in April to 7.7% in November; Matanda TC from 18.5% in April to 15.4% in November; Nyumanzi RC from 29.9% in March to 10.3% in December; and Kiryandongo from 29.7% in June to 7.1% in November.

Overall, treatment services reached 868 children with severe acute malnutrition, 2,647 children with moderate acute malnutrition, and 1,025 women with acute malnutrition. In addition, BSF supported 13,269 children and 3,572 women across the transit and reception centers.

The 2025 health and nutrition response underscores the effectiveness of timely, coordinated action among key stakeholders in mitigating malnutrition in refugee emergencies.

By November 2025, notable improvements in malnutrition rates were recorded across the targeted sites:

Kabazana RC declined from

21.5% in April to
7.2% in November

Nyakabande TC from

17.3% in April to
7.7% in November

Matanda TC from

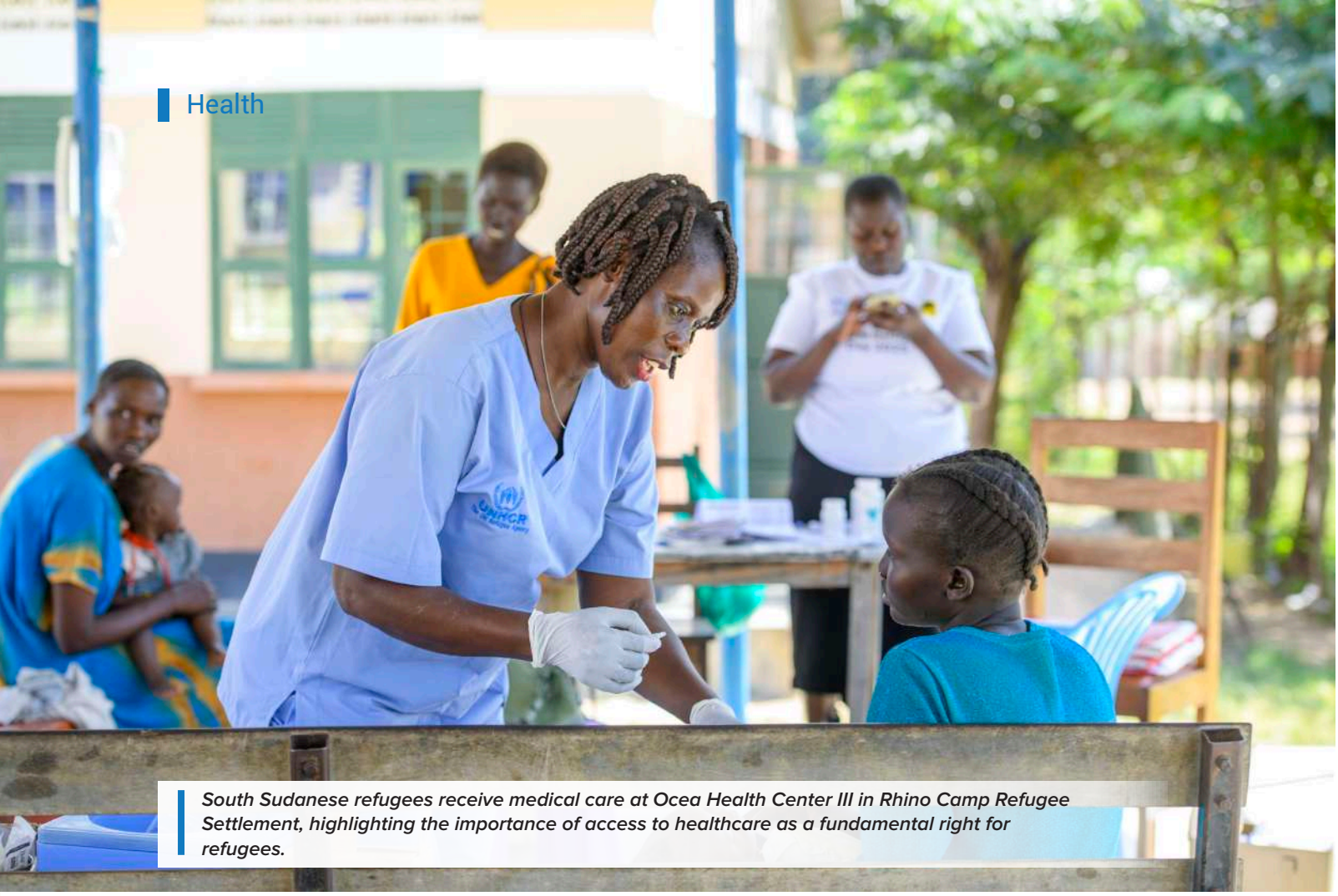
18.5% in April to
15.4% in November

Nyumanzi RC from

29.9% in March to
10.3% in December

Kiryandongo from

29.7% in June to
7.1% in November



South Sudanese refugees receive medical care at Ocea Health Center III in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement, highlighting the importance of access to healthcare as a fundamental right for refugees.

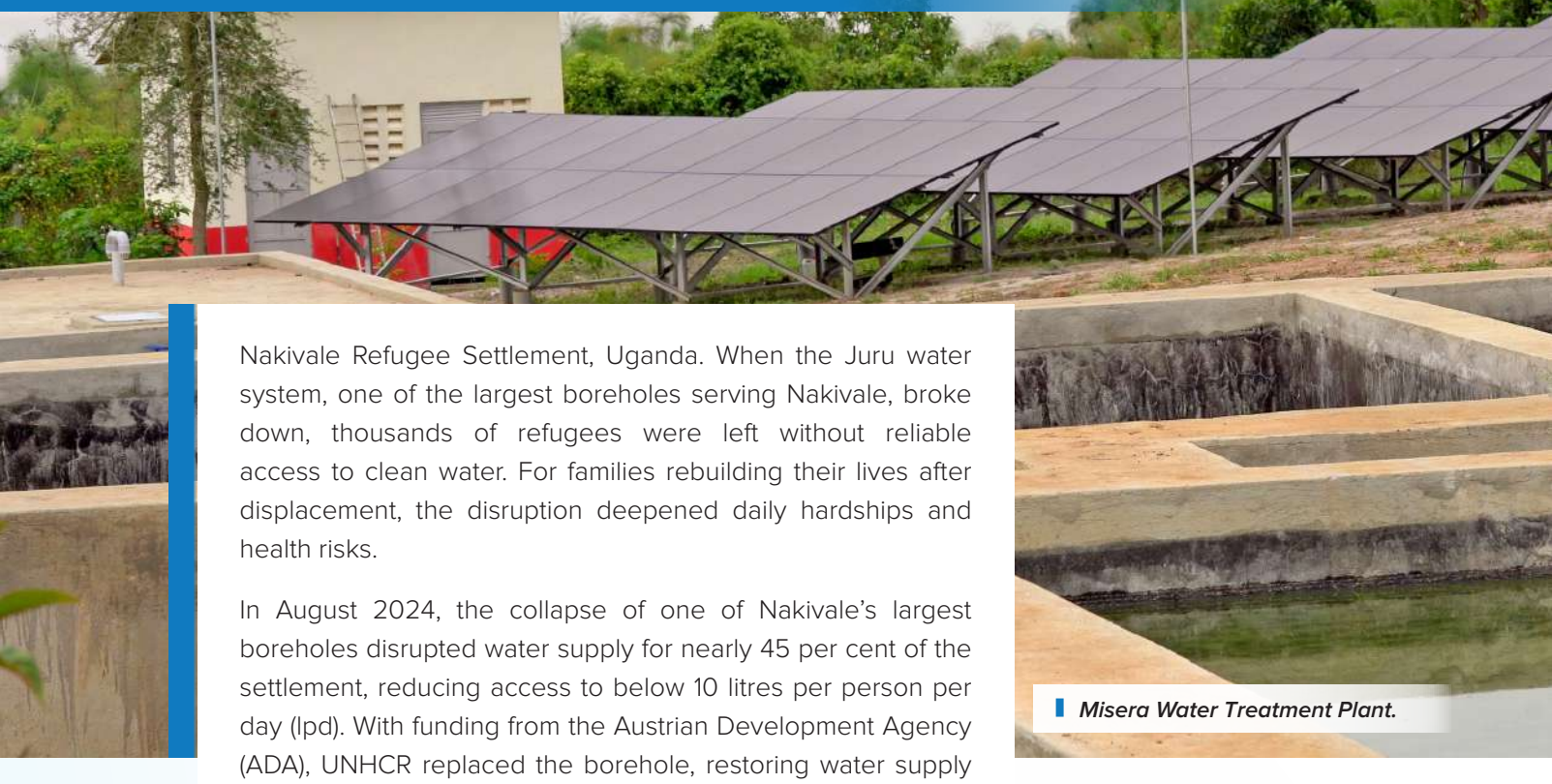
General information about health

UNHCR provides health and nutrition services to refugees through 89 primary health care facilities, most of which are government facilities supported by UNHCR and its partners. Of the total staffing, UNHCR supports about 75%, the government provides 25%, and partners contribute 5%. More than 465 survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence received a combination of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis drugs for HIV prevention. Across all health facilities, 57,285 mothers attended their first antenatal care visit, and a further 181,468 repeat antenatal care visits were recorded.

A total of 48,989 live births were assisted by skilled health workers, representing 97% of all live births recorded in 2025. In addition, 189,786 individuals (114,890 refugees and 74,896 nationals) were tested for HIV, of whom 2,265 (983 refugees and 1,282 nationals) tested positive and were enrolled in care and treatment. Currently, 16,261 individuals (4,669 refugees and 11,592 nationals) are enrolled in HIV care, treatment, and antiretroviral therapy across health facilities in Uganda.

A total of 1,486 individuals received tuberculosis (TB) care and treatment, of whom 1,035 were successfully treated. In addition, 41,186 children under five years of age and 19,099 women were treated for acute malnutrition in settlements, reception centres, and transit centres. Furthermore, 13,269 children and 3,572 women were enrolled in blanket supplementary feeding programmes across the five active transit and reception centres.

Clean Water, renewed hope in Nakivale Refugee Settlement



Misera Water Treatment Plant.

Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda. When the Juru water system, one of the largest boreholes serving Nakivale, broke down, thousands of refugees were left without reliable access to clean water. For families rebuilding their lives after displacement, the disruption deepened daily hardships and health risks.

In August 2024, the collapse of one of Nakivale's largest boreholes disrupted water supply for nearly 45 per cent of the settlement, reducing access to below 10 litres per person per day (lpd). With funding from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), UNHCR replaced the borehole, restoring water supply to 12 lpd by October 2024 and stabilizing services in the Juru zone. However, water access in both Juru and wider Nakivale remained below 15 lpd.

In March 2025, declining water levels in Lake Nakivale further exacerbated the situation, leaving the main intake structure without water and reducing access to an average of 5 lpd. Support from the Austrian Development Corporation enabled excavation works to deepen the lake intake point, increasing water production to 7 lpd. Despite these interventions, water availability in Juru and Nakivale continued to fall short of humanitarian standards, underscoring the persistence of water access challenges in the settlement.

Much of Nakivale's water comes from the Misera Water Treatment Plant, which provides more than 65 per cent of the settlement water. For Bugingo Emmanuel, a refugee from Rwanda, the plant is essential.

"I fetch water from Misera A for drinking and for making porridge," he says. "The water is clean, and it supports my family."

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Before recent improvements, Misera produced only 400,000 to 500,000 litres of water per day, far below what was required for the growing population in Rubondo Zone. As a result, residents frequently faced long queues and limited water collection hours. Increased investment has since doubled production capacity and extended water collection times.

"We used to have only a few hours in the morning and afternoon to fetch water," explains Nicholas Tinyefuza, a water system operator. "Now we have increased the hours, giving people more time and more water for their households."

For some refugees, access to water has also created pathways to self-reliance. Fetching and transporting water offers income opportunities, helping individuals meet their basic needs with dignity.

Today, with continued support from the Austrian Development Corporation, the system is maintained to ensure consistent water flow to Rubondo, Base Camp and surrounding zones. On behalf of UNHCR and the refugee community in Uganda, staff and residents express deep appreciation.

Bugingo Emmanuel, a Rwandan refugee, collects clean water from a tap supplied by the Misera Water Treatment Plant.

Before recent improvements, Misera produced only 400,000 to 500,000 litres of water per day, far below what was required for the growing population in Rubondo Zone.

General information about Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The WASH sector supported refugees and hosting populations to have improved, equitable and sustainable access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services through the inclusion of services to national systems and innovative approaches. This is being achieved by implementing the broader water and environment sector refugee response plan (WESRRP), a new WESRRP II (2026-2030) has been launched in September 2025 and partners are planning for its implementation. WESRRP II is aligned to the fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), that now has specific outputs for refugees.

The approach to integrate all WASH services to national systems (District Local Government, water supply utilities, area service providers, and communities) remains the priority. UNHCR coordinates with Ministry of Water and Envinronment, UNICEF, and partners.

UNHCR with Ministry of Water and Environment, UNICEF and partners continued to advocate for water and sanitation services in settlements to be integrated into the national government systems as part of UNHCR's wider integration strategy. November 2025 WASH sector data shows that 82% of refugees and host communities accessed basic drinking water, a slight decrease from 86% in 2024.

The average water availability per person per day remained at 17 litres. With 95% functionality of water systems in the settlements, UNHCR partners maintained 229 motorized water systems and 1,159 hand pumps. 80% of the water supplied through motorized systems was powered by renewable energy, mainly solar and hydro power. The construction of additional boreholes, motorized solar systems, extended pipe networks and new reservoirs contributed to an improved water supply.

Abbas and one of his sons inspect a vehicle at their workshop in Bweyale Town, near Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Abbas is rebuilding life as a mechanic in Uganda

Abbas Faisal Mohamed, a 55-year-old motor vehicle mechanic and Sudanese refugee from Khartoum, now lives in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, home to over 154,000 refugees, mainly from Sudan and South Sudan.

He arrived in Uganda with two of his children through Nyumanzi Reception Center, a key entry point for refugees arriving from South Sudan and Sudan seeking safety.

"We were new to the country, unfamiliar with the culture and had no money. No one could help us financially. I don't even like to remember that time."

During his stay at the reception center, UNHCR and partners supported Abbas with food, blankets, mosquito nets, and other essentials. UNHCR also facilitated his relocation to Kiryandongo, where he was allocated land and provided materials to construct a temporary shelter. He was guided through the refugee registration process, helping legalize his stay.

Back in Sudan, Abbas managed an automotive workshop for Ezentus, a heavy motor service provider. Despite his years of experience, starting over felt uncertain. After his urgent basic needs were met in November 2023, Abbas returned to what he knows best, mechanics.

He went to Bweyale town, near the settlement, rented space, and opened a mechanical workshop. His car workshop became more than just a livelihood. It became a symbol of resilience.

Abbas' wife, three children and mother fled to Egypt when fighting erupted in Khartoum. They are not currently living together in Uganda.

"I have big plans. I've been a general car mechanic for a long time and gained a lot of experience. This garage is the first step toward building a new life. One day, I hope to reunite with my family and bring them to Uganda."

With support from the Kiryandongo Settlement Commandant's Office, Abbas began formalizing his business. He submitted the required forms to Bweyale Town Council and Kiryandongo District Office, and now, as an entrepreneur, he contributes to local revenue. He received a Certificate of Registration for his workshop in May 2025.

"My business has a name, 'Rex on Run Services Family Group."

Nelly carves her place in Uganda's carpentry trade

Nelly at the carpentry workshop where she works in Nsambya, Kampala.

In the male-dominated workshop of hammers and saws, 21-year-old Nelly Bashal, an urban refugee in Kampala, stands out for the skill and confidence she brings to her work. In a trade traditionally dominated by men, Nelly is proving that skills have no gender.

Nelly arrived in Uganda in 2013 from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with her four older siblings, after fleeing conflict. Displacement and financial hardship prevented her from attending formal school, both in her country of origin and in Uganda. Instead, she began working in small roadside furniture workshops, sanding wood while carefully observing and learning the craft.

"I didn't know where life was taking me, but I was determined to learn something with my hands,"

Her journey took a decisive turn when she approached a furniture workshop in Nsambya, a suburb of Kampala, owned by Ugandan craftsmen, and asked for an opportunity to work. Impressed by her determination, one of the co-owners, Julius Mawanda, offered to take her on as an apprentice.

"She was serious and not afraid of hard work. She was eager and always asking questions, which made her a good candidate for this type of work," Julius says.

Today, Nelly specialises in upholstery and is steadily expanding her skills in woodwork, learning to cut, join, and craft furniture. Her growing expertise has earned her the respect of both colleagues and customers. Nelly's hands-on experience, discipline, and determination have set her apart.

Through UNHCR's collaboration with the Uganda Refugee Employment Promotion Project (UREPP), Nelly has been enrolled in the January 2026 carpentry intake at Nakawa Vocational College, a government technical institution, marking her first opportunity to receive formal vocational training.

Nelly hopes her journey will inspire other young women to believe in their potential and challenge long-held stereotypes in male-dominated trades.

"One day, I want to have a workshop of my own and teach other girls that this work is not only for men."

South Sudanese refugee women transplanting at a kitchen garden at Lokung Collection Point.

Planting hope, changing lives

The initiative introduces the concept of self-reliance early in the refugee journey by involving refugees in cultivating their own food.

In the heart of Lamwo District, Northern Uganda, Lokung collection point serves as the first stop for South Sudanese refugees fleeing conflict and instability. Here, they are registered, receive documentation, and access basic services before being relocated to Palabek Refugee Settlement to rebuild their lives.

But with reducing resources, especially human and financial resources, refugees are spending longer periods at the collection point. This extended stay, coupled with limited food diversity and uncertainty about the future, has taken a toll on both physical and mental well-being.

Recognizing these challenges, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), together with UNHCR and partners namely Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), Food for the Hungry Association (FHA), Uganda Refugee and Disaster Management Council (URDMC), World Vision, Coorperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), World Food Programme (WFP), Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development Network (SARD-Net) , Seed Effect, Thrive Gulu, ZOA, Ayuda en Acción and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) joined hands to launch a simple yet transformative initiative - kitchen gardening.

What began as a small pilot has turned into a vibrant space where newly arrived refugees cultivate nutritious crops like eggplants, okra, kale, cow pea and sweet potatoes. These gardens not only supplement limited food rations but also offer therapeutic benefits, reducing stress, fostering a sense of purpose, and encouraging peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.

"This farming space is good for us because it provides food. When I move to the settlement, I plan to start my own garden and grow some of these crops as well. When I see the plants grow, I feel like I'm growing too," said Angelina, a refugee from Ikotos, Central Equatoria, South Sudan.

The initiative introduces the concept of self-reliance early in the refugee journey by involving refugees in cultivating their own food. This approach lays the foundation for sustainable living as individuals transition to settlement life.

In a context defined by upheaval and uncertainty, the kitchen gardens at Lokung collection point are playing a transformative role, nurturing not just bodies but also minds and futures.

How one motorcycle sparked Zawadi's agro-enterprise

Zawadi rides her motorcycle along a feeder road in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement.

Meet Marie Claire Zawadi, a courageous single mother of four and a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since arriving in Uganda in 2016 and settling in Mahani B, Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Zawadi demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Before receiving support from ALIGHT, an international NGO operating in Uganda, life was difficult. She explained:

"I used to do casual labor just to get food for my children."

Everything began to change in January 2022 when she was selected as one of 10 beneficiaries of motorcycles under ALIGHT's 'Safe Ride' project. Zawadi says,

"I was so happy when I received the motorcycle, it felt like freedom. Before, I used to ride other people's bikes and pay them 12,000 shillings a day. I worked hard, but most of the money went to the owner. Having my own meant I could finally earn and save for myself and my children."

Using the income from boda boda riding (motorbike riding), a service she provided herself at a fee depending on the distance, along with savings from her local savings group, Mungano Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in Kaihora, Zawadi made a bold move in December 2024. She invested in agro-processing by purchasing a maize milling machine at approximately $1,000 USD and a rice milling machine at approximately $2,000 USD.

Today, Zawadi is a thriving agro-processor operating both maize and rice milling services. She has employed six workers, including refugees and nationals, paying them $40 USD and $35 USD respectively per month. She takes pride not only in her financial independence but also in her ability to uplift others.

Between February and April 2025, Zawadi earned $300 USD from her agro-processing business. This income has enabled her to meet her household needs, pay her children's school fees and continue saving for the future. She says,

"If I hadn't received that motorcycle from ALIGHT, none of this would have been possible. It helped me move from one step to another. The income I earned from riding the boda boda, together with my savings group, helped me buy milling machines and diversify my income. The motorcycle was the first step, it opened for everything that followed."

Zawadi dreams to learn machine repair skills to reduce maintenance costs and further boost her independence. She remains determined to lead by example and inspire others in her community.

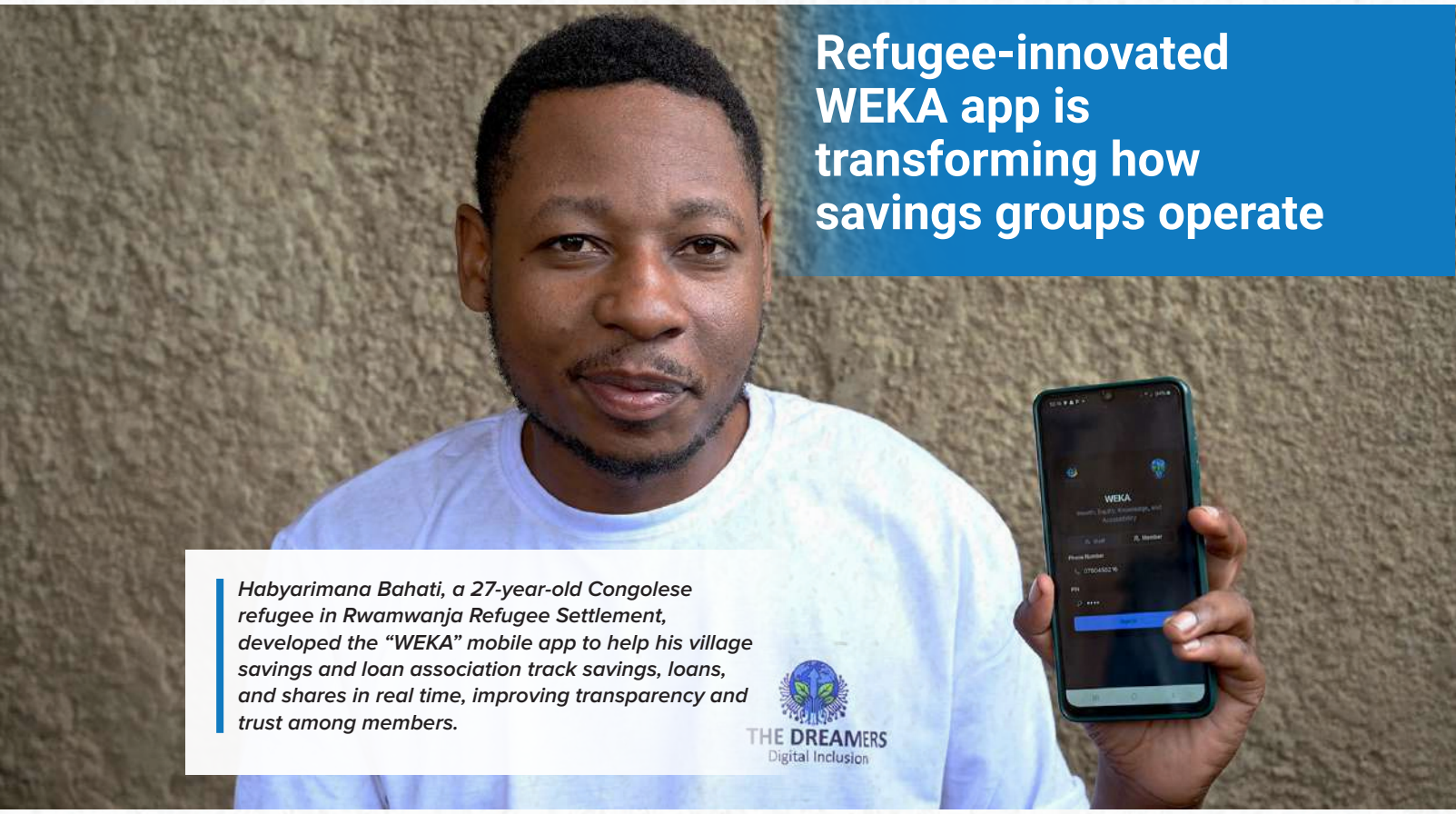
Zawadi's story is a powerful reminder of how targeted support and practical tools can unlock potential and transform lives. Through the "Safe Ride" project, ALIGHT is helping refugee youth build sustainable livelihoods, diversify income sources, create jobs, and strengthen communities.

Wabwire Fredrick, the ALIGHT Team Leader in Rwamwanja says,

"We are not just providing rides; we are driving transformation."

Zawadi with her workers at the grain mill.

The SafeRide project was launched in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement in 2020 with funding from the United States of America (USA) to empower youth through income generation using motorcycle taxis ("Boda-boda"). Under a cost-sharing model, each of the 10 beneficiaries (2 females and 8 males) received a motorcycle and began paying weekly instalments of $20 USD until reaching a total of $1,500 USD, after which ALIGHT transfers ownership. To date, 6 beneficiaries (1 female and 5 males) have completed payments and received full ownership. In partnership with MTN and Solaris PayGo, the project has automated recovery processes, enhancing sustainability and promoting financial inclusion within the settlement.



Refugee-innovated WEKA app is transforming how savings groups operate

Habyarimana Bahati, a 27-year-old Congolese refugee in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, developed the "WEKA" mobile app to help his village savings and loan association track savings, loans, and shares in real time, improving transparency and trust among members.

General information about livelihoods

Uganda's Refugees Act (2006) and Refugee Regulations (2010) grant refugees the right to seek employment, freedom of movement, and access to land for agricultural use and financial services. Despite this progressive legal framework, approximately 70% of refugees continue to live in poverty, compared to 38% of Ugandans. To address these disparities, the Government of Uganda developed the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP), which aims to implement sustainable livelihood programmes for both refugees and host communities. The JLIRP focuses on strengthening the capacity of refugee-hosting districts to respond to the needs of these populations.

Through advocacy, coordination with partners, and follow-up on Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges, UNHCR seeks to support refugees in achieving self-reliance, participating in local economies, expanding access to employment, and strengthening social cohesion. This approach emphasizes enhanced coordination among partners to deliver effective livelihood programmes, alongside advocacy for a supportive legal and policy environment. UNHCR also collaborates with development-oriented organizations, including UN agencies such as UNICEF and IOM, as well as international and local partners, to mobilize expertise, funding, and resources for sustainable, long-term interventions. In addition, UNHCR promotes private sector solutions through collaboration with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda and financial service providers to improve refugees' access to economic opportunities and financial services.

UNHCR-EU making it possible for refugees to acquire quality education through scholarships

Grace Kanane Espoir is a 21-year-old Congolese refugee and a student at Ntenungi Secondary School `embodies resilience and determination that define true success. Born in Rutshura Province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Grace was raised by parents who deeply valued education. He loved school and never imagined living outside his country until 2015 when he fled at just 11-years-old resulting from the unrest there. Escalating conflict forced his family to flee to Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement in Southwestern Uganda where he and his family stays currently.

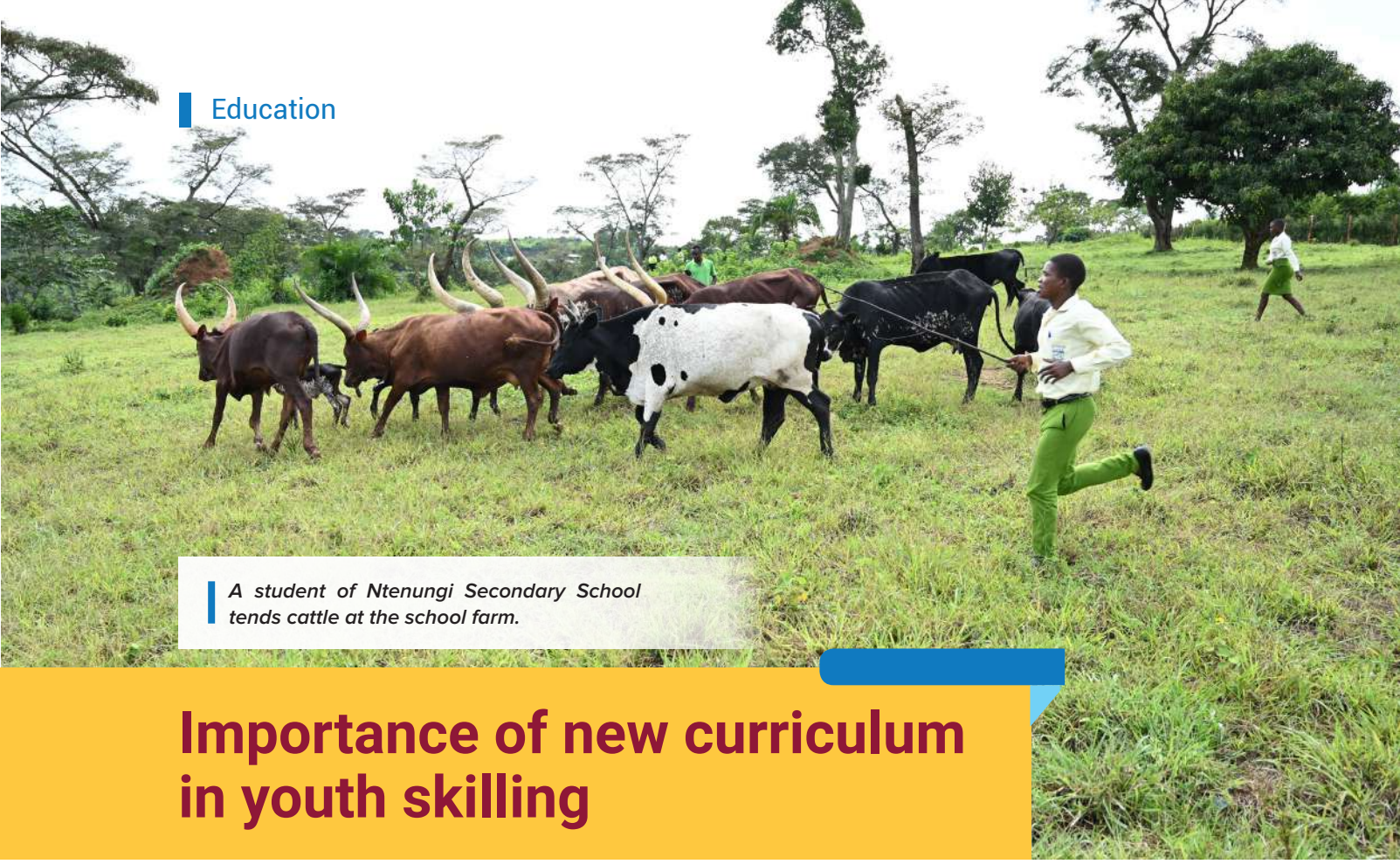
Despite the challenges of displacement, Grace's mother ensured he continued his education. He was enrolled at Mahani Primary School, but without proper academic documents and facing a language barrier, he was placed in Primary One to first master English, the official language of instruction in Uganda.

Having reached Primary Five in his home country, this setback was demoralizing but did not break him. With persistence and determination, he kept going. When Windle International established Mahega Primary School in his village, Grace transferred to Primary Three after improving his English with his mother's support. He continued studying, gradually progressing through the classes until he completed his Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, scoring moderately well with nine aggregates.

With no reliable financial means to join secondary school, Grace's future seemed uncertain. He enrolled at Rwamwanja Secondary School with support from his mother, who sold part of her maize and beans harvest to cover the costs. However, the expenses were too high to sustain him there. With no other option, he sought admission at Ntenungi Secondary School, which was more affordable.

Now in Senior Four at Ntenungi Secondary School, he has received a full UNHCR scholarship funded by the European Union (EU), enabling him to continue his education without interruption, with all costs for his candidate class fully covered.

"Thanks to the EU's support, I am now able to stay in school consistently, and my performance has gradually improved due to improved attendance. I remain hopeful and committed to achieving my goals in life."



A student of Ntenungi Secondary School tends cattle at the school farm.

Importance of new curriculum in youth skilling

Ntenungi Secondary School, nestled in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, is redefining education by integrating innovation and community collaboration. In just four years, the school has launched a transformative animal rearing project that equips students with practical skills aligned with Uganda's new lower secondary curriculum.

Born from a shared vision between the school administration and the Parents, Teachers Association (PTA), a body comprising both teachers and parents of students at Ntenungi, the project reflects a strong commitment to holistic education in line with the new curriculum.

Parents contributed funds for 5 cows and 30 goats to initiate the livestock program. Students gain hands-on experience in animal care, breeding and health management guided by experienced farm manager with a Certificate in Animal Husbandry. This experiential learning fosters critical thinking, teamwork and problem-solving, empowering students to become active contributors to their school and communities.

Beyond skill-building, the project has significantly boosted school sustainability and student well-being. Milk from the cows enriches the school's feeding program, meat is served during special occasions, and manure supports crop production. The sale of animal products generates income that is reinvested in educational resources and infrastructure, enhancing the school's reputation and growth. The rearing site also serves as a demonstration ground, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, a cornerstone of the New lower secondary curriculum.

The Deputy Head Teacher, Mr. Peter Amutuhaire who is also a Geography and Agriculture teacher explained,

> *"This project is more than just rearing animals; it's about raising hope, nurturing skills, and building futures."*

Students in Rwamwanja excel with access to a new computer lab

In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) introduced Uganda's New Lower Secondary Curriculum, a bold shift toward digital learning, project-based assessments, and the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). However, for schools in refugee settlements like Rwamwanja Secondary School, the absence of computer laboratories posed a significant challenge. Students were eager to explore and learn, but the necessary tools were missing.

In March 2025, UNHCR addressed this gap by equipping Rwamwanja Secondary School with a fully furnished computer laboratory. The facility includes 25 computers, a server, a projector, and solar power, transforming the learning environment for both students and teachers.

With access to digital platforms such as Kolibri, a software offering interactive content across all subjects and life skills, students can now engage with science through virtual labs and explore a wide range of educational resources. The computer lab has become a hub for innovation, enabling learners to research, collaborate, and submit project work, which is a core requirement of the new curriculum.

The facility includes 25 computers, a server, a projector, and solar power

Grace Namara a senior three student explains,

"Using the computer lab has made learning much easier, especially with the new curriculum that requires research and digital skills, I have learned how to type, search for information online and use educational programs that help me understand subjects better. It's really improved my confidence and performance in class."

The computer lab has improved academic performance, especially in science and ICT, enhanced project quality and timely submissions, boosted digital literacy among both students and staff, renewed motivation and confidence in the classroom.

Bwambale Joackim an ICT teacher reflected,

"The computer lab offers digital content in preparation for lessons while students with access design software of various projects."

Today, Rwamwanja Secondary School stands as a beacon of transformation, proving that with the right support, even the most underserved schools can thrive in a digital age.

Students at Rhino Camp Secondary School in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement share a moment with their teacher in the school compound.

General information about education

Newly arrived families in Uganda continue to place additional pressure on the overstretched education system. Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) show that approximately 34% of refugee learners are enrolled at the pre-primary level, 80% at the primary level and only 10% at the secondary level with less than 2.1% enrolled in tertiary or university education. Net Enrolment Rates remain low in refugee-hosting areas with 55% at the primary level and under 5% at the secondary level.

Currently, 41% of the education institutions providing access to refugees and host community children across the 12 refugee-hosting districts are government coded allowing them to be government grant-aided with refugees in these schools included capacitation calculation. The Ugandan policy supports the inclusion and integration of refugees into the national education system. This is strengthened by the Education Response Plan II which aims at enhancing coordination and the provision of quality education and sports for all. To foster inclusion of refugees Government of Uganda rolled out the new revamped Education Management Information System (EMIS) that includes refugees, consequently a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNHCR, Ministry of Education and Sports and Office of the Prime Minster to enhance the inter-operability of their respective data bases to foster the inclusion of refugees in the EMIS with protection safeguards. Education coordination is government led with UNHCR supporting co-leadership responsibilities.

Solomon's green journey in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

"When you plant a tree, you plant hope," Solomon says with a smile. "For me, every seedling represents a new beginning for the environment and for our people."

Solomon displays a pack of ready-to-sell briquettes he produces.

When Solomon Bhaghabhonerano arrived in Uganda as a six-year-old refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2002, his family settled in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, where he witnessed the impact of deforestation and poor waste management on the community. Even as a child, he felt compelled to act whenever he saw litter in the environment.

His passion for environmental protection only grew stronger as he went through school, from Bukere Primary to Bujubuli community Secondary School, all within the settlement. In 2012, Solomon's hard work paid off when he received a DAFI scholarship, supported by UNHCR and the German Government, to pursue a Bachelor of Science in conservation Forestry and Production Technology at Makerere University.

At Makerere, Solomon founded the DAFI Scholars Association to bring together refugee students inspired to give back to their communities. After graduation, he joined Windle International, where his experience in humanitarian work sparked a new idea: to establish a refugee-led organization (RLO) dedicated to tree planting and environmental conservation.

In 2017, with support from the UNHCR Youth Initiative Fund, Solomon's proposal to start Live in Green won a grant of USD 10,000. He used the funding to set up a tree nursery in Kyaka II, producing both fruit and non-fruit trees for sale to refugees and host community members at affordable prices. The initiative not only promoted reforestation but also created livelihood opportunities for local youth.

As his work grew, Solomon saw another pressing challenge, the cutting of trees for firewood. In 2023, he launched a new venture to produce carbonized cooking briquettes from waste collected around Bukere town. The innovation addressed two environmental problems at once: waste management and deforestation through introducing alternative clean cooking technologies.

With the introduction of machinery later that year, his small enterprise expanded, employing 15 workers engaged in tree planting as well as the production of briquettes and portable stoves.

Today, Solomon's briquettes are sold by the kilogram to both refugees and host community residents. Through exhibitions and social media, his work has reached new markets, including Kenya, where he made his first two-tonne sale in 2025.

Solomon's vision is simple but powerful, to save trees, protect the environment, and empower communities.

A brighter future with solar transformation cutting emissions at UNHCR Sub-Office Adjumani

In 2025, UNHCR Adjumani successfully completed a major solar energy project aimed at reducing both operational costs and environmental impact. The project was implemented with the support of the UNHCR's Green Financing Facility (GFF), a model that is transitioning UNHCR offices from diesel-reliant, high-emission energy systems to clean, efficient and financially sustainable solar power solutions.

The installation currently powers 20 UNHCR facilities, including offices, conference rooms and UNHCR guesthouses, ensuring reliable electricity while minimizing dependency on diesel generators. The 226.6 kilowatt-peak (kWp) solar photovoltaic (PV) plant, coupled with a 400 kilowatt-hour (kWh) lithium-ion battery energy storage system, now powers almost all of the facility's energy needs. The system is coupled with the national grid.

Addressing environmental impact

Before this transformation, UNHCR Adjumani office relied heavily on an unstable national grid and frequent generator use to keep critical systems running. Annual energy consumption reached approximately 201,480 kWh generating nearly 480 tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions each year. Daily operations were marked by constant outages, high diesel bills, and demanding maintenance schedules.

Thanks to the solar hybrid energy system in place and complementary energy-efficiency measures implemented across the facility, solar energy now covers at least 90% of the office total needs. Generators that once operated throughout the day are rarely used, serving only as backup during occasional interruptions. The shift has resulted in greater energy stability, significant cost reductions, and an annual saving of about 470 tons of CO_2, the equivalent of planting around 22,000 trees or removing 100 fossil-fuel cars from the road each year.

Iris, UNHCR Adjumani.

"This transition is both a strategic and heartfelt step towards a more sustainable future of the UNHCR Adjumani. As stewards of our environment, we feel a deep responsibility to act now, not just for operational efficiency, but for the well-being of humanity and planet earth. Leading this initiative fills us with pride and hope." Iris Sanunani Blom, UNHCR Adjumani.

The power of team collaboration

The success of this project is a testament to the strength of collaboration that brought together a dedicated multifunctional team, starting from Edgar Kipkurui Mutai, Roving Energy Expert, and his colleagues from Global Mobility and Infrastructure Services (GMIS) and the Sustainable Energy Service (SES), collaborating with UNHCR. Technical expertise was provided by OFGEN, the solar company responsible for installing the solar panels and completing the project. Their collective commitment ensured timely completion despite the logistical challenges of working in a remote setting.

A step toward sustainability

This achievement aligns with UNHCR's global pledge to cut carbon emissions by 30% by 2030 from 2010 levels. Beyond financial savings, the project demonstrates how renewable energy can strengthen humanitarian operations while contributing to climate action goals.

This achievement aligns with UNHCR's global pledge to cut carbon emissions by **30%** *by* **2030** *from* **2030** *levels.*

The OFGEN team after handing over part of the project to Iris Sanunani Blom, then Head of Adjumani Sub-Office.

General information about environment and energy

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government of Uganda, development partners, and humanitarian agencies, continues to mitigate the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation in refugee-hosting areas. This is achieved through co-chairing the Technical Working Group on Environment and Energy with the Office of the Prime Minister, mobilizing long-term funding for the sector, and supporting the implementation of key environmental initiatives.

UNHCR has been actively supporting the inclusion of refugees in Uganda's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0). This has included support for a capacity-building workshop for Refugee-Led Organizations on NAP processes, participation in the NDC stocktaking exercise, and the provision of inputs to ensure that refugee issues are reflected in Uganda's climate commitments. As a result, refugee considerations will be integrated into these key national climate pledges.

The Water and Environment Sector Response Plan II (WESRRP II) 2026–2030 was launched in September 2025, and partners are now preparing for its implementation. WESRRP II is fully aligned with the fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV).

In 2025, with support from EU INTPA, DG ECHO, Ireland, and an in-kind donation from the Signify Foundation, UNHCR delivered the following results:

- Solarized two schools and two water systems, improving access to education and clean water.
- Produced and distributed more than **3.83 million** tree seedlings for reforestation and agroforestry.
- Established **447 hectares** of new woodlots and maintained over 567 hectares of existing ones.
- Provided **9,147** individuals with energy-saving cookstoves, reducing firewood consumption and environmental impact.
- Installed **410 solar streetlights** in Palabek and Kyangwali settlements.

The integration of agroforestry into woodlot establishment has created additional land for crop cultivation, improving food security while supporting environmental conservation. This approach has also promoted peaceful coexistence by enabling refugees and host community members to jointly cultivate crops within the woodlots, strengthening shared resource management and collaboration.

The *"Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM)"* rebrands to *"We.Link"*

The "Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM)" rebrands to "We.Link"

Over the years, the FRRM has included a Helpline, an email address, an FAQ section, and a help page. The architecture is now set to incorporate additional feedback mechanisms such as protection desks through a mobile application, community structures including Village Health Teams (VHTs), contact form (replacing email) and WhatsApp chatbot. This comes with technical enhancements such as the introduction of topic tags and sub-tags to enhance data analysis and reporting, and a more familiar identity, the We.Link, to enhance community awareness and increase uptake of this interagency communication channel. In 2025, FRRM was re-branded as We.Link, adopting a name that better reflects its purpose and identity.

The upgraded version of the We.Link system was rolled out during 2025 and came with several improvements including centralized/harmonized data management, improved security features, more automation of activities, and improved data visibility among others. This field development at end of 2025 will primarily be used at protection desks and will ensure digital data management and timely protection referrals. The app is also linked to the central We.Link database and will ensure harmonized reporting.

Call trends in 2025

The We.Link (FRRM) helpline received **290,777** calls during the year. This figure includes all calls made to the helpline, whether they were answered or not, and represents a **20%** increase compared to **2024.**

Of the calls that were answered, **45,477** were new queries or cases, raised by individuals seeking information or assistance.

These included **50.6%** from women, **48.8%** from men, and **0.6%** from callers whose gender was not recorded.

In addition, **23,537** follow-up calls were received, mainly to provide feedback or share additional information on cases that had already been opened.

Most new queries **68%** were resolved directly by helpline staff using Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), while **32%** required further action and were referred to UNHCR and partner organizations for follow-up and assistance.

The highest number of new queries came from Nakivale Settlement, with **7,983** cases, accounting for **18%** of all new queries.

This was followed by Rhino Camp **(5,903)**, Kyaka II **(5,780)**, Bidibidi **(5,621)**, and Kampala **(5,160)**. Across all locations, food assistance was the most common concern, accounting for 39% of all new queries.

WORLD REFU

1

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World Refugee Day, commemorated every 20th June, is a globally recognized day designated by the United Nations (UN) to honor all those forced to flee. In Uganda, it was commemorated through out the country but the main event was held in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, which primarily hosts Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees.

3

1 *A refugee creative arts group performs at the World Refugee Day commemoration in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.*

2 *Sudanese refugees perform a song for guests at the opening of the celebration.*

3 *United Nations Resident Coordinator Leonard Zulu, Commissioner for Refugees (OPM) Patrick Okello, and UNHCR Representative Matthew Crentsil join in a dance.*

GEE DAY 2025

4 *As part of World Refugee Day commemorations in Kampala, Julian, a UNHCR staff member, engages with refugee women vendors at Gaba Market, where refugees and Ugandans work side by side in peaceful coexistence.*

5 *Marking World Refugee Day, urban refugees and partners cleaned Gaba Market in Kampala as a gesture of appreciation to Uganda for its hospitality.*

UNHCR enhances communication and cash assistance for new arrivals

Lodua Peter after receiving a mobile phone.

At the Lokung Collection Point in Uganda's Lamwo District, UNHCR is helping newly arrived refugees from South Sudan take a vital first step toward rebuilding their lives by providing them with mobile phones that enable access to essential services and communication.

This effort is part of UNHCR's start-up support to newly-arrived refugees to help cover basic immediate needs through cash transfers via Mobile Money. Each phone distributed not only enables access to the life-saving cash assistance but also promotes financial inclusion from the outset of their stay in Uganda and enhances communication opportunities for the refugees.

Lodua Peter, a 32-year-old South Sudanese refugee from Ikwot County, spoke about what receiving the phone meant to him.

"This phone will help me in many ways, especially with communication. Whenever I want to connect with my friends and family, I can call them."

Since November 2023, UNHCR shifted most in-kind support to cash-based assistance, giving refugees greater control over their daily needs and choices. Refugees can prioritize what matters most and use the assistance to buy food, set up shelters, or meet other urgent needs.

Mobile money is the preferred way for refugees to receive assistance because it is secure, fast, and widely accessible across the settlements.

At the Lokung Transit Centre, refugees receive phones, while MTN agents provide free SIM cards and open mobile money accounts using family attestations. This enables recipients to access their cash assistance immediately as they are relocated to their plots in the settlement.

Having a phone helps refugees keep their mobile lines active, reducing the risk of SIM deactivation after 30 days of inactivity. It also promotes financial inclusion by encouraging continued use of mobile money and offers a secure, reliable channel for humanitarian actors to deliver cash assistance.

Access to phones also ensures that refugees stay connected with their friends and families, while enabling a two-way communication and feedback between refugees and UNHCR.

Jatuporn Lee Cheewasrirungruang, UNHCR Team Leader in Lamwo says:

"The distribution of phones not only allows refugees to access mobile money, but it's a lifeline. It allows them to reconnect with their loved ones, access information, and begin a new chapter in their lives."

A phone is more than just a device, it's a bridge that restores lost connections, enables financial independence, and inspires hope for a brighter future.

TEMPE INDITEX bringing a smile to refugee children in Uganda

In the heart of Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, a quiet but powerful transformation is unfolding, one step at a time. Thanks to a generous donation from TEMPE INDITEX, thousands of students both refugees and nationals, received sturdy, well-fitting shoes during a distribution in all primary and secondary schools in the settlement. For many, it was the first time they had ever worn proper footwear.

"I used to hide my feet because they were always sore and dusty but now I walk to school with confidence and even play with my friends without fear",

said Aisha Alliance a 15-year-old Congolese refugee studying at Nteziryayo Primary School in primary four.

The impact was immediate and profound. Children who once walked barefoot across rough terrain and through harsh weather now stride into classrooms with pride and comfort.

For the 9-year-old Amos Samedi, a Congolese refugee studying at Kikurura Primary School, the shoes brought more than relief, they sparked joy. He explained,

"I used to walk barefoot since I arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). My feet didn't even hurt anymore because they were used to it. Now I feel so happy. I want to go to school every day just to wear my shoes."

Teachers have noted a positive change in their students since the TEMPE INDITEX distribution. Mr Swaib Faizal Kaaka, a Mathematics and Chemistry teacher, noted that,

"Students are more engaged, more active and more willing to participate. The shoes have become more than a physical necessity, they are a symbol of care, inclusion and hope in the education system."

Fortunate Natukunda, an Education Focal Point and a Community Services Officer from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) appreciated TEMPE INDITEX for the kind heart and gesture.

"TEMPE INDITEX is a blessing to refugee and host learners in settlement schools. It is deeply rewarding to see how something as simple as a pair of shoes uplifting spirits and unlocking potential."

Through this meaningful initiative, TEMPE INDITEX has restored dignity, boosted class attendance, and inspired learning. With each step, learners are not just walking with pride but also pledge to a brighter tomorrow.

Nakiwala Juliet, a UNHCR Education focal point in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement in Southwestern Uganda says,

"The distribution of shoes from TEMPE INDITEX has made a remarkable difference in the lives of refugee students. For many students, receiving a pair of shoes was not just about comfort it was about dignity, feeling loved, cared for and not forgotten. We have seen improved school attendance and a renewed sense of self-esteem among students. This is a powerful reminder that small acts of generosity can have lasting impact on education and wellbeing."

L-R: KCCA Executive Director Hajat Sharifah Buzeki (in a pink coat), Deputy Lord Mayor Doreen Nyanjura (navy blue suit), Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago (grey suit and purple shirt), UNHCR Representative Matthew Crentsil (dark grey suit and striped tie), and other participants during the handover ceremony at the KCCA offices in Kampala.

UNHCR supports KCCA with vital medical and educational supplies

Kampala, Uganda's capital, is home to 160,000 refugees living alongside host communities. Major nationalities include Eritreans, Somalis, Congolese, Ethiopians, Sudanese, South Sudanese, and others. Recognizing gaps in health, education, and gender services, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Strategic Plan 2025/26–2029/30 aims to improve access to services and involve refugees in planning, and strengthen coordination with NGOs and INGOs. To support these efforts, UNHCR donated medical and scholastic supplies. The contribution will ease pressure on public services and improve access for both refugees and host communities.

UNHCR Representative Matthew Crentsil (L) and Kampala City Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago (R) exchange documents at the handover ceremony at KCCA City Hall.

Kampala, Uganda's capital, is home to

160,000

refugees living alongside host communities.

Abdalla at her home in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Abdalla's voice for change: Advocating for refugees in Kiryandongo

Fleeing one's home is a nightmare for many Sudanese refugees like Nuralhuda Abdalaziz Abdalla from Western Sudan, Darfur - Nyala. She is a mother of six children with four boys and two girls staying with her husband in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Fleeing conflict with her children, Abdalla traveled through South Sudan to the Elegu border between Uganda and South Sudan. She arrived at the border on 1st January 2024 and was settled in Kiryandongo on 12th March 2024 by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Abdalla, a women's leader in one of the refugee community clusters in Kiryandongo, says the biggest challenge Sudanese refugees face is unemployment. Many lost their livelihoods when war forced them to flee Sudan, and rebuilding their lives without work opportunities remains a major concern.

"The main problem here is most of Sudanese, they had jobs in Sudan but they lost the jobs like me. I was an agricultural engineer before in Sudan but I have no job here."

With water points scattered across the settlement, temporary shelters that are unsuitable especially during the rainy season, limited plots for housing and farming, language and cultural barriers mainly affecting children, and inadequate health facilities and services, these challenges call for urgent action to restore dignity in the lives of many refugees in Kiryandongo. Abdalla continues to advocate for these issues, urging her community and those who can help them to take action.

A community centre contributing to peaceful co-existence between refugees and the host community

Imvepi Tank 65 Multipurpose Community Centre.

Located in Terego District, the Imvepi Tank 65 Multipurpose Community Centre sits within Imvepi Refugee Settlement. What was once a water point with several tanks installed to serve early refugee arrivals from South Sudan in 1996 has now become a centre of transformation for both refugees and host communities.

Through Netherlands-PROSPECTS funding, the centre offers a range of services, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training, vocational skills development, sporting activities, mental health and psychosocial support, and a conference hall for hire. The centre is managed by a Centre Management Committee selected from both refugees and host community members, a Refugee-Led Organization (RLO), supports in operating the facility on behalf of the community. Through its focus on digital education, peace-building, and the empowerment of women and girls, the centre currently benefits approximately 9,900 refugees and host community members.

Under the ICT programme, young people receive training in digital skills, data science, cloud computing, videography and photography, electronic repairs, and digital marketing.

Through these trainings, youth have developed innovative solutions using locally available materials, including:

- Local ovens
- Water coolers
- Grinding mills
- Phone charging systems
- Bread-making equipment
- Chapati-making machines

By producing these tools for sale and personal use, participants generate income, improve self-reliance, and strengthen their prospects for the future.

Khemsa Harriet, a South Sudanese refugee from Village 6 in Imvepi, developed a phone-charging system using locally available materials such as soft wood, wires, and metal. Through her innovation, she earns at least UGX 10,000 per day.

"Before the training, I had no idea I could build something that people would pay for. Now, I use my innovation to support my family. As a single mother, I am happy that I am able to support my child," she says.

Isaya, a 23-year-old South Sudanese refugee from Zone 1, Village 7, and a project beneficiary, adds:

"I arrived in Uganda in 2017. After completing secondary school, I joined the digital skilling classes even before the centre was fully constructed. Later, I was offered employment as an IT Facilitator and Lab Attendant at the centre."

By providing skills training to both refugees and host community members, the centre has strengthened peaceful co-existence, enabling people from both groups to learn, train, and innovate together. Sporting activities such as basketball, along with afternoon cheering crowds, further foster harmony between the two communities.

The centre also hosts a library offering in-house reading and book-borrowing services. The collection includes fiction for children and adults, academic books for primary and secondary students, non-fiction, and self-help materials across various subjects.

Services offered at the centre include:

- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
- Information and Communication Technology training (ICT)
- Technical and vocational training
- Library services
- Marketplace for produced goods
- Football pitch
- Basketball court
- Conference hall for hire

According to Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) proGres data as of 31 December 2025, Imvepi Refugee Settlement hosts approximately

76,547 individuals comprise a majority of refugees from

South Sudan (about **72,112**),	**Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) (about **3,869**),	**Sudan** (**563**) and other nationalities.

The settlement is located in Terego District, West Nile Sub-region in Uganda. Terego District hosts refugees in both Imvepi and Rhino Refugee Settlements. Imvepi Refugee Settlement was initially opened in 1996 to receive South Sudanese refugees displaced by the civil war between the North and South of Sudan. In 2012, it was phased out following a successful voluntary repatriation process. However, it was reopened in 2017 to receive a new influx of South Sudanese refugees due to renewed conflict in South Sudan and continues to be safe haven for those fleeing conflict in Uganda

Joseph Addo

Joseph Addo Yobo is one of UNHCR's fleet managers, working with more than 70 staff at Arua Sub-Office. He has over 15 years of experience in logistics, transport operations, and humanitarian fleet optimization.

Joseph making a difference through fleet management

Managing a fleet of vehicles for a diverse organization such as UNHCR is not easy, due to the nature of its emergency work. With emergencies and situations changing rapidly, someone in this role needs to be 'always ready'. They must manage how staff will move from one point to another and ensure there is transport for essential relief aid for refugees and requires a diverse set of skills including technical expertise, analytical capabilities and operational management.

Joseph Addo Yobo is one of UNHCR's fleet managers, working with more than 70 staff at Arua Sub-Office. He has over 15 years of experience in logistics, transport operations, and humanitarian fleet optimization. He oversees fleet operations, vehicle fuel management and maintenance and ensures safety and cost-effective mobility for staff.

"I manage the transport of staff, refugees and critical relief items while ensuring compliance with UNHCR's fleet and logistics policies. I also work with partners to optimize transport resources."

Joseph also manages the Humanitarian Booking Hub, which is a centralized digital platform designed to streamline transport services for UNHCR personnel used to ensure the most efficient use of fleet resources. Through the Hub, staff make their travel bookings and The Hub automatically groups staff who have requested similar journeys to share vehicles. Jospeh enjoys fleet management as it offers unique challenges and rewards, requiring continuous problem-solving and innovation.

In 2024, Joseph worked on significantly reducing fuel costs through implementation of a centralized fuel tracking system. He also introduced a structured car service schedule and improved road safety with the introduction of defensive driving programs, making sure all drivers were equipped and knowledgeable about what to do in emergency situations when on the road. Joseph continues to enjoy his challenging and rewarding role and looks forward to many more years serving his colleagues, refugees, and the host community.

Juliet is serving refugees and building hope in Rwamwanja

I am Juliet Nakiwala, an Assistant Field Officer with UNHCR working in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, which hosts refugees mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I joined humanitarian work in 2015 and have served as an Assistant Field Officer for the past six years.

Serving humanity is my passionate commitment. It means restoring dignity and creating hope for a better future.

My work focuses on ensuring the efficient delivery of services in Rwamwanja, strengthening coordination among stakeholders, and supporting new arrivals to ensure smooth operations. I participate in planning and reporting processes to ensure accountability and track progress, while addressing service delivery gaps through field assessments.

The most interesting aspect of my work is the opportunity to make a tangible impact on refugees' lives by restoring dignity and creating hope.

Daily, I support refugees by ensuring they have access to essential services, particularly protection. This involves coordinating with partners and local authorities to address urgent needs, facilitating settlement for new arrivals, and monitoring service delivery to maintain quality and accountability. I also engage refugees in planning and decision-making processes to promote inclusion, while advocating for education, health, livelihoods, and sustainable solutions that restore dignity and create hope.

My role sits at the intersection of service delivery which enables me to bridge gaps between refugees, partners, and Government authorities

Uganda's refugee response stands out for its emphasis on self-reliance, inclusion in national systems, and collaboration with local government, development actors, and humanitarian partners. I am proud to be among the UNHCR staff contributing to making this approach work.

The most interesting aspect of my work is the opportunity to make a tangible impact on refugees' lives by restoring dignity and creating hope.

My day often begins with reviewing emails and reports, followed by coordination with partners and local authorities, meetings to support the registration and settlement of new arrivals, and progress tracking. In addition to my core responsibilities, I also serve as the Education Focal Point for Rwamwanja. Each role comes with critical responsibilities that require careful attention.

I aim to strengthen my expertise in coordination, resource mobilization, and localization strategies to help drive sustainable solutions that empower both refugees and host communities.

Former Representative Mr Matthew Crentsil receives a gift from Assistant Representative (Programme) Benson Ngiela and the Programme team during his farewell gathering.

Matthew Crentsil concludes 32 years of distinguished service with UNHCR

In December 2025, Mr. Crentsil concluded nearly 32 years of distinguished service with UNHCR, having most recently served for three and a half years as Representative in Uganda—Africa's largest refugee hosting country. His tenure was marked by steady and impactful leadership during a period of escalating humanitarian needs, as well as an exceptional ability to deliver high quality protection and assistance despite constrained resources. His pragmatic, innovative, and efficient management approach left a lasting imprint on the operation and the wider organization.

A seasoned humanitarian, Mr. Crentsil rose through the ranks from his early days as a junior staff member in Ghana to build a career that spanned finance, administration, human resources, programme, business transformation, change management, operations management, and senior representational roles. His professional journey culminated in his candidacy for the position of UN High Commissioner for Refugees, during which he inspired confidence and pride across the organization and beyond.

Before his appointment in Uganda in July 2022, Mr. Crentsil served as Director of UNHCR's Business Transformation Programme at Headquarters in Geneva. He previously served as UNHCR's Representative in Venezuela (August 2018 – May 2021), and as Deputy Representative in both Rwanda and Ethiopia between 2013 and 2018. His earlier assignments included diverse roles in Guinea, South Sudan, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria. In Latin America, he served as Regional Programme Officer for Central America in Mexico City and as Senior Desk Officer for Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region in Geneva. In Asia, he worked as Administration and Finance Officer in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Before joining UNHCR in March 1994, Mr. Crentsil served as Principal Liaison Officer with Ghana's former National Mobilization Programme (now the National Disaster Management Organization) from 1992 to 1994. He had previously completed his national service with the Ministry of Agriculture in Ghana from 1989 to 1991.

The UNHCR football team poses for a group photo before a game at Lugogo in Kampala.

UN @80

Celebrated every 24 October, United Nations (UN) Day 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the UN. In Uganda, it was commemorated through a sporting event in Kikaaya, Kampala, where different UN agencies came together to participate in various activities, including football and netball. Observed annually, UN Day provides an opportunity to amplify the UN Common Agenda and reaffirm the purposes and principles of the UN Charter that have guided the organization for the past 80 years.

A UNHCR staff member takes part in a netball game.

A volleyball game during the various sporting activities by UN Agencies in Kampala.

UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Alfonso Herrera (front row, in a blue vest) joined the Barça Foundation team during a visit to Nakivale and Oruchinga refugee settlements, highlighting the power of sport for refugee girls and host communities.

FC Barcelona Foundation and Alfonso Herrera visit refugee settlements in Uganda

The FC Barcelona Foundation and UNHCR conducted a week-long visit to Nakivale and Oruchinga refugee settlements in Uganda. The visit was part of the collaboration agreement between FC Barcelona and UNHCR, signed in 2022, and included the special collaboration of Mexican actor and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, Alfonso Herrera, who joined the delegation with the Director of the Barça Foundation, Dr. Marta Segú. Alfonso Herrera joined the Barça Foundation to highlight the power of sport for refugees in Uganda.

Alfonso Herrera explained,

"I have met many young refugees who have experienced loss and are facing challenges related to mental health. Through sport, they have found belonging and community. I have been touched by the incredible impact that sport can have on the lives of refugees."

The actor met with refugees from the DRC and Sudan.

"Every day, people arrive in Uganda. Many arrive malnourished, sick and carrying the horrors of war. Most are women and children."

FC Barcelona Foundation Director, Marta Segú, stated,

"Visiting this joint programme in Uganda, after two years of implementation, we have seen the positive impact of sport as a tool to improve the lives of children and youth. Through sport, we could also see the benefits for the well-being of the girls."

They visited projects in the Nakivale and Oruchinga refugee settlements funded by the Barça Foundation, as part of its efforts to support UNHCR and refugees around the world.

The project in Uganda is part of a partnership between UNHCR, its national association in Spain (ACNUR Comité español), FC

Barcelona and the FC Barcelona Foundation. Launched in 2022, the partnership supports sports initiatives for refugee children and youth on four continents, in countries including Uganda, El Salvador, Türkiye and Malaysia.

The project in Uganda specifically supports refugee youth and host communities. More than 8,400 young people have benefited from this sports programme so far, which offers a safe space to play, learn and heal.

The partnership between UNHCR and FC Barcelona, which is made visible with the first men's and women's soccer team's jersey bearing the humanitarian organization's logo on the back, also aims to raise awareness among soccer fans around the world and inspire the wider sporting community to support people displaced by conflict.

About

The FC Barcelona Foundation

The Barça Foundation was launched in 1994 to support the children and youth of the most vulnerable social groups through sport and education in values, with the objective of contributing to a more just and inclusive society. The Barça Foundation frames its activities within the UN programmes Sport for Development and Sustainable Development Goals.

The Foundation supports educational access, violence prevention and conflict resolution in childhood and youth and combatting social exclusion and discrimination. Today, the Foundation reaches to more than 460,000 beneficiaries around the world.

ACNUR Comité español

ACNUR Comité español is a non-governmental organization, created in 1993, proud to have more than 500,000 regular members and donors. España con ACNUR raises funds to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and displaced people, supporting UNHCR's humanitarian aid programmes around the world.

Alfonso Herrera and the Barça Foundation team visited the UNHCR office in Kampala and met with the UNHCR Deputy Representative Jason Hepps (center).

Game Connect, breaking barriers and building bridges for youth through sport

Jeromeni (raising hand) during a Game Connect sporting activity.

AVSI Foundation in a consortium with Right to Play, Youth Sport Uganda, the Uganda Olympic Committee, and the UNHCR, with support from the Olympic Refugee Foundation, is implementing a sport-for-mental-health intervention, "Game Connect 2.0." The main goal of the programme is to improve the psychosocial and mental health resilience of refugee and host community youth (aged 15–24 years) through sports in Kampala and in refugee settlements including Rwamwanja, Kyangwali, and Pagirinya.

The 36-month (August 2023 to July 2026) project is currently in its second phase. The consortium delivers structured sport for mental health activities using a structured, tested curriculum to increase the resilience of 16,550 vulnerable youth and promote a culture of peace and social cohesion between refugees and host community members. The structured sport activities are delivered by trained coaches and peer educators in both social work/coaching skills and technical skills for the delivery of quality, safe and inclusive sports.

One of such beneficiaries from the project is Jeromeni Basomboli, a 20-year-old refugee living in Malumba village in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. When Jeromeni fled the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in February 2018 and settled in Uganda, she found herself living alone in Malumba with no one from her own tribe. Before she joined the Olympic Refugee Foundation – Game Connect Project, she says,

"I felt isolated and unable to relate with other community members, I carried old beliefs about the tribes we never associated with. It made life very hard." She says.

After taking part in Game Connect's 13 life-skills sessions, covering areas such as conflict resolution, empathy, and decision-making, Jeromeni felt encouraged to join the Sport Mental Health (S4MH) activities and became open to counselling and group support.

Her mindset began to shift, leading her to slowly form strong friendships, including with other young women. She says,

"With the Game Connect activities, I changed completely, I became more friendly, understanding and confident. The darkness I lived in began to fade."

Her transformation did not go unnoticed. She was elected as peer leader for her group and later became a secretary of Matumaini Saving Group where she actively participates in saving and planning for her future. Through nurturing from Game Connect, she was referred to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Maratatu Vocational Training Centre in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, where she is now training in tailoring, a skill she hopes to use to start a business and support herself after graduation in 2026.

Japan's Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Takuya Sasayama, launches the fourth TICAD tournament at the FUFA Technical Centre in Njeru, Buikwe District.

TICAD Cup shaping peaceful co-existence between refugees and nationals

In September, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA), hosted the fourth edition of the TICAD Cup, an all-girls football tournament, at the FIFA Technical Centre in Njeru, Buikwe district.

The opening ceremony was graced by His Excellency Takuya Sasayama, the Japanese Ambassador to Uganda, who served as the Chief Guest. Other notable attendees included Matthew Crentsil, UNHCR Uganda Country Representative, as well as officials from FUFA, UN Women, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The tournament featured eight teams, comprising three national teams and five refugee teams drawn from both northern and south-western Uganda. Jinja City Queens emerged champions of the fourth edition after defeating Pagirinya Ladies Sports Club in the final.

Players perform a Japanese "Fisherman Dance."

Eight teams featured in the 2025 tournament, including three national teams and five refugee teams drawn from northern and south-western Uganda.

Alia, a female football coach in Pagirinya

Alia Rose Duku, a 30-year-old South Sudanese refugee, lives with her two children in Pagirinya Refugee Settlement in Adjumani District, Uganda.

Alia fled South Sudan in August 2016, escaping violence in Juba-Bedele, where she tragically witnessed the torture and killing of her brother.

Arriving in Uganda in only a nightdress she wore when she fled that night, Alia entered Uganda with nothing. Upon arrival in Pagirinya, she was registered by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and received basic supplies including a plot of land to begin her new life.

"When I reached Pagirinya, UNHCR gave me clothes, a blanket and utensils including saucepans, jerrycans among other essentials. I was also allocated a plot of land by OPM."

Still grieving her brother's loss and adjusting to life in asylum, Alia was later joined by her boyfriend, also a refugee fleeing the conflict who later became her husband. The couple eventually had two children and started to build a life together in the settlment.

But grief struck again last year when Alia lost her husband, leaving her to care for their six-year-old daughter and three-year-old son alone. The emotional weight of raising two young children on her own deepened her sorrow.

In search of healing and purpose, Alia turned to football training and later to coaching a girls' team in her settlement.

With the support of a friend named Emmanuel, a football coach for young women in the settlement, Alia asked to join his training sessions even though she was significantly older than the rest of the players.

What began as a one-day training turned into a transformative journey. Alia quickly developed her skills and by early 2025, she had become a mentor and a head coach of the Pagirinya Young Ladies Sports Club, a team composed entirely of young South Sudanese refugee girls living in the settlement.

"Being a coach to these young girls has helped me stay physically fit and manage my grief through sports."

Under her stewardship, the team reached the finals of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Cup 2025, a major girls' football tournament organized by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in collaboration with Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA) and UNHCR. Although they narrowly lost 1-0 to the national team, Jinja City Queens, Alia considered the experience a major victory for herself and her girls.

"I feel very excited that my team participated in the TICAD Cup 2025. Through these competitions, my girls gained exposure by playing against both refugee and national teams. We are thankful to JICA and UNHCR, they supported us throughout our preparations by providing jerseys, playing boots, balls, goal nets and other equipment we used for the preparations of the tournament."

Looking ahead, Alia hopes her team will one day win the TICAD Tournament. She also plans to formally register the club to allow them to participate in other national level competitions.

Alia's personal journey of grief and displacement to mentorship and empowerment through sports is a powerful testimony of resilience, healing and hope. She continues to commend Uganda's progressive refugee policy which has enabled her to freely participate in activities like sports outside her settlement considering the freedom of movement.

"I thank the Government of Uganda. They continue to welcome us into their peaceful country. Because of that, I can live comfortably and take part in activities I love."

Pagirinya Young Ladies Sports Club at the FUFA Technical Centre, Njeru - Buikwe.

ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AHA	African Humanitarian Action
AIRD	African Initiative for Relief and Development
ALIGHT	Formerly the American Refugee Committee
ATC	Agricultural Talent Company
AVSI	Association of Volunteers in International Service
AWYAD	African Women, Youth Action for Development
BSF	Blanket Supplementary Feeding
BTVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training
CO_2	Carbon dioxide
COU	Church of Uganda
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CP	Child Protection
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DER	Division of External Relations
DLG	District Local Government
DPIV	Development Plan IV (Four)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRRM	Donor Relations and Resource Mobilisation Service
EAC	East African Community
ECAIF	Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation
ED	Executive Director
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
EU	European Union
EU-ECHO	European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAQ's	Frequently Asked Question
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FP	Focal Point
FRRM	Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism
FUFA	Federation of Uganda Football Association
FY	Financial Year
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFF	Green Financing Facility
GMIS	Global Mobility and Infrastructure Services
GoU	Government of Uganda
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
H.E.	His/Her Excellency
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HoSO	Head of Sub-Office
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IP	Implementing Partner
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
KM	Kilometre
KWH / kWh	Kilowatt-hour
KWP	Kilowatt-peak
LC	Local Council
LPD	Litres Per Person Per Day
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MC	Master of Ceremony
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organization
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPA	National Planning Authority
NPF	National Partnership Forum
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NTISD	Nsamizi Training Institute for Social Development
NWSC	National Water and Sewerage Corporation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PBW	Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PFA	Partnership Framework Agreement
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PPDR	People for Peace and Defence of Rights
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation Uganda
PSN	People with Specific Needs
PSP	Private Sector Partnership
PTA	Parents–Teachers Association
PV	Photovoltaic
Q-Mark	Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) Quality Mark
RC	Reception Center
REPSSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
RHPG	Refugee Humanitarian Partners Group
RLO	Refugee-Led Organization
RLP	Refugee Law Project
RRP	Refugee Response Plan
RWC	Refugee Welfare Council
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SARD-Net	Sustainable Agriculture for Rural Development Network
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Sfts	Safe from the Start
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SO	Sub-Office
SRRP	Sustainable Refugee Response Plan
TB	Tuberculosis
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
UCRRP	Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UREPP	Uganda Refugee Employment Promotion Project
URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WESRRP	Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan
WFP	World Food Programme
WRLO	Women Refugee-Led Organization

UNHCR staff member Carol Sparks talks to refugees aboard buses headed to Nakivale Refugee Settlement from Nyakabande Reception Centre in Kisoro.

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