

## REFUGEE ENGAGEMENT FORUM (REF)

### The 18<sup>th</sup> REF Meeting Report



*REF Meeting from 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at Silver Springs Hotel in Bugolobi, Kampala-Uganda.*

#### **Day 1: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Session I title:** Self-introduction and Opening Remarks

**Session time:** 08:33 AM to 10:00 AM

**Session Objective:** To bring the house to order, sharing expectations and getting to know each other.

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

The meeting was opened with a word of prayer led by Rev John Pasquale (RWC III-Palabek settlement). Participants then introduced themselves by name, what they wanted to see better in the 3-day meeting, and what should be prioritized during the GRF in Geneva.

More explanations on prioritization, Mastercard scholarships, the rights of the REF Leaders, resilience and self-reliance, plans for category 3, land issues across all settlements, empowerment, and medical service provision, amongst others, were the major expectations from the REF members.

## Welcome Remarks

**Ms. Carol Ann Sparks, UNHCR-** "There are a lot of opportunities amidst challenges. What type of support do you need from partners for the refugees to be successful? It is beyond identifying pledges but rather solutions. The way challenges are stated matters a lot. Let us come up with solutions from within ourselves. Most of the issues coming up in this session are the same issues raised by partners which means that we are moving on the same page. UNHCR is ready to support in ensuring that the messages are well packaged"- said Carol.

### Ms. Peggie - REF co-chair - OPM

- Welcomed all participants for the 18<sup>th</sup> REF meeting, the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting was a successful one and she was happy to be part of this as Uganda is going to be on the global lead in the upcoming GRF. "No one is left behind!". Thanked the REF representatives for sparing the time to come to the meeting.
- She urged the REF members to constantly get feedback from the community before coming and on returning to their settlements to make sure that they share the critical issues from the REF discussions with them.
- On the concerns of the Youth representative attending on a rotational basis, she informed the REF members that the REF has Terms of Reference (ToR) that guide them. She added that on a favorable note, it was realized that on several occasions' youths win leadership elections, and this is evidenced by many of the representatives being youth.
- Urged leaders always to treat people with fairness and representation for everyone. Do not weaponize your offices.

## Session II title: Key takeaways and action points from the previous REF Meeting - Granie Session time: 10:20 AM -11:00 AM

**Session Objective:** To take participants through the action points from the previous REF

What came out:

NO	Action Point	Responsibility	Progress /Update.
<b>17<sup>th</sup> REF Meeting</b>			
1	REF members to consult the community members about the possible pledges from the refugee community to the GRF basing on the 5 Thematic areas and provide feedback in the next REF meeting.	REF Members	With support from ULEARN, OPM, and UNHCR, consultations were made in the settlements. Key messages and pledges will be discussed in the course of the 3 days.
2	Sensitization of women about FRRM within the settlements especially in West Nile to encourage utilization among women.	REF Members	This was done during the different community meetings.
3	REF TF to review REF membership and voting guidelines regarding REF	REF-TF	This was well elaborated on who qualifies to vote for the REF representatives to the CRRF-SG

	membership and voting rights for delegated RWC members to the REF		
4	OPM Urban to replace the 3rd urban REF member for Kampala	REF-TF	Discussions are ongoing
5	REF to utilize WFP Communication channels like Food distribution points, Radio talk shows and any other platform to sensitize the community about REF.	REF Members	These options have been utilized and are still being utilized once they come.
6	REF to sensitize the community members on the continuous food cuts	REF Members	This was done and continues to take place.
7	REF Task force to invite AHA in the next REF meeting to clarify the issue of referrals	REF-TF	AHA are to participate in this 18 <sup>th</sup> REF
8	REF TF to invite OPM commandants to attend REF meetings.	REF TF	Still under considerations but the budgets are still limiting.
9	Ensure proper planning of community feedback and consultative meetings.	REF Members	These were well planned together with OPM, UNHCR and ULEARN
10	Utilize the village and zonal coordination meetings to share feedback with community	REF members	These are well utilized.
11	Support sensitization of the community members on the Refugee Investment Facility by DRC as and when information about it comes in.	REF Members	

**Session III title: Action points and key decisions from previous CRRF S.G meeting**

**Session time: 11:09 am-1:05 pm**

**Session Objective:** To review progress against action points from the 19th CRRF

**Presenter name and organization: Ms. Insa - CRRF Secretariat**

**Key points presented:**

- Transition management. The CRRF is to finalize and share the Draft from the consultant.
- UBOS was requested to include refugees in the upcoming NATIONAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS, although this has not yet been done since the Census was pushed. All people will be engaged in the Census processes and the questions will be universal.
- Advised RWCs to be positive with the forthcoming WFP new policy.
- The Ministry of Finance and Planning to provide an update on the progress of upgrading the Aid Management Platform to facilitate Internal operability and integration to better plan for the funds coming in for the refugee response.

- The next steering group meeting coming soon and documents will be shared early enough, discussion from these meetings will also be used to give feedback to the community about the upcoming GRF.
- She gave a brief background about the GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM and its 4 objectives,
- 3 Key components are stock-taking, Pledging, and Learning. Uganda is a Co-convenor, which involves encouraging other stakeholders to ensure high-level participation.

### **Feedback from the REF members**

- How far with the DEF in the refugee-hosting districts? If the transition is coming already, how will the transition be smooth if the DLGs are not involved?
- Localization process - The RLOs that are coming up are wanting. These are just relatives working together, for example, ED is related to Finance and HR, so the delivery of services may be tested.
- After consultations what next for the new and old pledges?
- If the transition takes place, what will happen, yet the host communities are also crying due to no drugs? What will happen if the refugees are fully taken up by the government?
- Localization in terms of how resources will be transferred and how it will be managed. The performance of CBOs and local NGOS will determine how resources will flow within the organization.
- Under durable solution, it will be more helpful to advocate for Peace in countries of origins so that the refugees voluntarily return.

### **Responses from the CRRF Secretariat and UNHCR.**

- Urged the refugee leaders to always utilize the different opportunities as and when they come in. "If an invitation/information is shared be more proactive. Call for applicants in the GRF was put out in January 2023, and those who applied were shortlisted", clarified the UNHCR representative.
- Take stock of what has been achieved by Uganda in terms of how many have achieved and how many are not. Ensure that the REF Representatives are well prepared.
- The pledges and suggestions in this meeting will be announced during the pre-GRF meeting which will take place in November 2023. Many round table discussions have been carried out.
- **Resilience and Self-reliance:** - The UNHCR and its partners are addressing barriers and equipping farmers, connecting farmers to markets, empowering refugees to programs that support the development of sustainable livelihoods, and providing support to business services.
- **Environment** - Promoting climate-resilient development, focusing on evidence-based solutions.
- **Localization-** Policy reforms to support more localization, track funds going to local actors, develop the localization strategy, advocate for change in partner policies, and increase on participation of local NGOs.
- **Transition Management-** Organizing a smooth transfer from the parallel system of services (facilities and HR) for refugees and host communities. Focus on education, health, and water facilities.
- DEF is alive and kicking; the CAO sits and discusses although there are no consultative and feedback sessions being held but rather use their coordination mechanisms.

### **Action Points**

- Coming up with a measure on how to monitor the pledges that will be made in the upcoming GRF.
- Is it possible to establish a REF Desk so that there is a one-stop center at the global level?

**HINGO:** No one doubts the work done by Local NGOs except for limitations in terms of ceilings. It would be good for the representatives to discuss this so that donors can deal with local NGOs directly.

**Session III title: How to formulate GRF pledges (Including outcomes from round table discussion)**

**Session time: 1:09 pm - 1: 50 pm**

**Session Objective:** To guide on how to develop pledges

**Presenter name and organization: Mr. Bisimwa John from UNHCR**

**Key points presented:**

A pledge is a statement by states, organizations, businesses, and refugees themselves. They can be financial, material, technical, inclusive laws and policies.

Pledge Development includes a multi-stakeholder approach, AGD considerations, new or additional and GCR initiatives.

**Pledge Development processes:**

- Consultation.....SWOT analysis.....Objective/outcome.....Pledge descriptions
- Identify potential partners-Convening Partners-Develop guidance note- submit the pledge.
- Refugee Advisory Group. Uganda is blessed to have a representative from West Nile. These are engaged in the pre-, during, and after the GRF Meeting. Other initiatives include the youth delegation, and students among others.

**REACTIONS and feedback from the REF members.**

- “For the GRF to be successful, let us be coordinated. There was no record of follow-up of the 2019 GRF pledges, but leaders have tried to retrieve them through consultations with community members. Youth representation: where are they picked from? The youths are among us. All RLOs are under leaders”, commented Peter Gift- REF rep to the CRRF SG.
- “Some children have access to schools; the enrollment has been increased, but what was left out is the quality. The teacher-pupil ratio is still challenging. In terms of livelihoods, strategies are not promising. Little has been made in livelihoods”, he added.
- Through the question-and-answer approach, the REF members discussed the reasons why we make pledges and responses were: sticking to the goals amidst challenges, showing seriousness, bringing peace and hope, building trust and being honest in-service delivery, to fulfill the pledge that has been made before, and to share the burden and to create ownership amongst others.

**Action Points**

- Partner's interventions should be aligned to pledges made by the government during GRF. UNHCR and Donors should streamline the call for proposals to align funding to the GRF pledges.

## **Session IV title: Summary of the Settlement Consultations**

**Session time: 2:49 pm-5: 20 pm**

**Session Objective: To give a snapshot of the understanding and the key messages from the settlements.**

**Presenter name and organization: Anyoli Jerry Grants - UNHCR**

### **Key issues**

- We need to have more financial training, and access to loans.
- There is a need to align whatever the refugees are doing to policy.
- Partners should be advised to do individual disbursements other than grouping people with different interests and visions.
- Invite the education experts and Education partner for more experience sharing with the REF Members in the education sector in the next REF MEETING.

**Group work:** The REF members discussed their pledges for the 2023 GRF, focusing on the five thematic areas. The following were the group leaders with their respective thematic areas:

1. Moses Nyang (RWCIII –Adjumani) - Resilience and self-reliance
2. Ayume Peter (RWC III-Imvepi) - Education
3. Margaret Aloyo (RWC III Women rep Palabek) - Climate action and Energy
4. Fenius- Durable solutions
5. Adokorach Vicky (RWC III Bidibidi, zone 1) - Localisation

The group presentations were scheduled for day 2- 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023.

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## **Day 2: 20<sup>th</sup> Sept.2023**

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

**Session time:** 8:20am-9:40am

**Session Objective:** To provide brief updates on the FRRM and solicit inputs from the REF members on the functionality of the FRRM.

**Presenter: Abigail (UNHCR)**

### **Key points presented:**

- **The FRRM is** an interagency Feedback mechanism and can be used to access Not only UNHCR but also other organizations working in the refugee response.
- Helpline is operational throughout the week (Monday-Friday 8:30am-6:30 pm), Saturday and Sunday from 9:00am-5:00pm.
- A total of 266,376 calls were received from Jan-Aug 2023, and 36,015 individual cases were handled. Of these, 26827 cases (75%) were resolved directly at the helpline, and 8578 referrals were sent to UNHCR and Partners.
- 253 misconduct-related complaints and 188 emergency protection & SEA cases were received.
- The complaints are categorized as follows: (category 1- positive feedback, 2- request for information, 3- request for service support and assistance, 4-Fraud corruption and misconduct, 5-Lifethreatening).
- On calls per location, it was highlighted that the West Nile region still has lower call rates than others. The highest percentage of the calls are from the Southwest, especially from Kyaka II.

- Food-related cases are the most reported during the period because of the food prioritization.
- Using group discussions, the REF members called the Help line and discussed the challenges with the Interactive Voice Recording (IVR). They identified the following challenges: dominated by English, delay in picking the call, and Kiswahili is too fast amongst others.
- They also highlighted that “Dinka agents should escalate to the relevant authorities and not discourage on call”, some agents use intimidating language-it’s good for them to be courteous, reference numbers given some refugees do not know to write or know what it is to be used for, *some of the agents sounding robotic*, and many languages in South Sudan amongst others as the challenges the refugees faced with the helpline.
- They recommended the following as areas of improvement: the language of instruction should be that language which the refugees understand well. For example, for Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, and Kinyamilenge- the language of instruction is French, the out-of-office recording should be recorded in the major languages when the agent picks the call, it’s good for them to be audible, have gender balance, i.e. have both male & female agents, add Bari and Luo in the IVR.

#### **Action points**

- “The helpline is not to replace other reporting channels”- emphasized Abigail. She urged the REF members to encourage their community members to also make use of the other reporting channels.

#### **Session II title: Integrity: Fraud and Corruption**

**Session time: 9:40am- 10:51am**

**Session Objective:** To build the capacity of the REF members on Fraud and corruption for them to identify the red flags and report them.

**Presenter: Ting (UNCR)**

#### **Key points presented:**

- When you hear or see something about fraud and corruption by UNHCR and partner staff, report it to the FRRM.
- All services provided by the UNHCR and partners are free of charge.
- Discussed what fraud is and cited examples of fraud,
- Discussed the various ways in which the refugee leaders can combat fraud, for example, through community information awareness and reporting.
- Discussed the consequences of fraud and corruption,
- If you do pay for a service, UNHCR and its partners cannot recover or help you to recover the cost.
- Took the REF members through the UNHCR Uganda’s Anti-Fraud by FDSP structure.
- Highlighted that in case fraud and/or corruption is committed by an OPM staff, the UNHCR does not investigate OPM but submits the allegations to OPM for them to investigate through the government structure.
- Everyone has the same responsibility to report fraud!

### **Feedback from the REF members.**

- "Can we as refugees experience something new? How far have UNHCR handled some of the reported cases? what are the processes involved, especially for UNHCR staff?"- inquired a REF member.
- "Can UNHCR get a local safeguarding officer who responds quickly to reported cases?"- emphasized another REF member.
- The REF members also inquired whether UNHCR has a mechanism in place to cater for extremely vulnerable individuals, has a mechanism in place to protect those who have reported concerns and already feel threatened.
- *A REF member hinted that some PoCs registration documents had been blocked in the system because of fraudulent dealings by the OPM. This was cited in Rhino refugee settlement.*

### **Response from the UNHCR**

- The IGO investigates UNHCR staff misconduct, and the process takes time.
- The FRRM is a confidential reporting mechanism, and when one has reported sensitive information, it is essential for that person NOT to discuss it with other PoCs.
- UNHCR has in place an anti-retaliation policy.

### **Action points.**

- REF members empower their community members to report fraud and corruption through community awareness sessions and individual interactions,
- REF members encourage their community members to always call FRRM to inquire about anything that they are not sure about.
- REF members are encouraged to report cases of fraud and corruption and not investigate the cases themselves.

### **Session III title: Feedback from the CCM, and health sector.**

**Session time: 10:58 am - 02:05 pm**

**Session Objective:** To provide the REF members with updates from the CCM and public health-related programs.

**Presenter: Dr. Ronald Nyakoojo (UNHCR) and REV Emmanuel (CCM Rep)**

#### **Key points presented:**

- The health budget for the year 2024 has been reduced, and that implies the health service for the PoCs will significantly be affected. Some health facilities will be closed, forcing some Pocs to move long distances to access services. This will be done considering the population and disease burden of the community. Some of the facilities will be handed over to the DLG. Inevitably, the quality of services will be affected too.
- Briefs on UCCM-Uganda Country Coordinating Mechanisms - responsible for submission of proposals for funding by Global fund. highlighted the Mission and vision of the CCM, The Core values of the CCM as (voluntarism, equity, transparency & accountability, good governance, stakeholder engagement, and others). UCCM



focuses on what affects the entire community but not individuals. UCCM has formed a refugee secretariat for CCM-this helps to coordinate CCM activities in refugee communities,

- **Election of CCM refugee representative:** - **elect** someone who delivers and helps to keep the institutional memory (a term is two years- if a member has served half a term, then it's not considered a full term). For the refugee constituency, there will be two representatives.

### Feedback from the REF members

- The refugees are not yet ready to transition to the government managing the health facilities. There is a need to have the refugees engaged further.
- Insufficient drugs in the health facilities. Provide more drugs to the refugee-hosting districts since they have a higher population.
- Coordination between the implementing partners and gov't- the payment of refugee leaders who supported the mosquito net distributions in Southwest is not done.
- The VHTs were trained on how to use the tablets, but to date, the tablets have not been distributed- cited in Southwest,
- Referral from Rwamwanja to Mulago/Fortportal- insufficient drugs, especially in Mulago, where PoCs are asked to buy the drugs.
- For the health cases (sicknesses) that take long to treat, why not refer them for resettlement?
- Few health workers-especially specialized Dr for women.
- Limited health equipment, for instance, no scan (ultrasound) machine in the settlement health facilities,
- Need to upgrade some of the health facilities at settlement levels- cited in Imvepi (need to have some simple theater established in those facilities).
- Poor conditions of the settlement roads, which in a way worsen the conditions of the referred patients.
- Increasing cases of malnutrition due to food prioritization.
- Poor attitudes of the health staff- needs for continuous engagement with the health staff.
- Delay in releasing test results, especially for TB-cited in Lamwo (Palabek settlement),
- What will transition look like when it comes to Kampala?
- PoCs who come from the settlements to seek medical support in Kampala on their own. How do we support them?
- Is there some MoU the UNHCR has signed with the government to protect the refugees? - cited in Lobule. The ambulances are very rear and at times hard to access.
- Poor accommodation at the AHA hostel- not favorable for the patients.

### **Responses from UNHCR (Dr. Ronald)**

- Clarified that to be able to manage with the limited resources, some health facilities will be closed. This will be done in agreement with the DLGs,
- UNHCR has in place equipment and mechanisms for tracking the drugs and holding accountable health staff for the drugs.
- On the attitudes of the health workers, they ensure that the partner staff are trained on person-centered service provision.
- On the tablets, UNHCR came up with a community health tool, piloted in Kyaka and Kyangwali, and Kiryandongo- distributed the tablets But in the process, realized that the tablets were disappearing. The partners were not comfortable with them getting lost. It was therefore agreed that OPM manage the Tablets. Because of the changes in leadership at OPM, this has yet to stall.
- The health partners have staff at the referral points, but these staff do not make decisions at those hospitals,
- Unfortunately, for some complicated diseases like cancer/kidney diseases- the referral system limits the health partners on this. They only give first aid in terms of managing pain,
- The health sector Response Plan guides UNHCR in delivering health services in the refugee-hosting districts.
- Guided the meeting on how the health workers make the diagnosis of sickness,
- Specialized health staff- are allocated by Mins Health according to the health center level.
- On referrals, he clarified that this is a medical condition made by the medical experts based on the condition of the patients. Referrals move according to the levels of the facilities.
- From the medical perspective, all medical workers swear an oath and are obligated to follow their ethics; hence, refugees should not fear that the health workers in government facilities would mishandle them.
- UNHCR is continuously lobbying for resources to support the refugee operation,
- Informed the REF members that for the IP-health for year 2024, the UNHCR is still keeping the IRC for West Nile and MTI for South West.

### **Protection related responses-by Julian (UNHCR)**

- Encouraged the leaders to take advantage of the residential nature of the workshop. Emphasized that the meeting is not in vain; some changes have come along with it.
- Called on the leaders to be positive-minded and view opportunities in every challenge.
- Transitioning does not mean UNHCR is exiting completely. They are only changing the way things are being done.
- Resettlement is not a right. very few PoCs get resettled on medical grounds. UNHCR does not decide who gets resettled, but the resettlement countries do.

### **Actions points.**

- REF members to work with the VHTs to ensure that the persons we serve have access to health services,
- REF members to educate the community members on the various changes that will come in the health sector.
- UNHCR to follow up with OPM to fast-track the distribution of the tablets to the VHTs in the remaining settlements,
- UNHCR to ensure the community is aware in case they're bringing in a new IP for instance, Health,
- UNHCR to work with partners to build the capacity of the existing VHTs for them to work well at the settlement level,
- UNHCR to lobby for mosquito nets to be distributed at the settlement levels.

### **Session IV title: Prioritization Model**

**Session time: 14:50 -16:02 hrs**

**Session Objective:** To provide more information on the food prioritization Model and the appeal process.

**Presenter: Nelson (WFP)**

#### **Key points presented:**

- Clarified how the prioritization is done based on the vulnerability status.
- Implementation is now in cycle 3.
- Some issues from the prioritization (uncategorized households, new arrivals)
- Hinted at the limitation of Resources/funds, which will affect the handling of successful claims,
- Urged the leaders to encourage their community members to update their household data every time a change is made.
- Claims reception window closes on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023. It opens on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023.
- 23,842 claims have been registered by Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023,
- Claims processing timeline [preliminary profiles and finalized consultation-communication to claimants in Nov 2023.

#### **Issues arising from the REF members.**

- A lot of PoCs have been affected for instance, some EVIs were placed in the wrong category. The appeal process takes too long- the three-month appeal period is too long. This forces some PoCs to embrace harmful coping mechanisms.
- What strategies have WFP got for the graduation?
- How are the refugee leaders considered bearing in mind that they work voluntarily? How will the leaders be supported? Need to strengthen the refugee leaders.
- Misinformation by partner staff for instance, partner staff going to the community claiming the community wanted to strike. Partners should be oriented and given the available information.
- Involvement of the leaders in the decision-making processes, Improve the appeal mechanisms. Increase the number of staff taking the appeal cases,

- "The prioritization has impacted negatively on the PoCs. This has led to increased cases of teenage pregnancy, increasing cases of PoCs spontaneously returning to their country of origin, abandoned families (mothers neglecting their children)" - emphasized a REF member.
- Food issues and durable solutions should be highlighted at all advocacy fora.
- How will the HHs phased off be supported by WFP?
- The uncategorized household,
- Arrogance of the staff handling the appeal process.
- The new arrivals are getting assistance. This is making the community members think that their support is all going to new arrivals. "For those who are married, if you cannot support one wife, why do you bring another one?"-asked a refugee leader.
- What happens to the households that split? - cited in Palorinya.

### **Responses from WFP**

- Transition model- helps to support the PoCs to become self-reliant. The model is still under consultation and clearing processes, and once it's done, it will be enrolled at the settlement level.
- For Category 3- some refugee leaders are in it. They were not put there because they are leaders, but about six indicators were considered, and being a leader was not one of them. This also applies to households that were wrongly categorized.
- Encouraged the leaders to use the FRRM and WFP hotline to report cases of misconduct like arrogance,
- Prioritization is being done because of resource constraints, and these constraints have not affected only the food but also the staffing.
- On the appeal period, this has been because of funding problems,
- Prioritization to be reversed- this may not be possible because currently, WFP has limited resources, and because of this, they will keep it on to support the most vulnerable households. WFP is unable to reverse and go back to full support but will keep on trying to make it better.
- encouraged the REF members to encourage the community members to follow the appeal process.
- Community leaders to try to explore other options for supporting vulnerable individuals,
- WFP did her best through community consultations to engage the community members. This informed the indicators used for categorizing. Feedback and consultation were done in about seven settlements. To reduce the bias, WFP uses some statistical methods to categorize the HHs,
- "Efforts are ongoing to find ways of supporting the PoCs, but we are not yet able to specify the when. There is a continuous call on the private sector to invest in supporting the PoCs"- said Paul-UNHCR representative.
- Learning is still ongoing- they can only share when implementation goes on,
- New arrivals- when they have just come in, they receive 100% for three months, then Category 1 (60%) for three months and then after that, grouped accordingly.
- The WFP used thirteen indicators using statistical methods to categorize the PoCs into categories 1-3. WFP tried objectively to do this.

- Encouraged the Ref members to embrace other initiatives to become self-reliant.
- Split HHs because of the limited resources they remain with the category of the HH they split from.
- The livelihood support by WFP is still in the design phase- priority settlements have already been identified, the beneficiaries have already been identified, and partners have been identified. Stakeholders' engagement and consultation are ongoing. Urged REF members to be patient as the processes are going on.

#### **Action points.**

- REF members to encourage their community members to update their Household status in case of any change constantly.
- WFP and partners to ensure all frontline teams have the right messages. New messages are being worked on primarily on the uncategorized households.
- REF members to encourage community members to embrace other initiatives to become self-reliant.

#### **Session V title: Generation of the GRF 2023 pledges**

**Session time: 16:05hrs-17:30hrs**

**Session Objective:** To generate pledges for the 2023 GRF.

**Presenter: Anyoli Jerry Grants**

**Key points presented: Group presentations.**

The REF members in groups discussed and presented the 2023 GRF pledges as below:

**In Education, Refugee parents pledged to send their children to school by conducting** awareness and sensitization sessions through community meetings on the importance of education, taking ownership of the education processes by embracing cost-sharing and monitoring their children's performance at school.

**Climate Actions and Energy:** - Pledge to support actions and interventions towards environmental restoration through trees growing, sensitizing the community on the importance of environmental conservation, recycling non-biodegradable materials, adopting energy-saving technologies, and supporting the Local Government to enforce the laws on environmental protection and engaging with the Local Government to source land for trees growing.

**Durable solutions-** pledged to collaborate with the partners to lobby for more support for refugees at the various advocacy forums. Embrace peaceful coexistence initiatives to co-exist with the host communities peacefully.

**Resilience and self-reliance-** pledged to conduct continuous advocacy for youth skilling. Pledged to strengthen the already existing socio-economic activities by engaging in IGAs, through awareness and community dialogues champion positive mindset initiatives, pledged to peacefully co-exist with the host community members.

## Action points

- UNHCR and Taskforce members to support the REF members to refine the draft pledges.
- Share pledges with partners at the settlement level to guide their implementations.

## **Session VI title: Localization and Refugee Lead Organization Network**

**Session time: 17:30 hrs -18:20 hrs**

**Session Objective:** To provide an overview of RELON and how localization works.

**Presenter: Jerry (RELON)**

### **Key points presented:**

- RELON is an African refugee-led Network with the vision of having an independent and credible voice influencing actions towards refugee inclusion and participation in decision-making in Uganda and beyond.
  - RELON does advocacy and engagement, RLOs capacity building,
  - Explored the concept of localization within the context of refugee-led organizations.
  - Discussed the importance of localization,
  - Localization is "empowering local communities and organizations to take the lead in humanitarian response".
  - Taking ownership of humanitarian response by representation, collaboration, community-led initiatives, capacity building, and feedback mechanisms.
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## **Day 3: 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2023**

### **Session I title: Recap of Day 2**

**Session time: 08:40hr- 09:10hrs**

**Session Objective:** To review the discussions from Day 2.

**Presenter: Jerry Grants Anyoli (UNHCR) & Milly Nancy Lagu (Class President)**

### **Key points presented:**

- The REF members mentioned some critical issues discussed in Day 2.
- Majority of them focused on reporting sexual Exploitation and Abuse cases and the reporting channels.

### **Session II title: Presentation by R-SEAT (Engage-Amplify-Connect)**

**Session time: 09:10hrs-10:17hrs**

**Session Objective: Brief presentation on R-SEAT, and what they do**

**Presenter: Andhira kara and Jean Marie**

### **Key points presented:**

- Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT) is an international initiative working to enhance the effectiveness of global refugee responses, by co-designing mechanisms to amplify refugee leadership ecosystems and increase the participation of refugees at state levels in a meaningful, sustainable, and transformative way.

- Our mission extends beyond amplifying refugee voices. We are dedicated to enhancing global refugee responses by building state-level engagement mechanisms with refugee experts. Through these mechanisms, we aim to craft policies and initiatives grounded in lived experiences, leading to more efficient, sustainable, and impactful outcomes. We also work to build capacity within the global refugee leadership ecosystem by connecting refugee leaders and refugee-led organizations (RLOs) with relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, foundations, and other non-profit organizations.
- R-SEAT works across spaces and contexts to deliver the tools for institutionalized meaningful refugee participation.
- R-SEAT intends to support the REF in distinct areas like resourcing and structure, professional development, and Independence.

#### **Key issues from the REF members**

- Need to clarify whether R-SEAT is a CBO/RLO?
- Is R-SEAT already working in Uganda?
- How will R-SEAT work with the REF members?

#### **Session III title: Self-Reliance and Localization**

**Session time: 10:20hrs-13:00hrs, and from 14:45hrs-17:00hrs**

**Session Objective:** Enable the leaders to appreciate self-reliance and resilience initiatives.

**Presenter: Noreen Nampewo (REF TaskForce member)**

#### **Key points presented:**

- Is self-reliance a myth or a reality? Some say it's a myth with the suggestion that the perception of the PoCs on self-reliance varies from person to person. Organizations come with approaches for self-reliance and resilience, but instead of graduating the PoCs to self-resilience, the PoCs are more vulnerable than before. Refugees lack resources regarding Factors of Production to sustain their self-reliance initiatives. Without localization, there is no self-reliance,
- Resilience and self-reliance have become priority outcomes of refugee support around the world, with self-reliance being highlighted in the GCR in 2018 as one of the four objectives,
- Self-reliance is the 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of the CRRF which provides the entry point for development interventions, hence offering an opportunity for refugees and host communities to be self-reliant.
- This primarily consists of sustainable livelihood interventions, enhanced service delivery and activities to promote peaceful coexistence, building resilient institutions, and investing in skills development to help communities better cope with the shocks and stresses of displacement,
- Resilience and self-reliance pillar has been considered as one of Uganda's key thematic areas for GRF 2023,

### **Shared common quotes on self-reliance and resilience like:**

"Children must be taught how to think but not what to think"- by Margaret Mead;

"Life is not easy for any of us. We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves"- by Marie Curie;

"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think"-Christopher Robin;

"To find yourself, think for yourself".

- Self-reliance is "the ability of individuals, HHs or communities to meet their essential needs and sustainably enjoy their human rights and live with dignity".
- Who is a self-reliant person? has a good relationship with others, appreciates the excellent work of others, is dependent, reliable, has respect for themselves and others, doesn't think they know everything, learns from others, they do not feel inferior.
- **Benefits of self-reliance:** independence, self-confidence, self-esteem, getting things done on our own makes us more effective, increases positive feelings about ourselves, and increases the likelihood that we will work harder.
- **Steps to self-reliance:** - Assume responsibility, accept yourself and be your own best friend, be informed and make your own decisions, know where you are going, have inner confidence, recognize and manage dependence, have your own values, not rely on 'things' to feel happiness.

### **Localization: -**

- Extending resources for the local/community-based organizations to manage,
- Requires the building of the capacity of the local partners by the international organizations through mentorship and coaching, & regular monitoring of the activities of the Local organizations,
- The Local organizations must obey and follow the policies on SEA, and safeguarding,
- The challenge with funding local organizations is that some have poor planning and mismanage allocated funds.
- The need for refugee leaders to encourage their community members to have self-initiated projects and CBOs. They MUST prepare in advance and be active in their communities.
- Increase direct funding and transparency around resource transfers to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action.  
Reaffirm the principles of Partnership,
- Stop undermining local capacity and provide robust organizational capacity strengthening.
- There is a need for the Local organizations to be solid and visible- there are opportunities for RLOs.

### **Feedback from the REF members.**

- Need to extend the training on self-reliance to the settlement level,
- Need to empower the Refugee leaders and their community economically,
- Most projects are in the settlement neglecting the Urban-Kampala



- The leaders testified that they had already embraced self-reliance earlier on. They cited some examples to show how they have done that. They have engaged in agricultural activities- cited in Palabek, and Kiryandongo. Learned a lot from the settlement-testified that they have been trained.
- The refugees though they would like to embrace self-reliance and resilience, are challenged by limited access to agricultural land.
- PoCs with no refugee/asylum documents. This limits them from becoming self-reliant. They also have challenges accessing the limited services available for refugees.

#### **Action Points**

- Advocate for the partners to be more innovative and diversify the skills training. "if everyone is a tailor, then who is going to be the customer?"-asked a REF member.
- REF members to encourage the local organizations in their settlements to join the Charter4 Change-localization network- @jerry/Noreen to share the updated link with leaders.
- Encourage the RLOs/CBOs to join the various platforms. This is particularly true for West Nile.

#### **Session IV title: Presentation by Last Mile Climate**

**Session time: 14:20hrs- 14:42hrs**

**Session Objective: To familiarize the REF members with Solar Electric cooking.**

**Presenter: Hellen**

#### **Key points presented:**

- Last Mile Climate helps humanitarian organizations leverage proven sector solutions.
- Solar Electric cooking system is one of the projects that will be implemented. So far, the project has started by inception which will run through 2023. This provides an alternative source of energy for cooking. The project will be implemented on a phase-model approach (phase 1- Uganda, Phase 2- Rwanda, SSD, Chad, Kenya, Burundi, Malawi.
- Solar cooking technology is affordable for both refugees and host communities.

#### **Issues from the REF members:**

- The REF members inquired about how Last Mile Climate will support the PoCs within the various settlements. They also inquired about which settlements in Uganda would benefit from the support.

**Session V title: Election of Uganda refugee CCM representative**

**Session time: 17:17hrs-17:43hrs**

**Session Objective: To elect a refugee representative to the CCM**

**Presenter: Jerry Grants Anyoli**

**Key points presented:**

- The REF members unanimously agreed that **Rev. Emmanuel Datiro** – REF member from Kiryandongo serves as the CCM representative by 22/32 votes.
- They agreed to elect CCM alternative Rep. Nominated the following names:
  1. Milly Nancy Lagu- 08 votes
  2. Anthony Moga- 11 votes
  3. Sandrine S – 13 votes
- **Ms. Sandrine Silawuka**- was elected by secret ballots as the alternate CCM refugee representative.

**Closing Remarks**

**Class President:**

- Appreciated all the members for their active participation. "The 18<sup>th</sup> REF meeting has been very good"- she said. Acknowledged the active participation of the newly elected members.
- Thanked the partner representatives for continuously supporting the REF engagement.
- Thanked the TF members for all their contributions towards the success of the REF meeting,
- On the action points, she encouraged the REF members to escalate this in their various settlements,
- Acknowledged and thanked the RLOs representatives for their active participation during the meeting.
- She then finally wished all the members God's blessings and a safe journey home.

**REF TF Co-Chair- Anyoli Jerry Grants - UNHCR**

- Thanked the REF members and expressed his gratitude that the capacity of the REF members has been enhanced to the level that they can do even more.
- Thanked the REF members for their active participation during the meeting,
- Thanked the REF TF (ULEARN, OXFARM, CARE, NRC, UNHCR, OPM) members for their continuous support and ensuring the success of the REF,
- Informed the REF members that in the 19<sup>th</sup> REF meeting, we will review the pledges for GRF 2023 and also have pieces of training in selected areas (leaders will give in their suggestions through the REF WhatsApp platform).
- Roundtable discussion on Transition is scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023- The two REF reps to the CRRF have been invited for the same.
- He finally requested a spiritual leader (Rev. Emmanuel Datiro) to pray for the leaders who will be going through elections in their various settlements,

### **Paul Dime Zbignew - UNHCR**

- Thanked the leaders for their active participation and for voicing the various perspectives of the refugees. "Something we sometimes take for granted is the work with leaders, and this is why Uganda is a model of refugee engagement,"- He emphasized.
- Conveyed greetings from the UNHCR Country representative.
- Informed the meeting that Uganda is hosting the biggest number of refugees, and hence the need to always engage with the refugee leaders when making decisions.
- Emphasized that the REF is always the best tool, and the role of UNHCR is to ensure that they sustain the REF engagements. UNHCR is continuously engaging with the TF members to support the REF.
- Urged the RLOs to always reach out to UNHCR in case they need guidance.
- Concluded by wishing the leaders a safe trip to the various settlements and promised that UNHCR will continue to positively interact with the refugees during feedback meetings, and other field visits.

Finally meeting adjourned with a short prayer lead by Mama Joyce Akujo- Bidibidi REF women representative at 18:10hrs.

**Appendix 1.** Key actions point from the 18<sup>th</sup> REF Meeting.

## Action points from the 18<sup>th</sup> REF Meeting.

NO	Action Point	Responsibility	Progress /Update
<b>18<sup>th</sup> REF Meeting- 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2023.</b>			
<b>1</b>	UNHCR and Taskforce members to support the REF members to refine the draft pledges.		
<b>2</b>	UNHCR and TF to share the pledges with partners at the settlement level to guide their implementations.		
3	REF members to encourage their community members always to update their Household status in case of any change with OPM/UNHCR		
4	WFP and partners to ensure all frontline teams have the right messages. New messages are being worked on, especially on the uncategorized households,		
5	REF members to encourage community members to embrace other initiatives to become self-reliant.		
6	REF members to work with the VHTs to ensure that the persons we serve have access to the health services,		
7	REF to sensitize the community about the Transition that is in education, health, and water.		
<b>8</b>	UNHCR to follow up with OPM to fast-track the distribution of the tablets to the VHTs in the remaining settlements,		
9	<b>UNHCR to</b> ensure the community is aware in case they're bringing in a new IP for instance Health,		
10	UNHCR to work with partners to build the capacity of the existing VHTs for them to work well at the settlement level,		

11	UNHCR to lobby for mosquito nets to be distributed at the settlement levels.		
12	REF members to empower their community members to report fraud and corruption through community awareness sessions and individual interactions,		
13	REF members to encourage their community members always to call FRRM to inquire about anything they are unsure about.		
14	REF members are encouraged to report cases of fraud and corruption and not investigate the cases themselves,		
15	UNHCR to invite the education experts and Education partners for more discussions on the education sector in the next REF meeting.		

**Links to the presentations, and attendance list.**

1. [SELF RELIENCE PRESENTATION 18TH REF MEETING.pptx](#)
2. [Sep 20 R-SEAT Presentation \(Uganda\)1.pptx](#)
3. [18th REF meeting attendance list.pdf](#)