

REFUGEE ENGAGEMENT FORUM (REF)

The 14th REF Meeting Report:

Held from 26th – 28th July 2022



Figure 1: REF members and part of the Task Force members on the 3rd day of the 14th REF meeting held from 26th-28th July at Eureka Place Hotel, Ntinda Kampala.

Day 1: 26th July 2022

Session time: 10:15 am – 10:55 am

Session I Title: Opening remarks & Introduction of the new Representative of UNHCR Uganda, Mr. Matthew CRENTSIL

Time: 10:15 am-10:55 am

Session Objective To officially welcome all participants, Introduce the new UNHCR Country representative and officially open the meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Zbigniew Paul DIME, Senior Protection Officer (Community-Based), UNHCR Uganda

Key points presented:

- The presenter welcomed all the REF members for 14th REF meeting
- Thanked the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) & all partners for supporting the REF engagements in Uganda
- Informed REF members that the 14th REF meeting was organized to build the capacity of REF members

- Officially introduced the new UNHCR Country Representative and invited him to give his opening remarks to REF members.

Remarks from the new UNHCR Country Representative- Mr. Matthew CRENTSIL

- The UNHCR Representative appreciated the donors for helping UNHCR to deliver support to the refugees.
- He welcomed all the new REF members and encouraged all the members to speak on behalf of others. He further challenges REF members to be open and participate actively during discussions.
- He thanked the Government of Uganda for its open policy toward refugees. Further emphasized that Uganda is an example to the rest of the countries because of its policies related to management of refugees.
- Challenged all refugees to reciprocate Uganda's hospitality by contributing to its development in the smallest ways possible.
- He emphasized the importance of the ongoing refugee verification exercise. He stressed that accurate figures are needed for planning purposes and called upon REF members to encourage community members to turn up for the verification in the various settlements.
- Finally, he assured REF members that UNHCR will continue to do its best supporting the Government of Uganda to satisfy the needs of refugees in the best way possible.

Remarks from OPM: Mr. Innocent NDAHIRIWE, Refugee Integration Officer (Legal), OPM

- The presenter started by thanking UNHCR, all partners, and the REF members for turning up for the workshop and for their continued support of the REF.
- He delivered greetings from the Acting Commissioner for Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), whom he said was unable to attend due to other commitments.
- He overemphasized the role played by the refugee engagement forum as a platform for the refugee to voice their concerns through their participation during the CRRF SG meeting.
- As OPM co-chair of the REF Taskforce, he pledged to continue supporting REF activities with support from partners.
- Thanked the partners for dedicating the 14th REF meeting to support the capacity building of REF members. He urged all REF members to be open and share their experiences (what is working, not working).
- He further challenged the refugees to be self-reliant instead of waiting to be fed.
- He noted that funding for refugee activities has continued to decline and called for peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities to enhance the self-reliance of refugees.
- He called upon refugees to be united because they are all part of the East Africa Community (EAC). He further confirmed that Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is now a member of the EAC and that Somalia has also requested to join the Community. To him, through the EAC, States can harmonize their policies related to the management of refugee affairs.
- Finally, he warmly welcomed the new UNHCR Country representative to Uganda and promised Government's continued support.

Session II title: Leadership

Session time: 11:25 am – 1:20 pm

Session Objective: To increase REF members knowledge and understanding about the concept of leadership and how to use the leadership spaces to bring about the desired change

Presenter name and organization: Mrs. Noreen Nampewo- CARE

Key points presented:

- Leadership is about doing things the right way
- A leader is someone who influences and guides others towards the accomplishment of a goal



- Leadership is a process of influencing others to achieve a goal or specific task in a given period
- A leader has skills and self-control
- Leaders have values- attributes that are inbuilt into the character that can easily be passed on.
- Functions of leadership include encouraging, harmonizing, motivating, etc.
- Leadership styles include Transformational, democratic, autocratic, and servant leaders
- Nature of leaders-aggressive, passive, and assertive
- Public speaking focus areas- audience, Message, and yourself (Presenter)
- Power dimensions in Leadership- Power over, Power with, power to, and power within.

Feedback raised by the REF:

Feedback raised by the REF members:

REF members' perspectives on who a good leader is:

- A good timekeeper responds to raised issues, a good listener, delegates, accountable, transparent, non-discriminatory, morally upright, Tolerant, Transparent, With Integrity, Accountable, Unifying, and Influential.

REF members' perspectives on who a bad leader is:

- Does not call for meetings, Segregates, Selfish, Judgmental, not accountable, Highly Corrupt, Unapproachable, Rigid.

REF members' recommendations to address bad leadership

- Capacity building, should get advisors, need to be trained, should be removed from their seats.

Session III title: Good practice study presentation.

Session time: 2:43 pm – 3:55 pm

Session objective: To share an overview of the REF good practice study with the REF members.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Mathew Olweny Okot – U-LEARN.

Key points presented:

- The study sought to identify key lessons and successes from the REF and document the experience in Uganda for the benefit of a wider audience.
- Lessons learned from the REF good practice study; REF builds upon existing structures, composed of intentionally diverse structures, fosters interpersonal relationships, operationally flexible structures, ongoing learning and adaption, and support across stakeholder groups.
- Way forward for the REF for example, need to continue evolving and learning as a global trailblazer, ongoing innovation, and improvement, and Widening engagement with the REF across the refugee response.
- Potential areas of increased engagement for instance; strengthening communication with communities, supporting inclusivity and representation of REF members, embedding documentation and information sharing to support accountability, and continuing the active support of the REF members.

Key feedback raised by the REF members:

- REF has supported in the resolution of issues that need escalation to a higher level.
- Capacity building for REF members;
- REF provides relational opportunities;
- REF platform makes it easier for members to access information;
- REF sets clear Terms OF Reference guiding the REF members;
- Requested for opening more positions on the REF membership to cover persons with disabilities;
- REF helps leaders to be involved in tracking good practices and sectoral working groups to get updates on progress;

- REF needs consider how to strengthen the linkage with settlement coordination meetings;
- REF Links Refugee leadership with the National leadership through CRRF SG meetings.

Session IV title: Presenters guide Presentation.

Session time: 3:55 pm – 5:30 pm

Session objective: To share an overview of the REF presenters guide with as working document to support REF members with tips on how to plan & organize and conduct feedback & Consultative meetings

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

Key points presented:

- The Presenter's guide is available on the U-LEARN website and the UNHCR Data Management Portal. Interested parties can go ahead to download it.
- Presenters guide is a document to help REF members to plan and organize awareness raising and community outreach engagements.
- Presentation on the sections of the presenter's guide, it has Part 1 & 2.
- Part 1 of the Guide shares the history of the REF, objectives, REF activities, why refugees should be involved in REF, how to get involved.
- Part 2 shares practical tips on how to conduct feedback and consultative meetings.
- It explains how to do Introduction of your audience, and self
- How to give session overview, presenting what is going to be discussed, what they know about REF and what they would like to learn in the session.
- How to ensure active Participation of communities through sharing about the topic and why they should be involved.
- How to close the session. Responding to questions and summarize the topics covered and close with a thank you note.

Key feedback raised by the REF members:

- Need to mobilize key partners and stakeholders for feedback meetings.
- Agreement on the Agenda i.e., opening prayers, introduction, opening remarks, feedback sharing and community sharing feedback with the partners.
- REF members should always introduce the audience during feedback sessions.
- REF members should share the session overview, presenting what is going to be discussed, what they know about REF and what they would like to learn in the session.
- Remember to always create REF awareness with general information on what REF is.
- Allow community to actively Participate by allowing communities to share about the topic and why they should be involved.
- Before session closure. REF members should respond to questions and summarize the topics covered and close with a thanks note.

Action points:

1. REF members to jointly plan with UNHCR REF focal persons for consultative and feedback sessions on quarterly basis.
2. REF members to ensure OPM commandant is informed and invited for weekly Consultative & Feedback sessions.
3. UNHCR focal persons to support in the mobilization of other partners for REF consultative and feedback meetings in their respective settlements.
4. UNHCR REF focal persons to be added on the REF WhatsApp platform.
5. REF Taskforce Co-chairs to streamline communication between the taskforce, partners and UNHCR focal persons.



Day 2: 27th July 2022

Session I title: Training on Basic communication skills.

Session time: 9:15am-1:20pm

Session Objective: To enhance the communication skills of REF members.

Presenter name and organization: - Mrs. Fauzia Nkunyingi (NRC) and Mr. Frank Walusimbi (UNHCR)

Key points presented:

Mrs. Fauzia Nkunyingi - NRC

- Requested REF members to share challenges faced in the community when presenting their various community concerns to partners.
- Asked REF members to share their expectations for the day- REF members raised two expectations; to improve on their communication skills and learn how to reach out to various partners operating in their areas confidently.
- Presented elements of protection mainstreaming- shared a video to trigger different thoughts on what to check for when convening a community meeting.
- Encouraged REF members to demand for services- quality services.
- How to present information from a protection perspective/lens.

Mr. Frank Walusimbi - UNHCR (Day-today communication skills)

- How to build skills to enhance day-today communication (listening/active listening, conciseness, body language, confidence, open mindedness, respect, and using the correct mediation).
- Shared the 7-38-55 Rule by Dr Albert Mehrabian [verbal and non-verbal communication expert] 55%-Body expression, 38%-pitch, tone, and how we say things, and 7%-words.
- How the audience perceive our communication [viewers make up their mind in 30-60 seconds, attracted to confident and comfortable presenters, useful content/value for money, credible content, take you to be an authority in your field].
- How to capture attention in <60 seconds [people we talk to are preoccupied – how do we break in their mind?]- opening remarks usually is the weakest part of our presentation, share short stories, emotional connection.
- How to prepare for the show/interview- dress well, encourage 2 or 3 people you trust to watch your presentation and give you genuine feedback, arrive early and sober, think through your presentation.
- confidence tips [stand/sit calm without shifting body unnecessary, hand gesture give away our inner confidence, how you look communicates a lot, be natural if something happen].
- How to manage the audiences and hosts – video on communication when there is failure to agree. Ref members shared their experiences when they possibly fail to agree.
- Some hints on how to use the social media.

Key Feedback from the REF members

Concerns/comments/challenges raised by REF members

- language barrier especially for some minority ethnic groups.
- lack of self-confidence when communicating.
- Need for resources to facilitate community dialogues/meetings.
- Inadequate representations of the various categories of the people of concern.
- Requested for tips on how to listen to the other persons' opinions.
- Cited the impact of the mother tongue on their accent.
- Noted late/delayed sharing of information especially by the partners operating in the various settlements.



- Cited challenges related to limited access to the communication tools (community radio, phones).
- information bottlenecks affecting the information flow from the partners to the leaders.
- Limited support to the refugee leaders in terms of office space, and some other office equipment.
- Limited sharing of information with the host community members.
- Some partner staff take the leaders for granted and do not involve them during community engagements.
- Concerned about the confidentiality of issues raised through the FRRM toll free line.

Action points:

- Leaders encouraged to always find peaceful ways of resolving issues.
- REF members to continue advocating for communication refresher trainings for leaders from partners in their respective settlements.
- REF Members need to encourage leaders to embrace adult learning especially in English language. Leaders to advocate for more partners to support more adult learning opportunities for refugees.

Session II title: Awareness raising on FRRM.

Session time: 2:34 pm – 15:21

Session objective: Sharing information with REF members on the functionality of the FRRM.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Harrison Lanigan Coyte – UNHCR

Key points presented:

- The helpline was set to deliver results to the communities.
- There has been a gap for community members thinking the helpline is for UNHCR which is wrong for it's an inter-agency helpline that serves over 68 partner organizations.
- When a community member calls a helpline, the feedback is categorized into different categories ranging from 1=feedback, 2=information request. For both categories one and two, the details of the caller are not recorded, and the cases are closed instantly.
- Category 3 is a request for assistance based of sectoral need and they need to get details of the caller to be able to call and assist.
- The referrals are sent to partners for they are well based on the ground to help, when they are calling the callers to have to be clear on whether they want the feedback shared with the partner or not.
- You can launch a complaint and advise on the course of action you want the partner to take.
- The complainant may be contacted to get more information on the complaint when it's being investigated.
- When complaints are regarding government staff the complaint is handled differently. They analyze the trends of the complaints and generate reports based on the trend but not individual cases and these are shared with the government to support resolving issues at the community level.
- Category 4 is on misconduct and Category 5 is the most serious protection issues in refuge response that are greatly life-threatening.
- With Cat 5 they generate a referral to the UNHCR senior protection person to support you in building the case details.
- Callers should be very clear if they don't want the organization to know that they are the ones who have complained.
- Assured REF members that all issues raised through the FRRM toll free line are handled with a lot of confidentiality.

Key feedback raised by the REF:



- REF member from Imvepi had shared feedback that most refugees are worried about the confidentiality of issues raised through the inter-agency FRRM Toll free line. This concern is what prompted the moderator to give chance to UNHCR FRRM focal person to respond and create awareness on the functionality of FRMM.

Action points:

- REF members and Partners encouraged to continue creating awareness on usage of the inter-agency FRRM in their respective settlements.

Session IV title: Questions and answers session.

Session time: 16:27 pm – 5:10pm

Session objective: To allow REF members raise pressing issues affecting REF members.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Zbigniew Paul DIME / Mr. Jerry ANYOLI – UNHCR.

Key points presented:

- Called for openness as REF members raise issues affecting them

Key feedback raised by the REF:

- REF member from Bidibidi raised the challenge of transport making it difficult for members to move within the settlement.
- REF member from Adjumani shared feedback that no dignity kits have been distributed for the last 6 months by UNHCR.
- REF member from Kampala requested DSA rates to be increased to match the increased cost of living.
- REF member from Bidibidi requested REF taskforce partners to increase the transport facilitation given to participants during feedback sessions.
- REF member from Kyaka complained about the delays in sending DSA to REF members when travelling to Kampala for the REF Meeting.

Action points

- It was unanimously agreed that all issues/concerns raised would be responded to during day 3 of the REF meeting.

DAY 3: 28th July 2022

Session I title: Evidenced based advocacy.

Session time: 9:00 am – 1:00pm

Session objective: To equip REF members with basic advocacy skills

Presenter name and organization: Mrs. Lillian Ssengoba & Joyce Akoli CARE International

Key points presented:

What is advocacy?

- Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing, and implementing policies.
- Advocacy is not: Extension work.
- Information and communication, informing the government about REF, fundraising.
- Key elements of effective advocacy include politics, evidence, do-ability.



What is influencing?

- Capacity to influence the character, development, or behavior of someone else...the organization;
- For those in power- cause positive change in the interest of your constituent;
- Importance of advocacy;
- Considerations for evidence-based advocacy to cause transformative change;
- Action planning;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Steps involved in advocacy- Akoli Care

- Identify what the problem is;
- Know what is happening externally;
- Know the desired change you want to see;
- Know who can make the change;
- What are our policy asks & messages? What u would want to be done for you;
- What resources do we have;
- What is the plan of action and implementation;
- Monitoring and evaluating the process.

Session II title: Introduction of the Director CRRF Secretariat

Session time: 10:23 am – 10:42am

Session objective: To introduce the Director CRRF Secretariat

Presenter name and organization: Mrs. Hellen Acibo, CRRF Secretariat,

Key points presented: by Mrs. Hellen Bugari, CRRF Director

- Expressed happiness meeting the REF members and welcomed all REF members for the 14th REF meeting
- Commended all REF members for their commitment towards the REF
- Emphasized the importance of the CRRF SG meetings, stating that it's a forum where refugee voices are heard
- She encouraged the REF members to always raise critical issues that affect them during the SG meetings
- Confirmed the CRRF commitment to continue supporting the REF engagements
- Encouraged the REF members to continue advocating for their communities
- Looked forward to meeting some of the REF members during her field visits in different settlements.

Key feedback raised by the REF representative, Mrs. Milly Nancy Lagu

- Thanked the CRRF Director for coming and the continued support from her office;
- Equally thanked the government of Uganda for the open policy on refugees.

Session III title: Basic ICT Training

Session time: 2:40 pm –4:55 pm

Session objective: To equip the REF members with basic ICT Skills

Presenter name and organization: Mrs. Habiba Hamid- UNHCR

Key points presented:

- Sought to understand how REF members have been using the tablets, challenges they faced while using the tablets, and what kind of support they needed?



- Use of basic applications.
- Email. This is the exchange of computer-stored messages by telecommunication.
- Gmail. Short form for google mail. It's a free service provided by google that enables users to send and receive email over the internet.
- How to create passwords for the devices.
- How to download applications from the Google Play store.

Key feedback raised by REF Members

On Usage of tablets

- REF members acknowledged that they have been using tablets to Take pictures, Chat on social media, Send and receive e-mails, and calling.

On Challenges faced

- REF members cited the following challenges, insufficient data, absence of power to charge tablets, Poor network coverage, limited storage capacity, and limited knowledge on how to use the gadgets.

On Support needed

- REF members requested for basic training on how to use tablets, solar and accumulator that can help in charging the gadget, and a power bank that can support when they run out of battery.

Session IV title: Q&A Session.

Session time: 4:50 pm – 5:30 pm

Session objective: To allow REF Taskforce members to listen to and address REF members concerns

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Zbigniew Paul DIME / Mr. Jerry ANYOLI – UNHCR, Deogratias ACIDRI, John Humphrey AINEBYOONA, Mansur Buga & Fidelia BADARU – UNHCR.

- REF representative from Adjumani cited that the REF is not inclusive, and that there is need to ensure inclusion of the Persons with Disability in REF.
- Representative from Kyaka requested that in the next REF meeting, AHA should be invited to respond to the health concerns from the settlement.
- REF member from Bidibidi noted that they face mobility challenges within the settlement as REF members and requested for every RWC III office to be facilitated with a moto Bike to facilitate movement.
- REF member from Nakivale confirmed that they face numerous transport challenges while moving to and from REF meetings because the vehicle that picks them has to move to more than 3 Settlements picking REF members. He requested for a separate vehicle to support Nakivale team
- REF member from Oruchinga raised an allegation that the OPM Staff in Rwamanja do not attending REF Consultative and Feedback meetings despite being invited.
- REF member from Oruchinga noted that Oruchinga does not have a UNHCR office to support POCs
- REF member from Kiryandongo requested for REF meetings to be held in different refugee hosting districts instead of constantly meeting in Kampala.
- REF youth representative from Kiryandongo requested for Youth participation to be regular instead of being on rotational basis. Requested the REF Taskforce to lobby for more funds to cater for youth leaders during REF meetings.

- REF member from Palabek noted that most REF representatives do not have office supplies in their respective settlement offices. He advocated for partners to support REF members with Office supplies.
- REF representative from Rwamanja raised concerns that most of the RWC leaders do not have a good working relationship with some OPM and partner staff.
- REF representative to the CRRF SG requested for the REF Taskforce to invite ambassadors from their countries of origin to attend some REF meetings so that they can listen to the voices of refugees.
- REF representative from West Nile, raised a concern that refugees in their region don't have access to land for commercial farming purposes.
- REF members raised a concern of increasing number of unregistered PoCs within their respective settlements something that is impacting negatively on households hosting such individuals.
- REF member from Nakivale noted that some leaders already acquired motorcycles from Government but requested for support in terms of fuel ease movements.

Response to the Issues:

Mr. Zbigniew Paul DIME (UNHCR)

- On the issue of motorbikes for REF members, he clarified that there are numerous challenges faced by the Operation including reduced funding making it difficult to address all the needs of refugee leaders for example the request for motorbikes. However there was a necessity to have a comprehensive compilation of all the expressed needs by the refugees' representatives in all settlements to inform the Management and the relevant partners. This will help the advocacy on this point and a better programming to resolve these issues.
- On the issue of inviting AHA during the next meeting to explain challenges faced by refugees referred to Kampala, he noted that access to social services in most areas is a challenge and some partners providing such services including AHA are equally constrained due to limited resources. Therefore, the presence of this only partner to address health issues does not appear relevant since it is an issue that has to be addressed by all partners involved in this sector including the Ugandan authorities.
- On the issue of REF members being empowered to manage REF sessions, he clarified that the 14th REF meeting was aimed at building the capacity of REF members but the subsequent meetings, REF members will be more empowered to manage sessions.
- On REF not being inclusive, he called upon the REF members to come up with solutions on how to include persons with special needs and other marginalized entities within the communities in the REF.
- He encouraged leaders to know how to deal with different partner staff members because some of the representatives may have personality issues that may influence their behavior, therefore knowing how to engage with the staff members matters. Core values like mutual respect, integrity, courtesy shall be maintained in all circumstances.
- He clarified that UNHCR basically provides technical support to the GOU that is responsible for registration and granting of refugee status to asylum seekers and ensuring the overall protection of all persons of concern and other entities operating within the Uganda territory.

Mr. Jerry ANYOLI (UNHCR)

- On the issue of hosting the REF meeting in different regions, he clarified that the REF meeting is organized in Kampala because the CRRF SG meeting usually takes place in Kampala. This usually dictates where the REF meeting is held so that the two REF representatives to the CRRF SG can attend in person.
- On the issue of REF members being accommodated in expensive hotels, he stated that the safety of REF members is a priority to the REF Taskforce.

- On the issue of DSA rates, he clarified that the rates are informed by a policy document approved by the UN resident coordinator. He further noted that little can be done, unless the policy document is reviewed
- Apologized for the challenges faced by REF members during the travel day to Kampala and Promised to address the gaps noted especially for Rwamwanja, Kyaka, Oruchinga & Nakivale teams
- On the issue of youth representatives being invited on rotational basis, he clarified that this is happening due to financial resource constraints that can't allow all youth to be invited to the REF meeting on regular basis, but assured them that REF taskforce is advocating for more support from partners

John Humphrey Ainebyoona, UNHCR Lamwo

- Emphasized the importance of leaders finding ways to harmoniously work with the OPM staff in their different settlements.
- He cautioned Refugee leaders against rubbing shoulders with government officials

Mansur Buga- UNHCR Lobule

- He encouraged REF members to always seek support from other partners within their respective settlement whenever they have community engagement to address mobility challenges raised.

Session V title: Closing remarks

Session time: 5:30pm-5:35pm

Session objective: Officially close the three days meeting.

Presenter name and organization: Mr. Zbigniew Paul Dime, UNHCR

Key points presented:

- Called upon leaders to be accountable to the people they serve and to the partners.
- Thanked REF members for their active participation and all the positive energies exhibited during the meeting,
- Assured REF members that UNHCR and partner are committed to work together with the leaders to address challenges raised despite not having immediate solutions to some challenges raised by leaders
- He wished all REF representatives a good evening and safe travel back to their respective settlements
- Finally, officially closed the 3 days REF meeting

Annex

Agenda & Attendance



Presentations

