

UGANDA | DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO DISPLACEMENT

Context – Displacement Situation

Uganda is hosting over half a million refugees and asylum seekers, making it the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, the eighth largest refugee-hosting country in the world and the third largest refugee population in the world relative to its economic wealth (GDP per capita). Despite the pressures, Uganda has some of the most progressive refugee laws and policies globally.

The Refugee Act 2006, in line with the standards of refugee protection provided in international legal instruments, recognizes the rights of refugees to work, establish businesses, move around freely within the country and live in settlements with host-communities rather than in camps.

Over the last three years, the refugee population hosted by Uganda has more than doubled, with significant influxes primarily from three countries: South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. In 2015, Uganda received over 112,000 new refugees and maintained the generous policy of land allocation for each refugee household.

Uganda is also well advanced in its efforts to recover from a number of complex armed conflicts, including the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency in Northern Uganda, which officially ended in 2006. Over 1.8 million people were displaced at the height of the conflict. In addition to the challenges of resettlement and reintegration, Uganda has had to address the social and economic legacy of the conflict, land disputes along with recurrent natural disasters, particularly floods and droughts.



Women entrepreneurs showcase their handcrafts
 (Photo: UNDP Uganda)

RESULTS

The local government authorities are empowered to better collect, analyse and manage data for development planning; leadership and ethical governance training for public service. They are better able to provide technical assistance to the responsible government entity for IDPs and refugees to undergo a change management and transformation process that enables operational efficiency.

UNDP has supported comprehensive multi-hazard, risk and vulnerability mapping and profiles for districts to support risk-informed development. The profiles include the nine refugee settlements across Uganda and provide a tool for settlement planners, residents and host community district administrations to better understand the climate and natural hazards faced. Drawing on these risk assessments, districts are better placed to make evidence-based decisions on their development.



A community meeting for displaced persons
(Photo: UNDP Uganda)

UNDPs Main Thematic Areas of Work

With a focus on social cohesion and livelihoods, UNDP has partnered with the Government of Uganda on recovery to create an enabling environment for peace and resettlement, re-integration and socio-economic recovery of IDPs. UNDP's comprehensive approach supported nationally led efforts to:

- Facilitate the return of IDPs through quick-impact livelihood interventions, support to service delivery through the rehabilitation of community infrastructure, enhancement of community security through equipping remote police posts, and cross-border harmony through shared market places;
- Establish the Uganda Mine Action Centre in 2006 to coordinate de-activation and destruction of thousands of landmines and unexploded ordinance, resulting in Uganda being declared landmine-free in 2012. The Centre also provided mine education and support to victims, enabling communities to return to their villages and resume agricultural-based livelihoods;
- Provide business and entrepreneurship training for former IDP youth to support self-employment and contribute to the re-establishment of local economies;
- Work with farmers to increase food production, enhance supply chains and access to markets;
- Establish a national register for small arms and light weapons. Over 60,000 firearms and 300 tonnes of ammunition have been destroyed throughout the country.

Humanitarian Partnerships

UNDP's engagement is guided by the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHOPE) strategy, a joint UNCT-endorsed strategic framework for self-reliance and resilience that supports the government's Settlement Transformation Agenda and is firmly anchored in the UNDAF 2016-2020. UNDP's contribution to ReHOPE centres around its existing programmatic priorities: sustainable inclusive economic development with a focus on natural resource management and climate and disaster risk management, and community and system resilience.

UNDP – UNHCR partnership moving forward

UNDP collaborates with UNHCR on addressing protracted displacement through a project aimed at stabilization and livelihood enhancement for pastoralist and refugee host communities in Northern Uganda. This project draws on UNDP's extensive recovery work in the region and uses UNHCR's networks to ensure that interventions bridge humanitarian and development interventions. In practice, this entails expanding the prevailing entry points for social cohesion and community security, with a particular focus on host communities.

UNDP also works with UNHCR in Uganda's oldest refugee settlement, Oruchinga, to enhance existing livelihood activities through the integration of climate risk management approaches, including the application of base maps, risk analysis and training to households on climate smart agriculture.

These collaborations are laying the foundations for UNDP and UNHCR to expand joint programming on protracted displacement, guided by the ReHOPE strategy and supported by the soon-to-be-established Solutions Alliance National Group.

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