

“Hard and Unbearable”:

COVID-19 Induced Challenges as told by Refugee
and Host Support Group Leaders



Briefing note compiled following virtual meetings organised by
Refugee Law Project
for Support Group leaders from refugee and host communities



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Author: Onen David Ongwech (Programme Manager Gender & Sexuality)
Photo Credit: Miriam Watsemba
Rapporteur: Okot Geoffrey Howard
Editors: Dr Chris Dolan (Director)
Devota Nuwe (Head of Programmes)
Nuwagira Gilbert (Personal Assistant to the Director)

List of Acronyms

AMERUV	French Acronym representing 'Association of Women with Children Born out of Rape'
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease – 2019
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DV	Domestic Violence
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IPs	Implementing Partners
LC	Local Council
NYC	New York Declaration on refugees
OPs	Operating Partners
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RLP	Refugee Law Project
SGNC	Sexual Gender Non-Conforming
RWC	Refugee Welfare Council
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
WFP	World Food Programme

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Introduction

Since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Uganda, lives have and continue to change dramatically. With several measures and televised Presidential directives, the #StayHome mantra continues to impact lives in various ways. Refugees and host communities have not been spared – if any, the pandemic has worsened the already biting challenges and vulnerabilities.

With some vulnerable communities in ‘hard-to-reach’ places at the receiving end of the directives and its associated enforcement and curfew, many of the things happening in and around refugee-hosting areas haven’t made it to the media. Many refugees and hosts are mired in inadequately documented challenges. While communities have not resigned themselves to the hurdles at hand and are adopting numerous creative coping mechanisms, the ways in which such resilience and positive coping mechanisms can be supported and replicated elsewhere by government, civil society, and international actors requires further exploration.

Confronted with unprecedented challenges, humanitarian workers have had to adjust their mode of operation in the wake of lockdowns and curfew. Teleworking and virtual meetings have been embraced by many humanitarian actors with lean staff on the ground. Whereas not all services can be offered digitally (e.g food distribution), virtual intervention undoubtedly has revolutionised humanitarian interventions. Counsellors are increasingly available for E-psychosocial support services, lawyers are providing online legal advice, and mobile money transfers to persons of concern (PoCs) are providing alternatives to physical distributions of food and non-food items. Given the current global trends in patterns of infections, COVID-19 is not about to go away (at least not soon). As such, humanitarian workers have had to hasten their uptake of innovative measures to continue serving humanity and indeed, new and less geographically restricted ways of working are emerging. Many funders have been accommodating of such changes in modality, with flexibility in terms of budget reallocations. For some organisations, however, it has not been possible, with some suspending operations and even making staff redundant.

Following the Ministry of Health’s guidance and Presidential Directives in the pursuit of flattening the curve of new infections of COVID-19, the Refugee Law Project equally adjusted its operation with refugees, host communities, and stakeholders in the country. Whereas RLP

continues to physically plant trees through our ‘tree growing approaches’, direct intervention with clients has been limited to virtual interventions.

In the interest of strengthening collaboration with and between leaders from the refugee and host communities, Refugee Law Project (RLP) initiated a regular virtual meeting with support group leaders to discuss key areas of concern, challenges, and areas for urgent intervention in partnership with other partners. This report summarises key issues coming from the first two virtual meetings held by the RLP’s Gender & Sexuality Team. These brought together 12 leaders from the refugee and host communities in May 2020.

Rationale

Whereas Uganda’s Local Government Act explicates the functions of the LC system, COVID-19 has further demonstrated the importance of community leaders. With eyes and ears on the ground, community leaders have and continue to support the Government in the fight against the novel virus not only through reporting any new arrival or anomalies in communities but also by helping to ensure that services and goods (including relief handouts) reach the very needy in communities.

RLP since its inception in 1999 has been working with Local Councillors (hosts) and their counterparts in the refugee settlements, the Refugee Welfare Councils. Since 2010 RLP has increasingly encouraged the establishment of refugee support groups structured around particular vulnerabilities, and/or experiences/ and/or other identities.

The working relationships with both formal leadership and the leadership of refugee support groups has become increasingly central in RLP’s work, from project conceptualisation through to accountability and reporting.

Before the lockdown, refugee and host support groups, in discussion with their relevant local council or refugee welfare council leadership, were actively engaged in;

1. Rule of law activities (themselves trained as community paralegals and critical in reporting cases that require legal intervention)
2. Addressing profound harms (trained as community peer counsellors, group leaders have been essential in the mobilisation, identification, and reporting cases of refugees and hosts who require urgent physical and psychological interventions)

3. Amplifying refugee-host voices (trained in public speaking and community-led activism, community leaders are the ears and eyes in the community. As the first point of contact for most people, group leaders relay information to and from authorities, as well as advocating for their constituencies in a range of spaces such as workshops, trainings, conferences, talkshows)
4. Promoting environmental protection and climate change mitigation activities (supporting tree growing and environmental protection mechanisms), and,
5. Advocacy on refugee-host relations (through supporting research projects and promoting dialogues between refugees and host for peaceful co-existence).

In the interest of ensuring business continuity, and to build on the foundation of work already established, RLP has deemed it fit to support creative approaches to continue engaging refugee and host leaders during the lockdown, to learn from group leaders what is happening in communities that may otherwise not be documented or reported by media workers. Also, the virtual meetings are organised to sustain and demonstrate the trust built over time and to walk with refugee and host leaders through this trying period of the pandemic.

Against this background and in the interest of adhering to the Social Distancing directives, RLP organised a virtual meeting with 13 support group leaders drawn from refugees and host communities in the districts of Adjumani, Kampala, Kiryandongo, Lamwo, and Mbarara. Members of the following support groups participated; Kampala (Men of Hope, AMERUV, and Angels), Adjumani (Amajara Women, Amajara Men, and God's Glory support group), Kiryandongo (Tupendane, One Heart, and Unity is Strength support group), Mbarara (Men of Peace), and Lamwo (Kica Pa Rubanga, Rubanga Twero, and Ribbe Aye Tekko support group)

Methodology

To achieve a constructive dialogue, 13 refugee and host support group leaders affiliated to RLP's Gender and Sexuality Programme were mobilised. Group leaders were supported with airtime and data bundles and telephonically guided on how to download and register for ZOOM Teleconferencing. Each meeting had a substantive host to chair and moderate the discussion, as well as a technical host to deal with any difficulties related to the use of zoom technology and internet connectivity. Community interpreters were also on hand where necessary.

Cognizant that not all group leaders own ‘Smart’ phones, cellular provision was established to accommodate leaders who could only join via telephone voice calls. The voice call system also eased the connection for participants with intermittent internet connectivity.

Some group leaders do not have cell phones. To ensure that participation, RLP staff nearer to them walked to their homes so that leaders could connect to the call using the phones of staff. For all the meetings, agendas were shared in advance and group leaders for early preparation.

The first meeting took place on 15 May 2020, and the second on 22 May 2020. Both meetings took an average of three hours partly because of interpretation and connectivity dynamics.

In the first meeting, several action points were agreed upon by RLP and the group leaders. Updates on these informed the second discussion. In the second meeting, 3 donor representatives were invited with consent from group members (OSF, Canadian, and Civsource were represented).

For confidentiality purposes, the conversation was not recorded. Participants who were concerned about their safety were advised to keep their videos off. RLP staff provided interpretation services during the meeting. However, some groups preferred the assistance of fellow group members.

Some group leaders submitted their talking points via emails before the meeting. Specific staff were assigned to specific groups to take notes during the meeting and these were submitted to the overall rapporteur. Summary of key discussions was pooled together by a team of rapporteurs and later compiled into a briefing note.

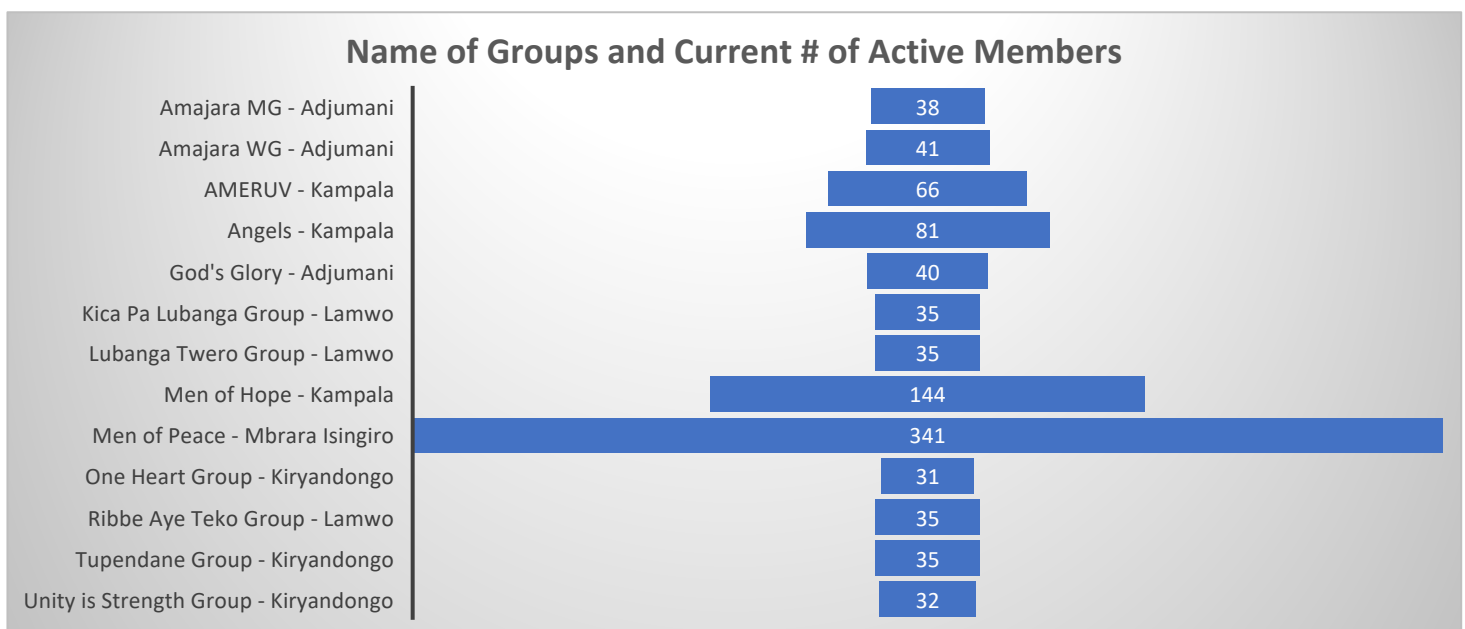


Figure 1: Graph showing names of groups and number of active members

Name of Group	Males	Females	SGNC	Prefers not to disclose	Total
Amajara MG - Adjumani	0	38	0	0	38
Amajara WG - Adjumani	41	0	0	0	41
AMERUV - Kampala	66	0	0	0	66
Angels - Kampala	33	44	0	4	81
God's Glory - Adjumani	25	15	0	0	40
Kica Pa Lubanga Group - Lamwo	21	14	0	0	35
Lubanga Twero Group - Lamwo	21	14	0	0	35
Men of Hope - Kampala	0	144	0	0	144
Men of Peace - Mbrara Isingiro	0	341	0	0	341
One Heart Group - Kiryandongo	31	0	0	0	31
Ribbe Aye Teko Group - Lamwo	27	8	0	0	35
Tupendane Group - Kiryandongo	34	0	1	0	35
Unity is Strength Group - Kiryandongo	0	32	0	0	32
Total	299	650	1	4	954

Figure 2: Table showing summary of support groups of the Gender & Sexuality Programme and their total active members

Parameters of the findings

The methodology above is not free from logistic challenges. Equally, managing dynamics of interpretation, particularly in areas with limited network connectivity, reduces how much ground can be covered in any given meeting. For these reasons, and particularly as these also involved RLP staff and clients learning a number of new technical skills, the scale of the meetings held could not incorporate the full range of the more than 50 refugee and host support groups RLP works with around the country.

It is possible that, given the physical, financial, and technical support provided to the support groups, their leaders may have censored their inputs. However, critical comments regarding the process and services of RLP in general were voiced.

This report is not blind to the services and contributions of all operating and implementing partners working in and around refugee hosting districts of Uganda. As such, the issues presented in this report are not entirely new but rather, reflect new incidents and examples of challenges that refugees and host leaders are wrestling with in the context of COVID-19.

Key emerging issues

Livelihoods

Addressing livelihood concerns remains at centre stage of most humanitarian and development actors. The UN for instance published the Livelihood Handbook and not long ago, the Livelihood response plan was also released as one of the measures of achieving the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). All the group leaders decried the livelihood challenges brought by COVID-19 related lockdowns. Whereas vulnerable refugees and hosts were already grappling with livelihood challenges, the outbreak of the pandemic worsened them.

From the conversations, livelihood challenges were due to the following;

Food Insecurity

Shortly before the outbreak of COVID-19, food rations were reduced. Cereals were reduced from 12 to 8 kilograms per person per month. Perhaps worse, the lockdown and its associated curfew interrupted agricultural services for many. For refugees, the 30X30m plots of land allocated by the government is insufficient to complement the relief food provided by the World Food Programme (WFP). As a coping mechanism, some refugees partner with friendly hosts for additional land to support farming activities. However, this can involve traveling some distance, and given the complexity of the curfew, this activity was only manageable by a few refugees. Leaders reported examples of themselves and their members resorting to 1 meal per day.

Reduced purchasing power

At the same time as food rations were cut, cash transfers were also reduced by one third, from Uganda shillings 32,000 to 22,000 per person per month. For the large fraction of refugees and hosts who are engaged in the informal sector, surviving hand-to-mouth through activities such as Village Savings and Loans Associations, quarry work, taxi operation, motorcycle riding, hawking, portering, digging other people's gardens for day-by-day payment, etc. these cuts are substantial, particularly as most such activities, with the exception of delivering food and medical supplies, are currently considered non-essential.

Increase in prices of essential commodities

The reduction in food and cereals has gone hand-in-hand with general price increases. The anxiety associated with COVID-19 led to a general increase in commodity prices especially food items with an estimated 30-50 percent while a few commodities including salt registering over one hundred percent increase in price. The reduction in food and non-food relief items was compounded by these increases in prices.

Domestic Violence

Increase in cases of domestic violence

As has been noted for many places around the world, in the refugee hosting areas COVID-19 has contributed to a marked upsurge in cases of domestic and gender-based violence resulting from numerous factors including livelihood related challenges and COVID-19 related stress and anxiety. In both meetings held so far, refugee and host leaders noted that whereas the cases seen in the news are alarming, many more go unreported and undocumented in communities due to interruptions in the reporting and referral pathways.

Cases of both men and women as perpetrators and victims were reported. Women are generally the registered heads of households as a strategy intended to give them control of relief items in the belief that they will use the items more responsibly than their menfolk. However, only a handful of women own mobile phones. The monthly cash remitted via Mobile Money thus ends up in mobile phones owned by men who then simply remark 'Your money in my mobile phone...'. Leaders noted that most partners previously working on addressing domestic violence have since closed their physical operation and the Police appear overwhelmed with enforcing the Presidential directives.

Unaddressed legacies of violence

While leaders lamented the domestic challenges occasioned by COVID-19 lockdown, they also emphasised that COVID-19 had aggravated domestic challenges that many households were already wrestling with before the lockdown. Leaders noted that many refugees and host communities have witnessed unspeakable forms of torture and violations including sexual violence in home countries, during flight and while in Uganda – for which some were undergoing physical and psychological rehabilitation. However, the current lockdown has made it difficult to access and uptake services. As such, a 'small' disagreement can readily trigger major quarrels and fights.

Challenges in reporting

Leaders noted that cases of domestic violence are hardly responded to by Police due to transport-related challenges and fears of mixing detainees arrested from enforcement of curfew and those accused of domestic violence and other crimes. Some districts including Kiryandongo and Adjumani had to prioritise larger-scale challenges resulting from ethnic clashes among refugees, clashes that resulted in deaths on occasion.

Legal challenges

Increase in cases of child marriage

Group leaders noted with concern how, because of the lockdown, the children are stuck in the same vicinity with their abusers, and there has been a corresponding rise in the number of child marriages and other forms of child abuse in and around refugee settlements (especially in Palabek refugee settlement). They emphasised that these increases had yet to find their way to national reporting systems.

Some of these abuses are attributed to livelihood challenges that force parents to 'trade' their daughters for food items and money, or to send their children to men and boys who can provide food for them. Group leaders from Kiryandongo in particular expressed fears at the rate at which children are engaged in petty theft mainly for food items, some of which they carry home. Such thefts put children at risk of arrest and torture at the hands of angry community members, but community leaders are kept off the radar and therefore such anomalies go unreported to Police and other rule of law actors.

Absence of legal workers

Besides the reporting challenges and overwhelming situation at police posts and stations, group leaders were concerned about increasing cases of petty crimes including theft of especially food items. While suspects are sometimes apprehended by community leaders, police were reportedly showed laxity in making arrests and following such cases since there were bigger challenges to deal with. The question of what can and should be done where such culprits are arrested has yet to be answered.

Disruption of court processes

Support group leaders reported that some of their group members are particularly afraid of what will happen when the lock-down is eased because some members, who had court and

police issues were reporting to police and court following the grant of police bond and court bail.

Tenancy related challenges

Whereas the President advised landlords not to increase prices and/or demand payment during the lockdown (which some have heeded and others not), group leaders expressed fears about what will happen once the lockdown is eased since the grace period is not a waiver and landlords are unlikely to be sympathetic to the fact that their tenants' livelihoods also suffered from the lockdown. That these fears are grounded is evident from the increasing requests received from urban refugees requesting RLP staff to speak to landlords who, despite the presidential advice, continue to demand rent payments. While group leaders expressed fears for what awaits in future, some group members have already been asked to leave their accommodations due to accumulated rent dues.

Deteriorating physical and psychological health

Whereas COVID-19 has not claimed any life so far (as of 21 June 2020), reports from the Ministry of Health show that communities are wrestling with malaria and other illnesses which due to the difficulties in travels, continue to claim hundreds of lives. Leaders requested support to transport those struggling as well as asking relevant stakeholders to swiftly distribute more mosquito nets. Group leaders also reported that more refugees and hosts are dying each day, including their group members, from injuries sustained during conflicts for which they cannot at the moment seek treatment due to transport challenges and associated costs.

Stagnation

In this section of the report, referred to as 'stagnation', we present a summary of discussions on why the above challenges have worsened due to the lockdown induced by COVID-19. According to the group leaders, the problems above have if any worsened due to the following;

Interruptions in service access and uptake

From the discussion, group leaders noted with concern that the few service providers who before the lockdown were offering services for disadvantaged community members grappling with physical, psychological and legal needs have either scaled down or physically closed

operation – including RLP. As such, refugees and hosts undergoing medical rehabilitation have been locked away from their doctors as they have been unable replenish their drugs or visit a doctor for a review of progress. Equally, refugees and hosts who before the lockdown were undergoing therapy sessions for trauma-related experiences have been disconnected from their therapists. While efforts are being made to provide e-support, only a handful of clients have access to mobile phones.

Dysfunctional social support mechanisms

LCs and RWCs ill-equipped

COVID-19 continues to pierce holes in once ‘functional’ social support mechanisms. Currently, and as reported by the support group leaders, the LCs and Refugee Welfare Councils system are currently overwhelmed with supporting the distribution of relief items, enforcing curfew, and reporting people traveling to and from their area of jurisdiction. However, the Refugee Welfare Councils were reportedly ill-prepared and facilitated compared to their national Local Council 1 counterparts.

Community Protection Committees unable to meet

Secondly, existing community protection committees in and around refugee-hosting areas are grappling with the lockdown and related demands from the communities. Refugee and host leaders decried the inability of community committees to hold meetings to address issues arising from their area of operation. Committees including Child Protection, Gender, Water and Sanitation, etc, are not able to respond to issues raised from community members.

Peer support systems dysfunctional

Similarly, the various social and peer support networks in communities that backstop social support interventions are currently ‘quarantined’. According to the leaders, cultural and religious practices that play significant roles in unifying people and promoting peaceful co-existence are currently ‘quarantined’. Home visits and charitable support to vulnerable members of communities have become difficult to practice as people increasingly become individualistic and thrive for their respective families and those close to them.

Coping mechanisms

The leaders did not only report challenges and problems. As first responders, community leaders shoulder a lot of responsibility for provision of physical and psychological support to

those around them. Far from the binary of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ coping mechanisms, this section explores the resilience and creative approaches adopted by leaders from the refugee and host communities in dealing with hurdles brought by COVID-19.

Psychological first aid

Group leaders reported that tens of group members camp at their homes each day; asking for food and other items, as well as asking them to call on service providers to come to their rescue. While such gatherings of people are dangerous given the social distancing guidelines (particularly as leaders frequently lack Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)), they demonstrate the trust that community members have in their leaders.

Group leaders cannot simply ask such people to go away or stop them from coming – rather, engaging members through psychological first aid was reported by the group leaders as having been particularly helpful. In demonstrating the magnitude of the problem, the president of Men of Hope support group remarked;

“I receive between 40-50 people everyday at my home with the same speech ‘we are going to die’. What is the contribution of RLP [and other partners] to their clients [without food] during this lockdown?” (Aimé Moninga, president Men of Hope Refugee Association)

Referrals to service providers

COVID-19 has affected established referral pathways since many partners have reduced their physical presence. However, the few who are operating physically and virtually are the main sources for groups to back-stop the challenges group members and other community members raise. Group leaders – particularly those in urban areas - reported on several referrals made to refugee-serving agencies especially those able to provide food and emergency medical support.

Forward-thinking approaches

Group leaders remain positive that whereas the situation is currently tough, it will not last, and what matters most is how it is managed including using forward-thinking approaches. Some group members reportedly are pursuing steps towards group registration at settlement and district levels. These include the development of group constitutions such that once the lockdown is eased a bit, they can finalise the process. This may open new windows of

opportunity with regard to fundraising, particularly given increasing reference to the need for 'localisation' of funding.

Online learning

Owing to the diverse challenges at hand, some leaders in Kampala have enrolled for free online courses on advocacy, problem-solving, group management, and advocacy – all of which are important for personal growth and progress of groups. When supported, knowledge learned will have long-lasting positive impacts on individuals and the group at large.

Self-medication

Due to distance and current transport challenges, group leaders noted that some members are left with no option and resort to self-medication for all sorts of illnesses. Group members cited cases of their members pouring honey on wounds, use of warm water and salt to nurse injuries, reliance on pain relievers including paracetamol, and usage of traditional herbs to blot pain. Whereas such approaches, in the absence of professional services, can offer temporary pain relief, they may in some instances also have negative consequences.

Alcohol consumption

Group leaders reported an increase in alcohol consumption as some of the coping mechanisms used by some of their group members. According to some leaders, this is further contributing to domestic violence and gender-based violence as the little resources reserved to push people through the lockdown is diverted into alcohol consumption.

Conceptual insights

The key issues arising from the discussions with group leaders reflect broader technical and conceptual challenges that require further explorations and deliberations, and ultimately critical reflection on the mode of operation of humanitarian work in the wake of disasters including COVID-19. Critical insights into the issues raised above demand further conversations on the following;

What is the future of durable solutions for refugees?

Voluntary return

Perhaps the time is now for humanitarian actors to delve deeper into the contentious issue of the so-called 3 durable solutions for refugees (Voluntary Return, Integration, and Resettlement). COVID-19 as early noted, is not about to go away (at least not soon), and neither are the volatile geopolitical and environmental situations that lead to flights of hundreds and thousands of people. When coupled with travel restrictions, voluntary return to countries of origin will continue to pose a challenge.

Local Integration

Unprecedentedly, COVID-19 has re-awoken xenophobic sentiments and triggered a rise in populist nationalism globally. In Uganda, political leaders have also been quoted making xenophobic remarks. The food distribution process, with its initial emphasis that the current food distribution is for Ugandans only, sent jitters down the spines of refugees who were as locked-up as their Ugandan neighbours. With the comments made to truck drivers, a refugee with COVID-19 in Nakivale, and food distribution saga, refugees fear that already fragile situation relating to local integration has only been made worse due to COVID-19.

Resettlement

Lastly, resettlement which was already shrinking, has been completely shutdown (thanks to the novel virus). With COVID-19 spreading all over the world, the future of resettlement – let along international travels, is uncertain and yet some refugees have cannot return and have equally failed to integrate. So, what alternatives are available for vulnerable refugees?

Are the integrated response plans fit for purpose?

Since the adoption of the New York Declaration (NYD) on refugees, and resultant CRRF which embraces the ‘whole of society approach’, several integrated response plans have been published and supported including the Education Response Framework, The Environment, Livelihood, and Health Response Frameworks. More are in the pipeline awaiting publication.

With current contexts, refugee children are unable to start studying online, and the natural environment will remain the only source of livelihood given the continuous reduction in food and cash. Access to and uptake of health services in the wake of COVID-19 remains a nightmare for many.

Before COVID-19, critical voices had already been documented on the gaps in those frameworks – none of which has seen a second edition. The outbreak of COVID-19 poses problems in the implementation of the plans and raises questions about whether the designers and promoters of the policy ever envisaged responding to a pandemic similar to COVID-19. It is not yet clear what will need to be done to align the documents to match the current contexts and challenges.

Isn't it time for Government to re-think its approach to urban refugees?

Whereas global migration trends continue to show that majority of refugees seek sanctuary in towns and cities, urban refugees have largely fallen in the cracks of service intervention and policy formulations. In Uganda and elsewhere, urban refugees have been told to 'go to gazetted refugee settlements' whenever they demand services. UNHCR's Urban Refugee Policy is yet to properly translate to the lives of refugees in major cities outside Kampala.

Refugee leaders reported that some refugees were in urban centres such as Mbarara and Gulu at the time the lockdown was announced. As such, they had difficulties returning to their 'homes' in refugee settlements. While many continued to 'hustle' around towns, they missed out on food distributions in the settlements since these require a physical presence to collect them.

These concerns are not new to the refugee regime of Uganda. Currently, Uganda's monthly refugee statistics only include refugees in Kampala as urban refugees and yet the reality is, many refugees fend for livelihoods in other major cities and towns throughout the country. Given the relentless need for improved documentation and reporting on all people who come in and out of all locations, documenting refugees in all locations is now more important than ever.

Rethinking sustainability and sustainable service provision

Sustainability is one of the terms often evoked in humanitarian and development work. Most if not all project proposals require applicants to explicitly elaborate on how the proposed intervention will address the sustainability question. From the conversation with group leaders, the challenges reported, though not exactly new, raise questions on the sustainability of some projects.

Barely three months into the lockdown and with scaling down of partners and services, ethnic clashes are spreading like wildfire – from Rhino to Maaji and currently in Kiryandongo, many lives have been lost with hundreds locked up in detention as a result. Whereas such clashes could indeed have happened even during ‘normal’ times, and further true that the system is stretched thin by COVID-19, it appears community leaders are yet not adequately prepared to function independently and maintain some degree of normalcy in the absence of Implementing and Operating Partners. Whereas group leaders cited several examples of how various trainings have enabled their leadership skills, most leaders appear unable to support colleagues without some form of assistance - which is perhaps understandable given the nature and environment they are operating in.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions, presentation of key emerging issues, conceptual and policy insights, the following require urgent attention by policymakers, service providers, researchers, and donor community;

1. Support volunteer refugees and hosts in leadership positions and frequently in contact with community members, as well as offering psychosocial support to those in need
2. Equip village health teams with mosquito nets to distribute as well as the capacity to test and provide treatment for malaria, and provide standby ambulances for emergency medical evacuations
3. Treat the current clashes among refugee ethnic groups as an urgent matter before they expand to more refugee settlements and before hosts are dragged into it
4. Expand provision of psychosocial support through electronic means but also rethink approaches on how to reach those refugees and host who do not have telephones
5. Share periodic information to refugees and hosts in languages friendly to them
6. Support families of refugees who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently on treatment in places that are out of reach to family members
7. Support those groups that are able to continue with VSLA with saving kits, sanitisers and PPE

8. Support virtual meetings for refugee and host leaders to frequently share experience and learn from one another
9. Invest in the documentation and reporting of challenges refugees and hosts grapple with as a result of COVID-19 to inform national reporting, planning and budgeting
10. Support virtual training for leaders from refugee and host communities on issues of concern including COVID-19 and psychosocial support.