



**THE HUMANITARIAN
PLATFORM** FOR LOCAL
AND NATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA

Newsletter



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Rethinking the Partnerships Between Local Organizations and Other Key Humanitarian Actors

In recent years, “partnership” has become a common term in the literature of International agencies, as well as in publications of the United Nations. More so, International agencies have been working on involving local NGOs in every step of project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. In short, local partners have become an important part of the management cycle of development projects.

Against this background, on 18th July 2018, the Humanitarian Platform for Local and National organizations in Uganda organized a learning event which attracted over 60 participants representing the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, International agencies, academia, Local Government and civil society, who came together to discuss about effective partnerships in the humanitarian sector.

Key issues discussed included the need for partners to understand the underlying principles of partnerships in humanitarian action and what Local and National organizations need for strengthening and enhancing these relationships. The OPM and UNHCR who constituted the first panel, pointed mutually to the question of capacity among local and national organizations; particularly in transparency and accountability, building trust and integrity, having instituted management systems such as financial tracking, accounting and reporting tools, which are

essential for partnerships to thrive. The Senior Legal Officer OPM, Ms. Vivian Oyella urged local and national organisations to be each other’s keepers coining the “one apple spoils a bunch” phrase to create and maintain a good reputation before the international community.

Organizations like OXFAM, CEFORD, TPO, DRT, CAFOMI and HIJRA and entities like Local Government and Academia shared experiences and challenges they have encountered in various partnerships, such as: international agencies being project and/or very issue specific and when the project comes





opened doors for healthy, strategic and sustainable partnerships within the humanitarian sector.

By the Humanitarian Platform



“Local and National actors need to align their goals, visions, policies and practices to international requirements”- Ms. Rose Eyoru, UNHCR

“Partnerships with national and local actors have always been identified as a source of problems in international humanitarian aid. But, the reality is that the national and local actors don’t play major roles despite the advantage of understanding the context, culture and internal dynamics of disaster-affected communities”. Ms. Vivian Oyella, OPM

“The issue of service delivery to the communities should go beyond NGOs/INGOs and include Local Government”, Ms. Rose Gamwera. ULGA

to an end then the partnership is ended; partnerships with academia have also landed on hard times due to differences in interests. It was also noted that often times the Academia’s interests are purely academic and scholarly and local organizations end up playing a peripheral role or the academia expecting a payment for the knowledge shared. Nonetheless, recommendations and lessons learnt from previous mistakes to were shared to enable effective partnerships.

Overall, the learning event provided space for experiential sharing by partners to inspire innovation and new partnership models; issues were identified; commitments were made; and timelines set. Commitments made included conducting capacity needs assessment and measures of enhancing required skills, stakeholder mapping based on the working groups and different spaces of humanitarian action, among others. The event also

Implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda



The New York Declaration calls upon UNHCR to develop and initiate a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in situations involving large movements of refugees, in close coordination with national and local authorities, and involving other UN agencies and a broad range of stakeholders. For that purpose, the CRRF is currently being rolled-out in 14 countries worldwide including Uganda, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Somalia, Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama; with the ultimate goal of enhancing the capacities, funds management and skills of the government authorities at national and district levels. CRRF

strives to enhance the government’s response and integration of the new arrivals to benefit both them and host communities, and ensure alignment with local, national and international development plans.

On 27th July 2018, the Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organizations in Uganda was hosted at the CRRF Secretariat by the Under Secretary for Refugees and Disaster at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The Director, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), Mr. Godfrey Kaima, took the participants through CRRF’s local implementation and synergy with the local and national actors.

Uganda has got various dynamic policies in place such as the 2006 Refugee Act, the 2010 Refugee Regulations, the Settlement Transformation Agenda and the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment Strategy (ReHoPE); how do all these policies support the implementation of the CRRF?

There is a lot that the Government of Uganda (GOU) and host communities have done and no one has recorded. Prior to CRRF, the Government of Uganda already had favorable policies; so the CRRF came to complement this. Uganda's refugee hosting model is one of the most progressive and generous worldwide; however, it is currently under threat as thousands of new refugees arrive each day, while its refugee appeal is chronically underfunded.

In May, 2016; the World Humanitarian Summit triggered Charter for Change that sets a specific target of 20% of humanitarian funding to be passed to southern-based NGOs by May 2018. The Grand Bargain (GB) was another major outcome of the summit which seeks to make emergency aid finance more efficient and effective, committing to “a global, aggregated target of at Least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible”. Is there any mechanism provided for in the framework to monitor and keep track of these commitments?

It isn't easy for the Government of Uganda to hold another government accountable due to diplomatic issues. Secondly, there is neither an enforcement nor accountability mechanism, despite some countries making commitments towards financing these processes. However, we might need to look out for a strategy which we must use to bargain around such issues; we altogether as government, civil society or the Humanitarian Platform must speak one voice and ensure that these commitments are fulfilled.

Talking about the Localization Agenda; it is recorded that the Localization Agenda aims at strengthening the role of local and national actors in the humanitarian response. This is due to the rhetoric that local and national organizations lack capacity; what do you make of this? Is it true that local



and national organizations lack capacity? If there is capacity, why hasn't it been recognized by the International community?

It's true, Local and National actors are not visible, what I see is International Organizations articulating the issues and needs of local communities even better, yet the local and national organizations have been at the frontline of these interventions. The question of capacity among local organizations is due to the existing gaps in coordination and recognition. The kind of reputation you build together as local actors is what will earn you the recognition. For example, narrowing it to individuals, “how you think and how you act determines what you will be.” Therefore, Local actors should package themselves as an individual. But it is also important that the Humanitarian Platform carries out an assessment to find out how local NGOs' internal systems can be developed to the desired standard.

How are the Host Communities and the Government of Uganda benefiting from the open door policy which you highlighted as being a 'settlement model and not camp model', in other words integrating refugees into the communities?

Let me demonstrate using a local example: Canadian cooking oil is being imported duty free to feed refugees, yet we actually have local capacity that would greatly benefit farmers and the economy. The private sector involve-

ment is very vital in terms of investments, identifying business opportunities in refugee communities but also playing their social responsibilities. CRRF can't ignore the needs of these host communities; even the escalation of refugee numbers this year could have been caused by nationals registering as refugees to access much better treatment compared to host communities. That's why the Government, acquired a World Bank loan of \$150,000 to support host communities – a clear demonstration of CRRF's intentions and leadership to the International Community

\$150,000

Government acquired World Bank loan to support host communities

From the time of inception, how far has Uganda reached in terms of implementation?

The CRRF has brought together a multitude of players, closing previous coordination barriers between government ministries, departments, civil society and agencies on issue of humanitarian work. The CRRF has also come up with the Comprehensive Response Plans whereby all the line Government Ministries including Education,

Health, Gender, Labour and Social Development; Foreign Affairs; Internal Affairs; Local Government; Lands, Housing and Urban Development; Works and Transport Services; Uganda Bureau of Statistics and National Planning Authority can jointly direct interventions, including the integration of social services in refugee hosting districts, through the District Local Governments.



So in conclusion, what do you envisage as the role of the local and national organizations/ Civil Society in the implementation of the CRRF?

The local and national actors have a huge responsibility ahead of them. At the CRRF Secretariat, we are emphasizing team work – not just talk on team work, but practicing it. In this case everyone

has got a role to play. It is undoubtedly the government to take lead on this process; however, there are responsibilities that other actors must do, including the fore bearing of the localization agenda, taking lead on advocacy for the fulfillment of commitments, reviewing of current policies and articulating the government support towards humanitarian action. The Government of Uganda is not just giving land to refugees but also going out of its way to ensure all social services provided to host communities also benefit refugees, and this has been happening long before the CRRF came into place. Therefore, this kind of support needs to be accredited.

By the Humanitarian Platform

UNHCR Partnership report 2018

In line with the CRRF, partnerships are of pivotal importance to all aspects of UNHCR’s work: from raising awareness of refugee problems, to preserving the character of asylum, to improving the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to making life in long-term asylum viable and voluntary repatriation possible. Partnerships are also critical in strengthening the resilience capacity of host communities, refugees, other displaced people and returnees, and in finding solutions.

Sustainable financing for refugees: the CSBAG Approach and recommendations



Uganda has become an asylum home to up to 1.5 million forcibly displaced persons from its neighboring countries for decades. Of these, over 75% percent are from South Sudan, 17% from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and others from Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Eritrea etc. With rising refugee numbers, a paucity of information exists on funding modalities for their management and protection. Likewise, social sector impact and local governments’ expenditure on them is unclear, rendering advocacy groups’ budget monitoring or advocacy for increased public financing on social service delivery in refugee hosting communities futile. The Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) undertook a study to understand Refugee Financing in Uganda, the key actors, challenges faced, and how these can be overcome. Below are factors for consideration for the country to sustainably overcome the refugee problem.

1. **Financing of refugee management should no longer be treated as a disaster:** Uganda’s proximity to conflict ridden countries and open door policy to refugees substantiate refugee management’s consideration as a development rather than a humanitarian issue; this entails creating public financing model for them that includes a vote and budget line in the refugee-hosting districts.
2. **Integrate refugee management in government plans and budgets,** especially for the social services targeting both refugees and host communities (health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene). It’s critical for refugee hosting districts with support from donors to include refugees in their development plans and budgets as they co-exist and utilize the same social services as host communities. A Comprehensive Refugee Response and Management Strategy should be developed to support self-reliance and resilience for refugees and hosts alike.
3. **Emphasize CSO role in tracking and monitoring of refugee programmes and budgets:** Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in mobilizing and organizing host communities to monitor and track refugee programmes and budgets for better service delivery. Financing CSOs to track interventions to refugee response, elaborating progress in implementation and checking for abuse of resources is critical. CSOs would also build capacity of the host communities in budget analysis and performance to increase budget efficiency in management of refugee

resources and reduce misuse.

4. Scale up investment in environmental protection: Refugee communities cause negative and irreversible effects on the environment through their heavy reliance on the environment for survival. More than 95 per cent of refugees and the host community depend on biomass especially for firewood, charcoal, small sticks, and crop residues such as maize cobs and stalks (UNHCR, 2016). Sustainable and ecofriendly energy saving technologies are required for refugee and host communities.

5. Critical investment in service delivery sectors in the hosting community: The overwhelming numbers of refugees impose a burden on service

delivery centres like schools, health centres and water points which are initially set up for a number of people. Investment in health centres, schools, water sources and staff to manage these is critical for the refugees' survival.

6. Introduction of a one-stop center for refugee-related expenditure: Data on financing for refugee response in Uganda is fragmented and insufficient; with each implementing partner keeping data on their interventions at institutional level. This deters tracking flows, intervention activities and service duplications. Availability of centralized quality refugee related expenditure data could remedy this through prioritization, programming, reporting and accountability.

7. Strengthen coordination and engagement of all partners with Local Governments: Whereas coordination amongst key actors (OPM, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners) at the national level is somewhat strong, engagements with the Local Government are still weak, but improving. There are no synchronized standards for reporting, and the responsibilities of OPM Department of Refugees and the LGs are not streamlined. LGs continue to play the oversight role as and when called upon by implementing partners. A mechanism should be put in place that emphasizes information sharing and transparency between local governments and the implementing partners.

By CSBAG Uganda

What works for effective partnerships across national and international agencies in humanitarian settings: Experiences by TPO Uganda



Over its 23 years of existence, TPO's 23-year existence in Uganda is leveraged on partnerships for interventional delivery across our different areas of work. Our partnerships comprise actors across the government, private sector, community agents, local civil society organizations and international non-government agencies. Our engagements with partners are guided by existing policies on partnerships and risk management as a means of continuously specifying its value addition, requirements, and benefits.

Through partnerships, TPO Uganda has continued to strengthen outcomes for most vulnerable populations through leveraging resources, skills, coverage and beneficiary scope. This is mainly through the recognition

that the different partners in humanitarian settings provide unique contributions to improve the lives of migrants, internally displaced people and populations with recovery settings. As a locally registered agency, TPO Uganda prioritizes investment in stronger quality standards recognized nationally and internationally. Including completing rigorous systems audits from partners such as the United

Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and the ongoing four-year Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative Audit; TPO Uganda is also currently directly implementing USAID and the UNHCR implementing interventions for refugee communities and also within post conflict Northern Uganda. These partnership processes have branded TPO Uganda as a unique

locally registered agency that can favourably contribute evidence-based lessons, best practices, and outcome experiences within humanitarian and fragile settings, alongside demonstrated high levels of commitment to deliver high quality impact at community level through active participation in coordination meetings with especially international partners. The community support structures approach utilized by TPO Uganda has been critical in ensuring that trained community level actors such as para social workers, child protection committees and religious groups

are equipped to highlight mental health, psychosocial support and child protection. Coordination meetings at community level have also been an effective space for international partners to utilize referrals for specialised mental health and psychosocial support.

At national level, TPO Uganda utilizes existing humanitarian agencies coordination platforms such as the Child Protection Working Group, the Inter-Agency Working Group and the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Working Group to share field-based experiences on existing progress and gaps at community level. During the International Refugee Summit in June 2017, TPO Uganda worked with international actors particularly UNWOMEN,

UNHCR and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) among others to coordinate the side event on what works to strengthen resilience among refugee women and girls. TPO Uganda utilizes its unique contribution as a lead mental health and psychosocial support partner to highlight integration points of entry for key partners.

TPO Uganda field staff are also facilitated to attend national coordination meetings to further strengthen the quality of participation in addition to our Head Quarters staff. These staff also help to provide tangible evidence of existing services and gaps as well functionality of structures. Strengthening these

achievements in the partnerships requires continue investment in documentation and visibility of the evidence that informs and guides TPO Uganda's engagement. It is important for international actors in humanitarian settings to have increased knowledge of existing national level actors that can be engaged to strengthen sustainability of outcomes at community level. Specific steps include identifying and utilising international platforms such as the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) to profile implementation models, popularise lessons, best practices and partnership opportunities.

By TPO Uganda



The Plight of Urban Refugees, "We must walk the talk"



Despite women and children's right to asylum and their perilous journeys to find safety, many nations prevent these attempts by preventing access to borders, human rights violations within refugee facilities, denial of fair court litigation and protection and financial exclusion. With an estimated 1.4 million refugees including 100,000 urban refugees, Uganda is ranked with the 5th highest global refugee population. In contrary to the country's Refugee Act 2006 that establishes refugees' rights to live, work and own land in urban areas, evidence on refugee livelihoods in Kampala suggests clear unmet needs especially in their rights to work and free movement without fear.



“It’s constraining and hopeless living in settlements, for a skilled, talented and educated young person with dreams for a future, we need empowerment and not handouts”,

As part of the Annual National Youth Festival that took place on 11th August 2018 at Makerere University, the Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organisations held a session dubbed the Plight of Female Urban Refugees. Focused on the plight of urban refugees especially females, the session drew from expert experiences including InterAid Uganda, Refugee Law Project, and Isis Wicce. Key issues discussed included the sustainability of refugees in the urban areas where most unregistered migrants grapple with ignorance on the asylum seeking process, dotted with a personal narrative of selected female refugees. Refugee Law Project’s paper on “Assistance and Protection for Forced Migrants in Kampala”,

sheds light on The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)’s current acceptance of refugees in Kampala provided they are “self-sufficient”, proved by letters of employment and local council residency. Thus, even despite refugee status being granted, if self-sufficiency isn’t established, the OPM directs the withholding of refugee status identification documentation if the refugee in question wishes to remain in Kampala

Ms. Noella Kabale Kalu, a registered forced migrant, did however attest to the restorative benefits of Government of Uganda

livelihoods support, which she called upon to be extended to other refugee girls her age who have resorted to peddling sex to survive.

Furthermore, the issue of urban refugee unemployment was emphasized by Ms. Joyce Ameso - Refugee Law Project (RLP), which she pinned on differences in education curriculum and language barriers, an area that RLP has addressed through their “English for Adults” course, that has bridged employment and further education gaps, As a way forward, among the array of recommendations from the meeting include: the need to have

safe spaces for young women to access information, sexual reproductive health services, and acquisition of skills to not only occupy them but also give them hope to achieve their dreams. It is imperative to underscore the fact that women face gender related challenges differently from men. They are faced with sexual harassment, gender based violence, early marriages, among others. As such, Ms. Juliet Were from Isis-Wicce, recommended that women specific policies should be enacted to meet the specific needs of female refugees.

By Humanitarian Platform

A Startling Visit to Rhino Refugee Camp/Settlement: Climate Change or Livelihood



254,858
Refugees currently hosted in Arua
Of these
85,295
Are at Rhino Camp settlement

According to the UNHCR monthly snapshot of March 2018, the total number of refugees in Uganda rose to 1,444,873 and out of these, 52% are women and girls.

After Yumbe district, Arua is hosting the second largest population of refugees of the 12 host districts in Uganda. Located in Arua district, Rhino Camp hosts 33% of the 254,858 refugees in the district and gets its name from its close proximity to the country's largest game park which famously sheltered white rhinoceros.

Under Uganda's Self-Reliance Strategy, refugees are expected to use allocated agricultural land to produce crops, both for home consumption and as a source of income to cater for essentials like soap, sugar, salt, clothing, school fees. At Rhino camp, due to inadequate rains for the past four years, this has not been achievable. Rural women here in pursuit of fending for their families have engaged in charcoal burning and selling as an income generating activity, creating a scary picture for the application of the self-reliance strategy and environmental conservation.

About our visit


The visit to the camp by the Humanitarian Platform team, which happened on a Saturday, raised numerous questions as certain structures attracted the eye including the absence of field workers in the settlement offices, no visible security personnel, and only one health worker at the URIAMA HCIII to serve all patients. The team also identified only one school which serves the entire five

villages of the camp with some children walking up to 20kms through thick and unsecure bushes to access it. Experiencing the scorching Arua sun, we were relieved to find a cool shade close to school but our excitement was short-lived as information was provided that it was a staffroom where teachers gather to plan for their class lessons. The general picture exuded harsh conditions for fieldworkers and could explain the high rate of staff turnover.

Glimmer of hope

One of the pillars laying a good foundation is the refugee policies put in place, such as the Refugee Act that supports resilience and self-reliance among refugees; and other global commitments signed by the government i.e. the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Policy and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which is being piloted in Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Chad and Zambia. Basically, the CRRF will inform the preparation of a global compact on refugees to be included in the High Commissioner's annual report to the General Assembly in 2018. In a nutshell, the Government of Uganda and all key humanitarian stakeholders have played a great role in ensuring that refugees and host communities live a relatively dignified life.

However, a lot is required, such as follow-up mechanisms; tracking progress of all these great policies not withstanding other factors like self-checks for refugee hosting capacity in light of economic struggles; further questions like how prepared host communities are for refugees, the level of integration and wellbeing of refugees and host communities over the years, let alone the burden of both populations on the environment also have to be asked. Who is keeping the government and the donor governments in check? There is need to reflect on whether as a country, we can tread this road of such promises or swallow what can possibly go through the throat by deciding to host less numbers; otherwise there is going to be a point of choking if these commitments are not fully fulfilled at the global level; as evidenced by our visit to Rhino Camp.



The Grand bargain

Pledges by the International community on emergency funding by 2020): **PLEGGED**

25%
to be channeled through national and local responders
Yet only

2%
reached local actors by 2016
and only

0.4%
went to national NGOs

By Humanitarian Platform





THE HUMANITARIAN PLATFORM FOR LOCAL AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA

Vision

Strong Local and National Organizations, that are well coordinated, informed and have the ability to influence the humanitarian agenda.

Specific Objectives

To promote information sharing, learning and knowledge management for better humanitarian preparedness and response.

Strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of local and national organizations to influence the humanitarian agenda.

Strengthen coordination within local and national organizations and enhance engagement with other humanitarian actors.

To act as a collective voice for local and national organizations to influence the humanitarian agenda at national, regional and global levels.

To promote partnerships and collaborations between the platform members and other humanitarian stakeholders



Up coming events

Date:.....

Event:.....

Venue:.....

Date:.....

Event:.....

Venue:.....

Date:.....

Event:.....

Venue:.....

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