

QUARTERLY REFUGEE NEWSLETTER

Issue 2: Refugee resilience

April 2016

Get to know...

ETIENNE:

"I like working at the factory because I came with nothing but now I'm able to buy clothes and food."

"I dream of raising a family, building a house for us and supporting them with a good life."



Inside

Welcome to New Bujumbura

Uganda hosts 500,000+ refugees

UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner praises Ugandan model

Japanese partnership sowing the seeds of a brighter future

Refugee sisters perform on the big stage

and more...



Dear Partners and Friends,

Thank you once again for your support to UNHCR and for taking the time to read this second edition of our newsletter. The theme for this edition is one that is especially close to my heart: **Refugee Resilience**. Often when a country or region is discussing the possibility of taking in more refugees, you see familiar questions being asked. Can we afford it? Can our infrastructure cope? These are often based on unfounded myths that frame refugees as a burden to be endured. Instead, what we should be asking is questions such as 'How can we maximize the talents of these new arrivals?' or "How much potential lies in this community that has already shown extraordinary strength?"

Media interest in refugee issues is often only stirred when we see large numbers on the move or when there is a wish to highlight a particularly violent conflict. It is of course right that these things are brought to the attention of the public, but what can be left aside is the incredible individual stories, of people quietly going about rebuilding their lives and becoming pillars of their new communities.

Some of these stories we have brought to you in this edition of the newsletter.

I recently accompanied our new Madame Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly Clements to Nakivale refugee settlement in the South-West where I had the privilege to hear some inspirational stories from people who have fled the recent violence in Burundi. One particular story really struck me. I met a young man named Benefice, just 24 years old, who had grown up as an orphan. When his cousins' parents were killed earlier this year, they came to Uganda where he took them under his wing. He made sure that they had a roof over their heads, food on the table and that they were going to school.

He did not stop there. He saw other orphans arriving in the village who shared the same needs as his cousins, so he took them in too and formed the Talented Refugee Orphans' Association. They now count more than twenty amongst their number, and are continuing to grow. Benefice arranged for a local craftsmen to teach them how to make baskets and clothes that help provide the group with an income. They sing together, play sports together, eat dinner together. They are a family. When he isn't tending to them, Benefice also manages to find time to teach English classes twice a week to others in his village. This remarkable young man, who has shown such strength and courage, is surely someone any community would be blessed to call one of their own. You will read more about his story later in this newsletter.

“More than 60 million people have been forced to flee war, violence and persecution, more than at any time since World War II”

People around the world are being forced to flee their homes on an unprecedented scale.

There are few places in the world where this is more visible than in the Great Lakes region. Uganda is now home to more refugees and asylum-seekers than at any time in its history, and continues to receive new arrivals on three fronts. By continuing to offer a safe haven to our neighbours in need from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and elsewhere, Uganda is showing exceptional leadership and fortitude by providing refugees with some of the best prospects for self-reliance, normality and independence found anywhere in the world.

But Uganda cannot tackle this refugee crisis alone.

The success of this inspirational model requires wholehearted engagement from all of us, from donors, government, humanitarian and development partners to members of the public and refugee communities themselves.

Only by working together, and by committing the resources and endeavours this project deserves, will it be able to flourish. Refugees are strong, they are resilient, and they are full of potential. If we give them the opportunity, they will show us just what they can achieve. With record numbers on the move, it is now incumbent upon us to work together to help refugees make rich and full contributions to the economic and social fabric of Uganda for as long as they remain in this country. We must renew the principles that made us strong, reaffirm our commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention and tackle the cancers of war and persecution.

Together, we will all reap the rewards ■

Neimah Warsame
UNHCR Representative to Uganda

Ugandan generosity extends to record **500,000+** refugees

More than half a million people fleeing violence and human rights abuses, mostly from South Sudan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, have now found protection and safety in Uganda.

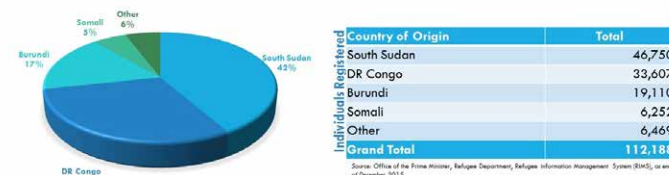
Uganda is now home to more than half a million refugees and asylum-seekers, the highest number ever in the country's history. More than 100,000 arrived during the course of 2015, making Uganda the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, after Ethiopia (736,000) and Kenya (594,000). The number of new arrivals has continued to increase during the first weeks of 2016. More than 20,000 refugees and asylum-seekers have arrived since the start of the year, predominantly fueled by a deterioration in the security situation in South Sudan. Militia activities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo has led to a continued influx in to Uganda's South-West region while new arrivals continue to flee the ongoing unrest in Burundi.

Uganda is widely recognized as having progressive and forward-thinking refugee and asylum policies. Upon receiving refugee status, refugees are provided with small areas of land in villages integrated within the local host community; a pioneering approach that enhances social cohesion and allows both refugees and host communities to live together peacefully.

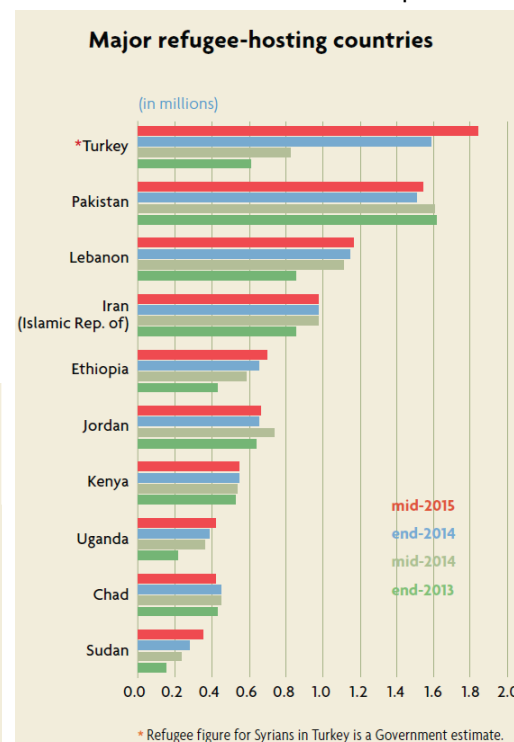
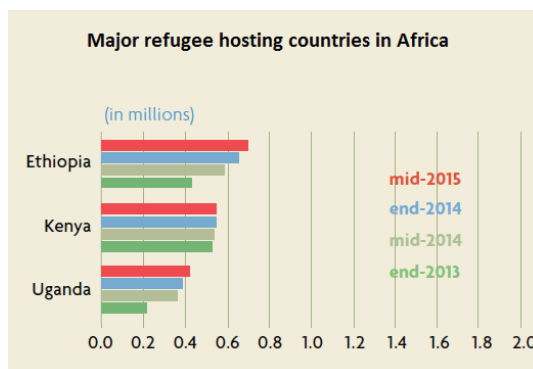
Refugees have access to the same services as Ugandan nationals, have the right to work and to establish their own businesses. They enjoy freedom of movement and are given land for agricultural use, reducing dependency on humanitarian aid.

The government has also included refugee management and protection within its own domestic planning in the National Development Plan (NDP II),

REFUGEE INFLUX TO UGANDA 2015 TOTAL



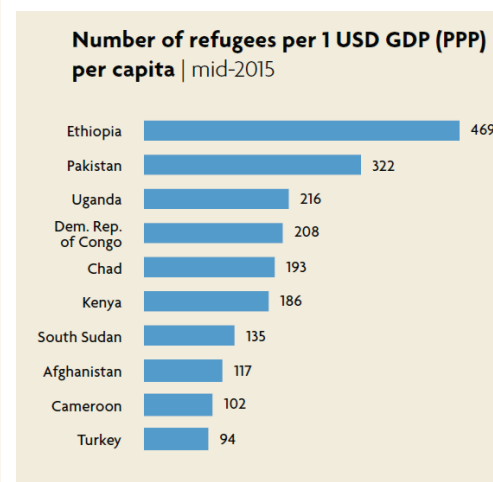
through the [refugee] Settlement Transformative Agenda. This approach means Uganda has created a fertile environment for including long-term development planning into the humanitarian response for refugees and their host communities.



More than 18,000 Burundians refugees arrived in Uganda last year, among them Larson, aged 29. He recently set up a pharmacy at the Nakivale refugee settlement and is currently trying to rebuild a life for his wife and two children.

"People always used to say that Uganda takes good care of its refugees," said Larson. "It's true. I like it here. It is peaceful. Maybe with time I could one day go back to Burundi but for now I'm focused on rebuilding things here."

UNHCR Representative to Uganda Neimah Warsame praised Uganda for its 'outstanding generosity and hospitality' shown towards refugees and asylum-seekers, and called on all partners involved in the refugee response to work together to develop an innovative approach to refugee protection that goes beyond emergency assistance towards providing long-term development ■



Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements was in Uganda from 14-16 November for her first visit to Africa since joining the UN Refugee Agency in July 2015.

Clements was given a first-hand look at the refugee situation in Uganda, a country which is now host to more than half a million refugees. She was accompanied by Ugandan Commissioner for Refugees David Apollo Kazungu, UNHCR Africa Bureau Director Valentin Tapsoba and UNHCR Representative in Uganda Neimah Warsame.

In Nakivale refugee settlement, Clements met with some of the 15,000 men, women and children who have recently fled the unrest in Burundi. The refugees spoke of their relief at reaching safety while requesting further support, particularly in the areas of education and water, sanitation and hygiene. UNHCR's financial requirements for the Regional Response Plan for Burundian refugees in Uganda total US\$13 million. The funding gap for this situation remained at more than 60%, leaving significant gaps in the humanitarian response.

Clements was impressed by the Government of Uganda's unfailing support and innovative and progressive refugee policy. Shortly after their arrival in Uganda, refugees receive land and have access to the same services as nationals. This is a pioneering approach which allows both refugees and host communities to live together peacefully and for refugees to contribute to Uganda's economy.



Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly T. Clements, accompanied by Commissioner for Refugees David Apollo Kazungu, UNHCR Africa Bureau Director Valentin Tapsoba and UNHCR Representative to Uganda Neimah Warsame, meet with young Burundian refugee orphans to hear their stories of being forced to flee their homes and to learn about the situation in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. ©UNHCR/F. Noy

Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Calls on International Community to “Support Innovative Refugee Model”

The Government has also recently integrated refugee protection into its national development plan (NDP II) through the Settlement Transformative Agenda. This is an outstanding achievement supported by the promising multi-year Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic framework. ReHoPE brings together the Government of Uganda, UN agencies, the World Bank and development partners to support resilience-building efforts for refugees and host communities. “The Government of Uganda's innovative and transformative approach to refugee protection is a model to be showcased and replicated elsewhere,” said Clements.

Addressing representatives from the Government, the donor community and UN agencies, the Deputy High Commissioner thanked the Government for their continued efforts in support of refugees. “UNHCR is committed to supporting the Government of Uganda in its efforts to protect refugees. The success of this innovative model relies on the engagement of all donor, government, and humanitarian and development partners involved, and I call on all of us to work together to develop an innovative and combined humanitarian/development approach to refugee protection.”

The Deputy High Commissioner continued to Rwanda and Tanzania following her stop in Uganda. ■

JICA/UNHCR Partnership Sowing the Seeds of a Brighter Future

By JICA

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been supporting the Government of Uganda to promote rice production for more than 10 years. Since June 2014, JICA's Promotion of Rice Development (PRiDe) Project has been working with UNHCR and the Government of Uganda Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to help refugees and their host communities by providing training on rice cultivation.

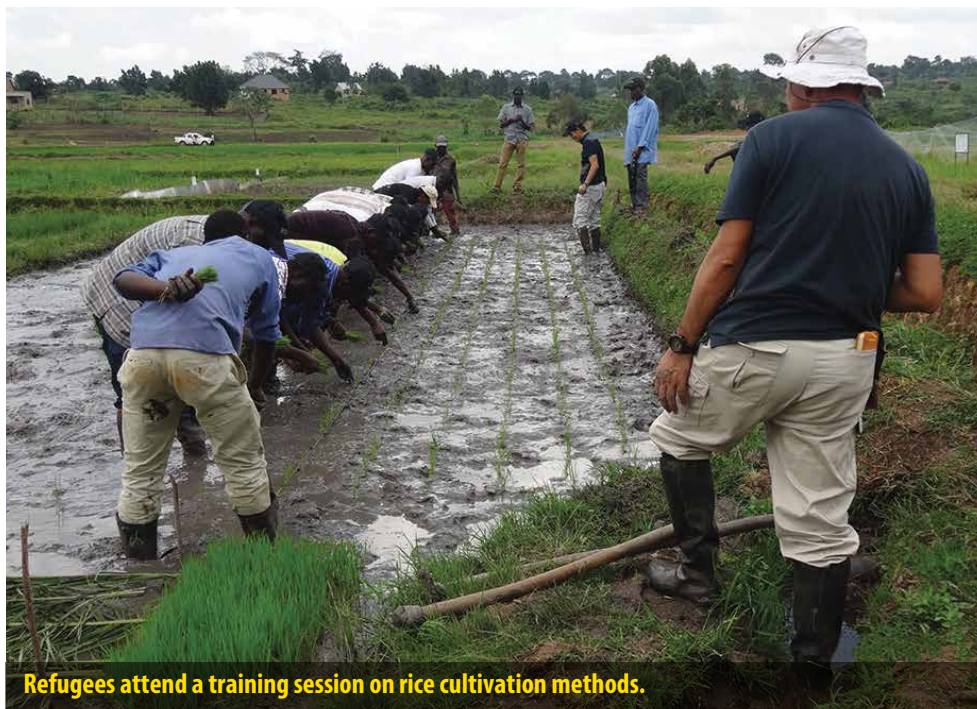
As one of the most generous and progressive countries for refugees in Africa, Uganda offers refugees opportunities to become part of local economies.

Many refugees end up staying in exile longer than they first anticipated, and there is a great need to address protracted refugee situations.

As a development agency, JICA partners with UNHCR to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and sustainable development. The hope of this partnership is to promote the peaceful coexistence of refugees and host communities by assisting them to become self-reliant and by strengthening their socio-economic resilience.

Rice production both contributes to food security and empowers farmers to become more self-reliant. PRiDe is working with UNHCR to target both refugee settlements and host communities in four districts: Adjumani, Arua, Kyangwali, and Rwamwanja. During the trainings on rice cultivation, which often involve around 50 people, a participant receives 1 kg of rice seeds, a rice cultivation manual and a planting fork (per group). With the first 1kg of seeds provided by JICA, successful farmers can potentially produce up to 50 kg of rice seeds after the first harvest.

Many of the refugees, especially those from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had previous experiences in rice cultivation in their home countries, and were happy to be able to put their talents to use once again.



Refugees attend a training session on rice cultivation methods.

During the first year of the programme in 2014, PRiDe experts directly trained 458 refugees and 371 host community farmers.

During 2015, the second year of the programme, PRiDe, working alongside the NaCRRRI (National Crop Resources Research Institute) in Namulonge, began offering intensive rice cultivation training with UNHCR. The facilities that NaCRRRI has available are ideal for agriculture training; one entire rice cultivation cycle (seed planting, weeding, harvesting, milling, etc.) can be completed in just a couple days. The first training sessions for 40

UNHCR staff, implementing partners, host community leaders and refugees were carried out in September 2015. Two months later, these newly trained officers conducted 11 training sessions in four districts where PRiDe supplied technical assistance and essential materials including rice seeds and cultivation manuals. Since the beginning of our partnership in 2014, a total of 1,450 people have been trained, and talks are underway about how to take the project forward to benefit even more people.

In 2016, UNHCR and PRiDe are planning to strengthen seed multiplication capacity at selected Zonal Agricultural Research and Development

Institutes (ZARDIs) so that respective refugee settlements and local communities have purchasing access to quality rice seeds when they need them. PRiDe and NaCRRRI will continue to welcome Ugandan and development partner groups who wish to participate in the intensive rice training sessions. The ultimate goal of the JICA-UNHCR partnership is to build the local capacity of refugee and host communities to own the means of rice production, giving them the local capacity to train end beneficiaries and to produce or purchase rice farming materials and equipment. By helping to build their socio-economic resilience and self-reliance through rice cultivation, refugees and host communities will be able to make increased positive contributions to Ugandan society ■

UNHCR, Government of Uganda and Nobel Prize winner agree **innovative social enterprise partnership**

By: Lynn Ngugi, Multi-Sectorial Coordinator for SGBV, Child Protection and Education, UNHCR Uganda and Charlie Yaxley, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Uganda.

The Government of Uganda Office of the Prime Minister, UN Refugee Agency and Yunus Social Businesses, founded by Nobel Peace Prize winning economist Muhammad Yunus, have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding that is set to provide microfinance assistance to thousands of refugees and Ugandans living in Kampala.

At a signing ceremony at the Sheraton Hotel in Kampala in July, Commissioner for Refugees David Apollo Kazungu, UNHCR Representative to Uganda Neimah Warsame and Muhammad Yunus put pen to paper on an agreement that will provide small loans to entrepreneurial refugees and Ugandans to help increase their economic self-reliance and empower them to help their businesses reach their full potential.

"I thank UNHCR and the GOU for their partnership," said Yunus. "We will go together until we succeed. This partnership presents an enormous possibility, and an opportunity to become a global example.

"When you donate a charity dollar, it gets spent only once, but when you provide a social enterprise dollar, it gets reinvested again and again and again"

The partnership is set to form part of the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy that looks to bridge the gap in Uganda between humanitarian and

development programming. Many refugees in Uganda have slim prospects of returning to their home countries in the near future. In order to help refugees to become less dependent on aid and to contribute to the economic development of their districts, efforts are underway amongst the humanitarian and development partners response to assist refugees in becoming agents of development through enhanced livelihood activities.

Uganda's approach to refugee management and protection provides a fertile environment for refugees to make the most of their economic potential. Refugees are permitted to move freely around the country, to seek work and to start their own businesses.



David Apollo Kazungu, Commissioner, Refugee Department, Office of the Prime Minister (LEFT), Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (CENTRE), and Neimah Warsame, UNHCR Representative in Uganda (RIGHT) at the signing ceremony in Kampala. ©UNHCR/L. Ngugi

In addition to the support provided by the humanitarian response in the refugee settlements, refugees more accustomed to an urban lifestyle relocate to Kampala,

where many engage in entrepreneurial ventures.

"When someone reaches safety in another country, their journey is just beginning," said UNHCR Representative to Uganda Neimah Warsame. "Their lives may no longer be at threat from physical violence, but they face a new struggle to meet their essential economic, social and psychological needs. I am proud to say that Uganda continues to lead the way in its displays of generosity towards refugees and that with partnerships such as these, refugees in this country are provided with some of the best prospects for reaching their full potential found anywhere in the world."

On behalf of the Government of Uganda, Commissioner for Refugees David Apollo Kazungu pledged to work with UNHCR and Yunus Social Business to tap in to the innate entrepreneurship among refugees.

"The refugees are strong and resilient," said Kazungu. "They have the strength and resilience borne out of the extraordinary circumstances they have been forced to live through. With this partnership, we can help them to reach the heights they are capable of."

Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 in recognition of his work pioneering the concepts of microfinance and microcredit. His work has been credited for helping millions of people in his native Bangladesh and across the world, who would usually be excluded from having access to bank loans, to break out of the cycle of poverty. His ideas focus on the belief that every person has both the potential and the right to a decent life, and that if given the opportunity, people can drive their own development ■

14 million Reasons to Care about Education for Refugees

by Alice Albright



BIOGRAPHY: Alice Albright is the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education. She has over 27 years of international experience in the private, non-profit and public sectors. Ms. Albright previously served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank), and the Chief Financial and Investment Officer for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI).

There are almost as many people forcibly displaced by war and persecution as live in Italy. 59.5 million according to the latest estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Developing countries host more than 86% of them. Countries that are already struggling to provide basic services to their own populations are also carrying the additional burden of providing for millions of people displaced from their own countries.

In December, I visited Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Uganda, roughly three hours north of Kampala and about the same distance from the border with South Sudan. People arrive at the settlement every day in buses, often with nothing but the few belongings they were able to quickly gather before they left. As the weeks and months pass, their numbers continue to swell due to the deteriorating security situation in South Sudan. More than 15,000 South Sudan refugees have arrived in the country in 2016, joining more than 170,000 others who have fled to Uganda since the outbreak of conflict in December 2013.

Around 85% of the 45,000 refugees in Kiryandongo, the vast majority of whom are from South Sudan, are

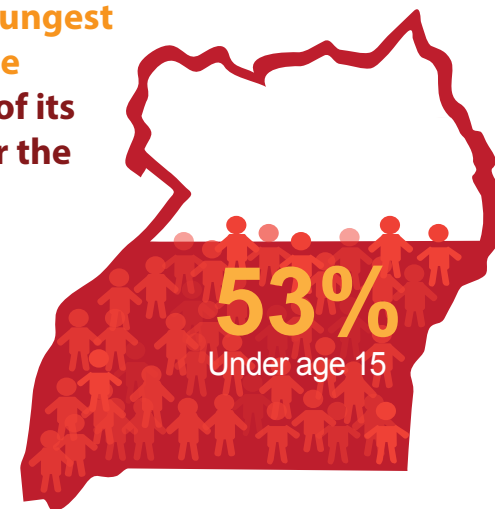
women and children, making up the largest demographic in the settlement. More than 20,000 are children of school-going age.

This disproportionately young and female population presents particular challenges to the humanitarian response in providing refugees with the bare necessities for rebuilding their lives. The problem is further compounded by the lack of available funding. As the number of people forced to flee their homes has reached a record high, funding levels have not kept pace with needs. Last year, UNHCR's funding needs for the emergency response to South Sudanese refugees in Uganda was just 30% met, leaving gaps especially in the areas of education, child protection and the prevention and treatment of sexual and gender-based violence.

Despite the difficulties, the Ugandan government recognizes that the cost of providing protection and assistance to the roughly half a million refugees living in the country is dwarfed by the cost of inaction.

The government gives refugees plots of land and first necessities to set up a new life. The refugees have freedom of movement, and are allowed to work. All of this gives them the opportunity to rebuild their lives independently and lawfully.

Uganda is one of the poorest countries in the world, it ranks 164th out of 187 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index, and has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 53% of its population under the age of 15.



Because Uganda understands that displacement is a long-term development issue, it has included refugee issues in its National Development Plan. Schools in refugee settlements are administered by the Ministry of Education. Uganda understands that every child deserves to receive an education, and that the refugee children in Uganda today are the ones who will rebuild the future of their home country.

The Global Partnership places a high priority on working to bridge the gap between humanitarian relief and development assistance. GPE supports countries to strengthen and rebuild education systems during and after crises so children can continue with their schooling. Therefore I am pleased that GPE has been

forging an ever closer relationship with UNHCR, and the two organizations will sign a Memorandum of Understanding in the coming weeks. UNHCR recognizes that education is key for refugees and their communities. It is not only a critical part of their protection mandate, but also an investment in a secure and sustainable future. The average length of conflict-induced displacement is 17 years, an entire childhood. Failing to provide basic services for these children not only robs them of their childhood but also of their future.

Designing an education response in these situations is challenging. The exact scope of needs is difficult to ascertain because of people's movements in often



New refugees arrive at the reception centre daily. They are registered, receive a health check, and given immediate necessities before being allocated a plot of land to settle.
©GPE/Henry Bongyereirwe



I visited a preschool run by Save the Children in the refugee settlement, with colleagues from UNHCR and UNICEF. ©GPE/Chantal Rigaud

rapidly evolving and unstable contexts. Even in a camp that has been running for some time, people will come and go for many reasons. Basic information like the exact number of children, their age, mother tongue, level of education, is often difficult to gather. Hence designing an effective education project is problematic, especially when it needs to be done quickly.

Just 2% of humanitarian assistance goes to education, a sliver of what is needed. And the world's poorest countries are bearing the burden. UNHCR estimates that there are at least 14 million refugee and internally displaced children in 35 countries affected by crises. In 2014, half of the Global Partnership's disbursements supported fragile and conflict-affected countries; in 2015 this proportion increased to two thirds. Of the 61 countries supported by the Global Partnership, 28 are fragile and/or conflict-affected. Education can give refugees hope for the future. It can give them the hope of something better for their children.

This problem is too big for us to ignore and we must do more ■

UK and Uganda: Working Together to assist Refugees



Biography

James Duddridge MP was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign &

Commonwealth Office on 11 August 2014. He was elected to Parliament in 2005 as the Conservative MP for Rochford & Southend East. James was educated at Essex University. He had a business career in the private sector, including ten years in the banking industry in Africa and London. He has vast experience on Africa affairs, a keen interest in financial matters and industry, and was a founding member of the polling forum YouGov.

As Pope Francis observed during his recent visit to Uganda, "Our world, caught up in wars, violence, and various forms of injustice, is witnessing an unprecedented movement of peoples. How we deal with them is a test of our humanity, our respect for human dignity, and above all our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need."

These issues, and our response, are as relevant and as current in the UK as Uganda. His remarks come as Europe struggles with the largest movement of people since World War II. We stand together in our

concern for the increasing displacement of people and the factors that drive such movement. It is essential that we enable and assist them in rebuilding their lives in security and with dignity.

This is why the UK has provided £11.6 million (58 billion Uganda Shillings) of support in 2015 to the ongoing refugee response in Uganda. This money has gone, not just towards providing lifesaving assistance in the provision of food, water, shelter, health care, but also to help them rebuild their lives and see a better future through support to livelihoods, education and skills training. This is in line with the UK's global commitment to addressing current migration challenges, such as those associated with the ongoing Syrian crisis.

Uganda faces unprecedented numbers of refugees fleeing conflict and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Burundi but stands as an example to us all for its progressive policies and promotion of local integration and peaceful coexistence. Uganda should be congratulated for the example it shows not just to the region but to the world for its pragmatic and generous approach to assisting those in need.

Moreover, the increasing emphasis that is being placed on promoting self-reliance among refugees and developing durable, sustainable solutions is also to be applauded. That this support is incorporated into the Government of Uganda's National Development Plan further highlights Uganda's realisation that



From left to right: Uganda Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees Musa Ecweru, UK Minister for Africa James Duddridge MP and UK High Commissioner to Uganda Alison Blackburne discuss refugee issues at roundtable meeting co-hosted by High Commissioner Blackburne and UNHCR. ©UNHCR/I. Nabusoba

refugees are not necessarily a burden but can contribute positively to the overall development of a country.

Conflicts and instability in Uganda's region in recent years have required sustained engagement by neighbouring countries, regional bodies and the wider international community. As this country knows only too well, the impact of such instability is measured in hundreds of thousands of people crossing borders to seek refuge. Uganda has played a key role in resolving past conflicts, for example by hosting the

Kampala Dialogue to resolve the conflict involving the M23 in Eastern DRC from 2012 to 2013. Uganda's engagement in the search for peace in Burundi and South Sudan will continue to be an important factor in finding solutions that prevent further suffering and displacement of refugees.

The UK remains steadfast in its commitment to support the provision of assistance to refugees in Uganda and helping the development and implementation of Uganda's innovative policies. *As Pope Francis said, "The world looks to Africa as the continent of hope." The UK stands with Uganda in realising these aspirations* ■

GIVING HOPE TO TRAUMATIZED REFUGEES



Story by: Lutheran World Foundation

Sexual and gender-based violence is one of the main intervention points for the Lutheran World Federation in Uganda. The programme provides psychosocial support aimed at assisting survivors of sexual assault, helping them to achieve a stable life, and to restore a sense of hope, dignity, self-esteem and, as much as possible, normality.

Mary's Story

Mary, 16, was forced to flee her home when fighting broke out in Juba in December 2013. With little time to gather her belongings, she left, along with her family and tens of thousands of other South Sudanese people.

Amidst the chaos, Mary became separated from her family, vulnerable and alone. As she ran in search of safety, hiding out in the bush by night with little to eat or drink, Mary was attacked.

She eventually found safety in Adjumani District, northern Uganda, as well as being reunited with her grandmother. Little did Mary know she would soon rely on her support.

Mary tries to speak to tell us what happened, but the sound she makes is barely audible. Beside her, a cute young baby, her skin almost as pink as the blanket she's wrapped in, is sound asleep.

"When I realized I was pregnant [from the attack], I wanted to take a drug and get rid of the baby," she says, "but my grandmother told me not to. She said she would help me take care of him."

Since then, Mary has chosen to turn her horrific experience into something positive. She's named the baby Emanuel meaning 'God with us'.

When Mary reached the Reception Centre, she was identified as in need of assistance, and was enrolled into a medical and psycho-social support programme.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) programme in Uganda helped Mary, her newborn and her grandmother to build their new homes, and has provided them with cash grants to help them lay the foundations of their new lives ■

Ruth's story

When violence plagued the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual assaults were systematically used as a weapon of war. Ruth is amongst the many Congolese refugees in Uganda that have survived such horrific attacks.

Before she begins to tell her story, she sends her five children to another room. To this day they don't know what happened to her. Her voice becomes no more than an angry whisper out of fear that eavesdroppers may be listening in.

As she begins to talk, she stands tall and strong, while her expressive eyes tell their own story. Ruth is no victim, she is a survivor.

"When I came to the Reception Centre, I went to an aid worker who took me for a medical examination," says Ruth. "They diagnosed me with HIV. In that instant, I lost all my energy. I could not stop crying. I couldn't even leave the room."

"In the following two weeks, I lost twelve kilos. But the LWF worker consoled me that HIV is not a death sentence. She reminded me that others might die before me from other causes and that I had to accept myself and continue living."

Although the situation is improving, there remains a great deal of stigma surrounding HIV amongst the Congolese community, to the extent rape and HIV are rarely talked about. The women are too afraid to even discuss the issue with each other, despite the fact that many of them are going through similar experiences.

"I would say around 90% of my countrywomen in this settlement have been raped," says Ruth. "But to keep the respect of the community, you have to remain silent."

LWF provided Ruth with building material for her new home, and a cash grant to open a small business. She sells cassava flour, tomatoes and silver fish, which she keeps in a green plastic bucket.

Ruth is also receiving antiretroviral drugs. She takes them each day and goes for a medical check-up once a month. The biggest help however is the psychosocial support and counseling LWF has given her. "I was feeling like the poorest person on earth," she says. "Now when I have a problem, I know I can tell LWF staff, and at the end of the day half of the problem is gone ■"

Refugee-led initiative ensures school's in for South Sudan's next generation

By Windle Trust Uganda

In February 2014, the refugee community in Ayilo 1, Adjumani district, northern Uganda came together and agreed on the need for the settlement to establish a new school. Three months later, 13 refugee teachers began teaching 1,403 students their first lessons at Ayilo 1 Primary School.

The school faced many initial challenges. With no buildings to use, classes were held under trees. Some classes would have to share trees as there were only four trees in total shared by the whole school. When rain struck, classes would often have to stop as pupils ran home to find shelter. With no latrines available, lesson plans would have to include comfort breaks at pupils' homes.

The lack of scholastic materials, toilets and fresh water meant the school wasn't meeting required standards and the District intervened to close the school down. But the passion of the teachers, despite the difficulties, meant new students were still enrolling in ever larger numbers.

Around two thirds of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda are children under the age of 18.

Windle Trust Uganda stepped in to help the school get on its feet, providing exercise books, pens, pencils and teaching materials as well as facilitating end of term exams. When some of the refugee teachers return home, WTU deployed seven trained teachers to cover the gaps.

Miral Welfare Foundation soon followed suit, providing four temporary tents to function as classroom, text books as well as lunches for the teachers to ensure they remained available.



The school has since blossomed after Caritas and the Danish Refugee Council help to build proper classrooms and latrines, while LWF continued to cover any gaps that arose. The school now has 25 permanent classrooms, 56 teachers, ten blocks of latrines and seven blocks of teachers' houses. 3,082 pupils are now being taught at Ayilo I Primary, providing them with the tools to help them build a better future ■



©UNHCR/F. Noy

Former Refugee Sisters Return to **Sing in Solidarity**

By: Charlie Yaxley, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Uganda

As the lights dimmed at the Theatre La Bonita venue in Kampala, the excitement in the air was palpable for a performance that meant more to this group than even the most passionate homecoming gigs.

Thebahatizz, four Congolese sisters —Sylvie, Rachel, Francine and Odette Bahati—and former refugees—provided a stirring reminder of how hardship can be transformed into a positive force.

“UNHCR is grateful and excited to be involved in the work of Thebahatizz,” said UNHCR Representative in Uganda Neimah Warsame.

“Their journey serves as an inspiration for others. Their tireless work promoting peace, education and the refugee cause is deserving of tremendous praise. Every child deserves a fair chance in life. That begins with a fair chance to learn. When we provide children with equitable opportunities to receive a good education, we sow the seeds of future social and economic prosperity for generation after generation to come.”

Thebahatizz’ story began in Kiliba in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, a region whose natural beauty belies the violence its people have continued to endure. At a young age, they were forced to flee their homes, travelling hundreds of kilometres, before finally reaching safety in Uganda in 2002.

Life in Kampala was not always easy for the girls. They were unable to afford school fees to put themselves through secondary education, but found solace in their shared passion for singing. They were taken in by a local pastor, who was enchanted by the girls’ voices, and provided them



Thebahatizz (LEFT TO RIGHT: Rachel, Sylvia, Odette and Francine) perform their debut single ‘Never Give Up’ at Theatre La Bonita in Kampala. ©Ahuna Films Ltd

with the opportunity to reach a wider audience by making them a regular fixture in weekly church services.

Word of their music soon spread beyond their local congregation and in 2010 they released their debut single ‘Never Give Up’, a message that continues to resonate strongly with the girls.

“It’s a song of hope, a reminder that tomorrow is another day, and that it’s going to be better,” said Sylvie Bahati. “It’s also really therapeutic for us. It reminds us to never give up, no matter how hard life can be.”

The sisters were resettled to Canada in 2012, and though music has continued to be a driving force in their lives, they were determined to make the most of the educational opportunities in their new home.

“Education was so important to us because back home in Uganda we spent our high school years without learning anything,” said Francine Bahati. “Some people would mock

us, say we were good for nothing, that we have no future, but life gave us a second chance, to achieve our dreams of studying again.”

Determined not to forget their roots, Thebahatizz have used their musical talents to speak out against sexual violence in conflict and to campaign for human rights. The volume of their message has continued to grow, leading them to be anointed as Peace Ambassadors by the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Canadian government.

The girls are determined to use their new found platform to give something back to Uganda for providing them with sanctuary in their time of need, and to help refugees in the country who share the situation they once found themselves in.

“We believe every child deserves an education, no matter what part of the world they are in,” said Odette Bahati. “Education is the way to change the world, it’s the key to a better tomorrow. Especially for girls; girls are the ones that raise families so we believe educating women is educating the world.”

With the help of some old friends, a veritable Who’s Who of the local Kampala music scene, Thebahatizz took their unique fusion of hip-hop and gospel influences to the stage to raise money for educational programmes for refugee girls in Uganda. One million Ugandan shillings, around \$271, was raised, with a similar amount going towards Ugandan youth in Karamoja. The contribution is just the beginning of a long-term partnership with UNHCR to provide refugee children in Uganda with the educational opportunities they never had ■

Welcome to New Bujumbura

Unable to bring their capital city with them when they fled Burundi, some refugees are creating a home away from home in Uganda.

By Charlie Yaxley, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Uganda.

All images: ©UNHCR/F. Noy

Etienne becomes sombre when he remembers the night men came to his family home in the Burundian capital Bujumbura and kidnapped his parents. They were later murdered.

"When I woke up in the morning, I felt heartbroken. I was even scared to take a bus because people on the streets were attacking those they thought were trying to run away," he said.

He escaped by picking up a bible and pretending he was going to church, and is now among more than 18,500 Burundian refugees – most from Bujumbura - who fled recent violence to seek safety in neighboring Uganda.

"I used to live with some of these people in Bujumbura, so I still have some of my friends around me," said Etienne, who now works in a small factory making combustible briquettes from agricultural waste as he settles into a new life.

Like Etienne, the majority of the 2,500 residents of the mud-brick buildings topped with plastic or tin-sheet roofs, have made the 500-kilometre-plus journey from Bujumbura, some with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Unable to bring the city with them, some have opted to rebuild a version of it themselves in exile. Welcome to New Bujumbura, Uganda.

Comprising schools, a community centre and businesses including factory workshops, a restaurant, a pharmacy and a hairdresser, their namesake community is growing up around the tiny village of Kashojwa in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement in southwest Uganda.

Among those rebuilding their lives in New Bujumbura are Odette and her sister Nbela, who run the local restaurant. It offers simple fare from home including potatoes, cassava, beans and matooke - a kind of cooked



A group of young Burundian refugees help to construct a shelter from mud bricks.

banana mash – served on a makeshift table made from two planks of wood. Occasionally there is fish, although meat is off the menu as it is too expensive.

"I haven't heard from my father since he was separated from us in Burundi," says Odette, who finds the familiar community the refugees are rebuilding around them reassuring. *"At least here I am around my fellow Burundians, it*

But while you can take these Burundians out of Bujumbura, their capital remains an enduring part of their identity

makes me feel more at home," she said.

A local community worker, Benefice, meanwhile, came to New Bujumbura as an orphan after his parents were

killed in Burundi. Once he realized there were other orphans arriving, the 24-year-old took them under his wing and founded the Talented Orphan Refugees' Association.

who gives twice-weekly English classes at the New Bujumbura Community Centre. There are a wide range of ages, many of whom had never spoken English before leaving Burundi, all eager to learn how to express themselves in the official language of their new home.

"I like finding new ways to help people learn," says Benefice, who also teaches basket and hat making, and is a firm believer in the value of song. "I think people learn best when they're singing so I try and find out what songs they like. It takes some time [to learn a language] but I know they will get there soon."

His eternal optimism is only briefly punctured when the subject of home comes up. While a resident of New Bujumbura, he feels no nostalgia for his home. "In Burundi there are many problems. I don't know if I will ever go back there. Right now, there's nothing I miss from that place. But our future is good, not only in Uganda, not only in Burundi, I want to help people everywhere." More than half a million refugees from strife-torn countries including Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia have sought safety in Uganda. Soon after arrival they are given the right to work, freedom of movement and permission to live in the community rather than in traditional refugee camps.



"In Kirundi, there is a proverb that says 'If we work together, we can improve all of our lives,'" says Benefice



At the end of the main street that runs through New Bujumbura, 29-year old Larson has set up a local pharmacy. He used to run a dispensary in Bujumbura, and while his new venture is far more basic, his determination to rebuild is typical of the resilience that pervades the community.

"I was a pharmacist before, I'm a pharmacist here," he says. "The people who were businesspeople before are businesspeople here. Wherever we are, we won't lose our identity. I like it here, it's peaceful. Maybe with time, we'll be able to go back but for now I'm focused on rebuilding my life here."

As night falls, life in the village slows to a halt as there is no grid providing

electricity. Some students study in their homes by candlelight, while one enterprising refugee has found a way to continue working into the night. Twenty-one-year-old Jeremiah uses electricity generated by solar panels during the day to ensure his hair salon can continue operating by night.

"I heard that Uganda looks after refugees well so we decided to come here," says the barber from Burundi, who trims hair by torch light. "My friends were already here too so I wanted to be with people who I knew I could trust." ■

Refugee bookshop helps next generation learn their mother tongue

By: Pratibedan Baidya, Associate External Relations Officer, UNHCR Adjumani

Before coming to Uganda from South Sudan in late 2013, 23 year old Daniel made a good living from trading books. But he was forced to flee the country after some of his friends and family were killed as part of the conflict. He had no choice but to leave all his books, worth around 4,000,000 South Sudanese Pound (approx. USD 631,362), in his shop in order to save his own life.

Daniel was forced to leave South Sudan with nothing but the clothes on his back but he has been determined not to let his frustration get the better of him. Instead, he's focused on rebuilding a new life for himself.

"I had experience in the book trade," said Daniel. "I used to supply Dinka books to 10 states of South Sudan before I had to flee the country, so I thought of running a book shop here as the majority of people forced to flee from my country want to have books in their own language."

As he could not take anything while fleeing from South Sudan, he collected 150,000 UGX (approx. USD 40) together with his four friends and started the venture. They are currently making a monthly profit of UGX 110,000 (approx. USD 31) and Daniel has been using the money for the education of his children and to support his family.

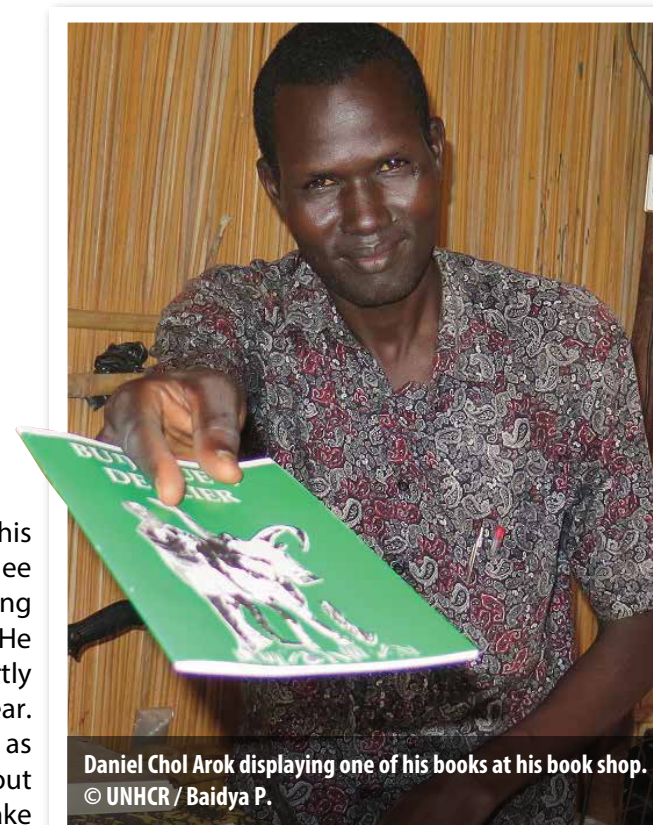
His customers are overjoyed to read books on religion, fiction stories and educational text books in their own language as it gives them a little reminder of their homeland.

He produces the books with the help of a local youth group, whose members each prepare the books in their own language. More than 170,000 South Sudanese people have been forced to flee to Uganda since the conflict that started in December 2013 and UNHCR has been providing life-saving assistance and protection support to them. As the Dinka language is not taught in the schools in the refugee settlements, people are pleased to be able to teach their children the Dinka language through Daniel's books.

"I have started the book shop as I feel that if people become educated they will be aware about their rights," shares Daniel. This is not the first time he has

been forced to leave his country as he was forced to flee Kenya in 2000 before returning to South Sudan in 2006. He started his book shop shortly afterwards in the same year. "Our people faced problems as they were not aware about their rights, so I want to make all people literate so that they became aware and can demand their rights," he adds.

Although a peace deal was signed earlier this year between the warring parties in South Sudan, Daniel is not optimistic about the possibility of returning home. "I will not return to South Sudan anytime soon as I don't want to destroy the future of my children, rather I will stay here and provide proper education to my children so that they do not face a similar fate. Maybe I will return to my motherland after my children complete their education and get settled in their profession," he adds.



Daniel Chol Arok displaying one of his books at his book shop.
© UNHCR / Baidya P.

Daniel has forwarded a proposal for expanding the business to Lutheran World Federation (LWF), one of UNHCR's implementing partners. He hopes that with six million Uganda Shilling (approx. USD 1,690) he will be able to expand his business and establish similar shops in all the nearby refugee settlements, and supply Dinka books as some people already know his trade from South Sudan. LWF is in the process of providing support to him for expanding the business ■

Refugees Reconnect with the Land in Nakivale Greenhouses

By: Eunice Ohanusi, Associate External Relations Officer, UNHCR Mbarara



UNHCR and partners provide assistance to SGBV survivors, providing psychosocial support to enable trauma recovery, access to medical facilities, justice and enhancing long-term sustainable economic independence.

Mary was first forced to flee as a young child when her parents were killed during the Rwandan genocide. Fearing for her life, she fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo. But without the protection of her family around her, she found herself getting married at just fourteen years old.

The marriage soon became abusive, so when violence erupted in her new home, she took the opportunity to flee once more to Uganda. During her journey, she again was forced to survive sexual assault.

Today, Mary is part of a greenhouse farming group of more than 150 refugee women who have survived attacks of sexual and gender-based violence, and are working together to put the past behind them and build brighter futures. Mary has played a pioneering role in

founding the group, based in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, which teaches the women to cultivate carrots, kales, coriander, cabbage, tomatoes, spinach, curry flower, beans and other crops.

"We learn first by observation as the instructors take us through the proper agricultural practices," says Mary. "Then we are assigned practical tasks on the demonstration farms before we are given inputs to start our own backyard vegetable gardens with continuous monitoring."

The group, made up of women from Congo, Burundi, Somalia and Rwanda, has now earned more than 200 million Ugandan shillings (around \$60,000) from their crops. Some of the money is being used to replenish seedling stocks to ensure the sustainability of the group, while the rest provides a valuable income to the women, many of whom are single mothers struggling to feed their families.

Sexual and gender-based violence is a fundamental violation of a person's human rights and can have a long-lasting and detrimental impact on a person's physical and psychological well-being. In young people especially, it can have severe adverse effects on educational performance and mental health. While immediate psycho-social care is required to meet survivors' immediate needs, providing a sustainable livelihood option can be instrumental in rebuilding skills and confidence.

The greenhouse farming project in Nakivale hopes to strengthen the resilience of the women who take part while also empowering them to go out into the community to help their

neighbours. It operates on a 'spiral benefit' concept; 'Everyone reaching one, sharing what they have learned.' The skills the women learn will also be valuable once they're eventually able to return to their home countries.

"It's a story of 150 women survivors, purposely picked and trained to grow vegetables in a greenhouse farm with a commitment to also teach their households and neighbours both in the refugee settlement and when back home," says Peter Kiura, from American Refugee Committee. "This, we believe, will help minimise survivor vulnerability to further abuse and through economic empowerment, shield many others from the risks."

More than 1,000 women in Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements are expected to benefit from greenhouse projects before the end of 2016. "We hope that more and more women will be empowered to continue managing their gardens in the backyard of their homes to ensure some degree of food security, as well as balancing their diet through eating their vegetables they grow," said Kiura.

UNHCR and partners provide assistance to SGBV survivors, providing psychosocial support to enable trauma recovery, access to medical facilities, justice and enhancing long-term sustainable economic independence ■

Refugee Restaurant Provides **Recipe for Success**

Betty is a 28 year old South Sudanese refugee living in Kyangwali settlement. She is a prime example of someone being able “to make the best out of a bad situation”.



By: Sabrina Amirat, former Field Officer,
UNHCR Kyangwali

She left her home country in 1994 when she arrived in Adjumani, northern Uganda. After living away from her home country for 10 years spent, she eventually decided to return to what was then Sudan with her mother and sister, but the volatile situation caused the family to flee again for a second time in 2010.

When she was forced to flee to Uganda once more, this time in Kyangwali, she decided to put all her energy into finding better opportunities for her family and children. With her sister, she started to work in the field, cultivating maize and beans. She saved part of the money she earned and decided to rent a small room for three months in Kasonga business center. Tapping in to her entrepreneurial spirit, she sold fried cassava, meat and beans to try and maximize her income.

Betty benefited from the support of different partners, UNHCR, Finnish Refugee Council, Action Africa Help Uganda, and American Refugee Committee, who provided her with agricultural training, as well as advice on sanitation and cooking. Progressively she has become a highly-valued partner to the humanitarian agencies in Kyangwali by providing catering services for workshops and special events.

In 2013, Betty was able to set up her own shop, which has become a regular lunchtime destination for many of the aid workers working in the settlement.

Betty's business has become a shining example of how the Ugandan model can foster peaceful co-existence between different communities as she has gone on to employ Congolese and South Sudanese refugees as well as Ugandan nationals.

Betty strongly emphasizes that the difficulties faced by people in the area, whether they're a refugee or a Ugandan, lie beyond people's nationality as they all share the same challenges in accessing job opportunities and developing better lives for themselves.

Even though she is financially more comfortable, Betty continues to spend part of her time each week working in the fields. She dreams of her children having a better life than her own. "I did not get the chance to go to school," says Betty. "I have to work hard to make sure that my three children will be able to become engineers, accountants, nurses or doctors. My children will have the opportunity to choose what they want for their lives. It is not easy but we continue to work hard for a better life." ■

The economics of hosting refugees: challenging popular myths

By: Linda Givetash for Quartz Africa Weekly Brief

In 2014, a team of academics from the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford conducted research into the economic contributions of refugees in Nakivale, Kyangwali and Kampala. Recognizing the limited data available on the economic lives of displaced populations, they set to learn more about the role refugees play in economic systems, and the mechanisms through which market-based systems can be made to turn humanitarian challenges into sustainable opportunities. Their research was anchored around five popular myths – 1) that refugees are economically isolated, 2) that refugees are a burden on host states, 3) that refugees are economically homogenous, 4) that refugees are technologically illiterate and 5) that refugees are dependent on humanitarian assistance. Their research challenges or fundamentally nuances all of these presumptions. The full report is available at:

<http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/refugee-economies-2014.pdf>

On a small farm in north-western Uganda, Nyantet Malual proudly shows off the cow she bought with earnings from her last harvest. The ability to own property and provide for her family was only a dream for the South Sudanese refugee when she arrived in the country two years ago.

“Now I’m sitting here, I buy my goat, I buy a cow, but when (I was) in Sudan I cannot,” she said.

“Here in Uganda I am free.”

The number of refugees in Uganda is hitting half a million people, up by 75,000 from 2014. Many refugees like Malual are gaining financial independence because of the country’s progressive 2006 Refugee Act that allows them to work, travel and access public services including education.

These policies are seemingly unexpected in a country where the GDP per capita is a mere \$696.

Youth unemployment is also incredibly high, at an estimated 60% to 83%.

But it’s not just the refugees reaping the benefits of having rights and freedoms comparable to citizens.

To read the full story, go to qz.com website story (<http://goo.gl/aqpM5p>)



Image: UNHCR/F. Noy

EMERGENCIES UPDATE

Uganda

In December 2015, Uganda became host to more than half a million refugees and asylum-seekers, the largest number in the country's history, making it the **third-largest refugee hosting country in Africa** (after Ethiopia and Kenya) and **the eighth-largest in the world**. In 2015 alone, 112,188 people fleeing violence and human rights abuses, mostly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, found safety and protection in Uganda.

Despite the record numbers of refugees in the country, Uganda continues to adopt one of the most progressive approaches to refugee management and protection in the world. Refugees are integrated with local host communities in refugee-hosting villages, and benefit from having access to the same services as Ugandans, the right to work and establish businesses and are able to move around the country freely. This enabling environment forms the basis for an increasingly developmental approach to the response programmes to refugees. The Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy, which brings together the UN Country Team, government and developmental partners, will look to take advantage of this by enhancing social service delivery systems and economically empowering refugee-hosting areas.

DR Congo influx

In the first three months of 2015, Uganda was receiving relatively few new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo. That changed in March, since when Uganda started receiving a '**silent emergency**' influx of new arrivals on a daily basis. This has continued at a steady pace, with an average of around 2,800 Congolese refugees arriving every month. There was a slight decrease in new arrivals towards the end of the year but it remains to be seen whether this is the beginning of a decreased rate of new arrivals. In recent weeks, there have been reports of increased activity by the Allied Democratic Forces, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and other militia groups that has prompted UNHCR and partners to increase operational capacities in case of an increased influx.

Burundi influx

More than 20,000 Burundians have sought safety, protection and assistance in Uganda since November 2014, predominantly from Bujumbura and its surrounding areas, due to ongoing fighting by government forces and opposition groups. The first weeks of 2016 have seen a steady increase in the number of new arrivals coming in to Uganda, however, fluctuations in trends were regularly seen last year and it remains too early to tell if this is the start of an increased average rate of daily new arrivals. Around three-quarters of Burundians arriving in Uganda are being hosted in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, which has pushed the settlement over its designed 100,000 capacity. Available options for new settlement areas are currently being discussed. The Inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan for Burundi for 2016 expects 10,000 Burundians to arrive in Uganda during the course of the year.

South Sudan influx

The largest number of new arrivals into Uganda in 2015 came from South Sudan. 46,750 people, typically from Jonglei, Malakal, Upper Nile and Unity States, and Juba, were provided with life-saving assistance in Adjumani, Arua and Kiryandongo districts, with a smaller number coming to Kampala. More than 84% of the new arrivals are women and children under the age of eighteen, making the South Sudanese influx a disproportionately young and female population. Reports from the refugees have indicated that they are fleeing due to continued violence between government and rebel forces. Additionally, more recent arrivals claim to have fled attacks on villages by armed groups, who are burning down houses, murdering civilians and sexually assaulting women. The recently released Inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan for South Sudan indicates an expected influx of 35,000 South Sudanese refugees in to Uganda during the course of 2016, though this figure may be revised upwards should conditions deteriorate.