



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**A REVIEW OF THE
EXISTING REFUGEE RESPONSE
FRAMEWORKS FOR INCLUSIVE
CP/GBV SERVICES IN UGANDA**

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List of acronyms

CP	Child Protection
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
ERP	Education Response Plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
JLRIP	Jobs And Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan
HSIRRP	Health Sub-Program Integrated Refugee Response Plan.
MOGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RHDs	Refugee Hosting Districts
RLO	Refugee Led Organization
SERP	Sustainable Energy Response Plan
UCRRP	Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WESRP	Water and Environment Sector Response Plan



DEFINITION OF WORKING TERMINOLOGIES

Abuse: Defined as a deliberate act with actual or potential negative effects upon a child's safety, wellbeing, dignity, and development. It is an act that takes place in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Child Protection in humanitarian action: The prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children in humanitarian action.

Community-based child protection mechanism (CBCPM): A network or group of individuals at community level who work in a coordinated manner towards protection of children from all forms of violence, in all settings. Such mechanisms can be indigenous or externally initiated and supported. They may be formal or informal in their structure and functioning

Energy: UNHCR in its Global Sustainable Energy Strategy 2019-2025 defines energy to refer primarily to the source powering cooking, lighting, heating and electricity needs of refugee households and businesses, as well as community facilities such as schools and health centres, in displacement settings and UNHCR offices and facilities.

Gender Based Violence: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.

Host Community: The government of Uganda defines host community the entire population of the district that hosts a refugee settlement. However, this is not always reflected in planning and programme implementation, which sometimes focuses on supporting the host community in sub-counties most directly affected by the presence of refugees (i.e. those covering, or adjacent to, the settlements).

Sustainable Energy: solutions that meet current energy needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own energy needs.

Prevention refers to actions that prevent GBV from occurring by addressing its root causes, namely gender inequality, systemic discrimination and unequal power relations between women and men.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda is widely recognized for its progressive and inclusive refugee policies, hosting approximately 1.9 million refugees and asylum seekers in a model that promotes self-reliance and integration within host communities. Central to Uganda's commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) is the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children who face heightened risks of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Despite the country's progressive refugee policy, women and children remain highly vulnerable to protection challenges. For instance, 64% of refugee households are female headed.

This review, commissioned by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from UNHCR, provides a critical assessment of the integration of Child Protection (CP) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) interventions within Uganda's main Refugee Response Plans (RRPs). These include the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP), Education Response Plan II (ERP II), Sustainable Energy Response Plan (SERP), Water and Environment Sector Response Plan (WESRRP), Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) and the Health Sub-Program Integrated Refugee Response Plan II (HSIRP-II).



Key findings highlight both progress and persistent challenges:

- ▶ While national frameworks acknowledge the vulnerability of women and children, integration of CP/GBV priorities within sectoral response plans remains inconsistent and often superficial. This assessment notes that several RRP lack dedicated interventions, safeguards or clear coordination mechanisms with protection actors like MOGLSD, District CBSD officers and humanitarian actors with a protection mandate and expertise in programming and operational footprint.
- ▶ Chronic underfunding significantly undermines protection outcomes. For example, in 2024, the UCRRP was only 46% funded overall, with protection allocations among the most affected. Government allocations to critical gender and social protection sub-programmes have similarly stagnated or declined.
- ▶ Human resource capacity is severely constrained. The average caseworker-to-child-at-risk ratio exceeds 1:200, far above global standards of 1:25. This has the implication of reducing quality and coverage of essential services.
- ▶ Disability inclusion remains limited despite clear evidence of heightened risks of violence against children and women with disabilities.

The review also identified promising practices in the refugee response. For instance, the UCRRP has supported the establishment of hundreds of community-based child protection committees; the JLIRP has costed GBV interventions under its social cohesion pillar and the Health Response Plan integrates mental health, referral systems, and survivor support into service delivery models. Yet these efforts remain fragmented and under-resourced.

This report makes recommendations for policymakers, donors and partners and they include include:

1. Mainstream Child Protection and GBV objectives across all sectoral plans, ensuring specific, costed activities and measurable indicators aligned with international standards.
2. Strengthen intersectoral coordination, integrating the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, UN agencies, civil society and refugee-led organizations into planning, monitoring and implementation frameworks.
3. Increase sustainable financing, advocating for greater domestic budget allocations while ensuring donor resources are better integrated into national systems to address chronic underfunding of protection services.
4. Invest in human resources, including recruitment, training and retention of qualified case workers to achieve globally acceptable ratios and deliver quality, survivor-centered services.
5. Prioritize disability inclusion, embedding Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) into planning and monitoring frameworks and ensuring accessible services for all.
6. Support district-level planning, enabling refugee-hosting districts to develop costed, protection-sensitive plans aligned with Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV).
7. Improve coordination within the Refugee Hosting Districts. Coordination mechanisms between sector ministries, humanitarian partners, and local governments require strengthening to ensure consistent, survivor-centered, and child-friendly protection responses.

Uganda's refugee response remains a global example of inclusive policy and practice. However, achieving durable solutions and safeguarding rights requires renewed commitment, strengthened coordination, and sustained investment in protection systems that address the complex, protracted needs of refugee women and children. This review provides an evidence base for strategic, coordinated action by government, donors, and partners to deliver on Uganda's commitments under the GCR, CRRF, and national development priorities.



1.0 BACKGROUND

Uganda became one of the first countries worldwide to implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), a framework adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2016 and later integrated into the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Guided by the high-level CRRF Steering Group, led by the Government of Uganda (GoU), the GCR/CRRF guides the refugee response to ensure that host communities get the support they need, refugees are integrated into national service delivery and that solutions to the plight of refugees are sought from the onset of a crisis.

Uganda has made further advancements towards the social and economic inclusion of refugees. In 2020, Uganda explicitly included refugees in its National Development Plan (NDP) III 2020/21-2024/25 by calling for the integration of refugee programming in all national, sectoral and DDPs and statistics. NDPIV also makes a string case for refugee inclusion through its various programmes most especially the Governance and Security Programme as shown below:

Table 1: Inclusion of refugees in Uganda's NDPIV

Objective 8: Enhance the national response for coordinating refugee protection and migration management		
STRATEGIES	INTERVENTIONS	
Strengthen responses that address refugee protection and assistance	a) Receive, screen, register, and settle refugees b) Process asylum seekers through the RSD processes c) Engage in regional and international meetings and organizations	OPM, MoDVA, UPF, ESO, ISO, MIA, DCIC
Strengthen the Role of Non-State actors in refugee responses	a) Coordinate with international and local partners for relief b) Reinforce the integration of refugee projects and frameworks within mandated structures c) Align non-state actor services with national priorities	

Source: NPA (2025): The Fourth National Development Plan

At sectoral level, the following comprehensive Sector Response Plans in Education, Health, Water and Environment, Sustainable Energy and Jobs and Livelihoods were developed aligned with NDPIII, Vision 2040, and wider regional plans including EAC Vision 2050.



1.2

INTRODUCTION

Uganda, known for its progressive refugee laws and policies, has been hosting refugees since its independence in 1962. Unlike typical refugee camps, refugees in Uganda reside in Settlements, where they are allocated 10-decimal plots of land for agricultural purposes, while some refugees rent land from host communities. The vast majority of refugees are hosted in settlements in 12 refugee-hosting districts in northern and mid/south-western Uganda while 5% of them reside in urban Kampala as shown in the table below:

Table 2: Refugee population by district of residence

LOCATION NAME	DATA DATE		POPULATION
Koboko	31 May 2025	0.3%	6,353
Lamwo	31 May 2025	4.8%	92,440
Kamwenge	31 May 2025	5.4%	103,015
Kyegegwa	31 May 2025	7.1%	135,203
Obongi	31 May 2025	7.4%	141,165
Kikuube	31 May 2025	7.9%	150,744
Kiryandongo	31 May 2025	8.1%	154,143
Kampala	31 May 2025	8.2%	157,329
Yumbe	31 May 2025	10.9%	207,652
Adjumani	31 May 2025	12.1%	230,943
Madi Okollo & Terego	31 May 2025	13.6%	259,793
Isingiro	31 May 2025	14.3%	272,659

Source: UNHCR and OPM

This system is designed to help refugees achieve self-reliance through farming and trade. However, it is also essential to recognize the ongoing challenges that women and girls face in these environments, particularly in terms of safety, climate change, and economic empowerment.

Most of the 1.9 million refugees resident in Uganda have fled civil unrest and conflicts in neighbouring countries of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia and Burundi.

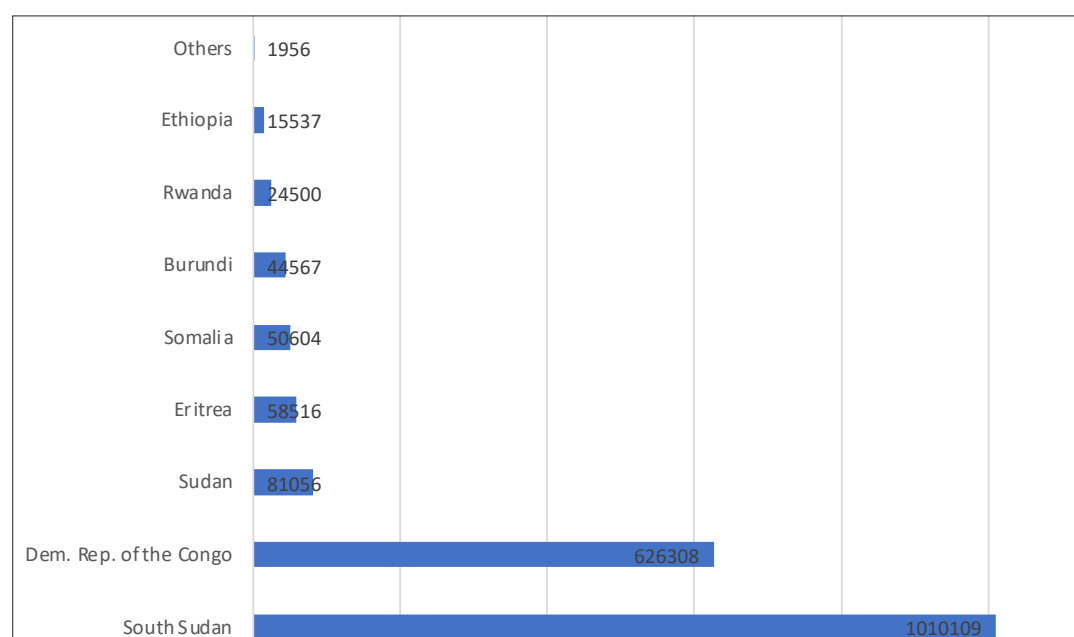


Figure 1: Breakdown of refugees by country of origin



Most of the

1.9M

*refugees resident in Uganda
have fled civil unrest and
conflicts in neighbouring
countries*

Refugee flows into Uganda are likely to continue due to ongoing conflicts, violent wars, unrest and human rights violations in neighbouring countries.

In Uganda, the response coordination is led by UNHCR and by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The Uganda government, in coordination with the humanitarian partners, has granted a welcoming policy for all asylum seekers. In the past years, Uganda has been affected by a general reduction of humanitarian funds that have triggered a prioritization of the humanitarian assistance. This need to prioritize has been exacerbated by recent global developments, which requires robust, accurate and timely data. In addition to acute humanitarian needs, the refugee response is increasingly protracted and needs to identify pathways for long-term integration, self-reliance, and resilience of refugees and host communities.

In order to facilitate long term integration, self reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities, UNHCR supported different government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to develop sector specific refugee response plans. It should be noted that long term sustainable refugee hosting requires integration in delivery approaches for the interventions. One of the pressing needs is protection (Child Protection and Gender Based Violence) which is not only faced with constant underfunding but also subjected to budget cuts due to preference for more 'hardware' interventions.

The most pressing child protection issues faced by Refugees and Host Community children according to the National Child Protection Sub Working Group (CPSWG) are Child Labor, Violence Against Children (VAC), Sexual Violence, Child Marriage, Teenage Pregnancy, and the challenges faced by Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) such as limited availability of safe alternative care, restricted access to services due to the absence of adult family members' support and vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, including child labor, sexual violence, and trafficking among others.

It was against this background that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), sought the services of a consultant to undertake a review of the integration of CP/GBV into the existing Refugee Response Plans. This report outlines the approach, methodology, work plan and key deliverables for the consultancy on reviewing the existing Refugee Response Plans (RRPs) for the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Child Protection (CP) and Community-Based Protection (CBP) in Uganda. The assignment critically assessed the integration of GBV and CP in the RRP and provides evidence-based recommendations to inform programming, policy and planning.





1.3 About the Assignment

This assignment was commissioned by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) with financial support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was undertaken between May and July 2025. The main objective of the assignment was to conduct an in-depth assessment of the existing Refugee Response plans for the prevention and response to Gender Based Violence and Child Protection issues, including Community Based Protection (CBP). The specific objectives were to;

- i. *Examine the extent to which the Refugee Response Plans (RRPs) have integrated/mainstreamed GBV/CP/CBP issues.*
- ii. *Examine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the RRP objectives and strategies in preventing and responding GBV/CP in the Country.*
- iii. *Analyze the financing mechanisms for GBV/CP prevention and response in the country.*
- iv. *Assess the responsiveness of the RRP to the needs of the most vulnerable Refugees and Asylum seekers ie women, youth, persons with disabilities.*
- v. *To document the best practices and lessons learned relating RRP to GBV/CP prevention and response mechanisms in the Country.*
- vi. *Identify gaps, challenges, and emerging issues in the integrating CP/GBV for refugee and host communities.*
- vii. *Analyse the effectiveness of the existing coordination and implementation structures in RRP in relation to GBV/CP prevention and response mechanisms.*

After the review, a draft report was presented for validation on 10th July 2025 at Imperial Golf View Resort Entebbe. The high level validation workshop was convened by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and it was attended by officials from Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)- Department of Refugees and CRRF Secretariat, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Water and Environment, Norwegian Refugee Council, REPPSI, UNHCR, Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) among others.

The high level validation workshop reviewed the report and made comments for incorporation by the consultant. The validation workshop adopted the report for onward publication, dissemination and use.

2.0 Methodology

To fully execute this assignment and its objectives, the consultant employed the following methodology.

This study relied greatly on literature review of the Refugee Response Plans. Literature on related studies, evaluations, reports and publications was extensively reviewed. These included:

- ▶ **The Sustainable Development Goals**
- ▶ **The Global Compact on Refugees**
- ▶ **Uganda Vision 2040**
- ▶ **The Refugee Act 2006**
- ▶ **The inter-agency rapid gender analysis and GBV assessment reports**
- ▶ **The 2022-2025 Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) and related annexes.**
- ▶ **Sector Specific Response Plans (Education, Water, Energy, Livelihoods, Health).**
- ▶ **National policies and legal frameworks on GBV and Child Protection.**
- ▶ **National Budget Framework Papers for FY2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.**
- ▶ **Annual Budget Performance Reports for FY2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.**
- ▶ **Relevant reports, evaluations and global guidance documents.**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

Table 3: Table of Key Informant Interviews conducted

AGENCY	UNIT
Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD).	Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan Secretariat
	Child Protection Technical Working Group
Ministry of Education and Sports	ERP Secretariat
Ministry of Health	Health Response Plan Secretariat
Office of the Prime Minister	CRRF Secretariat
Ministry of Water and Environment	Department of Refugees
	WESRP Secretariat
Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development	SERP
Refugee Led Organization	Aid A Refugee Initiative
Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD)	Uganda Country Office
Refugee Hosting Districts	Madi Okollo DLG
	Isingiro DLG
	Terego DLG



3.0

Integration Of Child Protection And Gender Based Violence Interventions In The Refugee Response Plans (RRPS).

This section makes a thorough review of the i) Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2022-2025; ii) Education Response Plan 2022-2026; iii) Water and Environment Sector Response Plan; iv) Sustainable Energy Response Plan 2022-2025; v) Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan and vi) Health Response Plan. The response plans are reviewed on the basis of their integration of child protection and GBV interventions, costing of GBV/CP interventions, key protection and Coordination issues among other parameters and juxtaposed to Uganda's NDPIV aspirations as elaborated hereunder.

The Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) provides a framework covering the period 2022-2025, with an updated detailed planning for 2024-2025. It is a joint plan between the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR and UN Agencies, international and national partners. The UCRRP aims to respond to challenges in a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated manner to achieve its strategic objectives: strengthen Uganda's asylum space, provide lifesaving assistance, improve access to public services, strengthen co-existence and self-reliance, and pursue durable solutions.

CASE STUDY: CP AND GBV REPORTING IN THE UCRRP

The UCRRP plans for and costs GBV and child protection and consistently reports about protection on a quarterly basis through the UNHCR data portal <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>

So far, partners through the UCRRP have been able to establish 395 Child Protection Committees with over 3,555 community members supporting case identification, monitoring, and raising awareness in settlements as well as providing 4,239 GBV survivors with appropriate multi-sectoral support, ranging from psychosocial support and medical services to legal assistance and livelihood support.

The UCRRP is costed at UGX 857,927,456 for the year 2024 of which UGX 178,187,657 is projected towards protection (CP and GBV) while of the UGX 867,890,947 projected cost to implement the UCRRP in 2025, UGX 180,688,859 is allocated towards protection (CP and GBV). The 2024 GBV resource requirement for the sector was \$25 million in 2024, with 24% (\$6,017,344) received as of September 2024 (UNHCR, 2024).

3.1.1

Integration of GBV in the UCRRP 2022-2025.

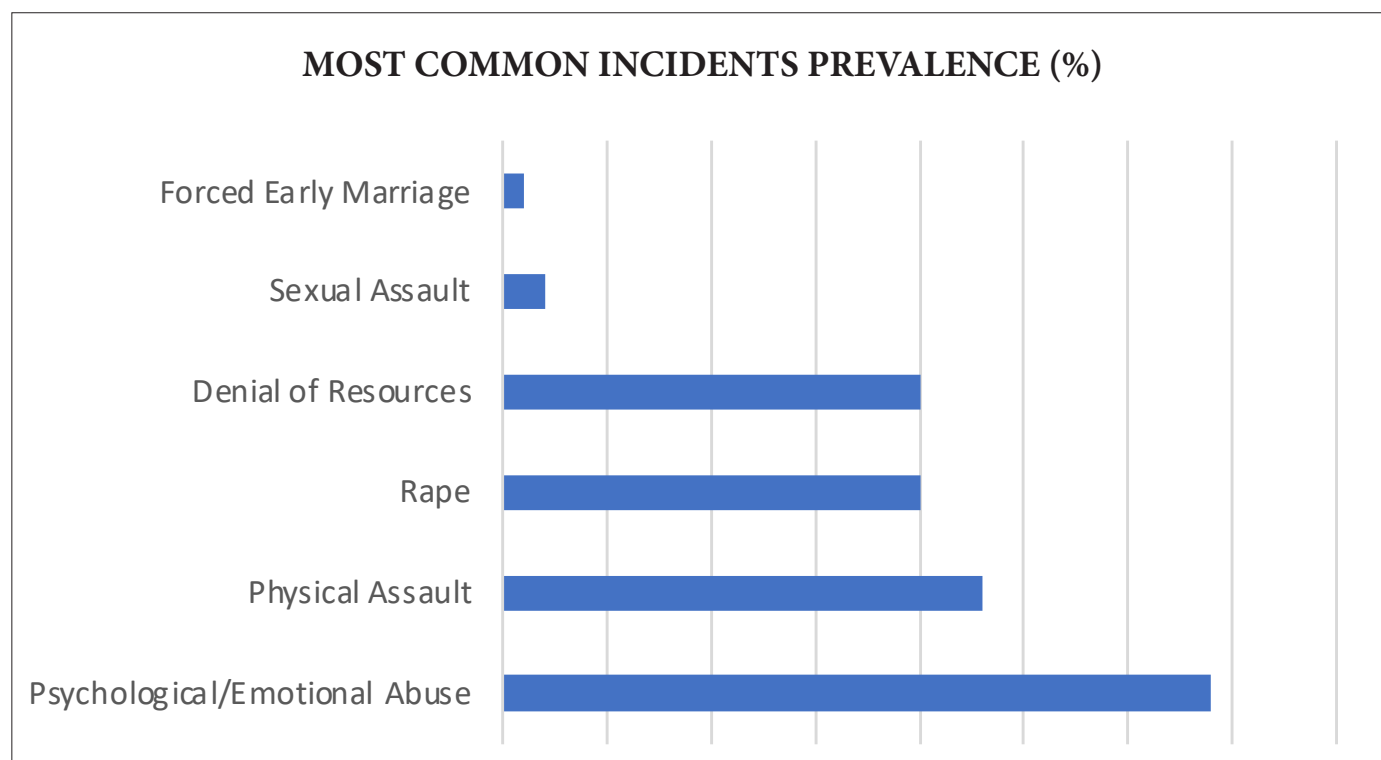
GBV programming is guided by the Inter Agency UGBV Strategy 2021-2025 and the GBV sector focuses on four objectives: i) preventing GBV by addressing root causes through targeted interventions; iii) building a specialized, accessible response and case management system for survivors; iii) enhancing partnerships and coordination for better protection and support services; and iv) providing durable solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless individuals affected by GBV. With the influx of Sudanese refugees where FGM practices are prevalent, the sector plans to integrate FGM prevention into broader GBV programming.

Table 4: Number of GBV cases reported annually 2022-2024

NUMBER OF GBV CASES REPORTED			
YEAR	2022	2023	2024
NUMBER	5,851	5,222	4204

According to the UNHCR GBV Dashboard Uganda Refugee Response Plan (RRP) 2024-2025, RRP GBV partners assisted 1,089 GBV survivors in the first quarter of the year, reaching 21% of the target indicator. Of these, 89% were adults and 11% were children. However, delayed reporting remains a critical challenge due to fear of reprisal, with many survivors experiencing emotional distress and safety threats.

Figure 2: Commonly reported GBV cases among refugees and host communities



Source: UNHCR Dashboard

The implementation of GBV interventions under the UCRRP is being hampered by the chronic underfunding for the sector. This is being exacerbated by the changing funding terrain which is bringing about reduced humanitarian funding and downsizing within the humanitarian organizations. GBV programming has experienced a significant reduction in GBV case workers—down 40% from 114 in 2023 to 68 in 2024. This hinders the ability to identify cases and provide essential support.

3.1.1

Integration of Child Protection in the 2022-2025 Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan.

The 2022-2025 Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) recognizes that in order to “ensure that children are protected from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and able to develop positively in a healthy environment, there needs to be a change in social attitudes towards children’s rights, as well as effective services for highly vulnerable children”. Specifically, the UCRRP 2022-2025 notes that humanitarian partners will:

- Work on prevention by empowering communities to identify and reduce child protection risks,
- Ensure that children have access to timely and quality protection services including comprehensive case management services, harmonized and adequate alternative care, and community-based and psychosocial interventions, and
- Strengthen the national system for child protection in alignment with the National Child Policy 2020 as well as the Uganda Alternative Care Guidelines 2019.

These are repeated in the Uganda Inter-Agency Child Protection Strategy (2023-2025) which focuses on three key objectives: strengthening the national child protection system; providing essential services such as case management and alternative care; and supporting children, families, and communities in safeguarding children. In support of this strategy, the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) involves partners in a coordinated effort to protect refugee children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, and separation



while ensuring access to quality child protection services.

Furthermore, the 2022-2025 UCRRP places significant emphasis on ensuring i) harmonization of the social service workforce, ii) provision of quality case management procedures, as well as iii) adequate alternative care provision in the refugee context. In line with the Uganda Child Policy 2020, the UCRRP commits to supporting the national Child Wellbeing Steering Committee (CSWC) in order to strengthen the child protection policy framework.

Child Protection programming is severely affected by funding cuts, impacting over 114,687 children with specific needs and 57,004 needing case management. Staff reductions have compromised service quality, with the average caseworker to-child-at-risk ratio at 1:199, reaching 1:295 in West Nile. These figures far exceed the global standard of 1:25, highlighting critical capacity gaps.

The Second Education Response Plan (ERP II)

3.2



The Second Education Response Plan (ERP II) for Refugees and Host Communities runs from January 2022 to June 2025 and is a follow-up to the first Education Response Plan (ERPI) which was operation from January 2018 to June 2021. ERP II is being implemented in the 37 sub-counties in the 12 refugee-hosting districts, and Kampala. It is anchored in the Djibouti Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education. It entreats member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to implement and develop quality educational standards and inclusion in their national legal framework and educational system.

The ERPII is driven by the following objectives:

- *To achieve equitable access to relevant and quality education and training*
- *To ensure delivery of relevant and quality education and training.*
- *To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of education and sports service delivery at all levels.*

Right from its theory of Change, the ERPII recognizes that the inadequate system readiness to host and fully accommodate the increasing number of refugees can lead to significant increase in school dropouts, abuse and violence. The theory of change was developed based on the understanding that inequitable education opportunities hamper the access and delivery of quality education to refugee, children and adolescents in the host communities. It articulates how improvement of learning outcomes and skills for crisis affected and host communities' children and adolescents will be achieved through improving equitable access and retention; delivery of the quality of education and training and strengthening systems for effective and resilient service delivery.

3.2.1**Integration of GBV and Child Protection in the Second Education Response Plan.**

To respond to the protection issues faced by refugees and host communities, the second Education Response Plan (ERPII) aims to inter alia Establish functional protection platforms and referrals mechanisms in schools. The ERPII recognizes that there is 'limited coverage of child protection agencies within the districts as most agencies are concentrated in urban and semi-urban areas'. It also identifies limited follow up on child protection issues and cases of teenage pregnancy and early marriages especially in settlements and Host communities as some of the enabling factors for Violence Against Children.

It there proposes to mainstream protection and provide school-based actions to address issues of bullying, violence, MHPSS through increased participation of children in school development and improved referral system between schools, protection/social services and other support mechanisms

The ERPII notes that "Sexual and reproductive health and education outcomes are positively related". It postulates further that 'girls who are exposed to gender based violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and teenage pregnancy are less likely to stay in school, participate in the workforce, and have healthier, better-educated children'.

The ERPII proposes the following interventions:

- a)** sensitizing the communities and creation of awareness (IEC materials);



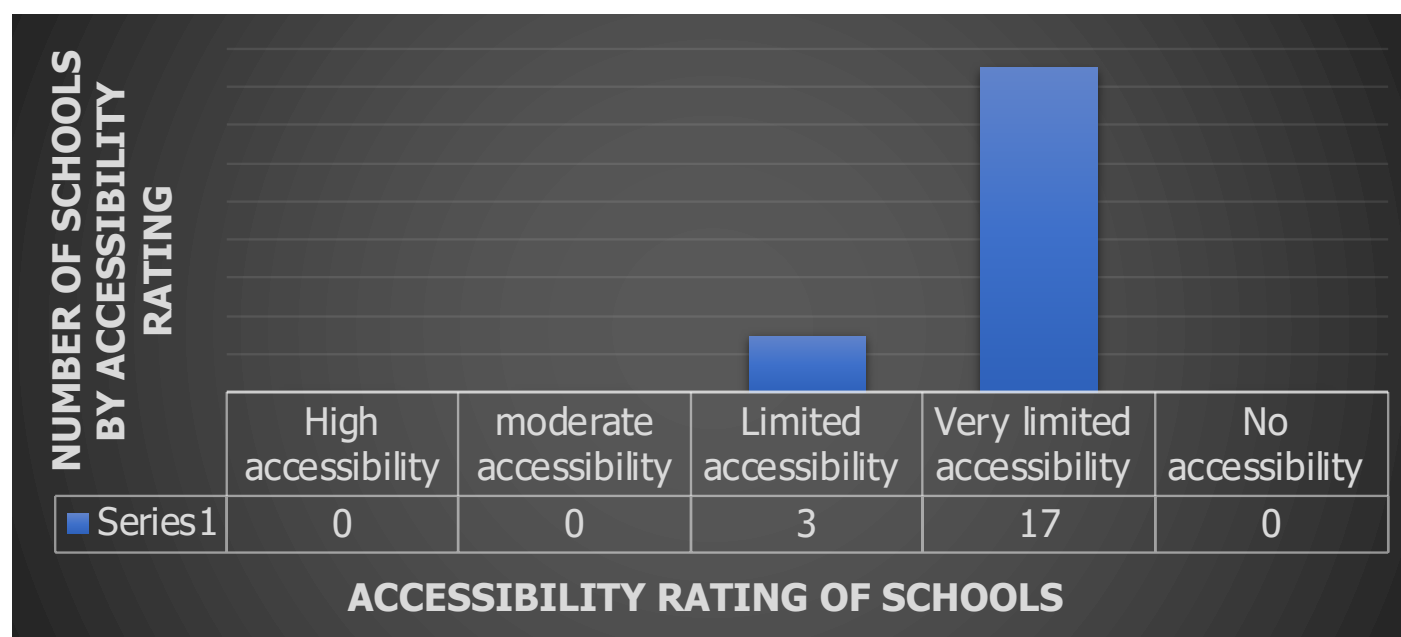
- b) Providing counselling services to youth;
- c) life skills and vocational training to engage in income generating activities;
- d) support school based interventions and provision of youth friendly services, including provision of sanitary pads, basic needs (food, healthcare),
- e) implementation of role model approach;
- f) Advocacy for children's rights and law enforcement, stay in school campaigns and;
- g) establish new ways of providing information and support to adolescents and young people in case of disruptions/closure of schools.

3.2.2

Disability Inclusion in the ERP

The ERP II is strong on inclusive education and providing a safe learning environment for learners with disabilities. It includes activities like i) conduct disability gap analysis in the targeted communities and develop an action plan to reduce the impact of gender/ disability related barriers to education; provide assistive devices to students with disabilities, orient parents and pre-primary teachers in special needs education and inclusive pedagogy; Improve accessibility to school environments for children with disabilities among others.

According to the midterm evaluation of the ERP II, schools in the Refugee Hosting Districts are yet to fully implement accessibility guidelines to enable learners with disabilities fully access education as shown in the graph below:



These were the main accessibility issues noted:

- a) Entrances lacked ramps or had ramps without rails, and ramps had no landing or adjacent steps and no level difference between the entrance and surrounding area.
- b) Door handles are fixed at high levels; some doors open inward and not outward; have locks without handles for easy grip.
- c) Some doors are narrower than the required measurement and cannot allow a wheelchair to easily enter and/or turn around.
- d) Ramps – were missing in many cases, and when ramps are available, they lacked handrails or landing ar-



eas, steep slope (not measured to standard) implying that school infrastructure improvements do not adhere to accessibility standards.

e) Stairs in many schools were missing, and when available, the rise was higher than required.

f) Notice boards – where noticeboards were available, they were placed too high up the wall, very old, and the information displayed were in small prints and invisible.

g) Latrines – latrines were generally available but with many accessibility barriers – pathways leading to the latrines were rough and inaccessible

3.3

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY RESPONSE PLAN FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES (SERP) 2022-2025

NDPIV notes that Uganda’s “large refugee population has contributed to deforestation at a rate of about 92,000 hectares per year and soil degradation, as refugees rely heavily on local wood for cooking and construction”. The Sustainable Energy Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (SERP) aims to support the implementation of emergency response and longer-term interventions towards achieving CRRF’s national service delivery system. It is domiciled at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD).

The Sustainable Energy Response Plan (SERP) encapsulates a multisectoral approach- seeking coordination with other Refugee Response Plans and notes that it “intends to build upon lessons learned from the development and implementation of other sectoral plans and strive towards mainstreaming energy to enhance multi-sector programme delivery and improved coordination” in a bid to enhance service delivery. We however note that the SERP does not include a mechanism for coordination with government entities, humanitarian partners and community organs with a protection mandate. We note that lack of coordination with protection sector actors such as MoGLSD, UNFPA and CP/GBV working groups limits effectiveness.

3.3.1

Integration of Child Protection in the Sustainable Energy Response Plan 2022-2025.

The SERP aims to address inter alia the ‘Safety, security, unequal work burden and health risks, particularly for women and children’ which brings to the fore a protection component within the energy sector. The SERP also seeks to integrate the Education Response Plan (ERP) within the Plan noting that “school meals are the most common safety net globally as these can alleviate the burden on parents and mitigate the likelihood of taking or keeping children out of school”. This realization creates a relevant linkage between energy access and protection relevant education indicators of enrolment, retention and completion.

The SERP makes mention of the Children’s safety and protection risks associated with lack of lighting, unsafe environments and poor infrastructure. The SERP recognizes that while the ‘risks of SGBV and VAC are similar in refugee and host communities, women, and children in situations of forced displacement face additional vulnerabilities related to poverty, food insecurity, aid dependency, and trauma that can exacerbate



their risks to violence and reduce their capacity to seek help and access services’. However, it does not include any standalone activities or safeguards to protect children from violence.

Furthermore, Violence Against Children is mentioned but not programmatically integrated. For instance, the SERP notes that “domestic violence, violence in schools, and a lack of child-friendly and accessible services for reporting and responding to Violence Against Children (VAC) lead to increased risks of boys’ and girls’ victimisation”. However, response to Violence Against Children is not programmatically integrated in the SERP leaving a glaring gap in prevention, mitigation and response to VAC incidents.

It is the considered view of the consultant that the SERP identifies great entry points for child protection within the energy sector. This because the literature review has shown that violence affects many children and adolescents in refugee settlements in Uganda as nearly half of females and males aged 18-24 years have experienced at least one form of violence (sexual, physical or emotional) before age 18 (OPM, 2022). In addition, about a third (32%) of females and 40% of males aged 13-17 years experienced at least one form of violence in the past 12 months. There is therefore need by the SERP to optimize the opportunities to improve child safety through lighting in schools and homes as highlighted within the Sustainable Energy Response Plan.

3.3.2

Integration of Gender-Based Violence in the Sustainable Energy Response Plan.

The SERP recognizes that a ‘gender assessment is very important to identify unique energy related needs, constraints and priorities of each sex and age category in relation to energy’ with a great acknowledgment that ‘women are the primary users of energy within the household’ . This is better captured in the table below:

MILESTONE	IMPACT
Comprehensive, gender integrated baseline assessment of levels of energy access for refugees and host communities undertaken, including development of M&E framework, project tracking tool and knowledge sharing platform	Needs and gaps fully understood to accurately set targets and activity performance measures. Stakeholders fully engaged, coordination and communication improved.
Market/financial systems developed that promote equitable access to energy products and services – including subsidies, smart payment mechanisms, supplier incentives and guarantees, women’s access to credit. Includes evaluation of supply chains, gendered barriers and innovative approaches which support men and women in the growing markets.	Reduced affordability gap, increased access to wide range of products for broader customer segment, including very low-income households (female headed, male headed, child headed); increased women’s inclusion in the market; increased market activity for women and men; and private sector involvement providing gender sensitive energy goods and services in refugee and hosting district.

Source: Sustainable Energy Response Plan

It is stated in the SERP that the Plan ‘aims to enhance safety and income generating opportunities for women and girls through access to energy and transformative gender approach which promotes changes in structures and cultures as well as ways of thinking and believing’. Critical to note from the review of the SERP are the following:

- SERP acknowledges GBV risks linked to energy poverty. Gender-Based Violence (GBV), particularly Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and risks related to firewood collection, poor lighting and economic deprivation



are acknowledged but not addressed through dedicated interventions.

- The SERP promotes clean cooking and lighting in order to reduce exposure of women and girls to Gender Based Violence.
- The SERP falls short of proposing survivor referral systems, safe shelters or psychosocial support mechanisms. The Plan focusses primarily on energy access schools and health centres which can be used to imply 'powering' response to GBV and Violence Against Children' through increased energy access.

3.3.3

Recommendations for integration of GBV And CP Interventions

As the Sustainable Energy Response Plan (SERP) 2022-2025 comes to its conclusion and processes for developing a new Plan commence, we recommend that Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development:

- ✓ Mainstreams Protection in Energy Planning by integrating Child Protection and GBV mitigation in energy infrastructure in lighting, clean cooking, safe design as well as conducting safety audits and risk assessments in settlements and public spaces. The interventions in the current SERP lack child- and gender-sensitive design in schools, health centers and community settings.
- ✓ Strengthens Multi-Sector Coordination by engaging the MoGLSD, UNFPA, UNICEF and the GBV/CP Technical Working Group in implementation and monitoring of the new SERP. It is also recommended that the new SERP includes humanitarian partners with a protection mandate and operational footprint on the SERP Steering Committee.
- ✓ Fully integrate and implement Child Protection and GBV interventions by i) allocating dedicated funding for protection-sensitive energy interventions and ii) embedding transformative gender approaches in all training, awareness and livelihoods activities.
- ✓ Introduces indicators on SGBV incidence, reporting, and child safety as well as Use of Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) in all reporting.



Water and Environment Sector Response Plan

3.4



Only
50%
households have safe
access to latrines, and
inadequate sanitation

Water collection is a burden mainly for women and girls, who face security risks while travelling long distances to fetch water. Only 50% households have safe access to latrines, and inadequate sanitation (e.g. 24 per cent of latrines are without door locks) increases gender-based violence (GBV) risks (UN Women, 2025). The Water and Environment Response Plan recognizes that environmental degradation and reduced ground water recharge and supply has contributed to climate vulnerability, sexual and gender-based violence for women and children during firewood collection, reduced food and nutrition security and depleted sources of cooking fuel.

The Human Capital Development programme objective 7 seeks to increase inclusive access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) with emphasis on increasing coverage in lagging communities through increasing investment in water supply and sanitation infrastructure to increase



3.4.1

Integration of GBV and Child Protection in the Water and Environment Response Plan.

The Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP) does not explicitly include Child Protection or Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as standalone thematic areas. However, some indirect linkages exist, mainly through interventions that support broader wellbeing, environmental health and access to services for vulnerable groups such as women, youth, children and people with disabilities. While the Plan acknowledges the vulnerabilities of refugees and the need for inclusive service delivery, specific child protection programming, safeguards, or institutional partnerships with MoGLSD or Non-Governmental Organizations with a mandate in protection are absent. This is a major gap, considering children and make up more than 80% of the refugee population.

The Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP) does makes reference to some aspects with a protection component such as:

- *Livelihood support for refugees and host communities, which, if implemented, has the potential to reduce economic vulnerability that contributes to GBV and violence against children.*
- *Inclusion of social economists among deployed officers, which opens the door for some social protection integration.*
- *Integration with national policies such as the National Gender Policy. The Plan, however, does not elaborate in detail the practical operationalization of this ideal.*

The Water and Environment Sector Response Plan further makes commitments to “reduce the dependence syndrome” and promote peaceful co-existence. It should be noted that these commitments are development goals relevant to family welfare and the realization of protection outcomes. The plight of women and girls in refugee settlements presents significant challenges, particularly regarding their safety, livelihoods opportunities, and overall well-being. The challenges faced by women and girls in refugee settlements and urban areas remain a significant concern, particularly in terms of safety, livelihood opportunities, and overall well-being. Tackling the dependency syndrome will be one way of ensuring children and women are protected from violence.

3.4.2

Recommendations for Integration

To address these critical protection gaps, it is the view of the consultant that in developing the new WESRRP, Ministry of Water and Environment should consider:

- Partnering with MoGLSD, UNICEF, UNFPA and humanitarian partners with a mandate in protection to align the Plan with existing CP/GBV minimum standards.
- Installing safe and accessible WASH facilities, especially for women, girls, children with disabilities and older persons.
- Incorporating Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) into monitoring frameworks as well as including child protection and GBV risk assessments in access to WASH facilities in the Refugee Hosting Districts.

The JLIRP is anchored in the Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance which was adopted on 28th March 2019 and committed IGAD member states to:

- ▶ Advance livelihood opportunities and economic inclusion of refugees
- ▶ Adopt the Plan of Action
- ▶ Roll-out comprehensive national implementation roadmaps with a whole-of-society approach
- ▶ Seek durable solutions for protracted displacement situations and address associated socio-economic challenges affecting refugees, returnees and host communities.

The Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan envisages a resilient, sustainable and inclusive development of refugees and host communities with reduced conflicts and violence in all its forms; increased employment in own micro and small enterprises among the refugees and host communities; increased volumes and qualities of agro-products in the domestic and regional markets; increased own and formal employment; and increased number of disadvantaged and vulnerable persons socially and economically included from the refugees and host communities in the refugee hosting districts.

3.5.1

Integration of GBV in the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan

The Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) envisages a resilient, sustainable and inclusive development of refugees and host communities with reduced conflicts and violence in all its forms; increased employment in own micro and small enterprises among the refugees and host communities.

The JLRIP further costs GBV intervention activities at USD 1,572,348 as shown below:

Table 6: GBV interventions in the JLIRP

Strategic Objectives (SO)	Strategic Intervention	Activities
SO1: Peaceful coexistence and economic interaction extended and strengthened between 1,460,584 refugees and 5,760,437 host communities by June 2023	i) Building capacities of refugees, host communities and host local governments to establish local mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and response to violence including GBV and land related matters among others.	a) Conduct community meetings to create safe spaces for dialogue in refugee settlements and host communities. b) Provide capacity building support to welfare and local councils c) Put in place household, group and community level violence response mechanism d) Provide support to institutions for dispute prevention and conflict resolution e) Conduct Community dialogues to manage violence including SGBV and promote peace. f) Strengthen national case management, referral pathways and MIS for GBV and violence against children to incorporate refugees. g) Provide IEC materials for SGBV advocacy Developed, translated and or popularized into local language h) Conduct radio talk shows and spot messages on SGBV to enhance knowledge prevention and response organized i) Integrate SGBV into existing curriculum at various levels (pre-primary primary, secondary and tertiary) j) Conduct periodic advocacy celebration of 16 days of activism against SGBV organized k) Provide facilitation to law enforcement officers to enforce mechanisms for conflict management within and beyond the refugee hosting districts strengthened l) Conduct community policing and sensitization meetings

Source: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan

**3.5.1****Child Protection in the Jobs And Livelihoods
Integrated Response Plan**

The JLIRP integrates child Protection in pillars 1 and 5 of the plan as shown below:

Table 7: CP aligned interventions in the JLIRP

STRATEGIC PILLAR	INTERVENTION	ACTIVITIES
SO1: Peaceful coexistence and economic interaction extended and strengthened between 1,460,584 refugees and 5,760,437 host communities by June 2023	i) Building capacities of refugees, host communities and host local governments to establish local mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and response to violence including GBV and land related matters among others.	Strengthen national case management, referral pathways and MIS for GBV and violence against children to incorporate refugees.
SO5: Five (5) per cent of refugee and host communities' vulnerable populations are fully included and actively participating in local 13 LGs	Reduce harsh parenting practices and create positive parent-child relationships	a) Conduct workshops on positive parenting in refugee and host community household members to create awareness on harsh parenting. b) Provide family-based care and out of school services for children and youth.

Source: Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan

The total child protection budget is USD 1,646,550 for the period 2020/21-2024/25. The JLIRP falls short of tackling child protection in its entirety such as addressing issues of child headed families, unaccompanied minors, teenage pregnancies among others. It is the view of the consultant that the next JLIRP should provide linkages between livelihoods and protection borrowing from the referral pathway by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and partners.



3.6

Health Sub-Program Integrated Refugee Response Plan II 2025-2030

The Health Sub Program Integrated Refugee Response Plan II is anchored in the Mombasa Declaration on Refugee and Cross-Border Health which calls for strengthening health systems, improving disease surveillance, and bolstering infrastructure in border areas, where refugees often first arrive. The purpose of this plan is to align the refugee response to the NDP IV and Health Sub-Programme PIAPs/sub-sector plan in order to contribute to the national objective of improving the health status of host communities and refugees through building a resilient health system that can withstand shocks and guarantee sustainable and equitable access

to essential health services.

The Plan seeks to respond rapidly and effectively in health emergencies; promote inclusion and self-reliance; empower the refugees and host communities determine and build their futures as well as pursuing solutions to address the consequences of displacement and problems of statelessness. The first Plan was funded to a tune of USD 441.2 million leaving a funding gap of about USD 142.2 million.

Table 8: Funding sources for HSIRRP-I

Funding partners	Budget Amount (US\$ '000')	Actual by end 2024 (US\$ '000')
Other Partners	229	177
GoU (Transfers to RHDs)	69.4	93.2
Development partners		
UNHCR	105	61.5
World Bank DRDIP	150	94.3
World Bank (UCREPP)	30	15.2
Total	583.4	441.2

Source: Ministerial Policy Statement, Ministry of Health, 2024/25

The Plan recognizes that the training of health workers “does not specifically address the unique needs of refugees and migrants”.



3.6.1

Integration of CP/GBV Programming in the Health Response Plan II

We note that the draft HSIRRP II includes interventions, which though not exclusively framed as CP or GBV programs, they create foundational structures that can support protection outcomes for refugees and host communities. These include:

- Calling for psychosocial support and mental health services, especially targeting refugees affected by violence or trauma. The Plan intends to work, in partnership with local governments, community leaders, and religious institutions, to integrate mental health support into existing community health programs. This includes sensitizing the community on mental health issues, training community leaders and health workers on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and establishing rehabilitation centers for those suffering from substance abuse. Cultural and religious leaders should be engaged to help shift perceptions about mental health and reduce stigma.
- Providing for the establishment of referral mechanisms and support for unescorted minors and GBV survivors through care-giving arrangements.
- Suggesting the use of interpreters, which is critical for GBV case management and child-sensitive communication.
- Recommending refugee-friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services at all levels of health facilities.
- Setting up refugees/asylum seekers' arrival health package to address cross-border health. Its implementation should be expedited because research shows that children's first experience of each form of violence often occurs subsequent to their arrival at refugee settlement. For example, nearly three-quarters (73%) of girls and more than half (53%) of boys in the 18-24-year-old age range experienced the first incident of sexual violence after arriving at their settlement (UN Women, 2025).
- Facilitating access by refugees and host communities, including women and girls; children, adolescents and youth; older persons; those with chronic illnesses, including tuberculosis and HIV; survivors of trafficking in persons, torture, trauma or violence, including sexual and gender-based violence; and persons with disabilities.

3.6.2

Recommendations for Strengthening CP & GBV Integration

To strengthen the protection-sensitive health response, the plan should:

1. Establish a distinct strategic objective or sub-objective on child protection and GBV with measurable indicators such as % of facilities with functional GBV referral pathways, % of child survivors receiving timely care etc.
2. Include MoGLSD and child protection/GBV actors as core members of the national and district coordination mechanisms.
3. Allocate specific resources for the training of health staff on CP/GBV case management and survivor-centered approaches.
4. Institutionalize child safeguarding and protection protocols within all health facilities.
5. Ensure age- and gender-disaggregated data collection in health management information systems to inform CP/GBV response.



6. Integrate CP/GBV in emergency preparedness and disease outbreak response frameworks. These include establishing safe spaces in isolation units or quarantine settings).

4.0

Key Institutions with a Protection Mandate

In terms of the institutional framework, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) is the pivotal institution for both child protection and Gender Based Violence in Uganda. However, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) plays a more pivotal role in CP and GBV interventions in the refugee settings. Other Ministries, Departments and Agencies that share the mandate for GBV and CP include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Local Government.

Table 9: Selected Key actors in CP/GBV and their roles

S/N	ACTOR	ROLE(S)
1	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Develop policies and plans related to GBV/CP. Coordinate implementation of policies, programs and activities relating to GBV/CP. Promote gender equality. Create awareness on GBV/CP prevalence and response interventions Provide shelters for GBV/CP victims. Develop standards and guidelines for handling GBV/CP cases. Undertake Capacity Building for local government staff.
2	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development	Mobilize resources for implementation of GBV/CP interventions.
3	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS)	Collect and consolidate data on GBV/VAC. Develop and report on GBV/VAC indicators.
4	Judiciary	Establish procedures for, and handle gender-based violence cases. Build capacity for judicial officers to handle GBV cases.
5	Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP)	Provide legal assistance to victims of GBV/VAC. Ensure timely court processes.
6	Uganda Police Force (UPF)	Provide security for the victims. Establish mechanisms to ensure perpetrators are apprehended. Build capacity within the Force to handle GBV cases. Gather evidence for GBV/VAC cases. Collect data and report on prevalence of GBV and VAC.
7	Ministry of Health (MoH)	Provide medical care for victims of GBV/VAC. Collect data about prevalence, risk factors, and health consequences. Build capacity for health workers in dealing with GBV/CP. Support forensic services for GBV cases.
8	Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)	Coordinate the refugee response, CRRF implementation among other initiatives. Monitor progress and implementation of the SDGs mainly SDG 5.2 Raise awareness on refugee law and regulations
9	District Local Governments (DLGs)	Coordinate mechanisms for GBV/CP in their districts. Creating awareness on GBV/CP issues and procedures in place for prevention, reporting, response and tracking. Monitor response and management of GBV/CP cases.
10	National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA)	Issue birth certificates



11	Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)	Ensure that gender and equity considerations are included in all annual plans and budgets developed by MDAs. Issue a gender and equity certificate to entities that satisfy the legally-prescribed minimum requirement for gender and equity mainstreaming in budgets.
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The institutions are also not well staffed. At the district level, the mandate for child protection and prevention of GBV is domiciled within the Community Based Services Department (CBSD) under the Probation and Social Welfare. A 2022 Value for Money Audit by the Office of the Auditor General found that 40% of sub counties in Uganda do not have Community Development Officers. This is worsened by the too many duties and responsibilities given to the CDOs and PSWOs beyond protection to coordination, development, implementation of culture and community-based services, programmes and projects in the district and urban councils.

4.0.1

Financing Mechanisms for CP/GBV

The good institutional framework is not supported with the requisite appropriation mechanisms. Child Protection and elimination of Gender Based Violence are some of the least funded interventions from the public purse and have to rely mainly on external financing. For instance, the Budget allocations to the Gender and Social Protection sub-sub programme under the MGLSD in FY2024/25 gained no increase from the UGX172.733 billion allocated in FY2023/24 having declined from UGX 197.9 billion in FY2022/23. This department comprises several interventions that have a direct bearing on GBV and child protection interventions.

Table 10: Funding for protection in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25

Department	FY2022/23 '000'	FY2023/24 '000'	Variance 23/24	FY2024/25 '000'	Variance 24/25
Equity and Rights	500,000	360,000	-28%	335,000	-6.94%
Gender and Women Affairs	25,862,045	20,477,378	-21%	20,549,365	0.35%
Youth and Children	24,655,546	10,989,704	-55%	10,995,000	0.05%
Disability and Elderly	146,896,839	140,906,315	-4%	140,854,032	-0.04%
Total	197,914,430	172,733,397	-13%	172,733,397	0.00%

Source: MoFPED-Approved Budgets

Low funding for the sector has been attributed to “the failure of the sector to package and communicate child protection services in a manner that makes them amenable to increased public financing” as well the provision of “donor support outside the government budget framework which does not create obligations for government to invest in child protection and GBV”.³

Equally, humanitarian funding for protection (Child Protection and Gender Based Violence) is very low. At a global level, funding for child protection in 2024 was only 1.8% of total humanitarian funding while Gender Based Violence received 1.3% (OCHA FTS, 2024). This trend, according to UNHCR, is attributed to the tendency by donors and humanitarian organizations to prioritize ‘hardware’ support because it is more visible and quantifiable.

³Quoted from P Mubangizi (2025): A political Economy Assessment of Child Protection and GBV Service Transition in Uganda. UNHCR



5.0

General Observations and Challenges

Failure to integrate host communities: This review notes that some Refugee Response Plans focus solely on refugees and give limited attention to the host communities. While it is the ‘official position of the CRRF Secretariat to include the full population’ within the RHDs, some of the RRP only target those sub-counties within the RHDs with the highest number of refugees. The ERPII is all encompassing and covers 37 refugee-hosting sub-counties while in the Water & Environment Sector Response Plan, water supply is only focused on 9 sub-counties that host refugees and that did not have piped water supply systems at the time of the adoption of the SERP. The Health Response Plan, on the other hand, takes a broader approach and does consider the needs of those living far away from the settlements while the Jobs & Livelihoods SRP targets “host community households in refugee hosting districts” and has quantified the number of households to be covered by the plan at 1,152,087 which is not disaggregated. There is a need for the RRP to consider the principles of integration and provide for all in the RHD.

Chronic underfunding. The UCRRP was only 46% funded in 2024, out of the total funding needs of USD 857.9 million. The UCRRP need was USD 968,000,000 for 2025 but only USD 111,500,000 had been received by end of March 2025 leaving a funding gap of 88%. This affects the implementation of the sector response plans.

Limited capacity to employ the requisite human resource: As of December 2023, the case worker-to-children-at-risk ratio is 1:214, marking a significant increase from 1:97 at the end of 2022. This surge results from a reduction in caseworkers, decreasing from 253 to 140. This situation challenges response capacity, causing delays in delivering child protection services for children at heightened risk.

Refugee influx: On average, 10,000 refugees from across the region have been arriving per month for the past 3 years and since the beginning of 2025, this has increased to 13,000. this rapid influx has placed considerable pressure on basic social services, including education, food, shelter, health and nutrition services, and WASH infrastructure. Overcrowding is a significant challenge, with many centres operating well beyond their capacity. The Congolese influx has led to overcrowding at Nyakabande (731%), Matanda (326%), Kabazana (291%), and Kagoma (247%). The Sudanese situation has exacerbated this issue in Kiryandongo (254%), while the South Sudanese influx has resulted in overcrowding in Nyumanzi (147%) and Lokung (123%).

Disclosure of violence is very low, even if knowledge of where to seek care for violence is high: 55% of females and 73% of males knew of a place to seek help for sexual violence. However, only 17% of males and 5% of females who experienced sexual violence in childhood sought help, and 3% of females and 17% of males received help.

The funding cuts in humanitarian funding have occasioned radical food rations thereby increasing food insecurity with a June 2025 World Vision report putting Uganda at 96% of severe food insecurity using Food Insecurity Experience Scale. It should be noted that food insecurity increases the risk of child exposure to violence by almost five times. In a composite scale, food insecurity was the strongest predictor of poorer child protection outcomes, followed by larger household size, experiencing cuts in assistance, being displaced, and having disability in the household



Reports of sex-for-work exchanges have emerged in Kampala and surrounding urban areas, driven by worsening economic hardships and rising poverty levels among refugees and host communities. This review noted that critical gaps persist, particularly in access to comprehensive services like protection shelters and sustainable livelihood support in refugee-hosting districts. There is need for RRP partners to continue collaborating with the government, private sector, and civil society organizations to strengthen referral pathways and advocate for the inclusion of GBV and child protection priorities in national and local development policies and programs.

Limited focus on disability inclusion: This analysis has found that whereas all the RRP make mention of disability, limited effort at disability inclusion in programmatic terms is made. This is despite the fact that there is a big connection between disability and VAC/GBV. The 2022 Humanitarian Violence against Children Survey indicates that Females ages 18-24 who had any form of disability were more likely to experience sexual and physical violence in the past 12 months compared to females ages 18-24 who had no form of disability (34.7% versus 27.5%). Males aged 18-24 who had any form of disability were significantly more likely to experience sexual and physical violence in the past 12 months compared to males who did not have any form of disability (62.6% versus 31.1%).

Limited involvement of the DLGs in the development and implementation of the RRP. Most district KIIs and those from KCCA noted limited involvement within the RRP. With the exception of the ERP, study participants noted insufficient cascading of the RRP down to the district while KCCA felt that “these Plans are developed for the districts not Kampala” yet there is a significant number of urban refugees within Kampala and its metropolitan. This limited participation has ‘further been affected by the loss of funding’ where some district officials intimated that even the few RRP that had quarterly coordination meetings have had to ‘scrap them off’.

5.1

General Recommendations

Protection working group should update and promote GBV referral pathways and train aid workers on Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines to improve service delivery and trust. It should also focus on enhancing access to holistic support for GBV survivors, including mental health and psychosocial support and legal and medical assistance; promote the implementation of evidence-based behaviour change methodologies targeting women, men, boys and girls; and encourage religious, cultural and community leaders to promote positive social norm change.

Tap into the Regional Development Programme under the fourth National Development Plan which inter alia seeks to Strengthen affirmative action in lagging regions and refugee- hosting communities as well as Implement the Refugee Response Plans- Education, Water and Environment, Health and Sanitation, Energy, Jobs and Livelihood. The Regional Development Programme further states in order to mitigate the risks caused by refugee influxes, ‘it is essential to develop and implement a district-level contingency plan specifically for refugee response’ so that ‘services can be scaled up efficiently to meet the increased demand’. We note that whereas the ERPII has district costed plans, other Response Plans are not decentralized. It is therefore recommended that UNHCR, OPM and MoGLSD support the Refugee Hosting Districts to develop sector costed plans where child protection and GBV is integrated.

The Governance and Security Programme under the 4th National Development Plan seeks to ‘Enhance the national response for coordinating refugee protection and migration management’. It is our recommendation that UNHCR and MoGLSD support the Governance and Security Programme Secretariat with coordination



of CP and GBV Response interventions. Equally, the Programme envisions Reduced proportion of refugees and host community populations living below the national poverty line from 32% in FY2022/23 to 27%. The Jobs and Livelihoods Response Plan should support the realization of this outcome and align interventions to be gender responsive and oriented to protection of children.

Address the human resource gaps in the refugee response. The NPA human resource mapping estimates a five year shortage of 337 Refugee Response Coordinators.

Strengthen coordination of CP/GBV in the response plans. UNHCR should support the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with a coordinator who will work across all the existing response plan secretariats to ensure i) CP/GBV interventions are integrated into the plans; ii) allocations are made and iii) financial tracking of the investment into CP/GBV interventions.

Update the CRRF Standards Checklist to guide the development and monitoring of the RRP. Clear indicators and strategic interventions addressing Child Protection, Gender Based Violence and cross cutting issues like disability should be integrated into the checklist.

Pursue Innovative Financing Models: with the dwindling resource envelope, Ministry of Water and Environment and Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, in implementing the SERP and WESRP, should **develop infrastructure Bonds**.⁴ Given the country's substantial financing needs for projects such as roads, bridges, energy facilities, and water supply systems, infrastructure bonds present a viable financing solution. These bonds can mobilize funds from both domestic and international capital markets for public investments and should integrate social components of child protection, peaceful co-existence and Gender Based Violence.

To bring about an increased role of the Refugee Hosting Districts in the implementation of the RRP, the government of Uganda should, guided by the NDPIV, introduce new products such as local government bonds to support local development and reduce reliance on central government funding.

⁴Infrastructure Bonds are debt securities issued by governments, municipalities, or special-purpose vehicles to raise funds for specific infrastructure projects.



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