Owned Spaces and Shared Places:
Refugee Access to Livelihoods and Housing, Land, and Property in Uganda

November 2019
Kampala
1. Introduction
2. Assessment Overview
3. Key Findings:
   a. Access to HLP
   b. Tenure and Documentation
   c. HLP Challenges and Dispute Resolution
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Introduction

- REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT, its sister-organisation ACTED, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT).

- REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the humanitarian community’s decision-making and planning capacity.
NRC is an independent humanitarian organisation working to protect the rights of displaced and vulnerable people during crises, and provides assistance to meet immediate humanitarian needs, prevent further displacement, and contribute to durable solutions.

In Uganda, NRC works in the areas of education; information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA), livelihoods and food security, shelter and settlement, and WASH.
02 Assessment Overview
BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- 2017 NRC study on housing, land, and property (HLP) rights in Uganda
- Information gaps on how HLP issues affect refugees and their decisions regarding durable solutions
- Need for a baseline understanding of current HLP conditions and movement intentions within Uganda
- Aiming to inform humanitarian strategic, operational and programmatic decision-making in Uganda and surrounding countries.
- Partnership with NRC, supporting ICLA programming
- Similar assessments undertaken in Kenya and South Sudan

Funded by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
Objective: To develop a response-wide understanding of refugees’ relationship with HLP rights in Uganda, and their impact on potential durable solutions and livelihoods, so as to inform the refugee response.

Research questions:
- What are the HLP issues refugees are facing in settlements and select host community areas in Uganda? Does it differ by region?
- What access do refugees have/perceive they have to HLP in settlements and select host community areas in Uganda? What are the conditions of housing, land, and property for refugees?
- How does access to or lack of access to HLP impact refugees potential for sustainable livelihoods and decisions about movement in Uganda?
- Are there differences in terms of access, experience, and issues relating to HLP by gender?
- Are there any critical HLP rights and protection cases for partners to follow up?
Primary data collection

- 3,164 household-level surveys completed
  - Representative at settlement/division level
  - 95% level of confidence, 10% margin of error

- 97 focus group discussions completed
  - With refugees and host communities (for context)
  - Disaggregated by gender

- 86 key informant interviews
  - With UNHCR, OPM, district local government, and partner staff working on HLP-related issues at the settlement level

Secondary data collected from available assessments and studies, across all levels of aggregation (response, regional, and settlement)
• REACH/NRC joint enumerator training and data collection
• Dates: December 2018 through March 2019
• 30 refugee settlements + 3 Kampala divisions
• Household-level surveys, focus group discussion, key informant interviews
• 3 data collection teams working simultaneously
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sub-region</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Refugee Settlement or Division</th>
<th>Estimated Refugee Households</th>
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**TOTAL SAMPLE:** 3,164  
Settlement: 2,810  
Urban: 354
Key Findings: Access to HLP
ACCESS TO HOUSING

All refugees reported having access to housing, but reports of damaged shelters were common.

Percentage of HH reporting shelter damage:
- Central: 23%
- Midwest: 54%
- Northwest: 68%
- Southwest: 62%

Percentage of settlement-based HH reporting shelter damage, by HH head gender:
- Male-headed household: 59%
- Female-headed household: 69%
By district, **Arua (88%)**, **Adjumani (87%)**, and **Isingiro (86%)** had highest percentages of HHs reporting shelter damage.

**Kyegegwa (45%)** and **Kiryandongo (52%)** reported the lowest percentages.
Around half of respondents in all regions reported that they were not planning to repair their shelters.
96% of refugees in the settlements reported constructing their shelters themselves, rather than acquiring housing.

Percentage of HH using main source of materials for constructing shelters:

- Midwest: 69% Purchased, 55% Nature, 23% Support package
- Northwest: 78% Purchased, 52% Nature, 18% Support package
- Southwest: 66% Purchased, 35% Nature, 37% Support package

From FGDs/KII:

- Disputes between refugees and hosts over natural resources (bamboo poles, grass, wood), when refugees tried to collect from nature

- Hosts expressed concerns about deforestation and less resources available due to refugees gathering building materials
70% of respondents in Kampala said rent was unaffordable, with 77% spending at least half of their monthly income on rent.

51% of respondents in Kampala reported rent as their top household expenditure.
ACCESS TO LAND

Percentage of HH with access to different types of land

- Land around shelter plot:
  - Central: 96%
  - Midwest: 98%
  - Northwest: 89%
  - Southwest: 28%
- Land outside of shelter plot:
  - Central: 14%
  - Midwest: 11%
  - Northwest: 20%
- No land:
  - Central: 2%
  - Midwest: 1%
  - Northwest: 2%
  - Southwest: 70%
ACCESS TO LAND

Percentage of HH with access to different types of land, by district

- **Kiryandongo**: 95% with land around shelter plot, 12% with land outside of shelter plot, 20% with no land
- **Hoima**: 96% with land around shelter plot, 10% with land outside of shelter plot, 3% with no land
- **Adjumani**: 99% with land around shelter plot, 12% with land outside of shelter plot, 1% with no land
- **Arua**: 97% with land around shelter plot, 9% with land outside of shelter plot, 1% with no land
- **Koboko**: 100% with land around shelter plot, 12% with land outside of shelter plot, 0% with no land
- **Lamwo**: 99% with land around shelter plot, 6% with land outside of shelter plot, 0% with no land
- **Moyo**: 100% with land around shelter plot, 13% with land outside of shelter plot, 0% with no land
- **Yumbe**: 98% with land around shelter plot, 13% with land outside of shelter plot, 2% with no land
- **Isingiro**: 89% with land around shelter plot, 42% with land outside of shelter plot, 2% with no land
- **Kamwenge**: 92% with land around shelter plot, 13% with land outside of shelter plot, 0% with no land
- **Kyegegwa**: 96% with land around shelter plot, 13% with land outside of shelter plot, 5% with no land

Legend:
- **Land around shelter plot**
- **Land outside of shelter plot**
- **No land**
Almost 95% of settlement-based refugees reported accessing land surrounding shelter through allocation from OPM.

Land surrounding shelter plot was commonly used by settlement-based refugees for cultivation.

Of those that cultivate on shelter plots in settlements, 81% reported that the land was not sufficient to provide food for the entire household in the most recent harvest/agricultural season.
- 83% of those renting paid on an annual basis, rather than monthly or one-time payment
- Some FGD respondents noted sharecropping arrangements (paying rent in harvested crops), or 4-month rental arrangements for the agricultural season
**ACCESS TO PROPERTY/ASSETS**

- **Settlements**
  - Around 65% of HHs reported owning at least one asset
    - Livestock
    - Solar panel
    - Bicycle
  - Only 26% of HHs reported having an asset that was income-generating

- **Kampala**
  - Only 18% of HH reported owning at least one asset
    - Building structures (for business)
    - Sewing machine
    - Vehicle
  - Only 10% reported having an asset that was income generating
04

Key Findings: Tenure and Documentation
- Only 2% of households in settlements reporting having documentation for their shelter

- 76% of households in Kampala reported having documentation for their shelter
  - Rental receipt was the most common type (81%), but only 14% were able to show the document for verification.

- Larger households in Kampala more likely to report risk of eviction
The majority of refugee households who reported having access to land outside of their shelter plot, do not have formal agreements or documentation.

- Of the 56% of land outside of shelter plots accessed through renting, ownership/leasing, or free access, households had formal agreements for only 10% of it.

Qualitative findings:

- Hosts cited lack of ownership documents as source of conflict, perceived to be exacerbated during refugee influxes.

- Instances of refugees illegally purchasing land or entering into informal agreements where they are exploited by sellers because they are not aware of land tenure laws.
83% of property items owned by households in settlements did not have any kind of documentation to prove ownership

- **Purchase receipt** (86%) was most commonly reported type for those that had documentation

In Kampala, 70% of property items owned by households had documentation

- 78% of property items had purchase receipts
- 28% of property items had rental receipts
05 HLP Challenges and Dispute Resolution
HLP CHALLENGES

Percentage of HH reportedly facing HLP challenges, by district

- Households headed by widows were more likely to report HLP challenges (40%) compared to those headed by people who were married, single, or divorced (27%)

- Most common types of HLP issues in settlements:
  - Unsuitable land or unusable land
  - Theft
  - Destruction of HLP

- Most common types of HLP issues in Kampala:
  - Forced evictions
  - Rent payment disputes
HLP challenges

- HLP issues relating to housing and shelter plots more commonly reported by female-headed households.

- HLP issues relating to land for agriculture more commonly reported by male-headed households.
- Issues with other *refugees* more common in Bidi Bidi, Palorinya, Lobule
- Issues with OPM/UNHCR more common in Rwamwanja, Imvepi, Kyaka
- Issues with *family members* more common in Ayilo, Palorinya
- Issues with *host community* more common in Kampala

Percentage of reported HLP issues by party involved

- **Family**: - 16% Central, 26% Midwest, 14% Northwest, 26% Southwest
- **Refugees**: - 30% Central, 29% Midwest, 26% Northwest, 15% Southwest
- **Host community**: - 15% Central, 8% Midwest, 0% Northwest, 9% Southwest
- **Local government**: - 3% Central, 17% Midwest, 1% Northwest, 9% Southwest
- **OPM/UNHCR**: - 22% Central, 32% Midwest, 0% Northwest, 32% Southwest
- **Other**: - 12% Central, 3% Midwest, 2% Northwest, 11% Southwest
About half of all households attempted to resolve reported HLP disputes, with a slightly higher percentage in Kampala.

52% of disputes in settlements were successfully resolved.
- Reported reasons for disputes remaining unresolved included: failure to identify/follow up with party, unfamiliarity with reporting procedure, and delays or lack of response from authorities.
- Households sought support from RWCs (55%) and community help desks (54%).

62% of disputes in Kampala were successfully resolved.
- Reported reasons for disputes remaining unresolved included: lack of money, failure to identify/follow up with party, and unresponsive landlords.
- Households sought support from family (40%) and LCs (27%).
Conclusions
CONCLUSIONS

- Both Ugandans and refugees face challenges accessing adequate housing and exercising their land and property rights in Uganda.

- Refugees are inherently more vulnerable in certain scenarios, because rights are sometimes vague, not respected, and not well understood. Social support networks are broken and access to livelihoods is limited.

- Formal agreements and documentation for HLP are uncommon.

- Lack of access to agricultural land, and lack of formal agreements/documentation may hinder refugees’ ability to access land, cultivate, and start businesses, which threatens self-reliance.

- Households headed by women, especially widows, may face greater challenges accessing HLP and resolving issues.

- Refugees in Kampala cited are challenged by unsteady rental agreements and payment issues, which will become more common if refugees move from settlements to urban areas.
CONCLUSIONS

Improved access to HLP and protection of rights for refugees can contribute to improved livelihoods and integration into the economic and social systems, and overall well-being, in areas of displacement.
Check out the assessment products:

- 25 settlement level factsheets
- 3 Kampala division factsheets
- 4 district level factsheets (Adjumani, Arua, Isingiro, Kampala)
- 1 report
- 1 de-sensitized dataset

Available for download at:

https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/country/uganda/
QUESTIONS?
THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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