

Analysis of Refugee Vulnerability in Uganda

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OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER



**DEVELOPMENT
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Acknowledgements

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The project Team Leader was Stephen Kidd and the Research Coordinator was Rasmus Schjoedt. The literature review was carried out by Anh Tran and Rasmus Schjoedt. The qualitative research component was led by Anasuya Sengupta with participation by researchers Ronard Mukuye, Palwasha Yusaf, Shirin Gul, Betty Lomuria and Rasmus Schjoedt. The quantitative research component was led by Bjorn Gelders, with data collection by IPSOS Uganda. Diloá Athias, Anh Tran and Heiner Salomon supported the quantitative analysis of both primary and secondary data. Putan Daniel Winter provided logistical support and support for scoping and monitoring visits for both the qualitative and quantitative research. Krystle Kabare, Michelle Szaraz and Katherine Dean were responsible for programme management. Celia Carbajosa, Madeleine Cretney and Sarina Kidd were responsible for the formatting of the document.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Uganda hosts more refugees than any other country in Africa, with figures in 2017 almost at 1.4 million (Table ES1 sets out the reported numbers of refugees in each settlement in October 2017). The large influx is a strain on the resources of the humanitarian system, in particular the provision of food assistance by WFP. There has been a hopeful expectation that all refugees – apart from those classified as ‘Extremely Vulnerable Individuals/Households’ (EVI/H) – will eventually become self-reliant and gradually move off the programme. It has become evident however, that many of those receiving lower rations or who have stopped receiving food assistance are still far from self-reliant, and are finding it difficult to subsist without support. There is, hence, a need to critically re-think the current system of beneficiary selection for food assistance.

Table ES1: Number of refugees in each district and settlement (October 2. 2017)¹

Region	District	Settlement	Population
West Nile	Arua	Rhino Camp	223,100
		Imvepi	
	Koboko	Lobule	285,014
	Yumbe	Bidibidi	
	Adjumani	Various	239,335
	Moyo	Palorinya	184,701
	Lamwo	Palabek	35,535
Mid-West	Kiryandongo	Kiryandongo	56,855
	Hoima	Kyangwali	48,543
South Western	Kamwenge	Rwamwanja	74,451
	Kyegegwa	Kyaka II	26,624
	Isingiro	Nakivale	100,560 ²
		Oruchinga	5,787
Kampala	Kampala	-	99,962
Total			1,380,467

Development Pathways was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive study to develop a well-rounded understanding of vulnerability among the refugee population in Uganda. The overarching aim of the study was to review the current beneficiary selection

¹ Source: OPM RIMS per October 2. 2017, includes asylum seekers and the population in transit and reception centres. There is no data on the number of refugees living outside settlements, except for those in Kampala.

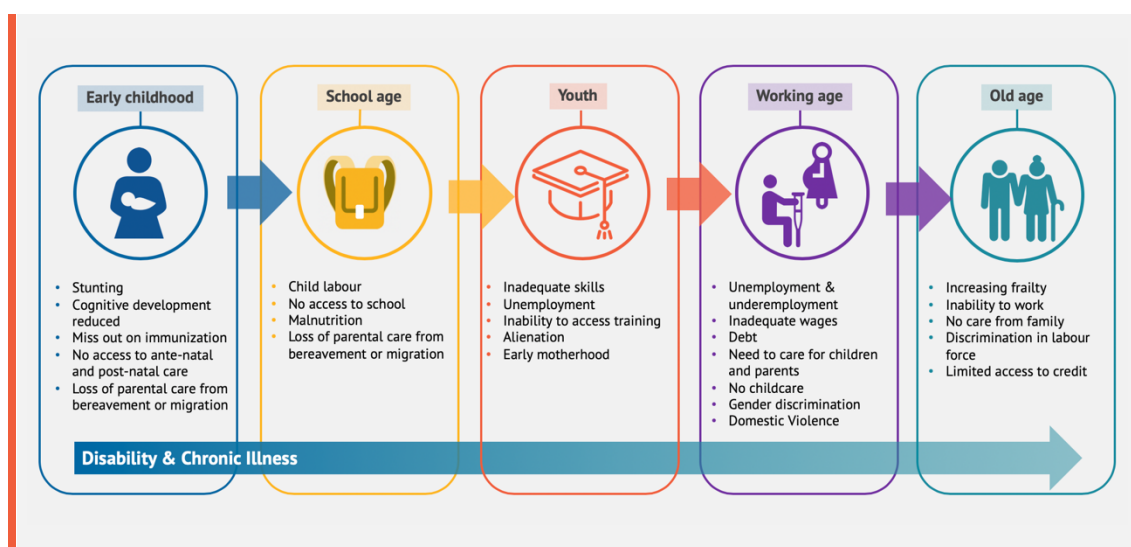
² According to the publicly available data from the OPM RIMS, the population of Nakivale was 124,842 until the re-verification in May 2017, after which the number dropped to 95,576.

criteria for food assistance. The final outcome is an in-depth report based on mixed-methods research, incorporating findings from a review of the relevant literature, qualitative field work in six settlements and the Ugandan Refugee Vulnerability Survey (URVS) of around 5,000 households in ten settlements. This report presents the in-depth vulnerability study.

Challenges faced across the lifecycle

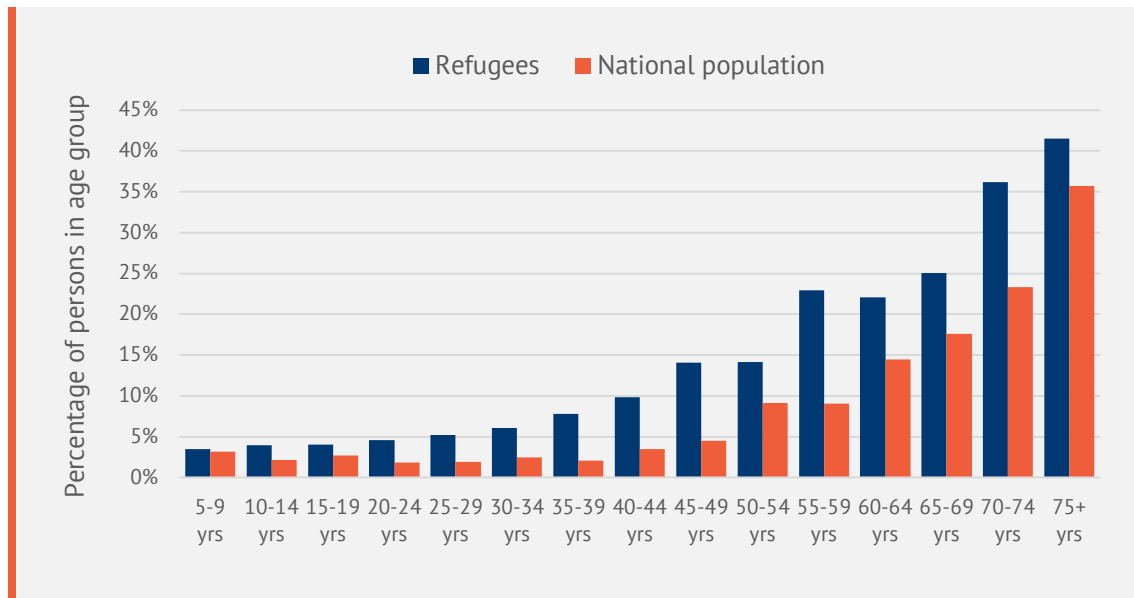
The various stages of the lifecycle pose specific challenges and risks to a person. In the context of refugees in Uganda, the differences in consumption and food insecurity are not very significant across the lifecycle, as the vast majority are living in extreme poverty and experiencing hunger. Nonetheless, children and older persons were found to be slightly worse off in comparison to other age groups. Figure ES1 summarises the risks faced by refugees across the lifecycle.

Figure ES1: Risks experienced by refugees at different points across the lifecycle



Furthermore, disability is a challenge faced by all age groups, and around 6 per cent of the refugee population has a severe disability in comparison to 4 per cent of the Ugandan population. Overall, 17 per cent of refugee households have a member with a severe disability while 54 per cent of households include a member with at least some form of disability (see Figure ES2 for age breakdown). Households typically incur additional costs related to the disability which are not taken into account when assessing the level of food assistance that they require. Disability is, therefore, an important consideration for understanding refugee vulnerability.

Figure ES2: Severe disability by age group among the refugee and national population in Uganda



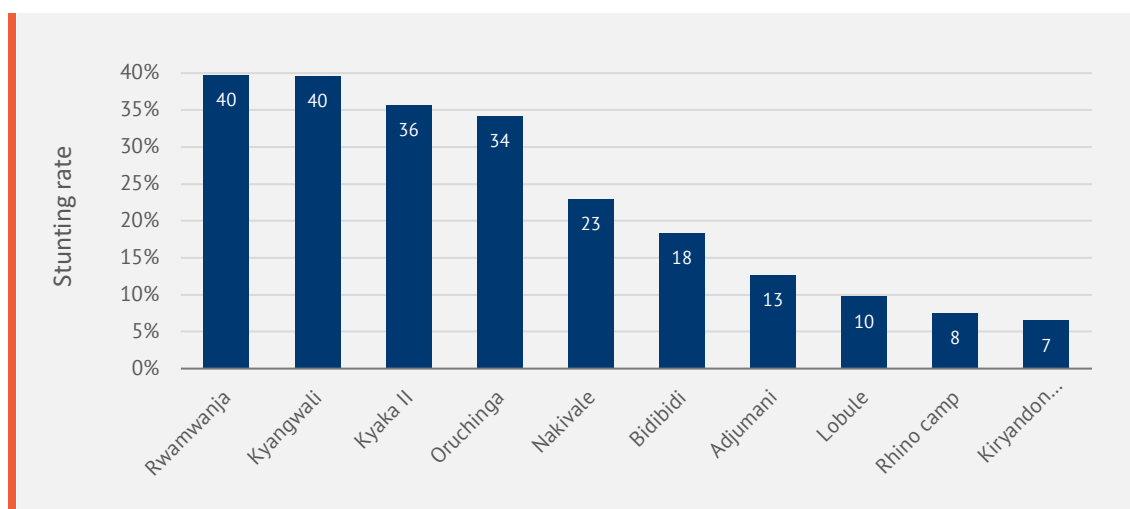
A brief overview of the risks across the age-groups is set out below.

Children (0-17 years)

Less than half of the refugee children live with both parents, while many live with only their mother or other relatives. The level of per capita expenditure is lower for households with higher numbers of children. While the majority of school age children are able to attend school, the proportion falls among those aged 15 to 19 years. Children with severe disabilities account for approximately 4 per cent of all children and, according to the URVS, most of them are not identified by the PSN or EVI assessments.

Malnutrition and poor health are significant risks faced by young children, in particular by those living in large households receiving reduced or no food assistance, or where not all household members have been able to register for food assistance. Figure ES3 shows the stunting rates among children aged 6-59 months across settlements, demonstrating that stunting rates are lower among refugee children in the 0-4 age group in some settlements.

Figure ES3: Stunting rates across settlements among children aged 5-59 months³



Young people (18-25 years)

The capacity of younger persons to engage in the labour market and become self-reliant depends, in part, on their level of education. Around 69 per cent of young refugees have only reached the level of primary education and the proportion is higher among young women, at 77 per cent. Only around 26 per cent of young persons are engaged in some form of economic activity, including working on their own plots of land.

Young women tend to marry earlier than men – often as teenagers – and, by age 25 years, 51 per cent of women are married, 11 per cent divorced or separated and 3 per cent already widowed. In contrast, 72 per cent of young men below the age of 25 years have never been married. There is a clear tendency for single young women (either divorced, separated or widowed) to take care of more children than those who are married, which impacts on their food security as there are fewer ‘breadwinners’ in the household.

Working age (26–59 years)

The majority of working age men and women are married or living together, although around 30 per cent of women are either divorced, separated or widowed. 82 per cent have not received secondary school education while only 2 per cent have an education level above that of secondary school. In fact, 45 per cent of working age refugees have never even entered primary school, rising to 52 per cent among women.

A key determinant of well-being is the number of children in a household. Approximately 32 per cent of households are single-headed carers of children and this category, along

³ Source: FSNA (2017)

with single pregnant women, were highlighted during the qualitative research as particularly vulnerable. The URVS found that working age single-headed households are struggling when measured against their levels of daily consumption and most single-headed households with children are living in extreme poverty with high rates of food insecurity.

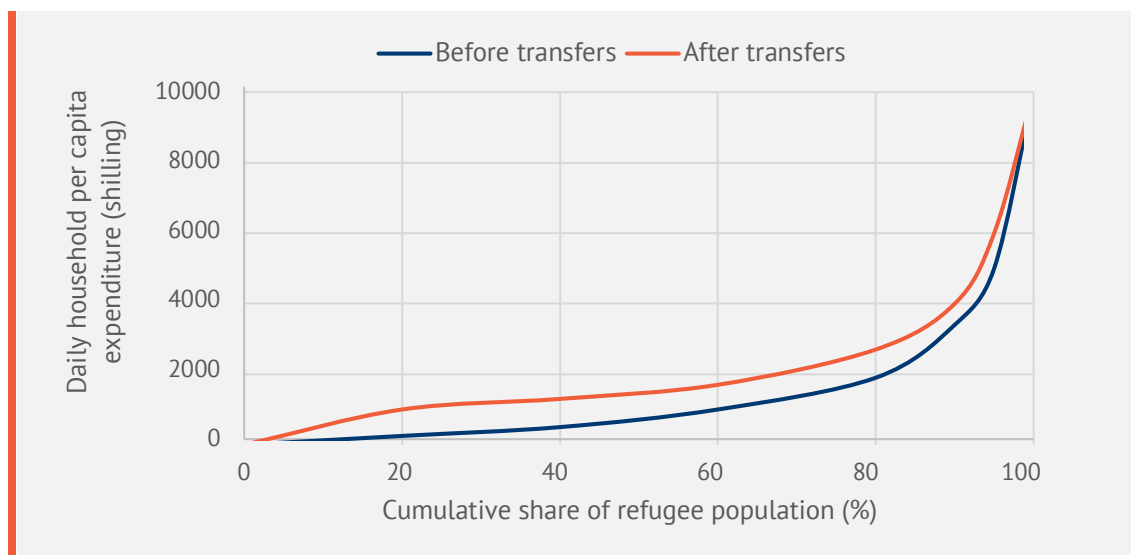
Older persons (60 years and above)

Older persons comprise four per cent of the refugee population and are found in 13 per cent of households. They are a very vulnerable category of refugees, disproportionately affected by poverty and homelessness as a result of a lack of support networks, poor health and disability. Many older persons, especially women, arrive in the settlements with young grandchildren whose parents are missing or deceased (27 per cent of older people live in skipped-generation households). The challenges are particularly severe for those that have not been classified as EVIs and are receiving reduced food assistance. Around 26 per cent of older persons reported being unable to work due to disability or chronic illness. For those living alone, the situation is dire with a high risk of food insecurity if they are taken off the food assistance.

Household expenditures

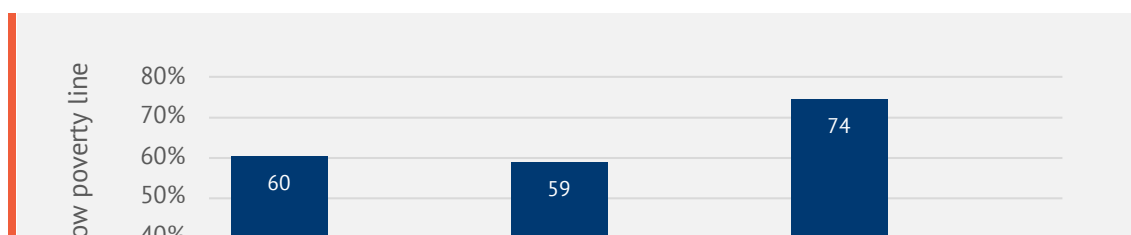
Most refugees are living in extreme poverty when wellbeing is measured by per capita expenditures. This finding was reflected in refugees' explanation of their own wellbeing during interviews. As shown by Figure ES4, more than 25 per cent of refugees live on less than UGX1,000 per day per person and 69 per cent on less than UGX2,000 per day per person. This corresponds to around US\$1.68 per day in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms (US\$0.56 per day in actual dollars), which is below the internationally recognised extreme poverty line. A small number of refugees have household per capita expenditures above UGX5,000, which may indicate some form of 'self-reliance'. However, these expenditure figures take into account the food assistance transfer. When food assistance is discounted, the figures increase to 60 per cent of refugees living in households with daily per capita expenditures below UGX1,000 while 80 per cent of refugees live on less than UGX2,000 a day. The case of Nakivale is of particular concern when gauging the viability of the 'self-reliance' agenda, since there is a high prevalence of refugees living on very low incomes despite many having resided in Uganda for a long period of time.

Figure ES4: Distribution of household per capita expenditure among refugees in Uganda, after and before transfers⁴



In fact, refugees are much more likely to be living in poverty than the host populations even though they receive food assistance. Figure ES5 shows that close to 70 per cent of refugees overall are living below the national poverty line compared to 25 per cent of rural Ugandans. There are large variations in the levels of poverty among refugees across the three regions, ranging from 59 per cent in the Mid-West and 74 per cent in West Nile.

Figure ES5: Comparison of poverty status of refugee and national populations



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