FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND RAPID URBANISATION: MOVING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT CITIES AND TRANSLATING IDEAS INTO ACTION

Fifth Learning Exchange for the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action

6 - 8 June 2023
Koboko, Uganda

Funded by the European Union
Overview: This report provides highlights of the discussions at an in-person peer learning event co-organised by the Municipality of Koboko, ACAV, and Cities Alliance and financed by the European Union (EU) in Koboko, Uganda from 6 to 8 June 2023.

It was the fifth - and final - learning event of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action, which is implemented by Cities Alliance and financed by the EU through the European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa).

The theme for the event was *Moving Towards Inclusive and Resilient Cities in an Era of Rapid Urbanisation and Mobility: Translating Ideas into Action*. It provided partner cities with an in-depth look at how Koboko Municipality has used the Action to transform itself - using inclusive, participatory, and sustainable strategies to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery for migrants and host community alike.

Through the Action, Koboko Municipality received direct support to address severely stressed or pre-existing low coverage of basic services and a high concentration of refugees. The municipality implemented the project together with ACAV. The activities in Koboko represented the second of three components of the Action, which also included a similar pilot project in Assosa, Ethiopia and establishing a regional network of cities.

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Forced Displacement and Rapid Urbanisation: Moving Towards Inclusive, Resilient Cities and Translating Ideas into Action

Cities are the first point of entry for most migrants and displaced persons seeking work, shelter, and safety, and where they will attempt to integrate and realise their aspirations for a better life. Whether they do so, or live excluded from opportunities in the city, depends on how a city responds to migration.

The CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility – Regional Network and Dialogue Action is supporting secondary cities in the Horn of Africa to manage and integrate refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). It has three components: 1) Creating a regional network that will help cities facing similar migration-related challenges share experiences and strengthen policy development for greater social cohesion; and 2) piloting approaches to refugee management and integration in Koboko, Uganda and Assosa, Ethiopia. The Action is implemented by Cities Alliance through its Cities and Migration Programme and financed by the EUTF.

This peer learning event in Koboko was the fifth in a series of five events organised through the Action. Partner cities had the opportunity to learn more about the work that has taken place in Koboko since the Action launched in 2019. It was a response to severe challenges Koboko Municipality was facing with a rapidly increasing population combined with limited budget allocations from the central government and other resource constraints.

The Action provided direct support to the Koboko Municipal Council to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery. ACAV provided technical support to Koboko Municipality to develop and implement inclusive, participatory and sustainable strategies for urban planning and service delivery, and they implemented the project together.

Panel sessions highlighted the Action’s work and reflected on the future of the regional network. Each day, site visits gave participants the chance to experience first-hand the results of the activities in Koboko.

Summary

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# Participants

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<td>Draecabo Trinity Ceaser, President, Arua City Development Forum and Private Sector Representative</td>
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<td>Hellen Drabrezu, Host Community Representative, ACTogether</td>
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<td>Cornelius Jobile, Deputy Town Clerk, Arua</td>
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<td>Wadri Sam Nyakua, Mayor, Arua City Council</td>
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<td>Solomon Osakan, Senior Settlement Office Department of Refugees, Arua</td>
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<td>Stella Wawa, Dean of Students, Muni University</td>
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<td><strong>KAMPALA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Koma, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Local Government</td>
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<td>Ssonko Moses, Senior Economist and Desk Officer, Ministry of Finance</td>
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<td><strong>KOBOKO</strong></td>
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<td>Remo Ajobe, Secretary for Works and Technical Services, Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florence Ajonye, Deputy Mayor, Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<td>Chandiga Amos, Committee Chairperson Social Services, Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<td>Banga Joseph Ata, Mayor, Koboko South Division</td>
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<td>Charles Ayume, Member of Parliament, Koboko Municipality</td>
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<td>Joel Azabo, Focal Point, EU Programme, Koboko Municipality</td>
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<td>Mambu Ashirafu, District Chairman, Koboko District</td>
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<td>Ambassador James Baba, Member of Parliament, Koboko County</td>
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<td>Emmanuel Baiga, Speaker, Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<td>Malish Bonjira Asu, Refugee Representative, Executive Director, South Sudanese Refugees Association (SSURA), Koboko Municipality</td>
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<td>Dapala Donald, Representative and Chairman of LC 1 Koboko MC</td>
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<td>Abdu Elly, Mayor, Koboko West Division</td>
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<td>Dramuke Idoru, Representative of the Councillors Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<td>Mambo A. Ismail, Project Accountant, Koboko Municipality</td>
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<td>Mawa James, Mayor, Keri Town Council, Koboko District</td>
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<td>Kenyi Naftali, Mayor Oraba Town Council Koboko District</td>
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<td>Musa Noah, Member of Parliament, Koboko North</td>
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<td>Olinga Tom Otukol, Resident District Commissioner, Koboko District</td>
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<td>Lemeriga Sabino, Mayor Koboko North Division</td>
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<td>Mambo Simon, Secretary for Social Services, Koboko Municipal Council</td>
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<td>Aate Sharifah Taban, Member of Parliament, Koboko District</td>
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<td>Sanya K.F. Wilson, Mayor, Koboko Municipality</td>
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<td><strong>WEST NILE REGION</strong></td>
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<td>Chandiga Ceaser, Mayor, Moyo Town Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drittoo Fred, Town Clerk, Inde Town Council, Madi Okollo District</td>
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The CRRF - Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action

Context for the Action

Today, an estimated 60 per cent of refugees globally live in urban or semi-urban areas instead of camps or purpose-built rural settlements, which are often geographically separated from host communities with limited access to livelihoods. The Horn of Africa hosts one fifth of the world’s refugees. These include urban-assisted refugees who have been moved to urban areas for protection concerns or medical treatment; refugees who can sustain themselves economically; unregistered or self-settled refugees living in urban areas; and refugees living in settlements or camps.1

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework developed out of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which reaffirmed the importance of international refugee rights, including the need to strengthen their support and protection. The Declaration called on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to apply the CRRF in specific situations that featured large-scale movements of refugees in order to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The CRRF was incorporated into the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the non-binding global framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing which recognises that solutions to refugee situations require international cooperation.2 The CRRF is currently being rolled out in Africa, Asia, and South America.

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Delivering the CRRF in the Horn of Africa

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) plays an important role in supporting the delivery of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa. The 2017 Nairobi Declaration forms the basis of IGAD’s regional approach, which is leading to an incremental shift towards greater freedom of movement for refugees. Many are attracted to urban areas, presenting new sets of challenges and opportunities for service delivery and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods and protection.3

Perceptions of the CRRF vary from country to country, and its implementation relies on national policy coordination and institutional arrangements. Urban displacement is, however, only partially reflected in national policies. Support to host governments in the region through the CRRF remains mainly centred on camps or rural settlements, with little attention paid to urban and semi-urban areas that host (or will host) an increasing number of refugees.

Additionally, secondary cities in the Horn of Africa are rarely represented in international discussions and panels to share the challenges and opportunities they face when trying to implement global agendas, such as the GCR or the CRRF. When questioned, municipalities point out that even if national plans are adopted, local implementation faces challenges in the availability of technical, human, financial, and logistical resources.

Refugees and host community representatives generally believe that they are not consulted enough and not well integrated into urban policies.4 In most cases, growing populations are not matched by increased municipal budgets, and host governments argue that they do not have the necessary financial resources to fully extend the CRRF at the local level.

The Nairobi Declaration: A Fundamental Change in the Approach to Refugees

The 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia has been central to delivery of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa.

In the Declaration, heads of state and governments committed to improving protection space and solutions for displaced people and providing educational and economic opportunities for some four million refugees and forcibly displaced people residing in the region.5

It represented a dramatic turn towards addressing displacement and migration from a development perspective, rather than a humanitarian one.

The Nairobi Declaration was originally formulated to address the protracted situation of Somali refugees, but it has since been extended to cover all refugee situations in the region.

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4 Annex 1: Workshop survey.

Overview of the Action

The rationale of the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action is that by strengthening the capacity of local authorities to deliver services and undertake contingency planning, refugees and their host communities will benefit from better services and a better quality of life. This will also improve the ability of local authorities to implement the CRRF and other global agendas.

The Action has selected municipalities from four partnering countries in the Horn of Africa to address the dual challenges of the rising number of displaced people and wider urbanisation.

It is divided in three components: a regional network and dialogue, and two pilot projects (one in Koboko, Uganda and a second in Assosa, Ethiopia). All three components aim to equip secondary cities with tools to increase the safety and well-being of displaced populations and their host communities in urban or peri-urban settings. By providing knowledge and technical assistance to local authorities and increasing the participation of displaced persons and host communities in the city’s economic and social life, the project seeks to reduce inequalities between these groups and improve their living conditions.

The project is financed by the EUTF for Africa, which provides joint, flexible, and quick support to complement political dialogue, development cooperation programmes, humanitarian assistance, and crisis response assistance. This support is always in close cooperation with the beneficiaries.

Municipal governments have become key actors in managing refugees.

Cities Alliance is the global partnership fighting urban poverty and promoting the role of cities. With its Global Programme on Cities and Migration, Cities Alliance has made a long-term commitment to support secondary cities in low-income countries that are managing large inflows of migrants and refugees.

Components of the CRRF

COMPONENT 1: Regional Network and Dialogue

The first component responds to the needs of secondary cities in the Horn of Africa that are currently experiencing a high influx of refugees and involuntary migrants seeking access to social services, housing, livelihoods, and basic support. It establishes a regional network and platform for dialogue among seven secondary cities: Arua and Koboko in Uganda, Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya, Assosa and Jigjiga in Ethiopia, and Gabiley and Borama in Somalia.

The network and dialogue are supporting secondary cities in strengthening their voices and bringing national and international attention to their needs. The cities also have the opportunity to advocate at global debates such as the Global Refugee Forum, which increases their international presence, improves their technical knowledge and capacities, and helps them play their fundamental role in successfully implementing global agendas.
The Action includes refugee and host community representatives in the dialogue, allowing them to discuss their needs, challenges, and potential solutions with the appropriate municipal, national and regional actors and engage in local planning activities. Peer learning with neighbouring cities facing similar challenges is informing cities on solutions for improving living conditions and opportunities for both refugees and host populations, reducing the risk of conflict, and providing access to basic services for all vulnerable city residents.

Cities Alliance is implementing the regional network and dialogue component. Five peer-learning events, hosted by partner cities and facilitated by Cities Alliance, are being organised to include displaced and vulnerable host communities in urban policy discussion. The events feature a discussion of cities’ needs and a technical training session to meet the identified needs.

This report documents the fifth peer-learning exchange in Koboko, Uganda following previous exchanges in Arua, Uganda (March 2021), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (November 2021), Kampala, Uganda (March 2022) and Lodwar, Kenya (January 2023).

COMPONENT 2: Technical Assistance to Koboko Municipality

This component responds to the current need to provide direct support to municipalities hosting a significant number of refugees. It directly supports the Koboko Municipal Council (KMC) to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery. The KMC is implementing this component with technical advice from ACAV.

According to a 2018 study initiated by the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), self-settled refugees make up about 26 per cent of Koboko’s estimated population. The study also underscores that insufficient local budget allocation is impacting the municipality’s ability to deliver adequate public services.

The initiative is strengthening local structures instead of creating parallel support systems. On a broader level, it is directly involving urban authorities to strengthen the inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the economic and social life in urban settings across the region. It is also improving livelihoods and greater access to quality basic services for refugees and host populations in select urban settings.

COMPONENT 3: Promoting Inclusive Urban Development in Assosa, Ethiopia

Implemented by the IRC, the third component is supporting Assosa Municipality to strengthen public, private, and civil society service delivery capacities, resources, and infrastructure for host communities and displaced populations in its urban and peri-urban settings.

One of the least developed urban areas in Ethiopia, Assosa is a central crossroads for migrants within Ethiopia or along the northern migration route. Its population has almost tripled in the past 12 years, straining access to basic services.

Assosa hosts five refugee camps, and international interventions mainly target refugees and some small surrounding host communities – leaving room for potential conflicts over already scarce resources.

This component’s activities are providing greater access to quality basic services, including water and sanitation, health, waste collection, and protection for displaced and host populations in Assosa. Better access to services will enhance social cohesion and community dialogue and help promote socio-economic development. The component also strengthens the inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the city’s economic and social life.
Achievements of the Action

Since the Koboko workshop was the last in a series of five learning events organised through the Action, several sessions focused on the initial achievements, which have been considerable. An EU InfoPoint conference was live streamed presenting the results to a global audience, and participants reflected on the outcomes at the international and local levels as well as their own personal experiences.
InfoPoint: Urban Displacement Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: What is the Role of Secondary Cities?

The EU’s International Partnerships InfoPoint organised a live-streamed presentation to share the results of the Action. It was moderated by Samuel Mabala, Cities Alliance’s Country Urban Advisor for Uganda.

The panel featured remarks from the international perspective (EU, UNHCR, and Cities Alliance) and the local perspective (Koboko Municipality, SSURA, and the Koboko host community). On an international level, the Action is helping improve the implementation of global agendas locally, highlighting the role of secondary cities in managing migration, and providing a model for other cities to replicate. At the city level, the Action has created concrete improvements in the lives of refugees, fostered inclusive participation, and provided a means for leveraging additional funding.

“The one of the refugee students who benefited from the skills development programme learned poultry, then started his own business and funded his schooling. Most inspiring, he was able to buy a piece of land. His life has totally changed. This project has impacted the lives of individuals in ways that you cannot imagine.”

- Samuel Mabala, Cities Alliance Urban Adviser for Uganda

The InfoPoint can be viewed at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/events/events/infopoint-conference-urban-displacement-trends-sub-saharan-africa-what-role-secondary-cities-2023-06-07_en

The International Perspective

In welcome remarks at the InfoPoint, Jorge Pereiro Pinon, Head of Sector for International Partnerships for regional and multi-country programming in Sub-Saharan Africa at the EU, noted that the EU wanted an approach that combined migration with urban development as the basis for the Action.

The EU considers the Action to be a success for three reasons:

1. It has improved the way the EU and international community actors are following the recommendations of the Global Refugee Forum and implementing the localisation agenda in the region.

2. It has allowed for an adjustment to a new reality in terms of displacement, namely the role secondary cities play in managing migration and the challenges they face with limited means.

3. It has provided a more comprehensive understanding of migration-related issues by implementing a wide range of activities to improve social cohesion and protection of vulnerable populations, as well as promoting political life.

“We need to think on how to expand and build on what has been done up to now in Uganda and Ethiopia. We at the EU are already working on a future programme that will continue what the Action did but also expand it to other countries: DRC, Somalia, South Sudan,” Pinon said.

Katie Ogwang, Senior Protection Officer at the UNHCR Regional Bureau for East, Horn, and Great Lakes Regions of Africa, noted that the drivers of migration in the region have changed over 20 years, from mostly conflict to include climate change, economic hardship, and growing populations.

UNHCR’s Claire Roberts Lamont mentioned the upcoming Global Refugee Forum and expressed a strong desire to include a delegation of cities to highlight the important work secondary cities are doing to implement the Global Compact for Refugees.
"We want to highlight the important work going on in Arua and Koboko. Arua, for the representation of refugees on its municipal councils, and Koboko for the broad commitment to ensure refugees can access local services,” Lamont noted.

Laura Lima, Head of Global Programmes at Cities Alliance, shared three key lessons Cities Alliance has learned from its programming on migration:

1. Recognise that Refugees and IDPs are not a burden, but part of the solution. The most successful projects bring together IDPs, refugees, and the local government for dialogue. The projects in the Horn of Africa have shown that including refugees in planning strengthens the social fabric.

2. Work at the most local level with existing and informal structures. Whether host community or IDP, there are daily challenges that are part of the shared local experience. Learn how to respond to visible, tangible, local goals. West Africa saving groups show that once refugees are mobilised around a tangible goal, they will come to the table.

3. Be realistic about a city’s capacity and resources, and what organisations can provide. This is why sharing knowledge between cities is so important. Cities share realities that go beyond the political into the cultural.

“We have a time imperative to act before it is too late. This is an issue that goes beyond borders, beyond continents,” Lima said.

The Local Perspective

The Mayor of Koboko, Sanya Wilson said in his presentation at the InfoPoint that Koboko’s ability to receive direct funding from the EU was transformational and allowed the city to accomplish in two years what otherwise would have taken 40.

He noted that Koboko began the journey by procuring data. As mayor, he saw there was pressure on services and kept asking why. The city realised they had urban refugees in their communities, but they did not know how many. Koboko engaged VNG International to conduct a comprehensive survey on refugees and IDPs in the city, which showed the need for interventions in education, health, and livelihood. Koboko took the data and developed proposals that it presented to NGOs and embassies. As a result, Koboko Municipality became the first city in Uganda to receive direct funding from a donor.

Mayor Wilson said the key to Koboko’s success was that the city had discretion over the funding. This allowed Koboko to do everything locally – prioritise, plan, and build capacity, which brought a sense of ownership, inclusiveness, and sustainability.

“It was not dictated to us,” Mayor Wilson said of how to implement the funding. “I think that is the model that has enabled us to own this project, for us to say we need to do it in the right way.”

Koboko involved everyone in the process of prioritising, so everyone knew what the city wanted and what people needed. “Because of everybody’s involvement, 94 per cent of the community in Koboko is aware of the projects we’re doing. It’s the most supervised project we’ve had in Koboko Municipality,” he noted.

As a result of the EU Action, Koboko constructed 10 modern schools, fully funded with toilets. The new facilities have brought a change in attitude among students, who feel like they need to attend school. A modern lab is exposing students to the sciences and providing specialised education.

The city built a modern health centre with EU funding, improving access to health care for refugees and host community. Koboko has leveraged this investment to obtain additional funding from the government of Uganda to further expand the centre. Mayor Wilson remarked that the long-term plan is to establish a school of nursing.

To promote livelihoods, the city built a market and provided opportunities for business and skill development. Funding for skilling has been included in Koboko’s Five-Year Development Plan.

“I strongly recommend this model of funding to other local governments, with an angle of technical support. I recommend a model where the local governments will be able to work with community-based organisations and refugees. It is really all about inclusiveness. It is very simple and can be replicated anywhere.”

– Sanya Wilson, Mayor of Koboko.
Malish Bonjira Asu, Executive Director of SSURA in Koboko and himself a refugee, said that the new trauma healing centre established through the Action has played a major role in promoting peaceful coexistence among refugees and host community.

“We sit together to share experiences. Counseling is greatly needed after stressful situations. The trauma centre has strengthened the relationship between refugees and hosts, because it is from there we get to the host community, and it has brought us together,” Asu said at the InfoPoint.

He noted that the Action has empowered refugee women, enabling them to gain financial literacy and start businesses, so they can take care of their families and pay school fees.

“There is evidence of sustainable integration, and this is all the result of this project and good leadership by the municipality and the community for welcoming them,” Asu said.

Stella Wawa, the Dean of Students of Muni University and a representative for the host community, said that initially the community regarded refugees as competitors because the burden on resources was so great. However, the host community benefited from all the EU interventions, especially livelihood training, which helped change that view.

“We are able to appreciate cultural diversity. Given an opportunity, we are very willing to continue supporting because we have seen the benefits,” she said.

By the Numbers: Key Outcomes of the Action in Koboko

**Services**
- 94% of the population consider access to KMC services to be inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- 89% of the population felt KMC services are responsive.
- 53.2% of the population reported increased access to KMC services, up from 44%.

**Education**
- The pupil-to-classroom ratio declined from 128:1 to 114:1 (Uganda’s national standard is 55:1).
- The pupil-to-latrine ratio declined from 138 to 128.
- The school dropout rate declined from 8.1% to 5.8%
- Teacher attendance increased from 89% to 96.2%.

**Health care**
- Outpatient department attendance improved from 36% to 73%.
- Antenatal care (ANC) attendance increased from 4,543 to 8,931.
- Facility-based births increased from 270 to 333 per month.

**Livelihoods**
- 75% of the targeted 800 beneficiaries have increased income and livelihood opportunities.
- 47% of the trained youth have successfully joined the labour market.
The Participant Perspective

Caroline Kihato of Oxford University presented the results of participant surveys on the most important outcomes of the Action. She opened the discussion by saying one of the most important achievements of the Action is mainstreaming migration into secondary city development. It has brought a range of actors and partners together for projects to address issues secondary cities are facing and catapulted migration and secondary cities into the local, regional, and global agendas – a real feat.

Participants identified five important outcomes of the Action:

- **Learning by seeing.** The value of learning from people who are facing similar issues and seeing the projects in action was very important. This required dedication and commitment to seeing places that participants had not seen before.

  “I went to Ethiopia. I didn’t know about planning beyond boundaries. Now I do. And I also have pride that I was in Addis, and I am proud that I have done this.”
  - Dr Sanya K.F. Wilson, Mayor of Koboko

- **Building a policy community.** The Action has built a policy community at the local, municipal, and regional levels around how to address migration-related challenges and potential solutions. A community can talk to policy issues around migration in a way that individual cities or organisations often cannot, such as access to national policymakers and forums shaping international agendas.

  “This is a chance to engage as equals and talk. I would not have had the chance to sit at the same table as the minister.”
  - Maimunah Melisa, host community representative, Kenya

- **Mutual inspiration.** Holding the dialogues in the network cities, the places that are being discussed, inspired participants in a way they would not have been if they were sitting at a conference table in a capital city.

  “We meet. We see each other. There is inspiration across the network.”
  - Meseret Teferi, IRC Senior Grants Manager, Ethiopia

- **Leveraging.** Being part of something like this Action, with trusted institutions in the field, has had a ripple effect on how partners have been able to use the platform to access other support and resources. It has given participants the confidence and the voice to act, because they have done it before.

  “These programmes can attract dollars. These are grants, these are not loans. That money comes in and it stays and circulates. It creates jobs.”
  - Victor Lekaram, Director Urban Areas Management, Turkana

  “We go and we learn, and then our learning cascades to a team.”
  - Bongo Patrick Namisi, ACAV, Uganda

  “More transformative than any textbook.”
  - Tsigereda Tafesse, Cities Alliance
Refugees As Contributors to the Local Economy

The Action has also highlighted the contributions that refugees are making to the local economies in West Nile. Moses Akuma Odims, Executive Secretary of WENDA, moderated a panel to discuss the issue and how local governments can tap into the opportunities they bring. The panel which included Cornelius Jobile, Deputy Town Clerk for Arua; Ejibua Sam Anguzu, Resident Programme Manager for VNG International; and Asara Specioza, Programmes Development Manager for SSURA.

The three panelists all confirmed that refugees have brought economic opportunity to their cities, whether through remittances, skills, and creating demand for products and services.

Cornelius Jobile, Town Clerk for Arua, noted that remittances from migrants have contributed significantly to the city’s economy. Put to productive use, remittances can transform the local economy with investment in areas such as agriculture, real estate, trade, and savings. Migrants in Arua have also created strong demand for basic services, such as housing.

“When we look at migrants and refugees in our cities, let us look at them from a positive perspective. The contribution they are making in producing more goods and services can spark economic growth,” he said.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu of VNG International said that from a local government perspective, the refugee settlements in West Nile are transforming these areas into urban economic zones with infrastructure, schools,
health care, and services. People are starting to move to these locations because of these opportunities.

“We have asked communities to share their cultural diversity, and you can see there is a lot of cross-learning between refugees and host community. This adds value to the standards of living, the way people co-exist, the inclusiveness of society. This is socially, culturally, and politically healthy in any society. There are a lot of benefits that come with refugees.” – Ejibua Sam Anguzu, VNG International

Asara Specioza of SSURA remarked that there are many ways refugees are contributing to the local economy. They bring needed skills, pay taxes, and create businesses that employ both refugees and host community.

They are increasing the scale of agriculture with large-scale farming, especially vegetables, that supplies the market. Refugees have opened schools, pharmacies, health facilities, and hotels.

“If you look at refugees in a positive way, then I think the nation can grow. It will not only be the nationals contributing to the National Development Plans, but the refugees and migrants and change the economy,” she said.

The challenge for local governments is how to tap into these opportunities. All three panelists agreed that local governments are struggling to do so.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu suggested that one issue is the deeply rooted view that refugees are a group of vulnerable people who need the basics – emergency housing, health care, and food.

“When you talk about somebody being a refugee, nobody thinks about the potential of the individual,” he said. “Refugees who escaped conflict are much more economically empowered than the basics.”

Moreover, local governments should do more to prepare for the demand created by refugees and find ways for them to practice their skills. Many refugees have skills they are not using in fields such as digital education, health care, and technology. For example, some refugees are fully qualified teachers who are not able to work, while local teachers are overwhelmed, sometimes having as many as 400 students in a class. Many refugees are excellent farmers and they have invested in production and challenged the host communities to do the same.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu stressed that refugees are now stakeholders in the community, and it is important to bring them to the table and listen to them. He noted that refugee organisations are represented in some local governments, which is a positive development.

Cornelius Jobile pointed out that many local governments in West Nile are constrained by heavy centralisation and existing policy and regulatory frameworks.

“We need to revisit the policy and regulatory framework for the reception and management of refugees,” he said. “The policy may not recognise them, but for the urban local governments, they are here.”

He suggested that local governments might be given leeway to enact local legislation that does not contradict the national policy framework.

He also called for refugee advisors in the government structure to obtain their voice in planning and development, and more reliable data on refugees so local governments can deliver services.

“We need to take deliberate efforts to integrate refugees and migrants into all aspects of life.” – Cornelius Jobile

City Exhibition on Integration

Partner cities shared photos of some of their best integration practices, creating a mini city exhibition on integration that was displayed at the Koboko event.
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Next Steps for the Cities Network

Prof. Loren Landau continued the discussion from the last workshop in Lodwar about institutionalising the network. His presentation was accompanied by a technical paper he co-authored with Kihato on “Sustaining Success: Toward a Network of the Future.”

The ultimate goal, he noted, is for the network to become a sustainable model for municipalities addressing migration and displacement.

“It is about trying to build these systems into what exists to make it natural, make it part of the norms so that it is not just you that is involved, but every municipality that is addressing migration and displacement has someone to look up to, can see this is the norm, and has the tools so they know what to do to address this,” he said.

For that to happen, it is important to get the institutional framework, logistics, and mechanisms...
for funding right. The Action has shown that if cities have the data, they can attract additional funding on their own. It is important to develop concrete strategies for how to do that, and to determine projects and models the network should target for investment in the future.

The network should be built in a way that the network municipalities can become vanguards for norm-setting and incentivizing. This can start happening online by documenting activities, recording testimonials, plans, and essentially building a curriculum. An online platform is also a way to increase visibility for the network, build credibility, and highlight the good work that is being done.

One question is how to expand the network without diluting its energy. One possibility is to establish guidelines in terms of resources and policy change needed for potential members to ensure that all members are working towards sustainable communities that are equitable, inclusive, and fair.

He encouraged participating cities to work collectively to tell their stories and reach out to communities that are not ready to embrace migration and tell them: This is how you can make this work, and we are here to help. We have tools and people to help you take the first step and institutionalize it. He cited the case of Lodwar in Kenya which decided to embrace refugee presence and has new clinics, schools, and stores. That is a powerful message.

A final point to think about is how to turn the network into something that is locally owned. It needs a steering committee of participating cities to work with Cities Alliance and other organisations to manage the network and set an agenda. It is important to have someone - Cities Alliance in the short term, perhaps one of the participating cities in the long term - who can do some of the logistics, bring participants together, build online platforms, do the narrative storytelling, and build mechanisms to project the lessons from the local level to the global level.
Reflections from the Cities

Mohamed Ahmed Warsame, Mayor of Borama, said the Action has changed his city’s mindset, by learning about what other cities are doing to provide social services for refugees and the importance of efficient planning.

Mayor of Gabiley Mohamed Omar Abdi praised the Action for opening his city’s eyes to planning and that they have a new direction. It helped local authorities begin to consider refugees, learn about their situation, and how to improve facilities. Another key lesson was that leadership is important for sustainability.

Mayor of Arua Wadri Sam Nyakua noted that the Action helped local authorities see what effective leadership can achieve and enhance that area. It made it easier to learn what other cities are doing to solve similar problems, and site visits helped his team visualise how it can be implemented in Arua. The Action also improved inclusion and social cohesion by making it easier to bring everyone into the process.
Mayor of Koboko Sanya Wilson welcomed the Action for giving Koboko the opportunity to translate the ideas the city had on paper into reality. He stressed the importance of sustainability and strong leadership, especially when advocating for an inclusive approach. “If you want to succeed, have an inclusive approach where everybody matters,” Mayor Wilson said.

Koboko is serving as an inspiration for other cities and towns in Uganda, and its future is bright. Mayor Wilson said that the municipality has built the capacity to move forward on its own. Thanks to data, it knows what its problems are and is equipped to write proposals, look for funding, and provide value for money.

Reflections from Partners

Jerome Byukusenge of UCLG Africa welcomed the Action for creating an enabling environment for considering migration as a tool for local development. He emphasised three takeaways. First, local authorities must integrate migration into development dynamics and planning. Second, partnership is key; the Koboko Municipal Council has been a good example of effective, transparent leadership that developed partnerships with communities, community-based organisations, and refugees. It is important to replicate the best practices seen in Koboko. Third, there is a need to increase funding for border and intermediary cities which desperately need resources.

Solomon Osakan, Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda, noted that while national governments are fighting poverty, it is necessary to embrace communities to be actively involved. Refugees cannot be pushed away; if people need support, governments must find a way to support them.

Anyama Williams, Chairman of WENDA, said that the peer learning experience has demonstrated that hosting refugees and migrants presents both challenges and opportunities. It is also clear that leadership and governance play a critical role in creating the environment for integration and inclusion of refugees and migrants, which hinges on communities’ focus on mutual interests and peaceful aspirations.
Angelo Di Giorgi, Programme Officer for the EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window, highlighted three aspects of the Action that he found especially praiseworthy: the importance of having a platform to discuss displacement and rapid urbanisation among peers, the multi-stakeholder approach that engaged local governments with refugees and communities, and a new way of understanding urban expansion that is planned, sustainable, and participatory.

Brigitte Hoermann, Senior Migration Specialist at Cities Alliance, said the Action has shown what trust in local organisations can achieve for vulnerable beneficiaries. “We can see that this achievement is based on a very special constellation, with a truly inspiring mayor leading the Koboko Municipality, a trusted and very capable technical advisor as ACAV, and an EU Delegation which recognised the opportunity to bring about change in how international development should be done at the local level,” she noted.

Bongo Patrick, Head of Programmes at ACAV, lauded the Action as a good example of how secondary cities can address forced displacement, refugees, wider urbanisation, provision of basic services, and peaceful coexistence among communities. “Koboko Municipality’s case and the regional network are good models worth replicating and sustaining in the future towards building inclusive, peaceful and resilient cities that inspire and change lives of refugees and host communities,” he said. “Scaling up successful local and regional actions that are interlinked will light up more candles of hope and usher in opportunities for a better future for refugees and host communities in the Horn of Africa and beyond.”

Charles Obila, Coordinator, IGAD support platform, The regional network has played a significant role in localizing both the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees by promoting innovative solutions and protection of the affected population. It has also facilitated political representation and access to justice for migrants and refugees and enhanced social cohesion between migrants, refugees and host communities. Learning events with the network have also facilitated peer review and exchange of innovative solutions/practices.
Site Visits

The learning event featured site visits so that participants could experience the activities in Koboko firsthand and hear directly from beneficiaries. They visited primary schools (Apa, Birijaku, Gbukutu Islamic Orphanage, Nyangilia, and Teremungu); the Nyangilia Secondary School; St. Charles Lwanga College; the Jabara Agricultural Vocational Institute; new health centres (Lasanga Health Centre III and Koboko Mission Health Centre III); Koboko Hospital’s new mental health unit; the Isoko satellite market; and the new abattoir at Lomutu Cell.
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Koboko, Uganda
Annex 1: Survey
Survey

Did the event meet your expectations?
1: Not at all | 2: To a small degree| 3: Normal 
4: To some degree | 5: To a high degree

Average: 4.7/5
(49 responses)

Yes, the first term was in there I had no method to integrate refugees and host communities but now I get what I expected and learned from this dialogue. Thanks for CA and EU and other cities
- Gabley Municipality Hibbo

Yes, I have participated in two peer meetings and I can understand the need of these events for experience sharing and learning by seeing
- IRC, Meseret

Will you be able to use the learning for your city level policy, planning or services?
1: Not at all | 2: To a small degree| 3: Normal 
4: To some degree | 5: To a high degree

Average: 4.4/5
(49 responses)

In Jigjiga, we need to be part of a project on the second round, get grantee and projects, for that I have the ability to use planning and services like participation of community and municipal
- Jigjiga City Administration Hashim

After attending the last events in my city, I would be able to prepare such policies such as waste management policy, urban expansion plan and also slum upgrading policy that approved by local councils
- Gabley Municipality Hibbo

The Koboko model is very much better in terms of capacity to the local gov in completing projects efficiently and effectively. In my country Ethiopia, the partners were implementing on behalf of the gov. Thus for the next time, I will take the lessons from Koboko and see how the city administration and CBOs can take the responsibility
- Mayor Assosa

After I have visited what Koboko municipality done, my mind set changed and want to re organise my approach for service delivery
- Borama Mayor
To what degree did this training (and the previous one) increased your capacity to address urban displacements?

“Of course, I got a lot of information such as reviewed the CRRF and integration policy in addition National Displaced policy in Somaliland made me localized and adding in the new 5 years plan 2023-2027

- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

“The training is highly important as I learn to create clear vision and capacity to the development of cities. After we return back to the city of Assosa we sill start to think out how we can start integrating the social system into urban displacement effects

- Mayor Assosa

“This training exposed my understanding on the important role played by local governments in supplementing gov efforts, that maybe limited to finance. This has opened my mind in thinking outside the box, without the box and given me confidence that humanity can address its challenges

- Host Community Rep, Melissa

Reflecting on the previous events, how do you think the regional city network is useful for your city/country?

“Very helpful, the learning and the network will help the cities of Ethiopia to learn from each other. Capacitate the local gov and interchange for the community members living and residing in the city host community, refugees and IBPs- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

- IRC, Meseret
Forced Displacement and Rapid Urbanisation: Moving Towards Inclusive, Resilient Cities and Translating Ideas into Action

Koboko, Uganda
Reflecting on the previous events, how do you think the regional city network is useful for your city/country?

Regional city network always is very useful to me and our city because got knowledge, experience and practical issues concerning leadership and vision – Gabiley Municipality Hibbo – Borama Mayor

Regional city network helps in job creation, better health performance and improved urban infrastructure in the network city

Are you actively using the previous sessions knowledge and expert papers? How?

This is yet my first meeting, but impressed with the information we received and effective, transparent, accountable leadership – Mayor Nebbi Uganda

Yes, integration of refugees, host communities and more partnerships with gov and civil society organisations to cause more changes in the communities – South Sudanese Ref Association Malish

Final suggestions to improve this type of sessions and any other comments

When the connection between districts improve, the central gov becomes better

We must use migration as a tool for development. Peer learning be encouraged, sharing with documents for urban development. Continuous consultation with communities to attain grassroot issues – South Sudanese Ref Association Malish – Arua Mayor, Wadri