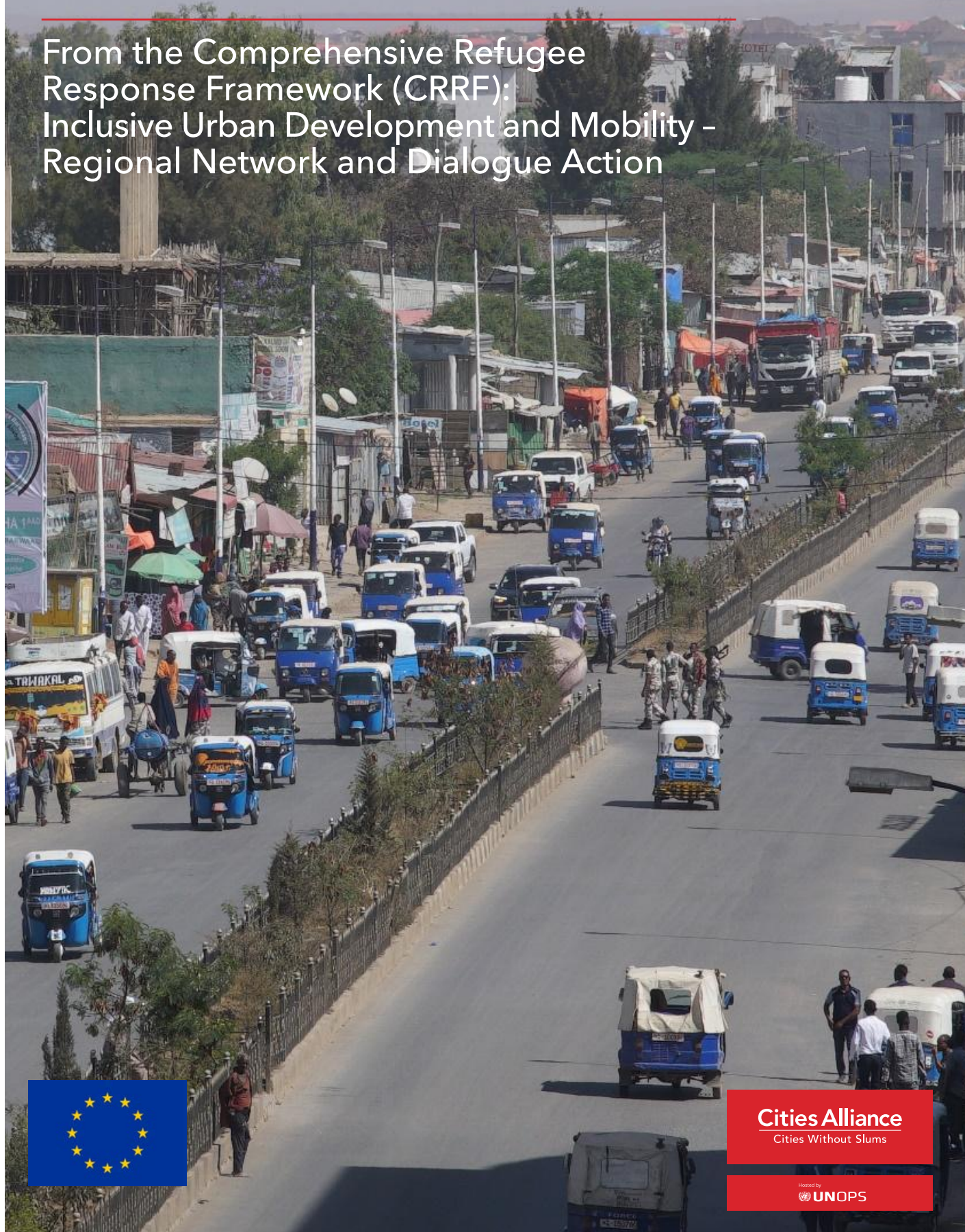


COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES

From the Comprehensive Refugee
Response Framework (CRRF):
Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility –
Regional Network and Dialogue Action



Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by
UNOPS



Koboko, Uganda

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FOREWORD

This compendium highlights learning from the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action, funded by the European Union (EU) Trust Fund for Africa and implemented by Cities Alliance.

Seven refugee-hosting cities from four countries in the Horn of Africa participated in the Action: Gabiley and Borama (Somalia), Arua and Koboko (Uganda), Assosa and Jigjiga (Ethiopia), and Kakuma-Kalobeyei (Kenya). The Action supported these cities to integrate refugees, manage migration, provide basic services, and establish a network for knowledge sharing. It featured three components: 1) Creating a regional network and dialogue; 2) Pilot programme in Koboko; and 3) Pilot programme in Assosa.

For three years, over 50 representatives from local and national governments, city administrations, refugee organisations, host communities, and the private sector participating in the Action gathered every six months to discuss their needs, challenges, and potential solutions with the appropriate municipal, national and regional actors as well as with neighbouring cities facing similar challenges.

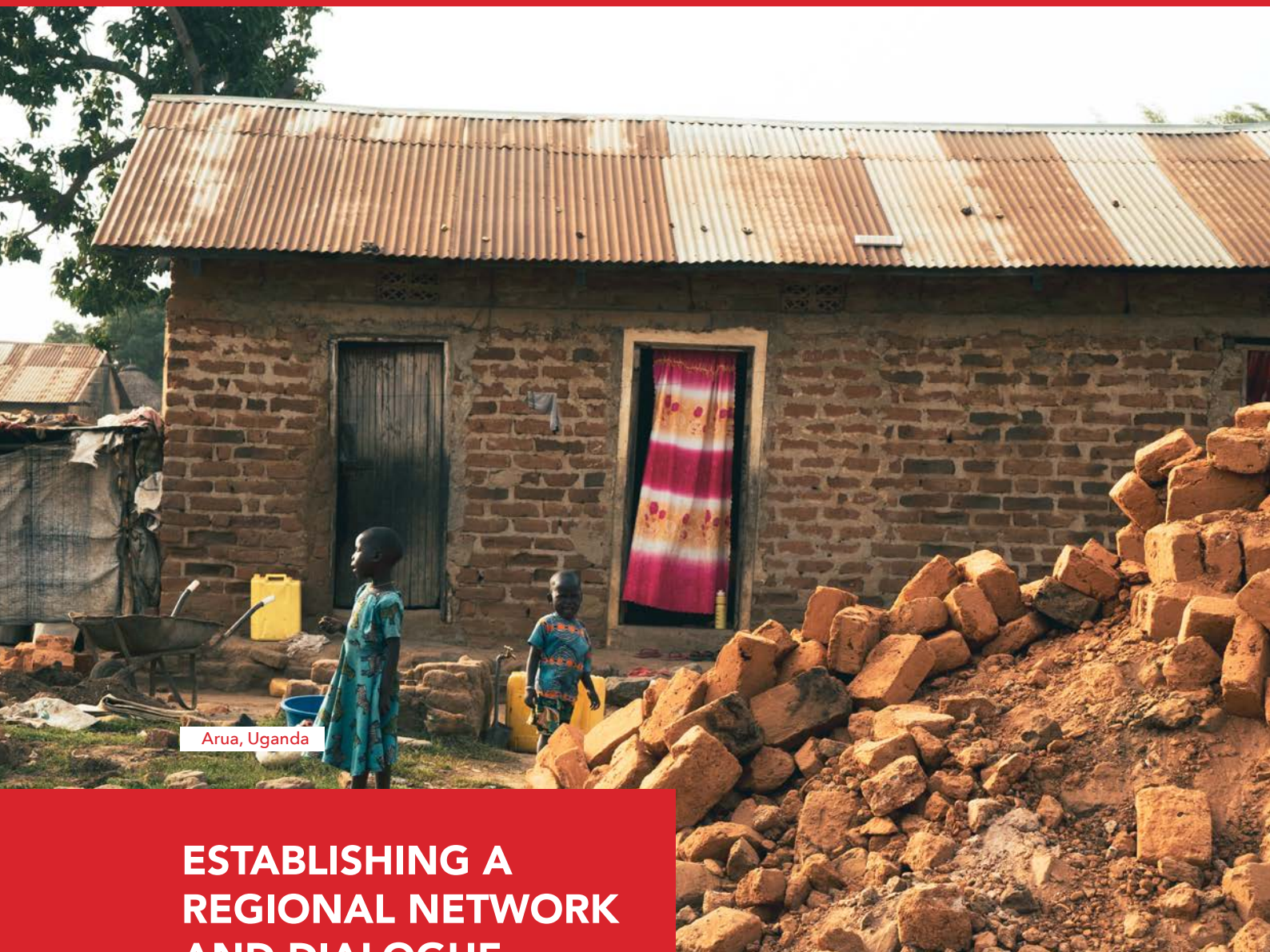
Through these meetings, the cities strengthened their voices and brought national and international attention to their needs. They also provided a platform for informing cities and communities on solutions to improving living conditions and opportunities for both refugees and host populations, reducing the risk of conflict, and providing access to basic services for all vulnerable city residents.

This publication provides an overview of the best practices, methodologies, and strategies on migration and refugee management at the local level derived from the meetings and discussions.



Kakuma, Kenya





Arua, Uganda

ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL NETWORK AND DIALOGUE

About the Action

Context

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 due to legal or logistical barriers. The Horn of Africa hosts one fifth of the world's refugees, including:¹

- Urban-assisted refugees who have either been moved to urban areas because of protection concerns or for medical treatment. Their stay is generally temporary.

- Refugees who can sustain themselves economically who reside in cities on the condition of self-reliance.
- Unregistered or self-settled refugees living in urban areas. They often live among host communities most similar to their own ethnic group. Their numbers are unknown, resulting in no or limited support; however, they are seen as significant in cities across the region.
- Refugees living in settlements or camps, which, given protracted refugee situations, have over time turned into urban conurbations. Kenya's Kakuma refugee camps are an example.

In 2016, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants reaffirmed the importance of international refugee rights, including the need to strengthen their support and protection. The Declaration called on the

¹ EUTF Action Fiche for the Implementation of the Horn of Africa Window T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/bt05-eutf-hoa-reg-67_-_crrf_urban_development_and_mobility_incl_rider.pdf

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to apply the CRRF in specific situations that featured large-scale movements of refugees to:

- Ease pressure on host countries
- Enhance refugee self-reliance
- Expand access to third country solutions
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

In 2018, the UN General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugee (GCR) as the non-binding global framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing – a recognition that solutions to refugee situations require international cooperation.²

The CRRF is incorporated into the Global Compact and is currently being rolled out in Africa, Asia, and South America. The Compact explicitly notes the need to engage with local authorities in urban settings and the potential of networks of cities and municipalities in establishing best practices.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has played a significant role in supporting the delivery of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa. The Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia was approved in Nairobi, Kenya on 25 March 2017. This declaration forms the basis of IGAD's regional approach. 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.

In the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, heads of state and government commit to:³

- Progressively advancing alternative arrangements to refugee camps and facilitating the free movement of refugees and their integration into national development plans and access to services.
- Calling upon states to align domestic laws and policies, including civil documentation, in line with refugee status under the 1951 Refugee Convention obligations to enable refugees to access gainful employment and self-reliance.
- Adopting a “whole of society” approach to refugee protection and assistance by enabling civil society,

diaspora, and private sector actors to support refugees, especially women, children, and the vulnerable.

- Enhancing education, training, and skills development for refugees to reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance and prepare them for gainful employment in host communities and upon return, with the support of the international community.
- Strengthening the capacity of governments in host countries and Somalia to deliver services, prioritising civil registration and documentation of refugees and returnees.
- Continuing to enhance security within refugee camps and out-of-camp refugee populations.

This approach is leading to an incremental shift towards greater freedom of movement for refugees. Many are attracted to urban areas, which presents new sets of challenges and opportunities for service delivery and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods and protection.⁴

Municipalities that can successfully manage the population increase resulting from refugees will be better able to tackle demographic growth and rapid urbanization. Consequently, municipal governments have become key actors in managing these phenomena.

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 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 Global Compact on Refugees 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.⁵ 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.

² Hammond L. & al. Comprehensive Refugee Responses in the Horn of Africa: Regional leadership on education, livelihoods and durable solutions, Research and Evidence Facility, February 2020. Available at: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/files/2020/03/CRRF-report.pdf>

³ Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees, 2017. Available at: <https://igad.int/communiqu/1519-communication-special-summit-of-the-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-durable-solutions-for-somali-refugees>

⁴ EUTF Action Fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/bt05-eutf-hoa-reg-67_-_crrf_urban_development_and_mobility_incl_rider.pdf

⁵ Annex 1 - Workshop survey

The CRRF - Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility 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. The Action aims to help select municipalities from four partnering countries in the Horn of Africa to address the dual challenges of the rising number of displaced people and wider urbanization. It is divided in three components:

1. A regional dialogue including representatives from secondary cities to foster peer networks and knowledge exchange on the challenges and opportunities resulting from urban displacement in the context of urbanization, implemented by Cities Alliance.
2. A pilot project providing direct support to Koboko Municipality in Uganda to address severely stressed or pre-existing low coverage of basic services and a high concentration of refugees. The Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari (ACAV) has been selected to provide technical support to Koboko Municipality to develop and implement inclusive, participatory, and sustainable strategies for urban planning and service delivery.

3. A similar pilot action in Assosa, Ethiopia, implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

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 by 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 – always in close cooperation with the beneficiaries.



Regional Network and Dialogue

The first component of the Action is the creation of a regional network and platform for dialogue, implemented by Cities Alliance. This 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. 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.

Secondary cities with between one and five million inhabitants are expected to grow by 460 million from 2010 to 2025, compared to 270 million for megacities. Those located in developing regions are experiencing most of this population growth, as they are the first point of entry for migrants seeking shelter and work.

The regional network and dialogue primarily aim to support secondary cities, Arua and Koboko in Uganda, Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya, Assosa and Jigjiga in Ethiopia, and Gabiley and Borama in Somalia, in strengthening their voices and bringing national and

international attention to their needs. It will also provide the cities with the opportunity to advocate at global debates such as the Global Refugee Forum. This visibility will increase their international presence, improve their technical knowledge and capacities, and support the implementation of global agendas. The presence and participation of these cities is fundamental to the successful implementation of the global goals.

The network also engages populations from these cities so they can be involved and consulted in local planning activities. 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. Peer learning with neighbouring cities facing similar challenges also informs cities on solutions to 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.

Five peer-learning events, hosted by partner cities and facilitated by Cities Alliance, were organised as part of the Action to include displaced and vulnerable host communities in urban policy discussion.



Cities are the first point of entry for most migrants seeking work and shelter, 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.

Gabiley, Somalia

Key Partners

IGAD: Spearheading Regional Cooperation On Urban Refugees In The Horn Of Africa

Since holding the first Special Summit on Somali Refugees in 2017, IGAD has spearheaded the creation of a political space to build consensus around refugee issues. It focuses on five key issues:

1. Creating conditions conducive for return
2. Maintaining asylum and protection in host countries
3. Socio-economic inclusion
4. Regional cooperation in addressing displacement
5. Solidarity and international responsibility-sharing

IGAD is playing a central role in delivering the CRRF in the Horn of Africa. An ambitious regional framework addressing forced displacement is emerging, despite challenges. Most IGAD member states are making national commitments to improve refugee access to education and livelihoods, while at the same time responding to new displacement. Many countries have developed national action plans or roadmaps and are pursuing progressive changes from encampment systems to integrated settlements.

Since 2019, international attention has increasingly focused on the integration of urban refugees, and there is strong support for the idea of building a network that includes all levels, local to international. The network launched by the CRRF project is a good start to adopting a more strategic approach to disparate discussions taking place on refugees at various levels and helping those discussions feed into each other.

Refugees must have the right to participate in the countries in which they live. In cities such as Arua, for example, the displaced population may exceed that of the host community in some neighbourhoods. In most cases, however, local planners only consider the host population, even though basic services must be provided to all, refugees, and hosts.

UCLG Africa: Local Governments Are Key To Addressing Migration

According to Juma Menhya Nyende, Director the UCLG Africa Eastern Africa Regional Bureau, UCLG Africa could be a strong ally to drawing attention to refugees residing in cities and examining their needs as well as both challenges and opportunities for cities, host communities and refugees themselves. UCLG Africa is the united voice and representative of local governments in Africa, representing nearly 350 million African citizens. It has a membership of 44 national associations of local governments from all regions of Africa, as well as 2,000 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants. It is the Africa chapter of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), a global network that brings together cities and local governments around the world.

Migration has many positive effects in the region. It is estimated that financial transfers from African immigrants' remittances represent more than twice the amount of the annual official development aid provided to African countries. On the other hand, the emigration of young people represents a risk for sustainable development in Africa; it weakens the human base of growth and sends the message that hope for young Africans lies beyond the continent.

Managing migration in Africa has become critical to the region's sustainable development, and local governments must be able to play their role in responding to the migration challenge. Three actions are essential to improve the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in African cities:

- Working with national and local authorities to improve the legislative framework of decentralization by granting local authorities' greater competence in migration.
- Networking with cities, providing them with knowledge and helping avoid replication between instruments. The cities from this network could be familiarized and included in the Charter of Local and Subnational Governments of Africa on Migration produced by UCLG-Africa.
- Providing capacity building for elected officials and municipal teams in migration management.



Koboko, Uganda

IMPLEMENTING THE CRRF IN UGANDA AND ETHIOPIA

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. KMC is implementing this component with technical advice from ACAV (Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari).

Koboko faces the challenge of a rapidly increasing population combined with limited budget allocations from the central government and other resources constraints. The Action has two main objectives in Koboko Municipality: To develop and implement inclusive, participatory, and sustainable urban planning strategies; and to increase access to, and utilisation of, quality basic social services for refugees and host communities.

Integration of Refugees in Resource-Constrained Municipalities: Koboko

Like other refugee-hosting towns in Uganda, Koboko faces the challenge of a rapidly increasing population combined with limited budget allocations from the central government and other resource constraints.

Bongo Patrick, ACAV Project Manager for the Koboko pilot, moderated a discussion of how the EU Action is supporting Koboko to integrate refugees, plan for urbanisation, and improve basic services.

Dr. Sanya Wilson, Mayor of Koboko Municipality, said that refugees have brought many opportunities to his city, including new health and education facilities

that benefit both refugees and host communities. For example, with support from the Action the city was able to build a new trauma healing centre – a major need for refugees – so that people could receive mental health treatment in Koboko instead of traveling to Arua, where the nearest facility was located.

The project also supported the city to build new facilities for schools, such as toilets, desks, and a science lab in one secondary school. There is huge demand in Koboko for meat, so the city built a modern new abattoir that can accommodate 50 cows.

The city was able to do this all because of data, the mayor noted. When refugees started coming to Koboko, there was a lot of pressure on resources, such as schools, healthcare, markets, and water points. The city decided it needed data on how many people were in the city and how they were using resources – a project that the EU helped fund. With that data, Koboko has been able to lobby and advocate for extra funding to support refugees.

Koboko has made sure that refugees and host community both benefit from these opportunities. When the markets became congested, the city built more markets with half the stalls for refugees and half for the host community. Skill development programmes also targeted half refugees and half host community. These programmes have helped refugees start businesses and contribute to the city's coffers.

The EU Action has helped the city address important gaps in the health and education sectors as well

as physical planning – effectively transforming the city, said Andrew Chelangat, Town Clerk for Koboko Municipality.

The Action has made a substantial contribution to the municipal budget. Ismail Mambo, Senior Accountant and Project Accountant for Koboko Municipality, noted that in 2022, the municipal budget breakdown was 61 per cent government grants, 29 per cent external assistance (from the EUTF Action), and 8 per cent local revenue. The EUTF funds have boosted service delivery to Koboko's growing urban population by supporting the municipal budget in various sectors, including education, health, livelihood, trade and industry, finance and planning, and inclusion and protection.

Malish Bonjira, Executive Director of SSURA, said that the Action has provided much-needed capacity building for local CBOs, who took on much of the community mobilisation.

Harriet Dozu, Host Community Representative for Koboko, noted that Koboko has some advantages that have helped it integrate migrants, including language and cultural similarities and an understanding that migrants are there because circumstances have forced them – a message that was echoed via radio and tv.



“

By 2040 Koboko will most likely be a city not because of politics, but because of planning.

- Dr. Sanya Wilson, Mayor of Koboko.

Koboko's Best Practices for Refugee Integration

Two years into the EU Action, Koboko Municipal Council has identified the following best practices to help integrate refugees:

- Involve refugees in the planning process right from the start at the cell, ward, division, and municipal level.
- Ensure that refugees and host communities have equal access to basic social services such as education, health, etc.
- Integrate refugees into school management committees, parent-teacher associations, and governance bodies.
- Insert a special provision in municipal contracts with contractors to include refugees in their workforce (30 per cent).
- Provide inclusive access to economic opportunities such as markets, income-generating activities, and saving groups.

Koboko, Uganda



The CRRF in Uganda

The Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda: We need support to generate more information on secondary cities.

The Office of the Prime Minister acknowledges the movements taking place to the cities and the need for better social services delivery. Uganda has a duty to implement the CRRF and other international declarations such as the Global Compact on Refugees.

In this direction, a Steering Group Meeting has been established at the national level, chaired by the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, and including the Ministry for Local Government to capture the interests and needs of local governments.

The CRRF Secretariat is responsible for stakeholder engagement at the national level and organises Refugee Development Forums with representatives from each settlement. There are still some challenges in terms of coordination that require long-term consideration, as refugees need long-term solutions. Urban refugees in Uganda face challenges as the country's refugee policy only recognises urban refugees in Kampala and not beyond. There are refugees resettling from the settlements to the cities, and these resettlements need to be approached as new opportunities.

According to Solomon Sonko, Senior Development Economist and Desk Officer at the Office of the Prime Minister, there is an urgent need to foster partnerships and networking within the East African region for embedded responsibilities to share towards refugees and host communities. To date, response plans have been adopted in Uganda, but their implementation is hindered by limited

availability of technical, human, financial and logistical resources. In Kampala, the numbers are known; there are currently 80,248 registered refugees. However, this is not the case for other towns and cities where refugee numbers are unknown.

This situation is evolving. The 2020–2021 version of the Uganda Refugee Response Plan (RPP) includes urban refugees as a strategic outcome: As the Uganda refugee model allows for freedom of movement of refugees, some have chosen to reside in urban areas rather than settlements, while others commute between settlements and urban areas.

While the situation of refugees in Kampala is well understood, this is not the case for refugees in other towns and cities of Uganda. The 2020–2021 RPP will endeavour to better assess the needs of refugees in other urban areas, enhance engagement with municipal actors, and strengthen support to refugees and hosting communities in these areas, resources permitting.⁶

An updated urban refugee policy would regulate the relationship between nationals and refugees and call for additional support to refugee-hosting cities. There is strong support for the idea of building a network that includes all levels, local to international.

The regional dialogue launched by the CRRF Action is a good way to strategically approach and link the various discussions taking place on refugees. There is also a need to include the private sector in the discussions. Poverty levels are high in some of the most vulnerable areas of Uganda, and the only way to enhance economic opportunities and employment for the refugees and host communities is to attract private sector engagement.

⁶ Inter-Agency, Revised Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan July 2020 – December 2021. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Uganda%20Revised%202020-2021%20Refugee%20Response%20Plan%20%281%29.pdf>



Kakuma, Kenya

Promoting Inclusive Urban Development in Assosa Municipality

Component 3 of the Action supported Assosa Municipality by strengthening public, private, and civil service delivery capacities, resources, and infrastructure for host community and displaced populations in its urban and peri-urban settings. International Rescue Committee implemented this component. The activities were based on the assessment that public service provision in WASH, health care, and protection were inadequate to meet the demands of the rapidly growing population.

A central crossroads for migrants within Ethiopia and along the northern migration route, Assosa's population has almost tripled in the past 12 years. There was initially considerable resistance to refugees in Assosa because they had no legal grounds to settle there, and resources were already scarce. With its emphasis on social cohesion, the Action has begun to change that view.

Meseret Teferi, Senior Grants Manager for IRC in Ethiopia, noted that IRC has been implementing EU-funded activities to strengthen basic service delivery, capacity, resources, and infrastructure for the host community and displaced persons in Assosa since December 2019. The activities were based on initial assessments that public service provision in WASH, health, and protection in particular were inadequate to meet the demands of the rapidly growing population.

Over three years, the EU Action in Assosa has significantly improved access to water, health care, and protection services (especially for victims of GBV) for both displaced people and the host community. The Action is unique in an area where most interventions concentrate only on refugees.

Mustafa Mohammed Ahmed, Host Community Representative from Assosa, said that there was initially a lot of resistance to refugees in Assosa because they had no legal grounds to settle there, and resources were already scarce. With its emphasis on social cohesion, however, the Action is beginning to change that view.

Yayehyirad Yemaneh, Field Coordinator for IRC in Ethiopia, shared some stories of people who are benefiting from the new facilities, including a woman who recently gave birth in the new delivery facilities and a health care worker. Mr. Yemaneh also shared that newly installed CCTV cameras are making the court system more efficient and effective. Previously, court staff could only access cameras in Addis Ababa.

Initial Lessons from the Action

Mr. Yemaneh outlined some initial lessons that IRC and KMC have identified after three years of the Action:

- Lengthy community conversations on land issues contributed to high inflation costs on supplies and delays in implementing some activities. This factor should be taken into consideration in future projects.
- Working in synergy with community-based structures and groups is critical to ensuring that GBV survivors have timely access to response services.

She had her first two children in the old hospital, where the delivery rooms were "very old, condensed, no prenatal and post-natal room, and post-natal for all cases were the same. The space was not suitable for the mother, a strong bad smell," she remembered.

Source: IRC



“

Today, I feel lucky to give birth in a building like this. The current delivery building is comfortable, clean, and suitable for the mother.

– **Rachel Nega**, a 24-year-old nursing student and resident of Assosa, gave birth to her third child at Assosa General Hospital's new delivery wing on 14 November 2022 and is very happy with the change.

“



He appreciates the new, more professional facilities.

Source: IRC

The previous delivery blocks were constructed 35 years back and with no improvement it was old, substandard, and uninspiring for professional work.

So, the building was not comfortable for either the professionals or the clients. The assigned staff faced difficulty staying in the room. Because of this, some active second-stage mothers got their babies with no professional support.

The delivery building, now built with EU funds and the IRC, has solved the problem of the past and is very comfortable and suitable for both professionals and pregnant mothers.

– Desalegn Berhanu, a 32-year-old midwife in the delivery ward, has worked at Assosa General Hospital for seven years.

The CRRF in Ethiopia

Abdirahman Ahmad Muhumad, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Jigjiga University, presented some of the initial findings from research on local governments and the sustainable integration of refugees in Ethiopia. The research is part of a joint project being undertaken by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) in Addis Ababa, and the Institute of Migration Studies at Jigjiga University. So far, one discussion paper has been produced on the findings, with more expected as the team’s empirical work continues.

Ethiopia’s progressive Refugee Proclamation

Ethiopia is one of the pilot countries to implement the CRRF. In early 2019, Ethiopia adopted the Refugee Proclamation – a new, progressive national refugee legislation that embodies many of the ideas of the CRRF and emphasises creating durable solutions through local integration. It seeks to reduce the barriers refugees face in pursuing economic activities for livelihoods, ending Ethiopia’s strict encampment policy and granting both refugees and asylum seekers the right to freely move and reside within the country. This movement may be limited, however, as Ethiopia’s **Refugees and Returnees Service (RSS)**⁷ retains the right to arrange places or areas within which refugees and asylum seekers may live.⁸

Mr. Muhumad noted that integrating refugees into host communities is a process that requires an important amount of political and administrative management at the local level. In fragile contexts, though, local governance structures are often weak, understaffed, and insufficiently financed, making it very challenging for local authorities to implement international and national refugee integration policies.

And while decentralisation reforms have strengthened the role of Ethiopian local governments and given them additional responsibility for the provision of state and municipal services, they often lack the capacity, financial resources, and the authority to fulfil their responsibilities, as the current financing arrangements for local authorities rely heavily on own-source revenues, which are mostly insufficient to meet the demand for public services.

Survey on CRRF implementation

To assess the implementation of the CRRF in Ethiopia, a project team from Jigjiga University used the Somali region as a case study. The team conducted a representative quantitative survey between March and April 2020, with an interruption due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. There were 675 respondents from refugee camps in Sheder and Aw-Barre, Somali region.

The survey findings were organised into three sectors to assess level of integration and potential challenges: non-discriminatory access to the national education system (education), right to work (livelihoods and jobs), and access to land.

⁷ In 2022, the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) was renamed as the Refugee and Returnees Service (RRS). The former ARRA was restructured into RRS (Refugee and Returnee Services) to integrate services provided by the government both to refugees and Ethiopian migrants (returnees), including IDPs (internally displaced peoples). This restructuring enabled the government to bring together the previously separated institutions that govern international migrants, IDPs and refugees. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/8427-national-and-international-migration-policy-in-ethiopia>

⁸ Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 28(2).

- **Education.** Refugees are generally satisfied with the education provided to them and their children. Most send their children to camp school. The problem is that the quality of schools in the camps is better than those run by the government in host communities; UNHCR provides better teachers and infrastructure, as well as free supplies. Such diverging standards are not positive for local integration.
- **Livelihoods and jobs.** Refugees are working in Jigjiga's informal economy and contributing to different sectors as labourers. Host communities believe that refugees add value to the economy. However, it is difficult for refugees to find jobs because they do not have official work permits or business licenses, and the capacity of refugee centres to help them is limited. In addition, the large number of job seekers in Ethiopia leads to labour market competition, which can create feelings of injustice and spur social tensions.
- **Access to land.** Refugees said access to land is important; 80 per cent of employment in Ethiopia comes from the culture of land. It is generally difficult to access land in Ethiopia, and land is leased from the government instead of purchased outright. The situation is different in the Somali region, where land is owned by the individuals and families, and host communities have given refugees access to land for cultivation so that they do not have to go through the government.

Overall progress of CRRF in Ethiopia

Mr. Ahmed said that although the Somali region is a leader in implementing CRRF in comparison with other regions of Ethiopia, the findings show that overall progress has been slow since the adoption of the Refugee Proclamation in 2019. There are positive elements, including similarities in ethnicity and language among refugees and host communities, a large donor engagement, informal integration already in place, and well-established regional coordination structures.

There are also challenges to implementing the CRRF. International actors are circumventing local actors instead of capacitating them, and resources are scarce for capacity building in planning and financing, especially at the local level. There is also an ambiguous perception of integration; it remains unclear what social integration entails, and different governmental entities are not clear on their role in implementing the CRRF.

Policy recommendations

Mr. Ahmed offered four policy recommendations to facilitate implementation of the CRRF based on the initial research:

1. Strengthen guidance from the federal government, with greater horizontal coordination between the different government entities. A strong coordinating body that includes the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, and ARRA, seems necessary to ensure an effective strategy for the local integration of refugees.
2. The federal government needs to recognise regional and local-level authorities as relevant actors and consult them about CRRF implementation and specific sectoral plans. Without the involvement of local authorities, a successful CRRF implementation is impossible.
3. Accelerate the process of drafting and adopting secondary legislation and directives to cascade the national legislation to the regional and local level.
4. Strengthen the local and regional administration through a variety of capacity building measures. Refugees currently have better access to healthcare and education than host communities, so it is clear the capacity of local governments needs to be strengthened in those areas.



This discussion paper examines the policy of refugee integration in Ethiopia, with a special focus on local governments. It analyses their role and capability to identify specific challenges and opportunities to facilitate the effective integration of refugees. It also sheds light on the views of refugee communities regarding local integration.

Access the study at: https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_21.2021.pdf



BEST PRACTICES SHARED BY THE CITIES OF THE NETWORK

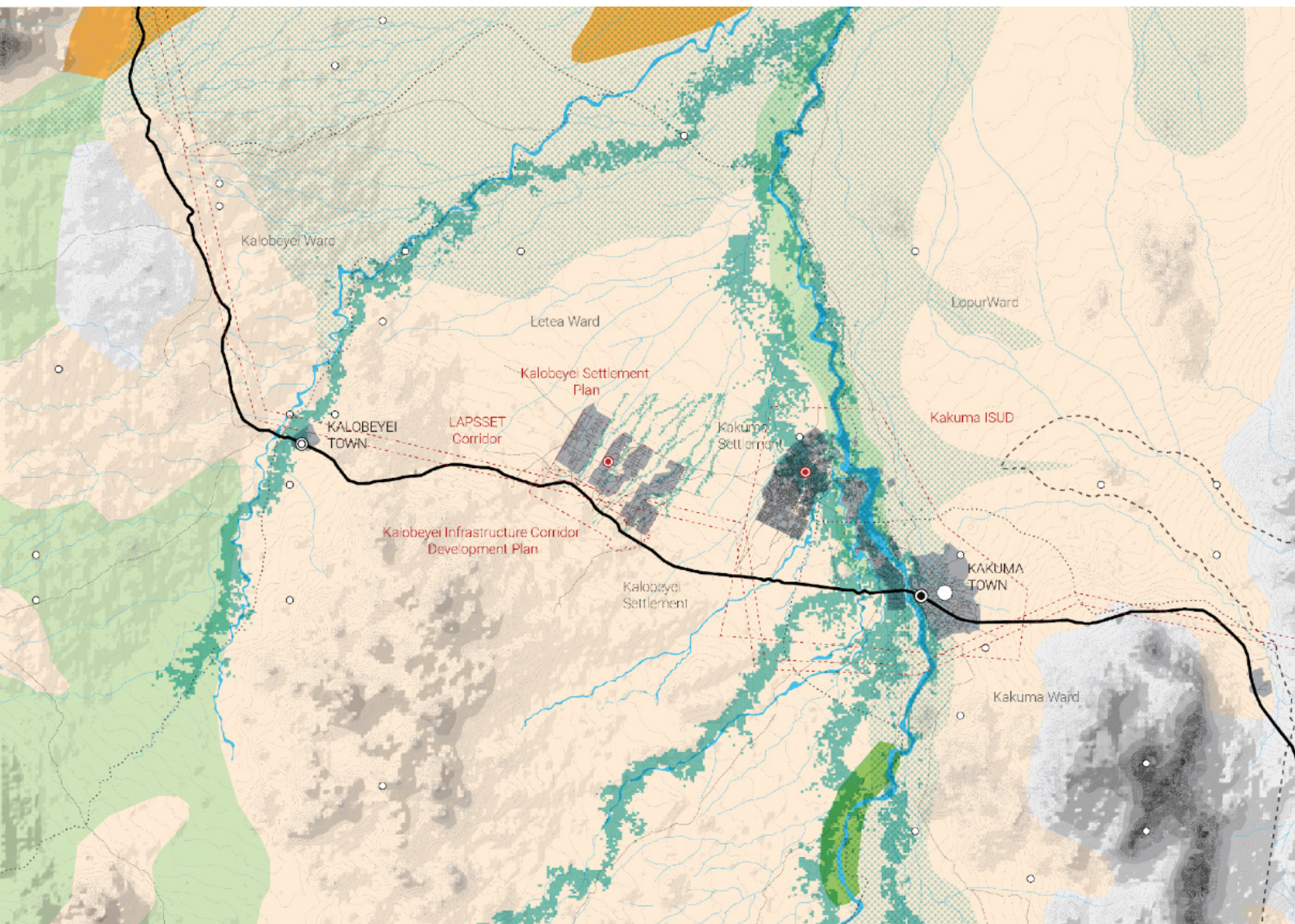
A Model of Integration: Turkana County

Turkana County is the second largest in Kenya, with a population of around 927,000 (2019). It is located in northwestern Kenya on the borders with Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Uganda, making it a prime destination for refugees from these countries. There are two refugee camps, Kakuma and Kalobeyei, with a combined population of nearly 1.6 million.

Victor Lekaram, Director of Urban Areas Management for Turkana County, began with an overview of how the Turkana County local government has supported the socio-economic integration of refugees for nearly a decade.

Turkana County sees refugees as an economic opportunity and has recognised that it needs to transition away from humanitarian and emergency support to socio-economic integration. This shift in mindset was supported by a push for greater decentralisation in Kenya and a refugee policy that is forward looking in terms of economic inclusion for refugees.

The county applied this approach to socio-economic integration in 2015 when it established the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, where refugees could live and do business. The settlement has been planned and developed under the 15-year multi-sector Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDIP), a participatory initiative led by the county in collaboration with UN-Habitat and UNHCR.



Map of Kakuma-Kalobeyei.

Source: Turkana County Government.

The large refugee population is helping Kakuma and Kalobeyei transition from a town to a full-fledged municipality, with the increased resources that come along with the new classification. The county is

supporting an integrated urban development plan for the new Municipality of Kakuma-Kalobeyei to ensure that it is inclusive and benefits both refugees and host community.

The county is establishing an economic zone in the corridor between Kakuma and Kalobeyei, where the new integrated settlement will be established, to create economic opportunities for both refugees and host communities and stimulate local growth.

Turkana's experience shows how an empowered local government can take the initiative to improve the lives of all its residents. And once the local government has begun taking action, partners will come to support their efforts.

The Hon. Peter Akono, Minister for Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Areas Management for Turkana County, said that one of the hallmarks of Turkana County's approach to refugees is that it makes sure that the host community benefits as well. He also stressed the importance of strengthening the municipality's role in providing service delivery to both refugees and host communities.

Melissa Maimunah, Host Community Representative for Kakuma Settlement, noted that the presence of refugees in Turkana West has helped transform the economy by supporting growth and boosting productivity. She also urged all stakeholders not to shy away from tackling the more difficult issues surrounding refugees and that integration is a continuous process.



“

All of the resources that we are putting into the refugees, the host community is also given priority to benefit from those resources.

– The Hon. Peter Akono,
Minister for Lands, Physical
Planning and Urban Areas
Management for Turkana
County



“

Integration and social cohesion are dynamic processes that need to be worked on, built up, and nurtured.

– Melissa Maimunah, Host
Community Representative for
Kakuma Settlement

Kakuma, Kenya



The Role of Data in Legal Protection and Inclusive Urban Planning in Refugee-Hosting Cities: Arua, Uganda

Located in northwestern Uganda near the borders with South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Arua is a commercial hub and transit centre for the West Nile region. The city has received a large influx of refugees, many of them unrecognised under Uganda's Refugee Act, which only recognises refugees living in Kampala or designated camps. Without accurate information on how many refugees were living in Arua, the city struggled to plan and budget for services.

In 2020, Cities Alliance brought together a consortium that included the AVSI Foundation, Arua city, and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the government agency mandated to collect and coordinate data in Uganda, to produce an accurate census of refugees and migrants in Arua's Central Division. This information would also enable the city to advocate for additional financial support to respond to migrants' needs.⁹

Samuel Mabala, Cities Alliance's Country Urban Adviser for Uganda, moderated the session and invited key stakeholders to share how they have applied the census data to enhance legal protection and inclusive urban planning in Arua.

The data is being used for city planning.

The Mayor of Arua City, Sam Nyakua Wadri, noted that the census data is already being used to inform policy making, programming, and investment planning in city infrastructure. It has enabled the city to open a municipal court to improve access to justice for refugees. Schools hosting migrant and refugee students are already receiving additional resources for more classrooms, desks, and toilets, and refugees are represented at school management committees. In addition, the data has revealed that migrants are contributing to the city economy through businesses they own and operate.

Stephen Bogere, Senior Sociologist at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, said that the census data informed the preparation of the Arua's physical development plan and encouraged the city planning department to establish a comprehensive digital database that is regularly updated to inform planning and decision making.

Arua has received additional resources from partners.

The Deputy City Clerk of Arua City, Cornelius Jobile, noted that the data showed that out of 670,000 students taking the Primary Leaving Examination, 30 per cent were migrants. The city shared this data with partners, including UNCDF, which used it to design a programme for financing durable solutions targeting the youth. Another partner, VNG, intends to conduct a census to generate data on Ayivu Division, which was not covered in the earlier census. The city also used the data to allocate market space to accommodate fish sales from South Sudan.

Solomon Osakan, Senior Settlement Officer at the OPM, said that the data led to a rapid needs assessment of refugees and their needs, which resulted in additional investments from donors. The Ugandan government also provided additional resources to UBOS to generate data for inclusive planning when it conducts the next national census in July 2023.

Services have expanded, and there is greater awareness of GBV.

The Host Community Representative, Ms. Hellen Drabrezu, said the data increased awareness of GBV and crime in the city. It also informed the planning for extending water services to underserved areas and an assessment of the adequacy of referral health facilities in police and prison barracks. In addition, it has fostered a good relationship with the South Sudanese business community in both formal and informal sectors.

⁹ The Arua census is accessible at <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/programme-outputs/report/arua-city-central-division-census-migrants-and-host-communities>.

Key Findings of the Census

- Refugees make up 10.3 per cent of the population of Arua's Central Division.
- Access to social services such as water, education, electricity, medical facilities, housing, and sanitation is severely constrained.
- In terms of economic opportunities and financial services, refugees have limited capacity and skills in financial literacy, enterprise selection, business management, and low access to loan facilities.
- Immigrants and refugees have been able to acquire land for commercial and subsistence farming as well as possession of other movable valuable assets.
- Refugees who break the law and are arrested stay in prison longer without access to justice or legal representation, due to lack of legal counsel and language barriers.

Vulnerable female refugees are particularly vulnerable due to cultural marginalisation and stigmatisation:

- Female refugee-headed households live in overcrowded small rental units with inadequate housing facilities.
- Women and girls experience early/forced marriages (some cross-generational), including resorting to transactional sex to support themselves and/or their suffering mothers.
- Women have limited or no access to sexual reproductive health care or HIV services.

The census conclusions written by UBOS included several recommendations. It urged Uganda to recognise all the refugees in the country, not just those in Kampala or designated camps. The report suggests expanding the Urban Refugee Policy to include refugees beyond Kampala and enacting a migration policy that provides more support to migrants in terms of labour, settlement, and assistance. It also called for a comprehensive census to be undertaken in the rest of Arua city, establishing a local government refugee desk, and increased budget for service delivery.

Urban Planning and Management Approaches for Greater Social Cohesion and Integration of Refugees and IDPS: Ethiopia and Somalia

Displacement and mobility are an increasing trend, and secondary cities are especially impacted, as they serve as safety nets for displaced people. This represents an opportunity; with growing populations and steady economic growth, secondary cities generate large numbers of jobs in the construction, service, industry, and other sectors.

Secondary cities can step ahead the challenge of migration and displacement by adopting forward-looking, creative urban planning and management approaches. Lessons from East African secondary cities show that such approaches facilitate the social and

economic integration of IDPs, refugees, and labour migrants and catalyse local economic development.

Tsigereda Tafesse, Cities Alliance's Country Urban Advisor for Ethiopia, highlighted Urban Expansion Planning as an approach that has been very successful in Ethiopia. Urban Expansion Planning is a long-term urban planning instrument that anticipates the inevitable population growth of cities and frames it into spatial planning, infrastructure design, and service delivery.¹⁰

¹⁰ More information on managing migration and Urban Expansion in Secondary Cities can be found here: <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/publications/cities-alliance-knowledge/managing-migration-and-urban-expansion-secondary>

In Ethiopia from 2013–2016, Urban Expansion Planning led to the construction of over 570 km of arterial roads, creating space for at least 140,000 new residents and more than 26,000 jobs. It also reduced informality and squatting in cities including Bahir Dar, Hawassa, and Mekelle. Since 2020, more cities in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Uganda have been exploring Urban Expansion Planning.

City and community representatives shared how cities in Ethiopia and Somalia are using Urban Expansion Planning and other approaches to integrate refugees and IDPs.

Urban expansion planning as an instrument of integration

In **Gabiley**, the expansion plan is making it possible for the city to prepare for the population to double in the coming years. It is facilitating basic services such as education, health, water, electricity, and communication services for IDPs and host communities alike. Gabiley Region is the main destination for refugees crossing the border into Ethiopia. There is currently no official number and contact to ensure their safety. Additional people in the city are putting pressure on resources availability including water and energy.

Gabiley has made many changes to make basic services more accessible to both IDPs and host communities. The city is divided into four districts, each with its own services such as schools, a medical centre, administrative offices, a commercial market, and a police station.

Gabiley is currently in the process of developing a five-year plan which includes community participation without discrimination. The plan aims to facilitate access to basic services for all, the creation of an economic zone, and building urban resilience by increasing the capacity of local authorities and resources to respond to environmental stress and increasing displacement of populations.

Investments and services to promote social and economic integration

Studies show that most migrants and IDPs coming to secondary cities are most likely to settle there permanently. Without careful planning and investment in services (land,

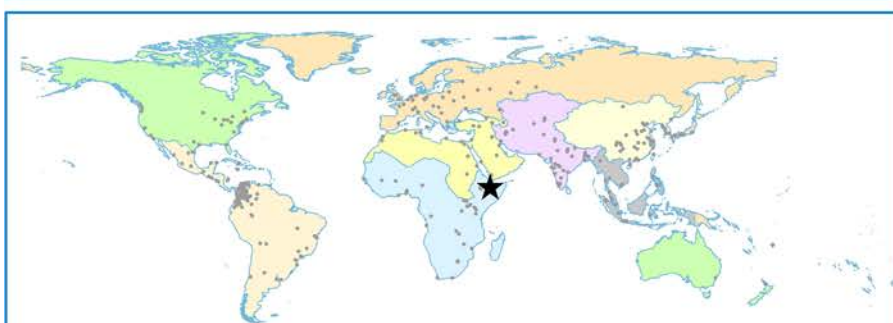
roads, market, water, health, schools, etc.) that consider migrants, IDPs, and refugees, secondary cities are most likely to suffer from unemployment, crime, violence, political unrest, aggravated poverty, and environmental risks. Purposeful investment in services and infrastructure improves lives and unlocks economic potential for migrants, IDPs and host communities. Cultural integration efforts play a significant role in fostering social cohesion.

Recommendations

Ms. Tafesse offered several recommendations for policy and planning based on Cities Alliance's extensive experience:

- Localisation of policies on governing urban migration plays a key role as cities seek to gain the resources and tools that they need to host migrants and displaced people who, formally acknowledged or not, continue to arrive.
- Policies and approaches of donor governments and international actors should increase the engagement of, and investment to, municipal authorities confronted with rapid urbanisation to build capacities and peer learning networks.
- Urban expansion planning should be adopted into national planning frameworks, as it has a critical role to play in helping rapidly urbanising cities accommodate new migrants and sustainably manage spatial expansion.
- Urban migrants and IDPs are there to stay. Facilitating durable economic solutions is a crucial intervention. This needs global advocacy as well as policy and financing responses.
- IDPs, refugees, and migrants must participate in local planning and the setting of service delivery and infrastructure development targets.
- Cities Alliance has existing instruments and mechanisms that are proven to be effective, cost efficient, and sustainable that should be scaled up to leverage the role of more secondary cities in managing migration.

Gebiley, Somali Land (Sub-Saharan Africa)

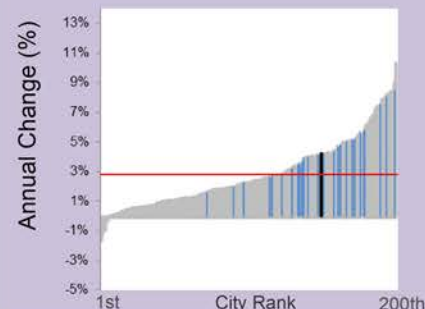


Legend for Charts

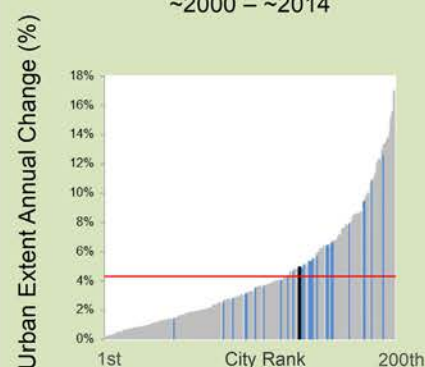
Gebiley | Other cities in region | All other cities | Global Average

Metrics	Oct 1990	May 2000	Feb 2019	Annual Change % ('00-'19)
Population	14,044	24,037	54,941	4.4
Built-up Area (Hectares)				
Total	56.4	93.5	312.9	6.4
Urban	3.7	50.9	233.7	8.1
Suburban	48.9	39.0	73.6	3.4
Rural	3.9	3.7	5.6	2.2
Open space (Hectares)				
Urbanized Open Space	61	81	177	4.1
Urban Extent	117	175	490	5.5
Density (Persons / Hectare)				
Built-up Area Density	258.4	269.2	178.5	-2.2
Urban Extent Density	119.5	137.2	112.1	-1.1
Fragmentation				
Saturation (Blt-up Area / Urb. Ext.)	0.48	0.53	0.64	0.9
Openness Index	0.62	0.49	0.34	-1.8
Compactness (Roundness)				
Proximity	0.99	0.98	0.94	-0.2
Cohesion	0.98	0.97	0.94	-0.2
Added Area (Hectares)	'90-'00	Share	'00-'19	Share
Infill	18.9	51.55%	80.37	36.88%
Extension	10.08	27.5%	99.36	45.6%
Leapfrog	4.68	12.77%	19.17	8.8%
Inclusion	3.0	8.18%	19.0	8.72%

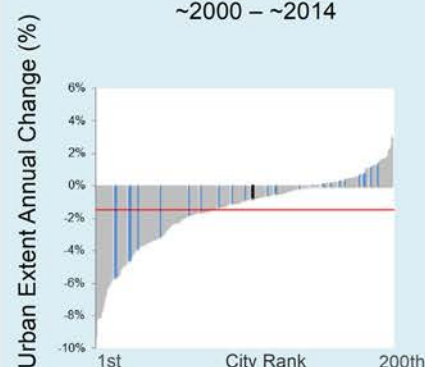
Population Growth
~2000 – ~2014



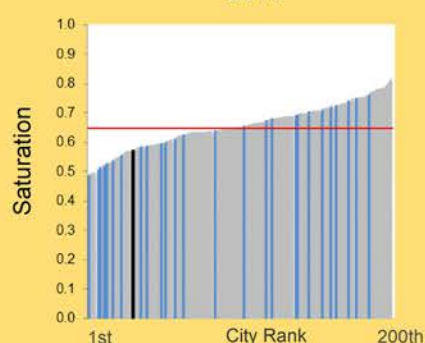
Urban Expansion
~2000 – ~2014



Density Change
~2000 – ~2014



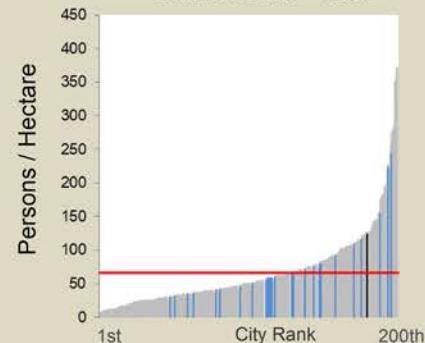
Fragmentation
~2014



Compactness
~2014



Average Density
Urban Extent ~2014





Borama, Somalia

CALL FOR PAPERS COMPETITION: MANAGING MIGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

With support from the European Union, Cities Alliance launched a Call for Papers to identify, compile, and disseminate best practices, methodologies, and strategies on migration and refugee management at the local level in the Horn of Africa. The call was part of the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action, supported by the EUTF for Africa. It targeted learning from the Action's cities, and the deadline for submission was 1 October 2022.

Winning Paper

At the third peer-learning event in Kampala, Cities Alliance launched a Call for Papers to identify, compile, and disseminate best practices, methodologies, and strategies on migration and refugee management at the local level in the Horn of Africa. The winning paper was submitted by Dr. Binyamin Bogale of Jigjiga University, who presented it at the peer-learning event in Lodwar, Kenya in February 2023.

Title: “The Role of Local Actors in Managing Migration Along the Eastern Desert Route of Ethiopia.”

Author: Dr. Binyamin Bogale

Abstract

The Eastern Desert migration route runs through the Somali Region of Ethiopia, extending from the city of Jigjiga to the border town of Tog-wochalle near Somaliland. It is a hub for many irregular migrants arriving from the northern and central parts of Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Somalia on their way to Europe and the Gulf States. As a result of this influx of migrants, the Somali Region is facing overwhelming pressure from the problem of migration management.

This study aims to better understand migrants’ experiences along the Eastern Desert Route and the role of local actors in managing migration. It investigates the major risks and consequences migrants encounter and how the regional government and Jigjiga city administration respond. The author employed a constructivist approach to research, collecting data through in-depth interviews with key informants, focus group discussions, and observations. The data was then analysed using theoretical frameworks from symbolic interactionism, social networks, and globalisation.

The findings reveal that the increasing numbers of irregular migrants transiting via the Jigjiga-Tog-wochalle route (either from parts of Ethiopia or from Somalia/Somaliland) are challenging the region’s capacity for migration management, especially in Jigjiga city administration and Tog-wochalle. These migrants face risks such as detention, confinement, physical and emotional abuse, control of mobility, sleep deprivation, denial of communication, and health-related issues. At the same time, the influx has curtailed local actors’ ability to respond, sometimes exposing the migrants to further victimisation.

The study offers several recommendations, including building a rehabilitation centre for intercepted migrants to avoid further victimisation and enabling local authorities to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration. Finally, to have a proper transfer of intercepted migrants, Ethiopia must reach a mutual agreement with neighbouring countries (Somalia and Somaliland).

1. Introduction

Migration is an age-old phenomenon, and history is full of stories of people leaving their places of residence in search of food, security from conflict, work opportunities, and a better life (IOM 2013; Liang 2007). Today, we witness frequent population movements around the world, both within and across countries. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division (2021a), there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population.

Despite its contribution to the economies of both sending and receiving countries, this international migrant force is subject to abuse, trafficking, and slavery. According to researchers, irregular migration (especially human trafficking) is a major social problem and global concern. It negatively affects the lives of millions of people and has become common in poorer to more prosperous countries and throughout regions around the world (Abebaw 2013; Aronowitz 2009; Cameroon and Newman 2008; Shelly 2010; Yoseph et al. 2006).

Although there are different definitions of irregular migration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines it as “movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries” (IOM 2011, p.54).

Currently, every nation-state is affected in one way or another by irregular migration (specifically human smuggling) either as an origin, transit, or destination site, and sometimes a combination of these. As one of the East African source countries for migrants, Ethiopia is no exception. According to Siegfried and Kuschminder (2011), the face of migration in and outside of Ethiopia has been changing, from large refugee flows in the 1980s and 1990s, to different forms of labour migration in the aughts as people sought employment opportunities abroad. In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has

become a major source country for labour migration to the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East (de Regt and Tafesse 2015; Fernandez, 2017). The history of young Ethiopians migrating to the Middle East through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea can be traced back to the rise of Islam in the 7th century CE (Ahmed 2013).

In recent decades, the trend of migration in Ethiopia has changed, following an increasing demand for labour from the destination countries. In most cases, these demands are met through the facilitation of irregular migration brokers operating in the country. Many irregular migrants in Ethiopia, especially men, are falling prey to traffickers and smugglers who use irregular over-land routes along the Eastern Desert Route.

Despite Ethiopia's position as a significant source, transit, and destination for migrants to Europe and the Gulf States, academics have paid little attention to migration issues, including the role of local actors in managing migration. There are a few isolated studies on the Eastern Desert Route and the experiences of migrants along the route in the Ethiopian Somali Region, but a more comprehensive study is needed. This study aims to take a step in that direction by exploring a wide range of migrant experiences and the role of the local actors involved in managing migration along the Eastern Desert Route.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Study Site

This study was conducted in the Somali Region of Ethiopia along the route extending from the city of Jigjiga to the border town of Tog-wochalle all the way to Somaliland (the Eastern Desert Route). This route is a hub for many irregular migrants arriving from Ethiopia and Somaliland on their way to Europe and the Gulf States.

2.2 Study Design

This study is exploratory qualitative research. Given the clandestine and sensitive nature of the issue, there are very few (if any) studies related to the experience of male irregular migrants. The author employed cross-sectional study design from June 2018 to June 2020, capturing the lived experience of the migrants by letting them recall things along the route.

2.3 Sampling Procedures

There are four irregular migratory routes in Ethiopia. The Eastern Desert Route was selected because it is

heavily travelled by irregular migrants moving from northern and central Ethiopia to the Gulf States. Due to the clandestine nature of the study, purposive, snowball, and accidental sampling techniques were used to select informants. Using these sampling techniques, a total of 35 informants were selected. Though generalisation is not a major purpose in qualitative studies, the researcher used what Creswell (1998) recommends as a sample size per study for qualitative research (20-30 individuals).

The study's target populations were migrants, the local community, and organisations involved in managing irregular migration, including government (kebele, city administration, police commission, the Eastern Anti-Trafficking and Smuggling Task Force, Bureau of Social and Labour Affairs) and non-government (IOM).

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the study was collected using in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Twenty interviews were conducted to capture the lived experience of migrants, and 15 interviews with key informants to capture the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in addressing the issue. Focus group discussions captured the role of the local community, such as community elders and transportation sector workers living along the route.

First, the data generated was transformed into transcripts, field notes, and words. Then, text and words were categorised and interpreted into content, and concept structures formed to develop the themes in line with the research objectives. The data was analysed and interpreted using qualitative data analysis methods, namely thematic or content-based analysis. To ensure the privacy of the informants, pseudonyms were used.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Major Risks and Dangers Migrants Encounter Along the Route

Stranded migrants, transportation sector workers, police, and the local community revealed that migrants encounter four major categories of risks and consequences along the Eastern Desert Route: arrest and confinement; physical and emotional abuse; control of mobility, sleep deprivation, denial of communication; and health risks. Each risk is discussed below and includes the perspective of migrants' lived experiences.

Arrest and Confinement

Traffickers/smugglers violate the rights of their victims to take maximum advantage and ensure compliance and control. Irregular migrants often face arrest and confinement by the police at check points, local militias on desert routes, and brokers in cities and town. Most stranded migrants interviewed in Jigjiga city and Tog-wochalle stated that the migration process along the route and in both towns was full of arrest and confinement.

Several reasons – such as a disagreement over payment between broker and migrant or driver and migrant, and the competition among brokers over the smuggling/trafficking business – immediately led brokers and/or drivers to report the case to the police, resulting in migrants being arrested and confined. With many of the migrants transiting the region from the northern and central parts of Ethiopia, they were often arrested by the police during their journey and while in Tog-wochalle.

Migrants can be forced to get out of a bus, remain confined at checkpoints, and then be taken to the nearby kebele police station under arrest. Most migrants stated that the police took away their kebele identification cards and other personal belongings, including their cell phones, during their arrest and confinement.

Physical and Emotional Abuse

The second category of risk and consequence is physical and emotional abuse. The study found abuses including threats to attack, actual physical attacks such as slapping (by corrupt police officers, local militias, brokers, facilitators, and drivers and their assistants), mistreatment with degrading words, causing nose bleeds, breaking bones (leg or hand), threatening to kill, and sometimes killing.

One participant summarised the abuse many experienced:

To reach ports in Somalia, it involves traveling longer desert distances which exposes [migrants] to beatings, detention, theft, and sexual violence. All these are happening both within the boundaries of Ethiopia and after crossing the borders. Most perpetrators are brokers, corrupt police officers, checkpoint guards, villagers, and border authorities at each segment of the journey.

Likewise, a stranded victim from the Afar Region asked rhetorically: “How can the mistreatment and beating happen to us in our country...if this occurs in our homeland, what will happen to us outside our country?”



Kakuma, Kenya

The focus group discussion held with transportation sector workers also confirmed that drivers and their assistants use physical attacks such as slapping and beating or boxing to demand additional money from migrants. Discussants also noted that migrants are mostly seen as objects and traded like goods among different brokers and traffickers once they are in the middle of the desert.

Control of Mobility, Sleep Deprivation, and Denial of Communication

The third type of risk stranded migrants encounter along the route is control of mobility and sleep deprivation, followed by denial of communication. Traffickers and their facilitators commit all these violations to keep the migrants under their control (ILO, 2011). In this study, most stranded migrants stated that they encountered one or more of these risks along the route during their journey. They also expressed that, unlike with arrest and containment or physical and emotional abuse, the control of migrants' mobility, sleep deprivation, and denial of communication are only limited to brokers and their facilitators operating along the route.

For instance, a stranded migrant from Adigrat, Tigray Region interviewed during a mass arrest by police officers of irregular migrants that were locked at a single compound said that:

Until I arrived in Jigjiga city I was communicating with my broker via cell phone...yet, once I met my facilitator, I was told to make my communication with him alone not with the main broker...then the facilitator brought me here to stay in this compound and he left from this place by taking my mobile... I was unable to contact my main broker and family, the only person I and other young boys would contact was the facilitator that came either to check us or when he brings other victims like us.

Likewise, stranded migrants from Tigray and Wallo (the Sedambe and Sambete areas, respectively) indicated that brokers and facilitators kept them under control by confiscating their kebele identification cards. One participant recounted that:

We were unable to get out of the hotel because we do not have our identification card with us...if you do not have a kebele identification card you cannot freely walk around the streets of Jigjiga, because of the frequent search made by the police for security issues at every corner of the city...so they both said we were forced to stay at our bed being closely watched by the bedroom renter and supervised by the facilitator.

Health-related Risks

According to Bhugra and Becker (2005), migration is a complex process, depending upon its type and causes; the process itself is stressful. These stresses, combined with harassment and a lack of social support, creates a discrepancy between achievement and expectation, further detrimentally affecting the migrants' physical and mental well-being.

In this study, migrants expressed experiencing various health risks, including stress related to arrest, confinement, nose-bleeding, bone-breaking, bacteria-borne diseases resulting from the food and water contamination, dehydration due to over-sweating, weight loss due to hunger, and loss of self-control due to lack of energy to reach their destination. Almost all the stranded migrants indicated that they experienced either one or all of these health problems during the migration process.

3.2 Migration Trends along the Eastern Desert Route (Somali Region)

Human migration has been part of the socio-cultural, economic, and political landscape of Ethiopia for centuries, and the country has been challenged by different migration patterns and dynamics. Historically, its people have migrated to different parts of the world crossing international boundaries. Migration to Saudi Arabia through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea can be traced back to the rise of Islam in the 7th century CE and its peaceful entry into Ethiopia (Ahmed 2013).

Since then, Ethiopian migrants have been moving out of the Horn of Africa in all directions of the compass. For instance, Yitna (2006) notes that although the exact historical period is unknown, it is believed that hundreds and thousands of Ethiopian irregular migrants transited through the Somali Region of Ethiopia to the city of Bossaso in Somalia with the purpose of traveling by boat across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and Saudi Arabia in search of economic opportunities. The International Organization for Migration also notes that the Ethiopian-Somali region is an important transit route for irregular migrants interested in the Gulf States (IOM 2016). It is clear that irregular migrants are transiting the region at a significant rate.

Despite the historical religious linkages and early experiences of migration to the Gulf States, socio-economic problems in Ethiopia, bureaucratic procedures, the costs of legal migration, and the lure of a better life made the search for alternative routes inevitable (Yitna 2006; Soucy 2011; Tekalign 2018).



This situation eventually gave rise to increasing irregular migration of the labour force to the Middle East through the route of Jigjiga-Tog-wochalle-Bossasso.

In line with this trend, the study found that the Ethiopian Somali Region is facing a growing migration management problem related to irregular migration and victims of human trafficking. For instance, official immigration data for the region from 2015–2016 states that there were over 35,833 irregular movements in the Fafan zone of the Ethiopian Somali Region alone (IOM 2016). Many of these have been irregular migrants coming from the northern and central parts of Ethiopia and Somalia/Somaliland.

Although it is difficult to quantify the total number of irregular migrants transiting the Somali Region, it is easy to envisage the magnitude because of the number of intercepted migrants who are caught, released, and then returned to different regions in Ethiopia and Somaliland. Using immigration data for intercepted migrants from August 2015 to April 2016, IOM (2016) puts the number of migrants trying to irregularly migrate to the Gulf States at 11,440 (for Ethiopia) and 1,377 (for Somalis from Somalia/Somaliland) to Europe via the Ethiopian and Somaliland border town of Tog-wochalle.

Based on the data collected, this study finds that there is a noticeable change in the trend of irregular migration (including human trafficking) within the Ethiopian Somali Region in four major areas: migration patterns, the actors involved, the structural organisation of smuggling, and trust on financial exchange.

Migrant Patterns

Indicating different historical causal factors such as unemployment, drought, ethnic conflict, and political instability in Ethiopia, different informants interviewed for the study stated that there is a change in the pattern of migration via the Ethiopian Somali Region transit route. Two former smugglers interviewed in Jigjiga and Tog-wochalle separately elaborate on this issue as follows:

In the past, migrants who would like to transit through the Somali Region used to come alone up to Jigjiga city and Tog-wochalle town, and then staying in hotels, they would search for brokers that can facilitate their journey to Somaliland irrespective of his/her background. Today, their migration process is pre-planned at home area and interconnected to their networks operating within transit routes all the way to the destination countries. Using such networks, from 1,000 to 3,000 migrants are smuggled through the Somali region per day.

A police officer interviewed in Jigjiga further explains that the patterns of irregular migrants traveling through the Somali Region have changed significantly. In the past, the police used to intercept few migrants transiting through region. Today, however, the number has increased, and in just one day a police officer can arrest between 150 to 500 migrants in Jigjiga alone. He observed that the numbers of irregular migrants are especially high during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, increasing beyond the capacity of the police to control and manage them.



Actors Involved

Many of the informants interviewed for the study – police officers, bus station workers, and former smuggling facilitators – stated that there is a real change in the type and nature of actors involved in smuggling. A police officer interviewed in Jigjiga noted that the business of smuggling in the Ethiopian Somali Region is currently attached to certain ethnic groups (Amhara, Oromo, and Tigray), which police have not observed in the past. Today, an Oromo migrant will have his own Oromo smuggler, and the same for Tigray and Amhara ethnic group migrants. Sometimes, such an attachment even extends to the local level; for instance, a migrant from Adigrat will have an Adigrat broker, and a migrant from Rayakobo will have a broker from Rayakobo.

The study also found that the type and number of actors involved in the smuggling/trafficking activity in the Ethiopian Somali Region have expanded, adding new organisations and actors such as banks, corrupt military personnel, and immigration authorities. These actors are either deliberately or unintentionally involved.

The Structural Organisation of Smuggling

Different studies (IOM 2006; Yitna 2006; IOM 2013; RMMS 2013) have mentioned that almost all the irregular migrants crossing the Ethiopian Somali Region have come from northern and central Ethiopia. Today, however, the region has become the smuggling and trafficking consolidation point not only for Ethiopians, but also for new victims from Somalia and Somaliland. The change in the involvement of migrants from different countries transiting via the region has resulted in a new form of structural organisation for the business of smuggling. As the police officer referenced above noted in his interview, the business of smuggling/trafficking is now conducted in an organised manner from source to transit and destination, which was uncommon in the past. Although there is no concrete data, the police officers, the IOM Liaison Office in Jigjiga, and the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BOLSA) for the Ethiopian Somali Region all expressed that the business of human smuggling/trafficking has become deeply rooted in the region.

Trust on Financial Exchange

Another changing trend is in the area of financial exchange among many actors of smuggling, including migrants themselves. Migrants still fear losing money at various stages of smuggling and being forced to send for the remaining funds needed for their transportation. With the business of smuggling attached intimately to an ethnic group or locality, however, financial exchanges are made with full trust among migrants and brokers of the same ethnic group. A former smuggling facilitator interviewed in Jigjiga stated that the business of smuggling and its financial exchanges, both within Ethiopia and closer to Somaliland, are conducted with full trust, sometimes among unknown actors.

3.2 Role of Local Actors

As discussed above, the business of migrant smuggling in the eastern part of Ethiopia, mainly within the Somali Region, is increasing. While crossing the region as a transit route, large numbers of young Ethiopians are exposed to different forms of human rights violations, exploitation, and abuses. Considering the high prevalence and complexity of the problem in Ethiopia, ILO noted that an effective response and management demands a coordinated, multi-level, and multi-sectorial approach (ILO 2011).

This section outlines the various efforts that governmental and non-governmental organisations have made in response to irregular migration in general, and migrant smuggling in particular, in the Somali Region of Ethiopia.

Prevention

At the national level, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the key institution engaged in activities to prevent trafficking/smuggling (Yoseph et al., 2006). Extending its organisational structure down to the regional level, the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs plays a pivotal role in preventing smuggling/trafficking activities. An interview held with the regional head of BOLSA in the Ethiopian-Somali region confirmed that the organisation leads the prevention and management of irregular migration, including human trafficking activities in the region.

Under the umbrella of BOLSA, the Eastern Anti-Trafficking Task Force was established in 2016 (2009 in the Ethiopian calendar) to prevent and combat human trafficking and smuggling. The task force covers four regions: Somali, Harari, Eastern Oromia, and Dire Dawa. It has not yet begun implementing activities, and BOLSA continues to play its prevention role in the Ethiopian Somali Region with a limited capacity.

BOLSA's Labour Administration and Employment Service Director for the Ethiopian Somali Region vividly points out that little has been achieved to follow up and monitor the situation and address smuggling problems because of budget limits, a lack of experts on the issue, and a shortage of vehicles to reach migrants stranded in border areas. He noted that with the Somali Region serving as a source, transit, and destination place for irregular migrants – especially those coming from northern and central Ethiopia, Somalia, and Somaliland – managing the problem has grown beyond the control and capacity of the region. The director added that BOLSA has asked for support from NGOs working in the region, but only IOM and Save the Children are cooperating with them on prevention activities.

In addition to BOLSA, another regional government organisation actively involved in trafficking prevention activities is the Regional Police Commission. Even though many of the stranded migrants interviewed for the study mentioned the police force as an actor involved in violating the rights of migrants on the route, it is impossible to overlook the role the Somali Region's police force plays in preventing human smuggling and trafficking activities.

An interview with a police officer in Jigjiga shows that, beyond raising public awareness and mobilising public participation, the regional police force is actively working to prevent smuggling/trafficking activities by assigning police officers to bus stations and checkpoints along the migration route. He added that the officers stationed at the bus stations, in collaboration with transportation sector workers, are involved in preventing activities by registering on the spot all the passengers travelling from Jigjiga to Tog-wochalle and again from Jigjiga to Harar and further cities/towns. Based on passengers' identification cards, the police officers would search for potential irregular migrants and investigate further as needed.

The police commission has also used hotel registrations in Jigjiga as a prevention mechanism. Customers renting a hotel room are registered and the lists with identification cards sent to the police commission. This practice has been stopped for two years, however, due to the complaints of hotel owners.

A police officer interviewed in Tog-wochalle elaborated on police efforts to prevent trafficking and smuggling:

Tog-wochalle is a border town closer to Somaliland. It is by staying in such a town, especially in bars and 'shisha' rooms, traffickers and their facilitators conduct their business. It is in bars and 'shisha rooms' where traffickers keep victims under confinement. So, our police officers in collaboration with the owners of the bars and 'shisha rooms' strongly follow up and manage the situation and problems of trafficking.

Protection

As discussed previously, migrants face various forms of abuse and exploitation, including physical and emotional abuse and labour exploitation. Yet, the study identified that there was very little assistance or protection provided to stranded migrants or those intercepted at different towns and checkpoints in the region.

In interviews, regional officials stated repeatedly that the major problem is a lack of budget allocated to the issue. Informants from the Somali Region BOLSA and the Police Commissions in Jigjiga and Tog-wochalle, who are involved in recent protection activities, repeatedly state in interviews that the region is unable to protect its own potential youth migrants attempting to migrate to Europe, let alone irregular migrants coming from northern and central Ethiopia to take a boat in Bossasso, Somalia.

Similarly, a focal person for assisted voluntary returnee and reintegration in IOM's Jigjiga Liaison Office said in an interview that the office is providing protection services only to those Ethiopian returnees deported to Tog-wochalle by the governments of Yemen and Somaliland. Thus, this study found that, in addition to the regional government bodies, the international organisation representing the interests of migrants have ignored migrants stranded along the Ethiopian Somali Region transit route.

The study also identified a lack of coordination among the Ethiopian Somali, Harari, and Oromia regional governments and the Dire Dawa Council as another problem. The Eastern Anti-Trafficking Task Force was established in 2016, but as yet still has not begun carrying out its presumed task. A big part of the problem is that concerned officials developed an idea that almost all of the irregular migrants were coming from outside eastern Ethiopia. Their collective understanding has also been affected by recent regional border conflicts between Oromia and the Ethiopian Somali Region. Thus, the feeling that “we are not a source of irregular migrants” directly and indirectly impacted the institutional network among the regional governments.

Prosecution

Investigating and prosecuting human trafficking and migrant smuggling require careful and humane treatment of migrants and witnesses, upon whose testimony the prosecution depends. In interviews, police officers in Jigjiga and Tog-wochalle said that stranded migrants who were arrested in the two areas and requested for testimony were not prepared to testify against their smugglers because they will be trying their luck again in the near future using the same or another smuggler along the same route.

The study also found that there is no social stigma or criminality associated with involvement in human trafficking among the local community, in spite of migrants' failure to report and give testimony against brokers. An assessment by IOM (2016:23) on irregular migration in the Fafan zone of the Somali Region confirms this point:

The topic of irregular migration is so pervasive locally today in the capital of the Somali Region, Jigjiga, that there is a running joke. If someone cannot be reached, will not answer their phones, or goes missing they are automatically accused of 'Tharib' (i.e., locally tharib refers to migrating through the irregular channels) by others.

A police officer interviewed in Tog-wochalle substantiates the above assessment:

The local people in the rural villages surrounding the town of Tog-wochalle are mostly crossed by brokers and migrants intending to reach Somaliland, but the communities do not want to stop them from their journey and report the cases to the police. This is because the local people always believe that migrants are 'Masakiin Ethiopians.' So, they let them pass safely through us and become successful. The word 'Masakiin' refers to the person, who is poor and migrating to search for alternatives.

In addition to the problems associated with stranded migrants and local community failures to testify against smugglers and their facilitators, the study reveals that most officials do not clearly understand the meaning of smuggling or trafficking in persons. They also do not have a good understanding of the difference between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The police, local militia, and immigration officials – who arrest irregular migrants, including victims, before they cross or while crossing the international border – commonly arrest all of them without screening for status. Depending on the availability of resources, the Somali Region police sometimes return intercepted migrants to the city of Harar, where local police then return them to their place of origin or send them on to Addis Ababa – without screening the migrants and determining if they are victims of trafficking or persons using the service of smugglers.

Regional officials, including the police, stated that a number of criminals (brokers/traffickers and facilitators) have been sentenced in the Somali Region over the past few years. However, some of the informants interviewed for the study (i.e., stranded migrants, previous smuggling facilitators, and bus station workers) implied that none of the main smuggling coordinators and brokers have been arrested and prosecuted. Even in cases where a criminal

act has been reported and an investigation initiated, very few actually end up in prosecution. The investigation is complicated because the courts are understaffed and overburdened with cases, and because both victims and communities are not willing to testify against the traffickers and their facilitators.

The government of Ethiopia has recently intensified its migration control infrastructure and regulations following increased media coverage of the suffering of Ethiopian migrants en route and deportations of thousands of migrants from Saudi Arabia. It has also swiftly adopted proclamations, including the new Anti-Human Smuggling Proclamation (909/2015) and the Private Employment Exchange Service Proclamation (632/2009). In addition, the Anti-Trafficking Task Force was established in 2016 at different layers of the bureaucracy to curb human trafficking and smuggling and combat illegal migration. Practically, however, it has been exceedingly difficult for the control infrastructure to stop the mobility of migrants using the services of traffickers and smugglers.

3.3 Rehabilitation Services

The provision of comprehensive and immediate services to the trafficking victims – temporary shelter, medical and psychosocial care, legal aid, food, clothing, and safe voluntary return and reintegration (including vocational and skills training, micro-finance, and employment creation) – are clearly stipulated in agreements and by many international organisations (IOM 2006; Play Therapy Africa 2011). However, this study found that the empirical reality did not match at all with what has been stated and agreed upon by concerned stakeholders, including government and non-government actors.

From the author's personal observation of the irregular migrant checkpoints in the area under study, when irregular migrants are arrested by the police or local militias, there are no coordinated rehabilitation activities. Until they are collectively taken to the nearby kebele police station for investigation, migrants (including victims) reported that they were required to stay in an open field



Adama, Ethiopia

amid the sun and wind from three to six hours. The existing counter-trafficking activities in the area are potentially limited to keeping migrants in temporary detention centres, or, if they are in Tog-wochalle, gathering them and sending them back to Jigjiga and then on to Harar.

Due to the absence of rehabilitation services offered by the regional police, migrants who have been arrested are often released and then observed wandering and sleeping on the streets because they have nowhere to go. The focus group discussion held with committee members of 04 Kebele in Jigjiga confirmed that migrants are sometimes found wandering around the kebele zones and villages begging for food, water, and shelter.

A police officer interviewed in Jigjiga stated that, without a rehabilitation programme for irregular migrants arrested on the route, the police could only hold them for a day and then release them, because there is no budget for food and water. He added that there is no budget at all for such migrants, and the only option is to commander a vehicle transporting khat (typically an Isuzu F-series truck) and return the migrants to Harar, where the Harari regional police would take the remaining measures.

Another police officer interviewed in Tog-wochalle stated that ordinary police officers and local militia in his woreda are not trained on the issue of smuggling, trafficking, and how to treat victims during interception. As a result of this lack of knowledge and absence of an appropriate place to keep intercepted migrants, they are frequently held in prison together with criminals before being sent back to Jigjiga for further action.

The return of migrants to their source areas (referral mechanisms) is not organised at the national level, and so the regional governments can only transport migrants to the nearest regional authority, which often results in the release of the migrants in the process and enables them to migrate once again. In an interview, the Labour Administration and Employment Service Director of the Somali Region BOLSA characterises the region's role in the migrant rehabilitation programme as follows:

In the Ethiopian Somali Region, BOLSA is the lead on taking responsibility to address the rehabilitation service for intercepted irregular migrants in the region...but the annual budget the bureau has is too small. As it is known our region is being stricken by irregular migrants coming from the northern and central parts of Ethiopia and again recently from Somalia/Somaliland...so with this little budget - let alone to give rehabilitation services to such intercepted irregular migrants in our region - our bureau is even unable to partially address the problem of irregular migration of the Somali Region.

On the scope of the rehabilitation programme in the Somali Region, the BOLSA Director referenced above also indicated that services are limited to irregular migrants intercepted in the region who are from the region. He added that, so far, the bureau has not taken significant action to serve the irregular migrants coming from northern and central Ethiopia headed for the Gulf States. Moreover, due to lack of support from NGOs and the limit of the nationally allocated budget for the region, the director noted that the Somali Region rehabilitation programme for its irregular migrants is currently limited to the Fafan zone.

Without an effective rehabilitation programme, some of the stranded migrants interviewed for this study revealed that a secret deal is often struck between corrupt police officers and smugglers to hand over seized migrants directly from the Togo-wochalle detention centre for further re-trafficking/smuggling and victimisation. The informants stressed that these conditions have created a fertile ground for smugglers to access large numbers of migrants in a concentrated manner.

In sum, this study revealed that the rehabilitation services for migrants stranded within the Ethiopian Somali Region transit route are very limited. Because of a lack of awareness, limits on national and regional budgets, and the absence of involvement or attention by local and international NGOs, these migrants are exposed to various forms of human right violations, exploitation, and abuse.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Irregular migration in its different forms is a major social problem that negatively affects the lives of millions of people around the world. It occurs in poorer to more prosperous countries and regions of the globe. Currently, every nation is impacted in one way or another by irregular migration, either as a place of transit, destination, or origin (or sometimes a combination of these). Ethiopia is no exception.

The majority of Ethiopians, mainly male, are falling prey to traffickers and smugglers because their migratory movement is carried out through irregular routes, such as the Eastern Desert Route, and their migratory status is irregular. Yet, compared to women and children, the experience of such a significant male population has not been investigated and shared with the public.

Although the initial phase of the Ethiopian male migration seems to be smuggling, once they reach the Eastern Desert Route, migrants are vulnerable to traffickers and exposed to various forms of risks and exploitations. Different actors involved in processing irregular migrants violate their human rights to take maximum advantage and ensure compliance and control. The risks migrants encounter along the route include arrest and confinement; being sold across

borders; physical and emotional abuse; control of mobility, sleep deprivation, and denial of communication; and stresses related to arrest and confinement.

With migrants treated like commodities and their rights violated both along the migration route and in destination countries, there is a significant and urgent need to protect the migrants' human rights and prosecute and punish actors involved in the various stages of smuggling/trafficking. This should start with the implementation of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime in its entire form, along with strengthening the migration control, management infrastructure, and regulations adopted by the

government of Ethiopia in different proclamations with adequate budgeting. Ethiopia must also reach a mutual agreement with Somaliland/Somalia on a safe referral pathway and establish a common rehabilitation centre for migrants intercepted along their shared border. This, in turn, can promote coordinated migration governance within the Horn of Africa.

Finally, although this study sheds some much-needed light on the experience of irregular Ethiopian male migrants along the Eastern Desert Route, more research must be undertaken on migration governance and the treatment of migrants en route by law enforcement agents and other concerned bodies.



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EU Initiatives Are Reducing Risks along on the Eastern Migratory Route

The Eastern migratory route that links the East and Horn of Africa to the Gulf countries and the Middle East is one of the busiest for irregular migration. Harsh climate conditions, conflict, and pre-existing socio-economic challenges, threaten the survival of people along this route, most of whom are Ethiopian. The EU has financed various actions in Ethiopia and along the Eastern migratory route to reduce the risks to migrants and the pressure on local communities along the route.

For instance, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) for Migrant Protection and Reintegration implemented awareness raising activities about the risks of irregular migration, including producing and broadcasting a radio programme, organising community workshops and mass mobilisations, launching social media campaigns, and distributing posters and flyers.

In addition, the JI supported around 9,000 Ethiopian returnees with individual reintegration activities (along the economic, social, and psychosocial dimension of reintegration) and more than 30 community reintegration activities (such as chicken and fish farming, modern beekeeping, plastic recycling, fruit tree cultivation, and irrigation-based farming) that increased the resilience of both returnees and their communities of return across Ethiopia.

Along the Eastern migratory route specifically, the JI supported two Migration Response Centres in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, in Tog-Wochalle and Dawelle. These centres are part of a regional

network that provides protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants by offering shelter, food, clothing, medical care, psychosocial support, and transportation along the way. The centres also raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration and the available alternatives, and they promote social cohesion and understanding between migrants and host communities.

Since 2019, Migration Response Centres along the Eastern migratory route have assisted more than 8,000 migrants, 21 per cent of them children.

The Better Migration Management (BMM) programme, co-funded by the EU and Germany, promotes activities including legislative improvements, training, support for law enforcement institutions, reinforcement of border posts, and awareness raising. It also supports partners from Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia to harmonise migration management across borders and improve the protection of vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking.

Along the Eastern migratory route alone, BMM has enhanced the range and quality of services provided at official border crossing points (Ethiopia-Djibouti and Ethiopia-Somalia) to encourage regular migration while addressing migrants' needs. The programme has also contributed to improved referral mechanisms and facilitated cross-border cooperation to reintegrate Ethiopian migrant children. To respond to the urgent needs of people moving along the Eastern route, BMM also funded the construction of a health centre at the Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti, and contributed to the construction of a similar centre in Tog-Wochalle.

Honorable Mentions From The Call For Papers

Title: “Arua City Adapts Locally Sustainable Best Practices to Provide Inclusive Adaptable Solutions to the Needs of Refugees and Host Communities in the City”

Author: Basil Droti

Abstract

Arua City has employed good practices to provide adaptable solutions to respond to the needs of refugees and host community members in the city, especially in the areas of education, vocational skill training, economic opportunities, and involvement in city associations.

However, refugees have not benefitted adequately due to the manner in which these interventions have been structured. Uganda’s current legal frameworks do not recognise Arua City as a refugee-hosting urban centre, which greatly hinders its efforts to provide targeted interventions to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities. The legal frameworks should be reviewed and adjusted to remedy the situation and better guide refugee management. Arua’s Ayivu Division should also be supported to conduct a census that includes refugees.

Overview

The protracted nature of armed conflicts and political instability in eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa has caused a refugee and forced migration crisis in the region. Uganda has been particularly affected, and in the last decade has become the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. As a result, local governments are facing substantial pressure to provide for the growing needs of migrants and displaced people.

In Uganda, refugees are formally registered and settled in Kampala and 13 rural-based, designated refugee settlements, where they benefit from targeted interventions. Uganda’s Refugee Act grants freedom for refugees to move and settle in any part of the country, subject to reasonable restrictions specified by law or directions issued by the Commissioner of Refugees on grounds of national security, public order, public health, public morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Many refugees choose to settle in areas outside the designated refugee settlements, such as Arua City. The largest city in Uganda’s West Nile sub-region, Arua City was created when Arua Municipality and Ayivu County merged in 2020. The city borders Democratic Republic of Congo to the west as well as the West Nile districts of Arua, Terego, and Maracha.

Arua City Council has adopted an open-door policy towards managing refugees and migrants. While refugees living in Arua City do not benefit from specific services to respond to their needs, the city council provides them with full access to basic services. According to statistics from the Arua Senior Inspector of Schools, 24.5 per cent of students enrolled in primary schools in Central Division of Arua City are refugees. They receive medical services from government-run and private health facilities at no cost. At some primary schools, such as the Arua Primary School Oli, refugees are represented on parent and teacher executive committees. The refugee community is also represented in the Market Vendors Association. These types of engagement have helped provide refugees with space to share their unique concerns.

The paper explores the issues Arua City faces in providing services to both refugee and host communities within its jurisdiction. It identifies the best practices Arua City Council has incorporated to develop adaptable solutions that respond to the needs of refugees and host communities and realise sustainable improvements.

The paper discusses factors hindering the ability of refugees in Arua City to fully realise their rights as provided under international humanitarian law, human rights law, and the Ugandan Constitution. It also highlights recommendations to strengthen the role of Arua City in refugee and migration management and the impact of the CRRF on refugee management.

Methodology

For the study, the author reviewed documents including policy frameworks on refugee management and the Arua City Development Plan 2021–2025 to assess its inclusivity in terms of responding to the unique needs of different population groups. Best practices were identified from existing literature that demonstrated how local governments have used their discretion to provide adaptable solutions to the needs

of refugees and migrants. A survey was also conducted on specific actions that can be taken to address the welfare of both refugees and host communities in a sustainable way.

Findings

Best Practices

Even though Arua City does not have a designated refugee settlement and the only recognised urban refugee response programme in Uganda is in Kampala, Arua City hosts a considerable number of ‘self-settled’ refugees. Stakeholders identified best practices including:

- Provision of unhindered access to basic public services for both refugees and host communities.** Arua City has embraced the right to access public services in terms of education, health, water supply, waste management and participation in income-generating activities, especially trade. According to the Senior Inspector of Schools, refugee children represent 24.5 per cent of students enrolled in primary school in Arua City Central Division (5,246 refugee children out of a total enrolment of 21,442). Some of the schools in Arua City have incorporated refugees into the bodies that support running the schools, such as parent and teachers’ associations. Refugees are represented in the City Development Forum and Vendors Associations, where they can advocate for refugee rights and specific consideration in provision of related services in Arua City.
- Refugees participate actively in the local economy.** Many engage in small-scale trade, such as foodstuffs and other basic household items, because they have limited capital. For example, South Sudanese refugees in Arua run a popular business in fish products. Through organisations such as the South Sudanese Refugees Association (SSURA), the refugees have maintained links to their home country to bring in locally caught, preserved fish from South Sudan. Since January 2022, Arua receives at least two truckloads of fish every day from South Sudan, with each truck carrying between five to seven tons of fish. Refugees from the DRC have also ventured into business, especially in the fields of jewelry and crafts.
- Vocational skill training.** In partnership with AVSI Foundation, Arua has provided both refugees and host community with training in vocational skills for different trades. The training aims to empower youth to engage in productive activities to enhance peaceful co-existence and reduce incidences of crime and drug abuse resulting from idleness. A total of 300 youth

(200 refugees and 100 Ugandan nationals) have been trained in tailoring, carpentry, and assorted crafts.

Gaps That Hinder Effective Service Delivery

The study identified several gaps that have made it difficult for Arua City to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities and provide effective service delivery.

- Legal frameworks that do not recognise Arua as a refugee-hosting city.** The framework for managing refugees in Uganda is largely informed by the Refugee Act of 2006, the 2010 Refugee Regulations, and the principles of the CRRF¹¹ as per the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The Refugee Act centralises the management of refugees under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) – Department of Refugees. It also specifies that only refugees registered and residing in Kampala and designated rural refugee settlements are entitled to specified services. Because the legal frameworks do not recognise Arua as a refugee-hosting urban centre, the city does not receive funding for services to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities. This status also hampers Arua City’s ability to strengthen coordination with the multilateral and bilateral agencies (and local partners) that support refugee management in Uganda and advocate for the needs of refugees.
- Weak, unreliable data on Arua’s refugee population.** The impact of the influx of refugees on Arua’s total population has been significant and amplified by weak data systems that do not support adequate planning. There is no definitive data on the total population of refugees and migrants residing in Arua City. The only available data point is the migrant and refugee census led by Cities Alliance conducted in 2020 to 2021 through the AVSI Foundation, the Arua Municipality and UBOS with funding from the Swiss Development Cooperation. That census captured data on the refugee population in Arua’s Central Division, which covers about 10 per cent of the city’s total population. There is no data on refugees and migrants in the Ayivi Division, which makes up about 90 per cent of the population of Arua. Plans and budgets are largely based on population estimates generated from the official 2014 census, which do not include refugees. Thus, refugees in Arua are not considered in the planning figures provided by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that guide allocation of resources.

¹¹ The CRRF is a non-binding framework for more predictable and equitable sharing of responsibilities that recognises that solutions to refugee situations require international cooperation. The policy and legal structures involve several stakeholders who need strong cooperation and coordination systems that must be applied under both international and local legal frameworks.

- **Limited support for fully engaging refugees in the development planning and prioritisation process.**

Despite the participation of refugees in many service delivery processes, there are no deliberate efforts to capture their needs. The service planning process focuses exclusively on the local structures in host communities, mostly because refugees are not included in the indicative planning figures and thus not budgeted for under available resources.

Recommendations

There is need to revisit the policy and coordination framework to ensure that local governments are adequately involved in the management of refugees. Arua City in particular should be recognised a refugee-hosting urban centre in Uganda. A sizeable number of refugees have self-settled in the city, and while the law gives them the freedom to so, it denies them the provision of targeted services.

Arua City should be supported to undertake data collection, planning, and processing activities to ensure there is a solid base of evidence that the government and partners such as UNHCR can use to provide adaptable solutions to the needs of refugees. A refugee census should be conducted in Arua's Ayivu Division to provide available data to support the planning process, similar to the one undertaken in the Central Division.

Basil Droti is a refugee and migration management expert working with the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) in Uganda on its Sustainable Development through Improved Local Governance programme. He is pursuing a Master of Arts in Diplomacy and International Studies at Uganda Martyrs University.

Title: "Making Social and Economic Inclusion of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Host Communities a Reality in Koboko Municipality"

Author: Taban Rashid

Abstract

This paper finds that the integration of refugees and their inclusion is a reality in Koboko Municipality, despite legal hindrances. Refugees in Koboko have freedom of movement, property rights and access to land, the opportunity to own businesses, and access to education. The municipal administration engages refugees and host communities in the city planning process, and their priorities have been integrated into Koboko's five-year development plan. Overall, there is peaceful coexistence among refugees and between refugees and the host communities due to a shared language (Kakwa) and culture.

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility – Regional Network and Dialogue Action implemented in Koboko Municipality with funding from the European Union has played a major role in the city's efforts to integrate refugees.

Overview

Koboko was a prosperous commercial centre until 1979, when armed conflict surrounding the removal of President Idi Amin caused the city to be virtually destroyed. Many residents were forced to flee to Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (then Zaire). As refugees began to return to Koboko in the mid-1980s, the city began to grow and develop once again.



Jigjiga, Ethiopia

Due to its location near the borders with the DRC and South Sudan, Koboko has been the destination for many migrants and refugees escaping conflict in these countries. In 2014, Koboko established the Lobule refugee settlement, but many of the refugees have settled in the municipality due to proximity.

A survey conducted by VNG International estimates that the self-settled refugee population represents about 26 per cent of Koboko's total population. The survey established that there are 23,128 self-settled refugees (2,896 households) in Koboko. Most (88.8 per cent) are from South Sudan, with the rest coming from DRC, Somalia and Somaliland, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

The refugees have expressed many reasons for self-settling in Koboko. These include escaping tribal conflicts in the settlements, access to better social services, support from friends and relatives, limited land for grazing and cultivation, concerns over discrimination, and better livelihood opportunities.

This study explores the question: To what extent is the integration of refugees and host communities a reality in Koboko Municipality? The research tested the hypothesis that refugees in Koboko Municipality are integrated into all services and participate in social economic activities in the Municipality together with the host communities, and that they peacefully coexist among themselves and with the host communities.

Methodology

The findings are based on two sources: a literature review of Uganda's legal frameworks and field data collected in Koboko Municipality, Bidibidi, and Lobule refugee settlements and their host communities. The data was collected through site visits and interviews with civil, political, refugee, spiritual, and cultural leaders as well as community-based organisations and associations of refugees such as South Sudanese Women Association (SAWA), South Sudanese Refugees Association (SSURA), Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI), and Congolese Refugees Association (CORA).

Literature Review of Legal Frameworks

Uganda's refugee laws and policies are widely recognised as among the best in the world.¹² The progressive Refugees Act of 2006 establishes an open-door policy to all asylum seekers regardless of nationality or ethnicity, granting refugees relative freedom of movement, the right to seek employment, and access national services, including primary and secondary education and health care.

It also provides each family of refugees with a plot of land for their exclusive (agricultural) use. The 2010 Refugees Regulations elaborates this point by providing refugees residing in "designated settlements" or "refugee areas" with reasonable access to land (not ownership) for the purpose of cultivation or pasturing.

Uganda also adheres to the international conventions on refugees, including the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Articles 17–24¹³ and 31¹⁴) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework of the Global Compact for Refugees.

As experts note, "both in policy and practice, there is a conducive environment for refugees in Uganda which deserves recognition"¹⁵ and Uganda is "the place where the rest of the world can learn something about the treatment of refugees."¹⁶

While impressive, Uganda's refugee policy has some limitations. The national government structures apply only to "official" refugees that have been registered either in Kampala or one of the recognised refugee settlements. Self-settled refugees living outside of these areas are not recognised and do not receive support from the Ugandan government.

As Tania Kaiser notes, "The status of such self-settled refugees in Uganda is uncertain. They are unrecognized

12 Owing, E., and Y. Nagujja. 2014. "Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place, Challenges of Refugees with Disabilities and Their Families in Uganda." In *Crises, Conflict and Disability: Ensuring Equality*, edited by D. Mitchell and V. Karr, Routledge.

13 Articles 17–24 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees adopts a very favorable standard of treatment, no less than that accorded to other aliens generally. Under the law, every recognised refugee is entitled to receive fair and just treatment without discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, gender, or membership in any particular social group.

14 Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention stipulates a contracting State not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of Article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorisation, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

15 Jallow, T., J. Tourné, A. Mwesigye, H. Schierbeck, F. Kasahura, R. Mayanja et al. 2004. "Report of the Mid-term Review: Self-Reliance Strategy (1999–2003) for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua and Adjumani Districts, Uganda." United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Government of Uganda.

16 Faigle, P. 2015. "Die Landgabe." ZEIT Online (May 27). <http://www.zeit.de/feature/uganda-fluechtlinge-land-schenkung>.

as refugees by the Government of Uganda, nor are they recognized or supported by UNHCR. As aliens rather than refugees, they occupy a precarious and ambiguous status, enjoying neither the rights of Ugandan citizens, nor the protection and limited material support of refugees in settlements.”¹⁷

Refugees are also not considered in resource allocation from the central government, which poses a significant challenge for the local governments responsible for delivering public services and urban development planning.¹⁸

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda implicitly excludes refugees from becoming Ugandan citizens, whether by birth or by registration. Theoretically, a refugee could obtain citizenship by naturalization under Article 13 if Parliament enacts the Assessment of Uganda’s Progressive Approach to Refugee Management law, which it has not done.

Findings

Despite the legal hindrances, Koboko Municipality is providing protection to self-settled refugees. The host communities have remained hospitable, because they faced similar conditions while in exile in the early 1980s. This common experience has made integration a reality in Koboko Municipality, and it is hard to establish differences between refugees and host communities. Refugees are referred to as brothers and relatives owing to their common origins and cultural beliefs.

Koboko Municipality authorities have welcome refugees from South Sudan and DRC, and they have been integrated into the social and economic life of the city, with all the rights laid out in the Refugees Act of 2006.

Refugees in Koboko Municipality have:

- **Freedom of movement** as stipulated in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 2006 Refugees Act. Refugees have been allowed to collect their rations from the settlements and return to Koboko Municipality with no restrictions, which gave them freedom. Compared to other legislations that restrict and confine refugees in settlement camps, the municipality allows refugees to move and peacefully mix with the hosts.
- **Property rights and access to land.** Refugees in Koboko have acquired plots of land with agreements of lease or permanent ownership. The municipality’s expansion has been directly attributed to this integration.
- **Participation in city planning.** Koboko Municipality has integrated refugees in the planning processes together with the hosts. In planning meetings at the cell level, refugees’ needs and priorities are collected and integrated into ward development priorities. They also participate in the public setting of priorities at the division level. In budget conferences for the divisions and the Municipal Council, refugee representatives and their associations (SSURA and CORA) fully participate in debates on budget priorities. Koboko integrates the voices of all residents by directly engaging them in meetings and through representation. This is true integration, as this planning process feeds into the municipality’s five-year development plan.
- **Business ownership.** In Koboko, many businesses are owned by refugees and other non-citizens. Examples include Total Fuel Station Koboko and hotels such as Blue Dove Hotel Ltd (owned by South Sudanese on land leased from the municipality), and High Way Inn and Salam Guest House, both Eritrean-owned. Many hotels have inclusive names, such as Across New Sudan and Yei City. Many refugee women and youth engage in petty business in restaurants, tea shops, and markets. These refugee-owned businesses employ members of the host community, increasing job opportunities.
- **Education.** Among refugees, there is strong demand for education for their children. In Koboko Municipality, refugee integration has led to the construction of new schools, including Ombachi Primary School, Ombachi Self Help Secondary School, and Nyangilia Secondary School. According to the Municipal Education Officer, the enrollment in Koboko’s schools is evenly divided – 50 per cent refugees and 50 per cent host community. In fact, despite the challenges they experience, refugee children have often performed better than Ugandan children. Refugees support their children with the necessary school supplies, they participate in school meetings, and they are represented on the different committees that manage the schools.

¹⁷ Kaiser, Tania. 2006. “Between a Camp and a Hard Place: Rights, Livelihood and Experiences of the Local Settlement System for Long-term Refugees in Uganda.” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44: 4, pp. 597–621. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁸ Bohnet H. and C. Schmitz-Pranghe. 2019. Uganda: A role model for Refugee Integration? Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR).

The CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action

Since 2019, the European Union has supported the Koboko Municipal Council to implement the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility – Regional Network and Dialogue Action.

This Action has played a major part in supporting the integration of refugees in Koboko Municipality in all sectors of development and service delivery. It engaged refugees and host community members at all stages and improved infrastructure in schools by constructing classroom blocks, providing more desks, and training teachers, among other activities.

The municipality sub-contracted four refugee-led organisations (RLOs) and four national organisations to implement the software component of the CRRF in Koboko Municipality. The human resources engaged in implementing these activities are non-discriminatively recruited, and in the spirit of integration, they work together to contribute to the common goal of improving service delivery for all residents.

Boda boda riding is a key business that has engaged youth with support from the Council. The Koboko Boda boda Operators Association was created and duly registered by the municipality. The association has now been incorporated into a savings and credit cooperative (SACCO). Out of 38 stages created in

Koboko Municipality, seven stages with over 100 refugee boda boda operators have been designated for refugees, namely Canaan, Bazira, Youngstar, Nyarilo, Gbulagbulanga, Ombachi and Gbukenga. In a unique sign of integration, the Ugandan riders support the refugees to access loans and buy and register motorcycles. This is because accessing loans requires collateral, which refugee youth lack.

Conclusion

Koboko Municipal Council has provided services to both the refugees and host communities within the global, regional, and national legal and policy frameworks. Refugees and displaced persons have been integrated into all sectors and are involved and participate in the planning processes. The common experiences and cultural similarities have greatly influenced integration.

Taban Rashid is a Ugandan community development worker and programme manager for community empowerment at Creative Innovation (CECI) Uganda, a refugee-founded and led organisation in Koboko Municipality that responds to the plight of refugees and host communities in Lobule and Bidibidi refugee settlements. At a native of Koboko, Mr. Rashid was himself a refugee, which inspired him to work for refugees and IDPs in Uganda and South Sudan. He holds a first degree in Development Studies and is currently pursuing a Masters in Refugee and Migration Studies at Uganda Martyrs University.



Title: “Inclusion of Refugees, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and Host Community into District Development Framework (DDF): A Case Study in Gabiley District Municipality”

Author: Sharmarke Hassan Nur

Abstract

This paper examines to what extent the Gabiley local government was able to integrate inclusion into the district development process, how the district’s strategic focus included concrete development options for improving the lives and livelihoods of migrants, and whether current projects were adapted to meet the needs of migrants and host community. It also looks at how the process aligns with local, regional, and international policies on refugees and IDPs.

The findings show that Gabiley made progress in equitable access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and economic development. Over 98.9 per cent of refugees, IDPs, and poor host community members surveyed said health care is accessible and free of charge, while more than 5,000 school-aged children in the district were receiving an education.

Areas where there is room for improvement include a lack of tailored policies promoting inclusion, limited collaboration with stakeholders, no dedicated team to promote the inclusion process, and the lack of a child and girl-friendly mechanism for refugees, IDPs and host communities to lodge complaints or make suggestions in the town.

Overview

In 2020, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded over 34 million refugees and asylum seekers globally. The Horn of Africa is particularly affected, due to prolonged conflicts, the impacts of climate change, and socio-economic instability worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Somaliland, a self-declared de facto state in the Horn of Africa, became the target destination for many migrants, especially people fleeing conflict in Ethiopia.

Gabiley District is one of the main entry points for migrants driven from rural areas by protracted drought, and many have settled in Gabiley over the past three years, with more likely to arrive in the future. The Gabiley local government is facing intense pressure to find sustainable solutions to integrating migrants and host communities.

Even though Somaliland is not yet recognised internationally, Gabiley District has expressed its commitment to mainstreaming inclusion practices aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees and the CRRF, which encourage global cooperation to create durable solutions for migrants.

In 2022, Gabiley committed to a new district-level initiative to integrate refugees into the community and the District Development Framework. The local government has taken initial efforts to prioritise strategic initiatives in line with the CRRF, which is laudable. However, existing challenges remain. The municipality has made efforts to localise the national policy on refugees, but it has not developed local policies tailored to refugees and IDPs.

This paper examines the inclusive practices adopted by Gabiley district municipality and how they are contributing towards realising the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees and the CRRF.

The research explored the following questions:

- The frameworks adopted by Gabiley municipality;
- The existence of formulated policies and procedures on the inclusion of migrants and poor host communities;
- How the district integrated inclusive strategic priorities into the District Development Framework (DDF);
- The existence of budget allocations for inclusive practices; and
- The impact of projects modified for greater inclusion on the targeted migrants and host community.

Methodology

The study is based on interviews with 21 key informants in local government and focus groups with 64 refugees, IDPs, and host community in the four neighbourhoods of Gabiley that took place between March and July 2022.

Findings

Framework for Inclusion

Gabiley District has adopted a five-pillar framework for integrating migrants that is in line with the principles of the CRRF:

- a. Ensure self-reliance of refugees, IDPs, and poor host communities through joint schemes for economic inclusion;
- b. Promote inclusive urban planning;
- c. Provide refugees with identification;
- d. Provide education through the Education for All (EFA) initiative; and
- e. Ensure urban refugees have equitable access to healthcare at public health centres in the district.

However, before 2022 Gabiley District has not formulated district-level policies specifically designed to address the integration process for migrants and the host community.

Inclusive Policies and Legislation Adopted

Gabiley District is positioned for inclusion at the district level, with policies built on existing legal frameworks, national policies, and durable solutions in line with the CRRF. It has committed to the following frameworks:

International commitments: Gabiley actively participated in the informal and formal consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in Geneva in December 2019 and pledged its commitment to the agendas. The Programme of Action in the proposed compact offers arrangements for sharing responsibilities and areas in need of support, including solutions.

Regional declarations adopted by Gabiley District:

- The Nairobi Declaration has played a critical role in shaping refugee responses across the region to address the Somali displacement.

- The 2017 Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education adopted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) calls for quality education standards and the inclusion of refugee children into national education systems.
- The 2019 Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods and Self-Reliance provides a framework for the objectives of the GCR and supports refugees and their hosts to achieve self-reliance.
- The CRRF approach strives to meet the goals of the African Union Agenda 2063.

District policies for inclusion of refugees, IDPs and host communities:

- Access to Education for All Policy: The municipality localised the Education for All and Sustainable Development Goal 3 on universal primary education in the district. This study finds that the local government has not formulated a clear district-level education policy or articulated how to offer access to quality education for refugees, IDPs and poor host communities.
- Integrating refugees through a new district strategic plan: In January 2022, the district mayor and executive secretary signed priority options to integrate inclusion practices into the district strategic plan.
- Profiling of refugees and IDPs in the district: In April 2022, the district mayor endorsed setting guidelines for profiling refugees, IDPs, and host community to obtain baseline information on the population to better target assistance and understand the dynamics among communities.

Priorities in the District Development Plan (2023-2027)

Gabiley Municipality has integrated inclusive strategic options into its district development framework to align the theme of the current district development plan with the Integrated District Development Framework (IDDF), allocate district funds to implement priorities in the IDDF, and reconfigure existing health, education, and local economic development projects to integrate inclusive practices.

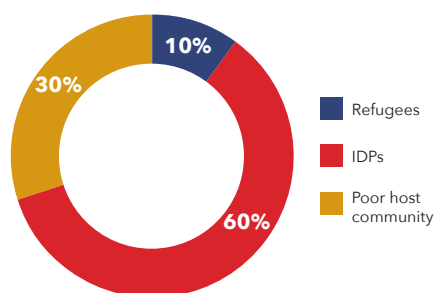
The plan prioritises improving basic services for city residents, providing refugees with identification, and equitable access to healthcare. An initiative is already underway to capture data on refugees and IDPs, and the registration process includes collecting information on the number of refugees, IDPs, and host community disaggregated by gender, location, age, place of

origin, or place of displacement. It does not include key information such as protection concerns, cause(s), or humanitarian needs.

A separate initiative is providing healthcare services to reduce mortality and morbidity among refugees, IDPs, and host community. It is expected to benefit around 5,000 migrants and host community members.

Chart 1: The inclusive projects in the district development plan for 2023–2027 will benefit IDPs (60%), poor host community (30%), and refugees (10%) due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, limited financing, and public pressure.

Percentage distribution of strategic Focus of Economic Inclusion



Source: Gabiley district inclusion plan.

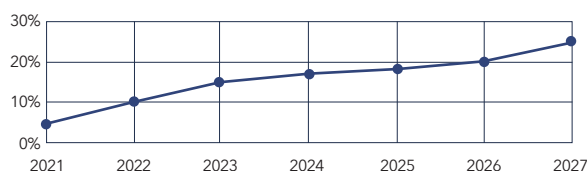
District Budget Allocation And Distribution

Gabiley Municipality's commitment to the CRRF is visible in its budget allocations, and it has strategically aligned its resources to enhance inclusive practices in the district. In 2022, funds to support migrants and host community were only 5 per cent of the overall budget. That number jumped to 10 per cent for 2023.

For 2023–2027, there has been a dramatic increase in budget allocations to support migrants and host community members. Funding for response interventions will increase from around 15 per cent to 25 per cent by 2027 (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: The increase in budget allocations for inclusive interventions between 2021 and 2027, the final year of the IDDF.

Percentage trends of budgeting of IDDF by Gabiley

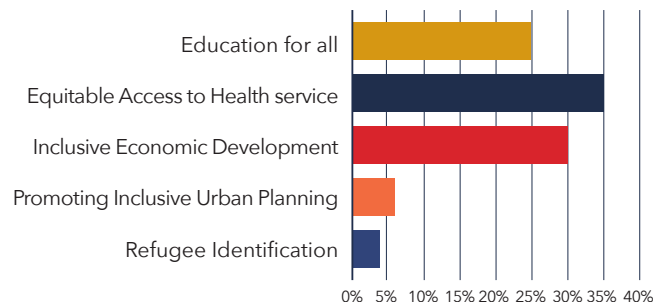


Source: Gabiley IDDF Budget Plan, 2023–2027.

The IDDF provides funding for a package of inclusive priorities, with the bulk of the resources allocated to providing access to health services and inclusive economic development (35 per cent) to strengthen refugees' self-reliance.

Chart 3: Distribution of funding for inclusive priorities in Gabiley's IDDF.

District Budgeting patterns for Inclusive options



Source: Gabiley DDF Budget 2023–2027.

Inclusive Projects Implemented

Access to equitable healthcare and nutrition services.

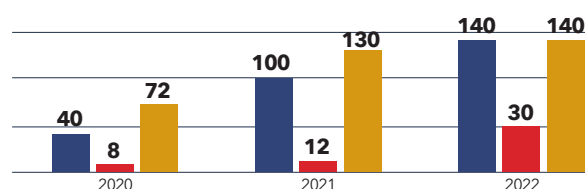
Gabiley launched a mobile health team to provide free healthcare and nutrition services to IDPs and host community members in slum areas. The project has doubled the population served by district-funded centres and particularly benefited pregnant women and malnourished children.

Local economic development. This project supported 425 women from IDP and host communities to start their own businesses with a startup cost of \$500. 85 per cent of the women can support their families with the business.

Education for All. This project supported five primary and intermediate schools in town, benefiting over 5,000 children in the district. As result of the initiative, the number of refugee, IDP, and host community students increased substantially. In 2020, public schools (particularly primary schools) enrolled 120 students in class one (40 IDPs, 8 refugees, 72 host community). In 2021, the district enrolled 242 students (100 IDPs, 12 refugees, and 130 host community).

Chart 4: Primary school enrollment trends in Gabiley District 2020–2022. The blue bar represents IDPs, the orange refugees, and the gray host community.

IDP, Refugee, host community children school Enrolment trends in Gabiley



Source: Gabiley DDF Budget 2023–2027.

Conclusion

The study shows that Gabiley District has made significant progress in incorporating global, regional, and national frameworks to integrate refugees and IDPs in urban development plans. It has integrated inclusive strategies into its district development framework, allocated funding for priority areas, and revamped existing health, education, and local economic development projects to be more inclusive. It is a good start but there is room for improvement. Gabiley should formulate clear policies tailored to the district to integrate migrants and host communities. It should also consult with refugees, IDPs, host community, and local stakeholders to design responses to migrant integration. Attention should be devoted to developing a robust feedback and complaint mechanism that is girl and child friendly.

Recommendations

- 1. Participatory discussion mechanism.** Establish a district-level coordination committee responsible for increasing efforts to enhance district inclusion in all aspects of district functions. Committee members should include local government staff, refugees, IDPs, the host community, and local partners. Establish national and local-level forum discussions to embed the CRRF mechanism at the national level.
- 2. A fundraising team to attract donors.** Since the magnitude of the need of the migrant and host communities in the district is far beyond the capacity of the local government, the district should establish a fundraising team to attract donors willing to offer multi-year funding, including direct budgetary support to the district's response for migrants and marginalised host community members. A fundraising team will enable the district to implement inclusive strategic priorities more effectively and incorporate refugees into the urban development process.
- 3. Secure funding for needed interventions** such as housing, job creation, full-scale climate change risk mitigation, and treatment of chronic diseases for migrants and host community members are needed but beyond the district's financial capacity. The local government should develop proposals to secure funding to address these issues.
- 4. Develop a complementary district policy** outlining how to incorporate inclusive practices into thematic areas.

5. Monitor projects for impact. Monitor the economic and educational advantages of the next batch of projects to maximise their impact.

6. Coordinate on inclusive initiatives. Local government should coordinate with the private sector and NGOs to promote inclusive initiatives adopted by the district for broader impact.

7. Ensure urgent humanitarian needs are met. Shrinking external aid amid the impact of COVID-19 and droughts in some parts of the country have increased the urgency of such aid.

Sharmarke Hassan Nur is Academic Dean of Timaade University in Gabiley. His research focuses on humanitarian issues.

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Arua, Uganda



Kakuma, Kenya

CONCLUSION

Reflections on the Action and Initial Achievements

The Action aimed to help selected municipalities address the dual challenges of the rising number of displaced people and wider urbanisation. Reflecting on the “localisation of migration governance” in cities and regions across the world as the Action concludes, the network recognises the possibilities and challenges facing non-capital cities in an era of rapid urbanisation, displacement, and multiple and intersecting forms of human mobility.

After three years of implementation, the overall network vision remains unchanged: Empowering local authorities to promote social inclusion and equitable development for municipalities affected by displacement and migration.

Looking forward, it seeks to develop a functional and sustainable network that provides ongoing technical and political support (e.g., visibility, legitimacy, allies) as they build effective emergency response mechanisms

while incorporating displacement and human mobility into their long-term planning processes. To do that, it aims to (a) amplify their voices and influence in relevant national, regional, and international policy forums and (b) provide value-added services to municipalities and national and regional bodies, including international organisations, donors, and humanitarian organisations.

Recognising its limited technical and financial resources, the network operates on the principle of “catalytic interventions” that enable network members (and the network writ large) to become champions of planning for migration and displacement. This involves finding means of setting local, national, and regional agendas; transforming national policy and financial frameworks; and attracting the technical and financial resources where they are likely to have the greatest impact (e.g., municipal, regional, national). Underlying these efforts are ongoing relationships of trust, mutual respect, and constructively critical engagement.



“

All the cities gathered here have demonstrated maturity and need for technical knowledge. Thank you for gathering us all today. We come from different environments that have enabled all participants to learn ... These are the kinds of meetings that we want to take forward the issues of refugee management and refugee challenges.

– Solomon Ssonko, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

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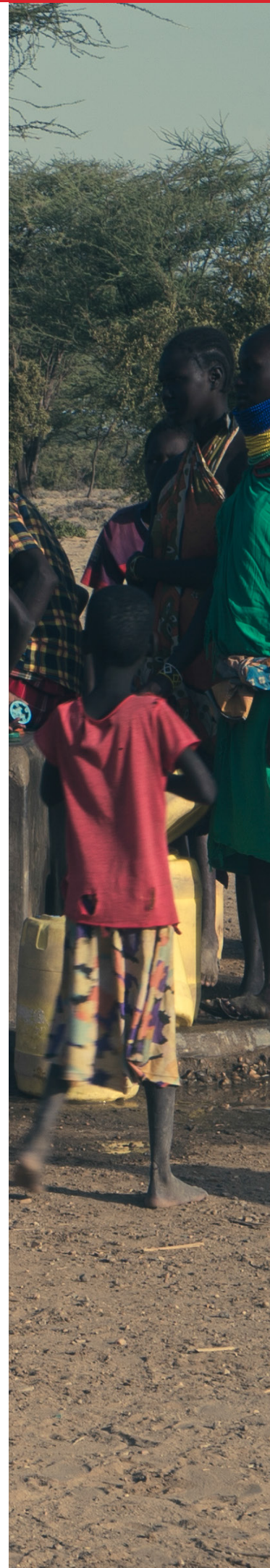
This exchange helps municipalities, because when you go to the presentation of Koboko District, what is happening in Koboko is not the same as what's happening in Arua District. We have the South Sudanese Refugee Association (SSURA) in Arua, but it is not as active as in Koboko because they don't have the physical office to implement the activities.

– Nyoka Mary, representative for refugees in Arua

“

This event is very important because it acts like an amplifier to understanding what happens. For example, as executive director of SSURA, I am able to learn how to fundraise and how to do proposals. Also, this event will help us understand that integration is very key because being a refugee doesn't mean that life is hopeless. Now I've understood that we can integrate, cooperate, and stay like a citizen and have a better life. So, when I go back, I'm going to pass this same message to my fellow South Sudanese that we have a better life to live, and we should work together with the host community and local authorities.

– Malish Bonjira Asu, Refugee Representative and Executive Director of SSURA



The direct investment in Koboko Municipal Council has been a success story, and the cities participating in the regional dialogue all want to replicate this model. Ownership and sustainability can only be built if all stakeholders targeted by the Action are involved in the

project planning and implementation, and that is what happened in Koboko.

As Bongo Patrick, ACAV Project Manager for the Koboko pilot, stated at the Action's fourth peer-learning event:

“



It is the first of its kind that a lower local government has received direct funding from a donor. So Koboko Municipal Council is really the way to demonstrate that direct funding to municipalities has a correlation with improvement of service delivery because it is a faster way of delivering resources where it is most needed. What Koboko Municipality has accomplished in two years with the support of the EU, if they were to rely on other funding would have taken them close to 40-50 years to accomplish.

– Bongo Patrick, ACAV Project Manager for the Koboko pilot

The cities' experiences in the Action suggest that solutions for refugees and IDPs should be developed at the initiative of refugees and the displaced, with the support of host communities and local authorities, rather than within the framework of formal refugee

policies. As Abdirahman Ahmad Muhumad, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Jigjiga University, explained in *Local Governments and the Sustainable Integration of Refugees in Ethiopia*:





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The establishment of symbiotic relationships between host and refugee communities that facilitate the inclusion of refugees point to the need for a shift from looking at refugees through the lens of official government policies to studying local dynamics in the regions that host the refugees and their contribution toward finding solutions for refugees in protracted situations.

– **Abdirahman Ahmad Muhumad, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Jigjiga University**

The participants of the regional dialogue value comparative perspectives leading to better lives for refugees, displaced persons, migrants, and host populations. At the same time, they recognise the need to adapt policy and dialogue approaches to suit the region's varied political structures, priorities, social institutions, economic realities, and bureaucratic capacities.

A core priority of the network is normalising migration and displacement within urban planning processes and deliberations affecting urban planning at multiple scales. That involves moving away from framing migration and displacement solely in crisis or emergency terms, and instead investing in mechanisms to predict and plan. Such a shift is critical in a region

beset by conflict, environmental challenges, and economic transformation.

It also means recognising that migration and displacement cannot be addressed as standalone issues, because they intersect transversally with most municipal planning priorities. To this end, the network should continue promoting innovation, learning, and the adoption of best practices. It should also promote partnerships in two key areas: (1) inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the economic and social life of municipalities; and (2) improved livelihoods and greater access to quality basic services for refugees and vulnerable host populations in secondary cities in the Horn of Africa.





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