DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

DDG DANISH DEMINING GROUP

"To have peaceful coexistence, people need to have full stomachs": Rapid Conflict Assessment in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, Uganda

Introduction

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has been operating in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement since January 2013 and has been since then the largest implementing partner in the settlement, currently carrying out activities in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihoods and cash transfers, protection and community services to the largely Congolese refugee population. Until December 2017, there had been few changes to the social, political and economic context of the settlement. The influx of refugees from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) has shifted significantly dynamics in Kyaka II in particular among the refugee population and to a lesser extent between the refugee and refugee-hosting communities around Kyaka II. Under an European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)-funded 'Emergency Cash and Protection Assistance for new Congolese refugees in Kyaka II, Uganda' six month project (1 April – 30 September 2018), a rapid conflict assessment was carried out. The exercise documented and analysed some of the key changes in context and dynamics triggered by the recent (and ongoing) refugee influx and identified potential areas of tension 1) among the 'old' and 'new' caseload of refugees; and 2) between the broad refugee population and 'nationals', proposing recommendations on measures to mitigate these and promote peaceful coexistence.[1]

The report is expected to inform DRC's current ECHO-funded action as well as the general refugee response in Kyaka II with regard to key potential areas of conflict which should be better understood and mitigated. The study also seeks to support DRC in informing and designing interventions that mitigate tensions and support peaceful coexistence between refugees as well as between refugees and host communities.

The report begins by providing a brief background into Kyaka II refugee settlement and the causes of current displacement from DR Congo. It then turns to a section on the impact of the new arrivals in Kyaka II, discussing in particular the economic and social implications of the refugee influx and how these cause tension between old and new refugees, as well as to a lesser extent, refugees and the host community. The report concludes with some recommendations on aspects to consider for the management of inter-group relations in Kyaka II.

Methodology and limitations

The analysis combines data from a brief desk review with findings from qualitative semi-structured interviews with a total of 39 respondents in Kyaka II. Given the rapid nature of this assessment, the study privileged discussions with refugee and host community representatives, government and humanitarian agencies. In particular, DRC has over 50 staff based in Kyaka II - many of them with several years of experience in the settlement. Specifically, the study carried out extensive in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with long-serving DRC staff, representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Kyegegwa district, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and primary school teachers. KIIs and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also carried out with refugee representatives from both old and new caseload separately (at level of RWC 1, 2 and 3) and host community representatives (LC3 and LC1). In total, findings and analysis in this report draws on 17 KIIs and 5 FGDs, of which 9 respondents were women. Given time limitations, not all zones in the settlement were covered; the study targeted instead areas where new arrivals have been settled in and which border host villages. Due to its rapid nature, all findings are preliminary and expected to inform on broad dynamics as well as highlight areas which may require more in-depth research and understanding.

Background: Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

Kyaka II Refugee Settlement is 81.5 square kilometres spread between the three sub-counties of Kyegegwa, Mpara and Ruyonza, all located in Kyegegwa District in South-Western Uganda. The settlement is 18 kilometres off the Kampala-Fort Portal main road, down an unpaved road and on an elevation of on average 1400 metres, located in a valley with significant rainfall, even during the driest months. The area is fertile and agriculturally productive.

The settlement is divided into nine zones (with 26 villages): Kakoni, Byabakora, Mukondo, Kaborogota, Buliti, Sweswe,

Itambabiniga, Bukere and Bwiriza. All of these zones neighbour host community villages, which are spread along different areas of the settlement. Unlike settlements in northern Uganda, Kyaka II is gazetted government-owned land. Thus, land disputes between refugees and nationals have not been common since nationals would not be entitled to use this land even if there were no refugees. In March 2018, there were 325,240 nationals and 44,988 refugees in Kyegegwa District, with refugees in Kyaka II accounting for 12% of the district's population.[2] However, villages around Kyaka II appear to be sparsely populated and the refugee population is likely much higher than the nationals

in surrounding villages. Nationals in neighbouring villages are largely subsistence farmers belonging to two main ethnic communities, the Batooro and Bakiga. The Batooro are the original population from the area while Bakiga, originally from Kabale, Rukungiri and Kanungu (south-western border), have over the last 15 years migrated to the area by buying land from Batooro. While relations among these two groups are deemed positive, there are also underlying political strains as the immigration of Bakiga have changed the demographic profile of the area. Relations between nationals and refugees in Kyaka II have historically been positive, with regular reports of friendships, occasional inter-marriages often drawn on cultural and linguistic affinities and regular business and trade relations.

Kyaka II refugee settlement was originally established in 1983/1984 to receive Tutsi refugees from Rwanda. It reopened in 1995 to receive more Rwandese and again saw a significant number of Congolese arrivals in 2005 and in 2006. In 2008 refugees were transferred from Kyaka I to Kyaka II, when the former was closed down the same year.[3] From 2008 to late 2017, informants reported that Kyaka II sporadically received asylum seekers who would undergo refugee status determination before settling in Kyaka II as well as urban refugees mostly from Kampala, referred by OPM.[4] The settlement hosts predominantly Congolese, but also relatively sizeable numbers of Rwandan and Burundian refugees, from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The largest ethnic groups in Kyaka II are the Bahema, Banyamulenge and Banyabwisa ethnic communities from eastern Congo. Due to its brevity, this study did not go in-depth into how ethnic and identity politics in Kyaka II are part of life, nor how the recent arrivals may be affecting these ethnic relations, although it would be important to understand this better as ethnic identity solidarity is an important coping mechanism and source of support. According to informants, there has never been any case where ethnic differences escalated into violence in Kyaka II, although ethnic identities permeate relationships, social networks and social life, holding both risks and opportunities. Notably, refugees, including new arrivals, tend to search for their ethnic constituencies once they arrive in the settlement as these are important sources of support and comfort. OPM resettles refugees by zone – when one zone is full it moves to the next. Although it is discouraged, often new arrivals search for their ethnic, cultural and linguistic community and informally relocate from one zone to another in the settlement. Despite complex ethnic relations, most refugee communities in Kyaka II are Bantu-speaking and can easily communicate among them either through Kiswahili or through local languages with a Bantu origin. Similarly, Rutooro and Lukiga languages spoken by the Batooro and Bakiga host population respectively are also Bantu languages, meaning that refugees and nationals are usually able to communicate easily, the first step to develop positive relations.

According to the OPM, Kyaka II can accommodate up to 100,000 people, but only if plots are reduced to 30x30 metres (m). In the current pace, it is likely that the full capacity of the settlement will be reached within 2018. Preparations to receive new arrivals from DR Congo in Kyaka II began in 2016 but did not materialise as most

arrivals were sent to Rwamwanja and Nakivale refugee settlements, also in south-west Uganda. When these two settlements reached full capacity, Kyaka II became the preferred site. An escalation of violence in eastern DR Congo in December 2017 led to a new refugee influx into Uganda. By April 2018, the settlement's population had gone from 27,000-30,000 pre-December 2017 to over 55,000 people, with an average of 900 arrivals per week.[5] Prima facie status is granted to all Congolese coming from Ituri via Ntoroko and North and South Kivu via the Nyakabande transit centre close to Kisoro.

Causes of displacement: Brief overview of context in Eastern Congo

Since the influx began in late December 2017, most refugee arrivals have come from North and South Kivu provinces, although there have also been arrivals from Ituri Province. The causes of displacement are diverse and multiple. In the Kivus, refugees are fleeing violence emerging from ethno-political conflicts between government forces and an assortment of militia groups known broadly as Mai-Mai, as well as violence resulting from a number of foreign-based armed groups active in the region.[6] Most violence in the Kivus is a result of armed group activities and counter-operations by FARDC. While the former have definitely been influenced by the political crisis, it's not a direct result.[7] While violence in the Kivu provinces has progressively escalated over the past decade, Ituri had until December been relatively peaceful. Ituri province was the scene of brutal violence between 1999-2007 but had since, with the exception of attacks by the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) around the south-western corner of Lake Albert, seen a dramatic decline in violence and displacement. The recent rise in violence started in Djugu territory, north of the provincial capital of Bunia, in December. Clashes between Lendu youth and FARDC soldiers backed by Hema youth spiralled into revenge inter-communal attacks across the area forcing people to flee via Lake Albert to Uganda.[8] The attacks took many by surprise as Lendu and Hema neighbouring communities had largely lived in peace since the previous cycle of violence ended in 2007 and local conflicts over land, cattle or power, similar to those that ignited this violence, had been largely successfully managed during the last decade. The majority of refugees from Ituri in Kyaka II are Hema who were either alerted by Lendu neighbours about the impending attacks or pre-emptively fled when they heard about attacks in neighbouring villages, due to previous memories of violence in Ituri. But the current political conflict affecting Ituri should not be framed as reductionist ethnically driven inter-communal clashes between Lendu and Hema.[9] Rather, inter-communal tensions are driven by powerful political and commercial interests.[10] Although there is no evidence of the national political crisis directly spilling into the violence in Djugu, "the continuing disintegration of state authority, the increased activity of politico-military power brokers and general frustration amongst the population could undoubtedly be part of these dynamics."[11] Violence in Ituri resumed in February on an even larger scale and by April 2018 over 300,000 people had been displaced and thousands of homes torched in at least 70 villages.[12]

An influx in the midst of a protracted refugee caseload

Until December 2017, there was very little attention on Kyaka II. The roughly 27,000-30,000 refugees in Kyaka II were considered a protracted refugee population, well established in Uganda and mostly self-reliant enjoying large plots of agriculturally fertile land.[13] Since then, humanitarian agencies have scaled up their response in Kyaka II to address the needs of the continuous refugee influx from eastern Congo. For the majority of new arrivals, it is their first time displaced in another country and living in a refugee settlement thus they are particularly vulnerable, misinformed and do not easily navigate the logic of the settlement. But the recent refugee influx is also affecting the ability of old refugees to remain self-reliant, as OPM has reallocated land to host new arrivals. While households still maintain the household plot in the size it was originally allocated, it is the excess land that they had been granted use of that has been reallocated. Thus, one of the key challenges faced by humanitarian agencies in Kyaka II is how to address the humanitarian needs of a continuous flow of new arrivals while simultaneously considering how the new arrivals are impacting on the socio-economic well-being and self-reliance of the older refugee caseload and the latter's new-found social and economic vulnerabilities.

Policy of self-reliance under strain

The idea of promoting refugee self-reliance in Uganda dates back to the 1960s and was formalised jointly by OPM and UNHCR in 1998 with the establishment of the Self-Reliance Strategy, which was specifically directed at promoting self-reliance among Sudanese refugees living in settlements in the West Nile region. The strategy also looked to promote greater integration between refugees and host communities, by among other things, improving the availability and quality of services in refugee hosting areas.[14] More recently, Uganda's current National Development Plan II for 2016-2020 highlights the country's commitment to promoting refugee self-reliance and includes the 'Settlement Transformation Agenda' (STA), which aims to establish self-reliance and local settlement for refugees, and to support social development in refugee-hosting areas as a durable solution to refugees'

problems while protecting national and local interests.[15] Led by the OPM, the STA is supported by the Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (ReHOPE) running across all refugee hosting districts and combining the efforts of United Nations agencies, the World Bank, donors, development actors and the private sector to develop new and innovative approaches to protracted forced displacement. The strategy places much emphasis on the integration of services to refugees and host communities and both the STA and ReHOPE are considered a core part of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) process, informing systematic and sustainable interventions benefiting both refugees and host communities.[16]

Uganda's generous legal and policy framework surrounding the hosting of refugees is laudable and there are many lessons to be learned for other contexts but it should also be assessed with regard to some of its assumptions and limitations. In Kyaka II, first, as the number of new refugee arrivals continues to rise, the size of plots assigned per household is decreasing and is no longer considered by refugees sufficient to ensure self-reliance and provide enough food per household.[17] Second, the STA assumes that refugees will become self-sufficient within five years, when the distribution of food and non-food items will stop.[18] In Kyaka II food rations are provided in full for three years and gradually reduced until completely stopped at the five year-mark (with the exception of vulnerable households). However, considering the challenges around land availability, it is unlikely that refugees are able to become self-reliant, including the old caseload whose previously viable livelihoods are now under threat. Third, there are not enough financial resources being pooled into non-agricultural alternatives to support the Government of Uganda's roll out of its STA. Amnesty International argues that "it is primarily this factor that has prevented Uganda from carrying out its ambitious policy and vision of self-reliance. Donors have failed to adequately support Uganda's initiatives including STA and ReHOPE. They have also repeatedly failed to provide sufficient funding to the UN humanitarian appeals for refugees in Uganda."[19]

Sources of division in and around Kyaka II

Political and communal conflicts from DR Congo have not appeared to have spilled over to Uganda nor, thus far, specifically into Kyaka II. However, the continuous increase in the refugee population in Kyaka II is leading to more competition over already limited services, resources and livelihoods. These factors are likely to place further strains on relations between 'old' and 'new' refugees, as well as, on the mid/long-term, between refugees and host communities and affect peaceful community relations and stability in Kyaka II. This section outlines some of the key effects that the new refugee arrivals are having in Kyaka II and how these are negatively impacting relations between old and new refugees as well as potentially between refugees and nationals.

It is also worth pointing out that violent incidents in Kyaka II have not occurred among communities, but rather as a result of communities protesting against institutions governing refugee affairs. In 2014, there was an incident provoked by delayed food rations which led to an uprising where an NGO vehicle was attacked and police brought in to control the situation. Recently, in November 2017, there were clashes between nationals and OPM, when the settlement administration evicted nationals from Kyaka land that had built illegal structures in Bukere Trading Centre. While both cases have been addressed, they act as a warning sign on how institutional mismanagement can impact on stability and community relations.

Economic impact: land, livelihoods and conflicts

The most significant consequence of the new refugee arrivals in Kyaka II is the considerable reduction of land available to refugee households. This is having severe consequences on the livelihoods and economic self-reliance of 'old refugees'.

Until mid-2017, the old refugee caseload living in Kyaka II had abundant land to cultivate on. Although OPM formally allocated 100x50m plots per household, in practice most households cultivated several acres of land and farming was a viable and profitable livelihood providing good income.[20] This revenue was used for paying for school fees/contributions, improving homes, investing in business opportunities, buying food, among other needs. Until recently, OPM actually encouraged refugees to cultivate large portions of land as a strategy to avoid idle land and prevent nationals from encroaching onto government-owned land. This informal policy changed in mid-2017, when the government began preparing Kyaka II to receive more refugees. According to the RWC3 chairman, "In July-August 2017 OPM told us that they were expecting new arrivals and that we had to vacate the land." OPM instructed old refugees to vacate their farms and reassigned them with 50x50m plots in order to make space for the new arrivals. Land previously farmed by old refugees is being reallocated to new arrivals; the first arrivals were settled in Kakoni and also initially given 50x50m plots. However, by January 2018 OPM further reduced land allocations to new arrivals to 30x30m plots per household once it was recognised that the refugee influx was going to continue and land in Kyaka II would need to be maximised to host refugees to its full capacity. According to informants, when OPM finds land that appears to be vacant (e.i. no home built there) it is assumed that it is unoccupied and can thus be reallocated to a new arrival.

The reallocation of land from old refugees to new refugees has had two main consequences. First, and perhaps the most significant social and economic impact of the new refugee arrivals on the situation in Kyaka II, the reductions in land available per household has impacted on the livelihoods and economic self-reliance of old refugees. While Kyaka II can in principle host up to 100,000 refugees, this can only be done if land plots are limited to 30x30m per household. Yet, as noted by one NGO informant "you can't live off that and it becomes very difficult to talk of self-reliance." The considerable reduction in land available to old refugees, many of whom had become entirely self-reliant, is one of the key grievances experienced between old refugees and new arrivals and likely to impact on all aspects of social and economic life. Tensions also arise because as argued by a variety of key informants, a 50x50m plot is insufficient for a household to survive on, thus the reluctance of old caseload refugees of fully letting go of their old farms and land, especially in a context where there are limited non-agricultural livelihoods opportunities. As explained by the female RWC3 vice-chairman, "farming was where people got money to pay for school fees." As a result, it was reported that many children of older refugee arrivals have dropped out of primary and secondary school.

Paradoxically, 'old' refugees settled in the trading centres (who are often also those settled in Kyaka for longest) are those most affected by the land reductions. On the one hand, their farms (often in more rural areas) have been reallocated to new arrivals (as it was 'vacant', ei. no home there). As explained by one RWC2 chairman, "the problem they face is that people chose to live in the [trading] centre with farms further away. But now those farms have been reassigned to others and people are left with only their houses in small plots in the centre." On the other hand, refugees in Kyaka for more than five years do not receive any food aid at all and are expected to be fully self-reliant. As 'old' refugees are those expected to be best integrated and most self-reliant, their new vulnerabilities may be invisible and thus neglected by NGO livelihood support programmes.

Second, although land in Kyaka II has always belonged to government, old caseload refugees who had been farming large plots had a sense of entitlement over their farmland and there are reports of many cases of resentment against new arrivals perceived to have occupied their land. There are also reports that newly settled refugee households are being threatened by 'old' refugees and coerced to leave plots allocated to them. One UNHCR informant explained that "old caseload refugees feel new arrivals stole their land."

Vulnerable livelihoods, insufficient food and theft

While old refugees are finding it difficult to be self-reliant in the new context of land scarcity, refugee representatives also raised concerns that new arrivals were not receiving sufficient food rations, even though during the time of research UN WFP was distributing full food rations to new arrivals in Kyaka II. This may be explained by the fact that new refugees may not be used to rationing food for one month or that they have different food habits which lead many people to sell their food or exchange the maize flour (posho) with matoke, which may result in insufficient food per month. As a result, both new and old refugees are leaving the settlement to search for casual labour, mostly in agriculture, in exchange for food or money. The standard payment is said to be 10,000 Ugandan Shillings (UGX) for a full day's work, although most often people work for half a day (7am-12pm) at 4,000 UGX. While these wages (or equivalent food exchanged) may supplement food gained through assistance or cultivation, they are insufficient to also cater for school fees and other basic necessities.[21] The other option (that few can afford) is to rent land from nationals where a 20x60m plot over one season (3-4 months) costs 60,000-80,000 UGX.

The new refugee influx and resulting economic situation is perceived to have affected the security situation in Kyaka II and surrounding villages. While all refugee and host community representatives interviewed reported to feel safe in and around Kyaka II, different informants also noted that there had been an increase in cases of petty theft, especially between new arrivals themselves, but also affecting 'old' refugees as well as host villages. As noted by one DRC informant, relations between refugees and nationals have been fine, however, "I anticipate that soon there will be conflict between refugees and

nationals as refugees have started to steal food from neighbouring farms, cassava or matoke. Food shortages will lead to theft." RWCs representatives also reported an increase in theft, both between new arrivals (who have temporary homes easy to break into), but also to a lesser extent new refugees stealing from old refugees and from host communities. Anecdotally, in Byabakora, one RWC1 noted that since the influx began, an average of two/three cases were reported to him weekly, often theft of plastic sheets, lamps, pans and other household items. Another RWC2 reported that since December 2017 she had received eight cases of theft of refugees stealing from the farms of nationals. While there is a sense of empathy by nationals towards the challenges faced by refugees, as time goes by and theft increases, this is likely to change and theft to increasingly affect positive relations between refugees and nationals.

Impact of refugee influx on refugee leadership structures

Formal refugee leadership in Uganda mirror the host community's leadership structures at village, parish and sub-county level, represented by Local Councils (LCs) level 1, 2 and 3 respectively. In a refugee settlement setting, the equivalent Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) levels 1, 2 and 3 represent village (or cell), zone and whole settlement, respectively. The resolution of disputes and refugee grievances follows a hierarchy of administration. According to informants, RWCs 1 and 2 deal with petty theft, assaults and quarrels and minor domestic issues while RWC 3 are tasked with addressing marriage and divorce cases and solving disputes over debts above 50,000 UGX. Grave assaults and sexual violence are taken to police. Land issues, both between refugees and refugees and nationals, are sent to OPM zone commandants. It was reported that until recently, land issues between refugees were solved by the RWC structures, which also provided them with considerable power and status.

Until April 2018, RWC structures in Kyaka II were composed of 11 elected members, with the last elections held in mid-2017. However, in order to reflect the new demographic profile of the settlement with regard to new arrivals, it was agreed that post-December 2017 new refugees would elect two additional representatives from the pool of new arrivals into existing RWCs 1, 2 and 3. Elections of these members into RWCs 1 and 2 were held in mid-April, adding the total number of representatives in each RWC across Kyaka II to 13, with no changes in chairman and vice-chairman. While a step in the right direction in terms of addressing questions of RWC representation and legitimacy in the eyes of new arrivals, there are many concerns over how well these new members have been integrated and accepted by the existing RWC structures as well as whether the RWC structures are able (or willing) to address the grievances of new refugees fairly. All new refugees interviewed for this study complained that when confronted by cases involving old and new refugees, existing RWCs are biased towards and favour old refugees. As explained by one recent refugee arrival, "we don't feel represented by the old RWC structures, we hope it'll get better now that representatives from the

new arrivals have been integrated into RWC structures." Even though new refugees would prefer to establish their own parallel leadership structures, this is not possible as it would create parallel structures of authority. In the current system, newly elected members could act as a bridge between cases brought by new refugees and RWC chairmen, on the risk of they could also start acting as gatekeepers. Instead cases should be solved by the whole RWC with the chairman having a prime role.

Because of the importance of RWCs in addressing inter-personal conflicts in Kyaka II, it is critical to address and correct dysfunctional elements in the RWCs as early as possible to avoid inter-personal grievances (family, neighbourhood, etc.) from becoming inter-group issues and escalating into violence. Community Services (OPM, UNHCR, DRC) should ensure that the new members in the RWC structures receive appropriate training on Ugandan law, legal process as well as their roles and responsibilities as RWC members. But joint trainings and awareness campaigns should also be given to all members of RWCs (old and new) emphasising the importance of collaborative work, fair and equitable representation of all refugees, regardless if from old or new caseload, among other issues.

In addition to RWC leadership structures, there are also traditional dispute resolution mechanisms at village and zone level, which include customary structures, elders and pastors often along ethnic lines. While this study did not map and identify these in detail, it is likely that these are on many occasions the first recourse people use to address their grievances and inter-personal conflicts and should thus be better understood, including with regard to their engagement with RWCs and how these conflict management structures may be engaged in mediating relations between old and new refugees. More research is required into the customary structures that are part of the social fabric of Kyaka II.

Pressure on resources and congested services

The population increase in Kyaka II has impacted on the availability of natural resources as well as on the quality of social services, especially health, water and education. The situation is likely to worsen as more arrivals are expected over 2018. One recurrent cause of conflict between old and new refugees has been the sharing of water resources, managed by Water User Committees. Until recently, people in villages paid water user fees (500-1,000UGX maintenance fee per month). When new refugees began settling into different villages across Kyaka II their fees were waived (as they could not afford these), leading to tensions between old refugees who paid fees and new ones who did not. To avoid these attritions, for the moment, agencies have waived fees to all refugees and instead, communities are expected to provide labour. However, lack of information is still driving water-related conflicts at the local level and new refugee representatives still mention the continuous demands by old refugees to pay fees to access clean water.

The relationship between refugees and environmental degradation is well documented from other contexts and

as the population of Kyaka II increases, so will the pressure on the environment. There appear to be two key factors. First, a refugee household of two individuals receives seven poles to build a shelter, deemed insufficient and leading new arrivals to go search for additional wood/poles to build their homes. Second, daily collection of firewood is a female responsibility, which often makes women more vulnerable to SGBV. Female refugees collect firewood from forests within the settlement and adjacent areas bordering a Ugandan army barrack and there have been reports of sexual harassment and abuse.

Competition over resources and overcrowded social services result in frustrations among users and can contribute to tensions among refugees but also with host communities who use those services. Significantly, overcrowded schools and health posts can also contribute to a change in host communities' acceptance of refugees, as they feel their quality of life is affected by the refugee presence: their children attend overcrowded classrooms where a primary school teacher may have over 100 students in one classroom; medicine is no longer available to address health needs. As explained by the vice-chairwoman of the RWC3, new arrivals have impacted on the availability of medicine, of clean water supply, of land available for farming and consequently on the availability of food.

Social impact: inter-personal conflicts

The three key factors mentioned above lead to an increase in inter-personal conflicts. The increase in theft is one concrete and immediate social impact of the redistribution of land. Insufficient land, the lack of viable livelihoods and sufficient food is often a trigger for an increase in inter-personal conflicts, including neighbourhood conflicts and family conflict of different types. These are likely to increase if root causes are not addressed. In general, however, the security situation in Kyaka II was reported by all informants as good, with refugees feeling safe and comfortable walking at night.

The resettlement of new arrivals into neighbourhoods that had been for long demographically stable inevitably changes social dynamics. As noted by the RWC3 chairman, "when some new people come, there are lots of stories told, including accusing them of being thieves." This same chairman observed that it was only after 6-12 months after arriving that new refugees begin to settle and understand how to move and navigate the settlement and its surroundings. There were also reports of witchcraft accusations between neighbours, often caused by mutual distrust.

Poverty and destitution are also key factors that lead to family conflict with gendered repercussions.[22] In the context of displacement, men, traditionally the primary income earners, are unable to fulfil their social roles. In turn, they may feel emasculated and 'disrespected' by their wives who no longer see them as providers, since UNHCR, WFP and other humanitarian actors have since taken on this material role. This can often result in domestic disputes, families breaking, adultery, domestic violence and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Since December 2017, it was reported that there has been an increase in cases of domestic violence and SGBV. In turn, girls and women may also adopt negative coping mechanisms and might be pushed into semi-coercive sexual relationships or transactional sexual relationships. Even though some cases might be prostitution or sexual exploitation, most cases are often more nuanced

Connectors and local resources for peace

The previous section highlighted how new arrivals are affecting life in Kyaka II, drawing in particular on areas which can, if unaddressed, lead to more inter-personal conflicts and social instability. There are however several factors that act as catalysers for peaceful relations and social stability and can be supported to strengthen peace. This section will briefly outline some of these key connectors, touching upon the institutional environment including shared social services, perceptions of host communities in relation to refugees, trade and economic ties and collaborative leadership structures among refugees and nationals. All these can be both a source of division and of positive interaction.

Government policy and integrated services

As per the Ugandan refugee-hosting model, social services are used by refugees and nationals alike under the assumption this promotes positive relations and provides host communities with tangible benefits. For instance, nearly all of Kyegegwa sub-county's population regularly access Bujubuli's Health Centre (in Kyaka II), since there is none in the sub-county. But as noted by national and refugee representatives, support to social services should match the increase in the refugee numbers, especially with regard to education, health and WASH. Despite the positive dimensions noted above, there are also some elements of resentment held by nationals in relation to refugees with regard the perception that refugees are provided more aid than them as there are some services that are exclusively provided to refugees.

For instance, if patients are referred to a hospital outside of Kyaka, an ambulance will pick up both a refugee and a national patient and take them to the hospital. However, it will only bring back the refugee patient, while the national will have to find his/her own way back home.

Although in principle, all humanitarian actors should be operating across the settlement and the host villages (respecting the 70:30 ratio), informants reported that this is a recent phenomenon and not always a transparent or clear one. Coordination between district authorities and humanitarian actors has improved since December, and there are also improvements in how NGOs plan activities, but there is still some way to go. There were reports there are still no effective monitoring mechanisms for the 70:30 ratio and the overall perception that the host communities are not receiving the entitled 30% resource allocation. There should also be more efforts to involve LCs to partner with RWCs and promote joint community meetings between neighbouring refugees and nationals on different sectors. While it may make sense to target resources to those most vulnerable and in need (such as newly arrived refugees), donors and humanitarian partners should also consider the medium and long-term implications of this approach which will potentially lead to growing hostility by nationals and growing vulnerability of old refugees.

Host communities on new arrivals: "the positive effects are more than the negative ones"

According to LC representatives interviewed, new refugee arrivals have not, thus far, led to a change in how refugees are perceived by nationals, regardless if 'old' or 'new' caseload. In fact, new arrivals are perceived by nationals to have largely had a positive impact in their lives. One Ugandan teacher explained that "since the arrivals began coming, there is more development around." According to one LC1 chairman in Bujubuli, the influx of new refugees has led to road improvements all around Kyaka, additional boreholes have been constructed and hospitals were better stocked with drugs. Ugandan teachers interviewed also noted that two more schools were currently being built in Kyaka, as well as a vocational training centre due to open soon. The LC3 for Kyegegwa agreed that "the increase in number of refugees has actually benefited us." For him, it had led to employment opportunities of nationals from the area recruited by

the growing NGO presence. The presence of refugees as workforce is also perceived as an advantage: "now we have enlarged our farms and are more productive". NGOs were more present in host villages, from borehole construction, cash transfers, distribution of improved seeds, among other sectors.

In terms of business, the recent refugee influx is significantly stimulating markets and there is an increase in demand for agricultural produce such as matoke and cassava. High demand has led to higher prices–one matoke bunch previously sold at 5,000-7,000 UGX has increased to 15,000 UGX, with individual households taking more money home. Kyegegwa also benefits from the revenue of the settlement with Bukere Trading Centre said to be the largest tax revenue income in all of the district. In addition to the trading centres in every zone, there is a bustling market every Wednesday and Saturday in Bukere that attracts business people from across the district. Business relations mean there are solid relations and interests between nationals and refugees, but this also leads to an increase in the cost of living for nationals. One serious invisible downside to this market demand was pointed out by an LC1 chairman in Sweswe – he noted high demand of agricultural produce (previously mostly for subsistence) was leading to food shortages among nationals from neighbouring villages as farmers were selling all their produce, previously used as subsistence: "poverty is making us sell all." His remark serves as a reminder that humanitarian actors should consider a wider 'area of influence' than the settlement, instead considering settlements and host villages as inter-connected spaces.

Collaborative local leadership structures

Despite challenges (including those mentioned in the previous section under refugee leadership structures), the fact there are well established leadership structures both among refugees and nationals who speak positively of each other and occasionally meet is of huge added-value. As it is possible to predict an increase in petty theft and inter-personal conflicts, it is important to pre-empt these with 1) joint community meetings bringing together neighbouring villages of refugees and nationals; and 2) institutionalise the partnership between RWCs and LCs, at different levels (1,2 and 3) as these are the key mechanism to address grievances.

Key Conclusions and recommendations

Preliminary findings suggest that relations between refugees and nationals are overall positive. The host community believe they have benefited from the refugee presence for years as well as the recent influx. The shifting environment may lead to some changes in the mid-long term as the demographic pressure increases, resources become more stretched and there is a surge in cases of theft. Of greater concern in the short-term are the relations between old and new refugees, which if unaddressed are likely to deteriorate, especially as more refugees continue arriving and continuously

disrupt the fragile social balance achieved in different neighbourhoods. For this reason, this report has placed more emphasis on the relations between old and new refugees. If these internal settlement relations are managed well, there is less likelihood of spill-over into a deterioration of relations between refugees and nationals as well.

Findings point at three key areas of concern. First, as the population of Kyaka II continues to grow with new arrivals anticipated to continue coming from DR Congo, livelihoods will come under additional strain with land plots being

potentially further reduced. Operational agencies need to devise a strategy that addresses both the short-term and immediate humanitarian and protection needs of new arrivals and concurrently consider how the growing population of Kyaka is affecting long-term livelihoods of 'old' refugees and develop an early recovery approach and appropriate responses to address these needs and vulnerabilities accordingly. Second, refugee leadership structures appear to be currently unable to manage individual grievances and inter-personal conflicts involving new refugees. This needs to be addressed urgently to avoid an escalation of conflicts. Third, more with regard to refugee-national relations, as the refugee population of Kyaka II grows, more investment needs to go into integrated services to ensure that nationals continue to see and experience the material advantages of hosting refugees.

Recommendations

Below are some preliminary recommendations on the three areas of concern noted above that can contribute to mitigate potential conflicts among refugees and between refugees and nationals. While some of these activities are already underway, priority should be placed to fast-track their roll out:

Considerations on livelihoods and self-reliance

1. **Invest in and support innovative non-agricultural livelihoods/off-farm activities.** Viable livelihoods are key in ensuring social stability and peaceful coexistence both between 'new' and 'old' refugees and between refugees and host communities. Given the increased scarcity in land available for farming, agencies should consider innovative agricultural techniques as well as further supporting non-agricultural livelihoods that do not depend as much on land. This may include further support to fish-farming, poultry groups, handicraft and other trades (as per existing DRC livelihoods activities). However, these should be developed alongside **improved market assessments and engagement with existing business community to support diversification of income**. Supporting off-farm activities that are not market-driven could also potentially generate conflict as there would be an unnatural competition created which could negatively impact existing businesses, both refugee and national-owned.

2. **Provide refugees with trainings and work that fits their needs, interests and skills.** This also means further involving **refugees and nationals in the development and planning of interventions**. Special consideration for social protection mechanisms should be given to refugees who are no longer receiving food aid (old caseload).

3. There have been multiple complaints from refugees that food rations are insufficient to carry individuals through the month, even though the food basket is being distributed in full. Thus, complaints are likely connected to inexperience in managing and rationing food for a period of a month, as well as new arrivals unfamiliar to the kind of food distributed. **Roll out sensitisation campaigns that discuss the importance of rationing food. Consider a**

mixed distribution of cash alongside food which would permit new arrivals to select their own food.

4. With regard to what could be termed as 'invisible' food insecurity among nationals, high demand for cassava and matoke in the local markets is said to be leading to food insecurity among host communities. As nationals have farms that look plentiful, food shortages are easy to overlook. **In order to mitigate food insecurity among nationals consider rolling out food security awareness campaigns and trainings in financial management.**

5. **Consider the implications of limited livelihoods on gender relations and male emasculation.** This may require more reflection on constructions of masculinity and how to develop programmes that do not indirectly contribute to male emasculation, instead promoting alternative yet appropriate gender roles.

Considerations on Community Authority

Structures

1. **Carry out mass sensitisation campaigns targeting new arrivals on existing authority structures.** These should include information on Ugandan law, roles and responsibilities of different authorities, services/ referral pathways.

2. **Roll out ASAP the establishment of Helpdesks in every zone.** Helpdesks should be able to provide accurate information to all refugees, but especially new arrivals on authority structures, their entitlements in terms of ongoing humanitarian assistance, referral pathways, services available and their location, etc.

3. **Support RWCs in working collaboratively with new refugee representatives, through:**

- Joint sensitisation sessions to old and new RWC members on integration of new RWC members into RWC structures;

- Expanded (ongoing) training sessions by Protection and Community Services with new RWC representatives on: 1) Ugandan law; 2) roles and responsibilities of different authorities (especially on reoccurring issues such as land, domestic violence, theft, etc.); 3) referral pathways; 4) basic conflict management education/ skills.

- Consider whether the above may be relevant to extend to other community coordination and leadership structures with influence such as Water User Committees and Child Protection Committees.

4. **Further mapping of and research on roles of 'informal' dispute resolutions mechanisms** such as courts of elders, clan heads, customary leaders, religious leaders that have a prime role in solving inter-personal conflicts, and consider provision of the above trainings.

5. **Facilitate Community Dialogues.** Encourage community dialogues between old and new caseload, which may also involve engagement with religious forums, cultural

forums and/or joint celebrations highlighting common values and community visions.

6. **Institutionalize regular meetings between neighbouring LCs and RWCs.** Promote joint community meetings between neighbouring refugees and nationals on different sectors in order to instil sense of being part of the same community and formalise partnerships.

7. **Further research on ethnic dynamics and affinities.** More research should be carried out into the specific ethnic dynamics of the various ethnic communities in the settlement in order to among other aspects 1) understand how to bridge ethnic divisions that permeate relations in Kyaka II; 2) understand how community leaders may favour selection of beneficiaries from their own ethnic communities, regardless of the selection criteria identified by an implementing partner.

Considerations on access to social services

1. **Improve social services across all sectors.** Refugees and nationals access the same social services, particularly in terms of health and education. However, as the population in Kyaka II grows, so must the resources invested in social services. Not doing so risks exacerbating conflict as users become frustrated with overcrowded and low-quality services. Humanitarian partners should support health clinics with more staff, medicine and facilities that can cater for the growing number of patients. Education services should also be supported with more teachers, classrooms, latrines and scholastic material. WFP should also consider the provision of school meals to avoid school drop outs. Other sectors such as livelihoods, WASH, protection, among others should also ensure fair distribution of resources between refugees and nationals.

2. **Ensure humanitarian aid does not become a source of conflict**. The refugee influx has led to an increase in the humanitarian aid available in Kyaka. This increase in support should be managed carefully and equitably to avoid conflicts over aid. One NGO informant argued that "the way these resources are being distributed is a time-bomb".

3. **Consider provision of alternative sources of energy that can possibly reduce exposure to protection risks, especially of women.** Most households in Kyaka depend on firewood as a source of energy, with not only dire environmental consequences, but also exposing women to SGBV when they go collect firewood in forests. Briquettes should be provided as a means of mitigating violence against women and preventing environmental degradation.

Findings in this report were discussed and validated in an event in Kyaka II with representatives from OPM, NGOs, RWCs and LCs. A presentation was also made at Kampala level with the donor and NGO community. This rapid conflict assessment in Kyaka II demonstrates that it is possible to carry out conflict analyses in the context of fast-paced emergencies and that these processes can be carried out quickly and inexpensively. DRC as well as all of our humanitarian partners should consider integrating conflict analyses across their emergency programming from the outset as it can provide valuable guidance for ongoing and future conflict sensitive programming.

Notes

1 This report will use the term 'old' refugees to refer to refugees living in Kyaka II before the December 2017 influx, often for several years; 'new' refugees to refer to those who arrived since December 2017; and 'nationals' to refer to host communities living in villages around Kyaka II.

2 UNHCR, 2018. Uganda Refugee Response Monitoring: Settlement Fact Sheet: Kyaka II - March 2018

3 Kyaka I, located some 30 kilometres from Kyaka II, was closed in 2008 following mass repatriation of Rwandan refugees. Kyaka I has allegedly recently reopened to host internally displaced Ugandans from Lakai district.

4 When this study was carried out, there were less than 300 individuals awaiting status determination by the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) which had last met in April 2018.

5 Interview with OPM representative, Kyaka II refugee settlement 24/04/2018.

6 Sengenya, C. 2017. 'Rebellion fears grow in eastern Congo', IRIN Analysis, 31/10/2017. Personal communication with T. Van Laer (IRRI), 25/05/2018. See also the Kivu Security Tracker monthly reports, available at: https://kivusecurity.org/reports.

7 Personal communication with T. Van Laer (International Refugee Rights Initiative), Kampala 25/05/2018.

8 Van Laer, T. 2018. 'Guest blog: What's happening in Ituri?', Congo Research Group, Featured/Guest blog: 05/03/2018, available at: http://congoresearchgroup.org/guest-blog-whats-happening-in-ituri/

9 Ibid.

10 Mahamba, F. and C. Sengenya, 2018. Politics and oil: the unseen drivers of violence in Congo's Ituri Province IRIN In-depth analysis, 04/04/2018.

11 Van Laer, Op. Cit.

12 Mahamba and Sengenya, Op. Cit.

13 Aside from the plots formally allocated to the households, the old refugee caseload had informal access to additional agricultural land reserved for future arrivals

14 Kaiser, T. 2006. 'Between a camp and a hard place: rights, livelihoods, and experiences of the local settlement system for long term refugees in Uganda', Journal of Modern African Studies. Vol.44 (4)

15 Office of the Prime Minister, A concept paper for the Settlement Transformation Project, April 2015.

16 Amnesty International, 2017. "Help has not reached me here" – donors must step up support for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, June 2017, London: Amnesty International. p.15.

17 According to several interviews with old refugee representatives, NGO, UNHCR and OPM informants.

18 OPM, UNHCR and World Bank Group, 2016 p.66.

19 Amnesty International, 2017, p.16.

20 According to several interviews with old refugee representatives, NGO, UNHCR and OPM informants in Kyaka II.

21 Recent cash transfers by the NGO Give Directly were hailed as a means to maintain some financial autonomy and support the payment of school fees and other essential needs.

22 For an example from Tanzania, see Danish Refugee Council, 2017. "If you miss food, it's like a weapon, it's like a war": refugee relations in Nduta and Mtendeli refugee camps, western Tanzania, by D. Felix da Costa for the Danish Refugee Council Tanzania.

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