

Global Refugee Forum Consultation in the Middle East

Diaspora and Refugee Workshop

Nairobi, 26-27 November 2019

Introduction

The DRC-organized consultation brought together 21 representatives of refugee organizations based in different refugee camp and urban environments in Uganda, Kenya and Somalia. The organizations were all working in some capacity to improve the well-being and uphold the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers or returnees in their countries of residence, on the road from their countries of origin, or living in displacement in host countries closer to home. Some of the organizations were working with communities in countries of origin as well.

The workshop engaged individuals from these organizations in a day and a half of discussion, as part of making sure that refugee and diaspora voices are heard at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019. The GRF has been organized as part of the follow up and accountability to the implementation of the Global Refugee Compact (GRC), and will be a forum for showcasing and discussing good practices in improving the lives of those in displacement, as well as making pledges to contribute to or support initiatives. The principle ‘audience’ for the GRF are the States who signed the Compact and who need to demonstrate their continued commitment to burden-sharing. However, in the spirit of the GRC, other actors such as private sector, NGOs, CVOs, development actors, etc. will be present, and it is important that progress and promises are monitored, and informed, those affected by displacement.

The purpose of the workshop was therefore to extract good ideas, map existing good practices, and provoke collaboration around pledges commitments from those working at the grassroots level with refugees in Europe.

Day 1

Participants were given an overview of the Global Refugee Compact and the GRF process by Nancy Aburi from the office of Ambassador Affey, UNHCR Special Envoy for the Somalia situation. The presentation provoked discussion amongst the participants about the many challenges refugees face in accessing national systems and other mechanisms of self-reliance (such as loans, bank accounts, credit), and about the need for refugee organizations to be more visible in the push for a new way of doing business. Nancy said she would advocate for greater show-casing at the GRF of the work of these organizations, as Ambassador Affey will be facilitating a session at the GRF on 16th December.

Discussion of themes, and outcomes

After this presentation, working groups were composed around the six themes which the GRF has identified as priorities for arrangements for burden and responsibility-sharing, protection capacity, education, jobs and livelihoods, solutions, infrastructure and energy. All of these were discussed by the group in a variety of working groups throughout the workshop.

The ideas presented by the groups are shown in the tables below. The tables include a column of best practice examples in each of the thematic areas, which were presented in a session at the end of the day, and have been matched to the challenges. Over-arching themes from the groups included:

- 1) The importance of education, literacy, digital literacy for those living as refugees, and as a key to self-reliance;
- 2) The importance of a diversity-sensitive approach in understanding refugee communities, and differences in needs and priorities;
- 3) The important role played by grassroots organizations who are frontline service providers for those living in displacement
- 4) Partnerships (private sector, networking, diaspora, etc.) are a key to impact

Protection

Protection was discussed in different working groups, focusing on protection challenges as experienced in refugee camps, and in urban settings. Participants selected which group they wished to join based on their own location and experience.

1) Protection in refugee camps: registration, documentation, accessing systems

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
<p>It can be difficult for newly arrived refugees to know where and how to register</p> <p>Transportation and mobility to reach services across a large camp</p>	<p>CBOs are advocating for refugees' rights</p>	<p>Work together with RAS, UNHCR</p> <p>DAFIKESO: Provide movement passes, specific documents and student passes.</p>
<p>Registration can take a long time – months – and it is often the responsibility of the refugee to make sure names and information are correct</p> <p>It's highly important to be quickly registered as it gives access to services, health, food, basic needs</p>	<p>RCK and Aamin supports the right to have an identity</p> <p>DAFI Kenya Student Organization (DAFIKESO), UNHCR and RAS support the refugees in renewing expired documents</p>	<p>INVER: Financial security, accountability (equity/private sector)</p> <p>Advocacy in regards of education</p>

Police discrimination, corruption and harassment	Refugee community set up security service in Kakuma by refugees. Possible to report violations	Advocacy with UNHCR
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2) Protection in refugee camps: violence, GBV

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Discrimination between humanitarian workers and incentive workers.	Community associations and elders to solve issues	Improve feedback mechanism to report cases of discrimination & corruption
Insufficient meetings and opportunities for refugees to share their views		More consultations with refugees
Resentment from the host community over occupation of land - refugees fearing for their protection		Need more regular meetings with UNHCR and with the host community to resolve issues
Insecurity issues in the camps: food distribution is not sufficient for a month, insecurity for the next days	Community policing efforts (no organization specifically named)	Community education and awareness to prevent conflicts
Child and Gender-based violence, sexual exploitation when looking for fire wood	CBOs carry out community assessment to tackle problems	Need to develop an accessible reporting mechanism
It is very difficult to reach UNHCR staff if there is an issue. There is now an online booking system: but you need to access the working stations and the computers to book a time. That is a challenge in itself		Ease the process to give feedback and talk to UNHCR staff in charge of the camps

3) Protection: urban environments: registration, status

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
<p>Refugees arriving in urban settings do not always know where to get information</p> <p>Corruption: You have to give something to the security to get into the premises to be able to register yourself</p>	<p>The diaspora provide accommodation for newly arrived refugees and inform them about the services provided in the city and about the national laws</p> <p>Ubuntu gives accommodation for new arrivals in the city, provide orientation to access services, link them with organizations (language barrier: translating). Advocacy and translation, cultural orientation, scholarship</p> <p>The Hub: refugees and volunteers</p>	<p>Need of new partnerships and funding for CBOs providing services for refugees in urban settings</p>
<p>Significant delays and language barriers in renewing documentation at RAS</p>	<p>Ubuntu provides translation services to newly arrived refugees</p>	<p>Improving the access and the rapidity of registration and documentation processes for refugees</p>
<p>Refugees without correct documentation (with alien cards but not refugee cards) are excluded from free or affordable services such as health care under NHIF, hospitals, education, access to internships, etc.</p>	<p>Sudanese Student association: scholarship with African Union</p> <p>Collaboration with students from ISAAC to see if they can get funds for refugees from their countries</p>	<p>Need more regular consultations with refugee groups such as this one</p>
<p>Exclusion from financial services (bank accounts, mpesa accounts)</p>		<p>Bring refugee voices to the existing advocacy efforts with Mpesa and Equity Bank being done by UNHCR, IFC and others</p>

4) Protection of refugees in urban communities (violence, GBV, discrimination, etc.)

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Sexual violence and rape against women and men	Refugee Flag Kenya is advocating to report these violations	Better training of police and security
Arbitrary arrest: False accusations e.g. possession of drugs		Better targeted training of police and officials
Violence against arrested refugees in detention		Supporting and partnering with national and local authorities to prevent and fight violence, discrimination and corruption faced by the most vulnerable refugees in urban settings (LGBTQ, women, children, disables)
Discrimination against refugee LGBTQ community	Refugee Flag Kenya supporting refugee LGBTQ community in Kenya	

5) Primary and Secondary Education

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
<p>Education can be unaffordable for refugees, especially without the correct documentation</p> <p>Even getting lunch can be a challenge</p>	<p>Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR), INVER & DAFIKESO provide education for refugees in the camps.</p> <p>Books are provided for high school students who could not afford to buy the books themselves.</p> <p>School run by the diaspora: The families are only asked to contribute per family and not per child to support the running costs. Lunch is provided at the school. The school is located in a slum area in Nairobi</p> <p>Dafikeso: tuition for candidates in class 8 and form 4 preparing for national exams, Diploma scholarship (5 students on session already in Kakuma, urban and Dadaab)</p> <p>I Stretch My Hand: Provision of revision books to top performing children (especially girls) as a way to encourage learning</p>	<p>Provision of learning material, teachers allowance</p> <p>Support fundraising and funding for community-based organization</p> <p>Setting a kit for refugee education (scholarship)</p> <p>Assist in getting required paper (Birth certificate) for children to access education</p>

6) Tertiary Education (camps and urban environments)

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Language barrier	AAMIN: provide skills training development targeting IDPs and refugee in Somalia, promote social entrepreneurship to the refugee	Partnership of DAFIKESO with African Union, universities and management programmes
Acceptance of birth certificate is a challenge to access education	AAMIN certification along with the Ministry of Education and higher learning of countries hosting refugees	Ease documentation to access education for refugees
Scholarship: few slots to attend university level, majority remain in the camps without access	RAA: identification of refugees with talent and empowering them with trainings to become self-reliant DAFIKESO: issuing diploma and scholarships	Partnership with TUCUSA and DAFI Kenya Student Organization (DAFIKESO) Amb. Affey already engaged in supporting scholarship/ exchange programme for refugees with Khartoum university. The objective is to continue and increase these partnerships, so it can benefit many more and give more opportunities for young refugees.
Poor electricity and facilities to access online education. There is a high demand of young refugees to access these online courses	SIS: online courses on entrepreneurship CBC: vocational training in Nairobi	Potential partners (UNESCO, USAID), local communities and local governments to support tertiary education
Few options available for scholarships and skills trainings for refugees (very limited subjects proposed)	South Sudan reading society: promoting literacy among young refugees	Access to quality education and not alternative “refugee” education/vocational training
Cultural barrier for further education of young women	SAVIC: vocational training (English courses, tailoring) NEW Ways: vocational training in Somalia	SSRS: partnership with WTK in distribution of books and others, partnership with UNHCR in facilities support

7) Jobs and Livelihoods: Self-reliance for refugees in camps

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Access to quality skills education is a slow and difficult process	URISE: online courses, community discussion forum, ICT literacy INVER: adult education programme, entrepreneurship, tailoring classes for families and single mum	Ease documentation and promote access to education for refugees
Linking refugees with source of finance (loans, grants) to start business since they are not able to access loans etc in the normal way from banks and financial institutions	RECONCILE have programmes targeting host & refugees, provision of start-up funds IFC have a challenge fund which will roll out in next six months in Kakuma, fostering refugee and host community business and employment in social enterprise	Willingness to partner with private sector actors looking to invest in refugee business start-up, self-reliance Commitment to identify refugee entrepreneurs who would be eligible for such grants, loans, business training
Not enough skills training for entrepreneurship to create their own jobs	RECONCILE International: empowering women and men with entrepreneurship skills	Commitment to provide trained refugees (women and men) to fill positions if private sector companies etc can make opportunities available
Digital skills are important to link them up with outside the camp	SIR: empower youth with digital (ICT, web design, app development), providing freelancing space for job opportunities, 3D printing	Improve access to ICT for refugees in camps. New partnership with private sector needed to improve access to ICT in camps
Need of a platform to enable external investments in refugee initiatives	IFC challenge fund will be good pilot for growing interest of private sector in supporting refugee business in camps and peri-camp environments (eg Kalobeyei, Northern Uganda)	A countrywide, online platform for refugees to showcase their work and to match refugee business people with possible supporters, investors and employers

8) Jobs and Livelihoods: Refugees in Urban Environments

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Job security, particularly with high local unemployment	Few initiatives supported by diaspora community (financial and skills) > looking for online platforms to be visible	Improving access to relevant job and entrepreneurship opportunities for refugees

Difficulties of acquiring a work permit, and other documentation – this is a barrier to starting up a business	Linking unemployed refugees with businesses	Stronger, sustained advocacy with government around rights of refugees to work
Low capacity in business skills		Partnership with existing trainings and skills development opportunities being provided by existing organizations
Harassment by government officials, police or others		Advocacy, legal aid
Lack of access to market	CBO supporting farming, small businesses (art and craft projects, selling bags made by refugees), fish farms	Facilitating access to entrepreneurship opportunities
No access to investments and loans	Amin Ambulance is getting diaspora funding (diaspora individuals and orgs) Some diaspora supporting small initiatives	As above, willingness to partner with upstream efforts to foster private sector investment in refugee business and self-reliance

9.) Energy and Infrastructure: Refugees in camp settings

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Inadequate energy and poor infrastructure for lighting, cooking, etc.	Refugee businessmen and women in the camps making a livelihood out of running generators and charging for electricity for the neighbourhood	Participation in any efforts by government or UNHCR to supply solar panels and alternative energy provision to both the camp and to host community Government facilitation of clean gas provision More partnerships with ministry of energy, relevant stakeholders Removal of regulations around private sector activity in camps
Children and women are exposed to protection risks collecting firewood		Strengthen responsible firewood collection by host community to reduce distant firewood collection by

		refugees, and provide income to host community
No proper roads, no hospital, no markets in refugee settings		Improve in partnership with CBOs the services and infrastructures in camps
Very poor housing and poor internet	Some diaspora organization support Internet service. Limited because electricity is very expensive, so difficult to expand	Strengthened presence in camps of telecom companies, competition between Safaricom and other providers
No access to clean water (shortage of water supply: risk of diseases...)		Improve access to clean water in camps with private partnership

10) Energy and Infrastructure: Support to refugees in urban settings

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Access to affordable housing in city contexts	<p>Sudanese Women Association is doing referrals to housing</p> <p>Organization producing booklets with information and environmentally friendly bricks made by an organization in Uganda</p> <p>UN Habitat and other INGOs have been building housing for IDPs and returnees in Hargeisa and Galkayo in Somalia</p> <p>Focus on housing, land and property rights in returnees/solutions programmes</p>	<p>Stronger engagement of development actors such as UN Habitat</p> <p>Prioritization of women-headed households in accessing housing</p>

11 and 12) Solutions: role of refugee and diaspora organizations in supporting access to solutions for refugees in camps and in urban environments¹

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Insufficient legal pathways; resettlement numbers remain very low, and selection/ vulnerability identification is unpredictable	Diaspora can advocate for more resettlement spaces, and for private sponsorship	Continued advocacy at the political level for a wider range of resettlement options, visas (study, temporary etc)
Corruption in government, RAS, bureaucracy		Awareness raising with host community, police and others
Current global climate moving towards lower numbers for resettlement	Agoa project and RLN in Uganda	Advocacy for western states to remember their commitments under the burden-sharing aspects of GCR (accountability)
Integration solutions are highly political and refugees cannot influence them	Opportunities like GRF for refugees to showcase their capacity to be self-reliant given the correct freedoms	Commitment to supporting refugees to do their own advocacy
Return remains impossible for many to Somalia, Eritrea, South Sudan	Global refugee-led network good for visibility	Links between humanitarian programming and peace-building in countries of origin

Day 2

On the second day, organizations were asked to brainstorm on some of the difficulties and responses being implemented in support of populations in countries of origin, either those who were at risk of displacement or returnees who had gone home after some time in displacement. The discussion was divided into four topics:

¹ the results of these two working groups have been put together because there are limited interventions that diaspora and refugee organizations can undertake to influence the implementation of solutions; and the challenges facing them are the same, whether the refugees are in camps or in urban environments

13 and 14) Addressing root causes, conflict-resolution and peace-building ²

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
<p>Chronic nature of conflict in many countries of origin</p> <p>Causes of displacement include conflict, persecution, human rights violations, discrimination, natural hazards and the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Existing racial, ethnic, religious and cultural divisions are often exacerbated by poverty, low development levels, poor governance, the lack of rule of law, corruption, impunity, natural disasters and other factors.</p>	<p>CTD: advocate for peace-building and environmental conservation at home</p> <p>GoAFRICA: org advocating for peace at home via music and arts</p> <p>SSRS: advocate and promote peace via literacy</p> <p>SSSAK: advocate for peace through South Sudan Embassy in Kenya; advocating for peace via social media platforms</p> <p>LOBONG LORE Org: advocate for peace through cultural dance in neighbouring countries</p> <p>Peace Tech Africa Org: innovative way to advocate for peace for Africa via workshops with young and other diaspora orgs</p> <p>DafiKeso: coming together via East Africa association of students to help different communities' peaceful coexistence with education and have students voice heard</p> <p>AMATABAN: promote peace-building via art, drama, and music</p> <p>Meyalim Darfur: diaspora in USA focusing on peace-building between government and stakeholders; Talks on tribalism; Reconciliation and transitional justice</p> <p>UMYDF in Uganda: conflict resolution, peace-building: advocacy with government, security, religious leaders; peace clubs in schools; work with IGAD and USIP; research</p> <p>SORADO, diaspora organisation in DK working with New Ways to empower youth and women</p>	<p>East Africa association of students working with embassy in Nairobi on how to engage for peace-building</p> <p>Other partners with UNCHR, AU, IGAD Nairobi plan, UN to promote peace</p> <p>Expanded use of social media for community conflict – resolution messaging in countries of origin</p> <p>Community peace-building work in schools in countries of origin</p>

² the results of these two working groups have been put together as there was considerable overlap in terms of the challenges to be addressed (since the root causes of displacement are often conflict-related) and the kinds of initiatives described

	<p>in Dusamareb with funding from DRC Diaspora programme</p> <p>Sudanese women for peace: both in the camps and home: reconciliation and transitional justice; part of the peace talk in Juba</p> <p>AMIN Leo: peace via art and music in Uganda</p>	
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15) Strategic advocacy by refugees and diaspora with local, national governments, and with regional bodies towards durable solutions, integration, alternative pathways

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
To make sure that governments and other stake-holders and duty-bearers in countries of origin are influenced by refugee voices in their decision-making around resource distribution, conflict management, etc.	<p>Fariya Foundation in Somalia: group of women engaged to support reintegration of returnees</p> <p>Action-Kiru: peace-building and reconciliation in DR Congo</p> <p>Africa Reconcile working for peace in Uganda</p>	<p>Advocate for creation of a peaceful taskforce that will promote peace and reconciliation (conflict resolution). This should include local government, returnees, national government, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Advocate for minorities and resource-sharing to prevent conflicts (fight inequality)</p>

16). Partnership, capacity building

Challenge/Gap/Need	Example of existing good practice that can be replicated	Suggestions/Recommendations based on learning experiences
Lack of capacity and education in business, rights, and other elements of self-reliance	<p>COSAF in Uganda: self-defense training for LGBTQ communities</p> <p>URISE: work in South Sudan (Turit) peace-building trainings with UK and Canada partner</p> <p>RefugeePoint, HIAS: support for voluntary repatriation (info, procedure)</p>	<p>Capacity building through social media platforms and creating Facebook groups with stakeholders involved</p> <p>Returnees providing training and replication of good practices from countries of asylum in their home country;</p>

		<p>Training/information for LGBTQ community back home about the opportunities to advocate for their rights back home</p>
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Next steps

Having concentrated during the 1.5 days on discussing the challenges faced by refugees in East Africa in camps and urban settings (with a focus on Kenya and Uganda), but also in countries of origin, or countries where refugee populations live near to home, a session of the last morning of the workshop was dedicated to examining how the workshop would yield results for the Global Refugee forum in December. DRC reminded the group of the timing and content of the GRF; 16th – 18th December, a ministerial meeting but with space for civil society voices, and for side events, as well as showcased best practices. Short videos were also made for each of the participants who wished to take the opportunity to describe the work of their organization and present one expectation for the GRF, hopefully in order to have this displayed online, or run at the GRF.

The group elected a Steering Committee of 5 persons, with a good balance of men and women, who will lead the continued discussion (in the short time remaining until the GRF) on how to distill outcomes, develop further any joint pledges and commitments, and to represent the priorities and decisions of the group at the meeting. The Steering Committee consists of Aisha Ali, Jessy Inga Volonte, Jean Paul Bahikye Kasika, Ramazani Katanangwa, Pascal Zigashane and Peter Matai Muon. As part of the process of bringing diaspora and refugee voices together to make a joint statement or position more powerful, the outcome document may be developed by the Steering Committee into a statement or policy document for the GRF.

The group then elected the individual from the Steering Committee who would attend the GRF on behalf of the whole group. **Aisha Ali** was selected and will join representatives of the three other DRC-led consultations (Berlin, Copenhagen, Istanbul) at the GRF in Geneva on 16-18 December 2019.

Anybody from the Nairobi workshop may connect to the DRC-led **global online webinar on 11th December 2019**; present on that call will also be representatives from the Middle East and Europe workshops. It is hoped that the global webinar will provide participants with the chance to identify common priorities and messages, and possibly to make a joint statement to be carried to the GRF.

Submissions of best practices or pledges can be made by any organization bilaterally to [UNHCR](#) (online or on the template documents shared at the meeting) or as part of an agreed, multi-stakeholder effort (preferred, and part of the desired outcome of the workshop).

As part of the process of bringing diaspora and refugee voices together to make a joint statement or position more powerful, the workshop report may be used to develop a statement or policy document for the GRF.



List of Participants, Nairobi 26-27 November 2019

Name	Name of the organization
Mr. Abdullahi Ali Muhumed	New Ways
Mrs. Aisha Ali	I Profile Foundation /Hope Hub Uganda
Mr. Amin Bolis Ismael	INVER (initiative for Nurturing Vulnerable & Empowerment for Resilience community Based Organization
Mr. Bahikye Kasika JeanPaul	Kituo Cha Sheria- Legal Advice Center, Forced Migration Program.
Mrs. Hekema Ibrahim Mohammed	Sudanese Women For Peace & Development Association (SWFPDA)
Mrs. Jessy Inga Volonté	Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR)
Mrs. Joelle Hangi	Refugee Artist and Authors
Mrs. Julia Korinyang Marko	Dafi kenya student Organization
Mr. Mohammed Farah Mohamed	Aamin Ambulance/ Amin Organization
Mr. Lukendo Mbokani Mparha	OneYouth OneHeart Initiative
Mr. Matai Peter M. Muon	South Sudan Reading Society
Mr. Mbazira Moses	Refugee Flag Kenya
Mr. Pascal Lutanyalerwa Abandelwa	Ubuntu Initiative
Mr. Peter Ladu Tibi	Resource Center for Civil Leadership
Mr. Ramazani Katanangwa	MIBOSCO
Mr. Simon Pey Tiek	I STRETCH MY HAND
Mr. Solomon Ahumuza	COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVE FOR REFUGEES (COSIR)
Mrs. Sudi Omar Noor	kiron campus
Mr. Yang Yohannes Gony	Dafi kenya students organization
Mrs. Zainab Idris Mohammed	Daryeel development organisation
Mr. Zigashane Bahati Pascal	URISE Initiative for Africa