

A Case Study for the Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) Integrated Programme for Refugees in Uganda 2016

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Young children from South Sudan at a refugee transit centre in Uganda. © Stefanie Glinski/World Vision

Around the world, nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced. More than half of these girls and boys flee violence and insecurity in search of a safer future away from bombs and bullets, violence and persecution. Children in these contexts are among the most vulnerable people on earth, as they are at risk of some of the worst forms of abuse and harm. Some of those risks include trafficking, child labour, recruitment into armed forces, maiming, early marriage, rape and other forms of abuse and harm. This is certainly the case for children who have been forcibly displaced from South Sudan into neighbouring countries, particularly Uganda.

The harm suffered by refugee children is not limited only to traumatic experiences suffered while in South Sudan or in transit to Uganda but is also especially prevalent in the new settlements, where usual child protection systems and coping mechanisms are not in place. World Vision had to look beyond its usual ways of responding to children and families affected by conflict and become more adaptive and creative in its child protection programming to respond to the needs of South Sudanese refugee children in Uganda. This case study explores experiences, best practices and challenges from World Vision's integrated Child Protection in Emergencies programmes in the Bubukwanga (Western Uganda) and Adjumani (Northern Uganda) districts from 2013 to 2016.

Context

Uganda has witnessed waves of refugees coming from various countries in the past decade. For example, in July 2013, an estimated 66,000 Congolese refugees crossed into Uganda in a period of four days following conflict among a Ugandan rebel group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Congolese rebel group known as the M23, and the Democratic Republic of Congo National Army (FARDC).



The situation was overwhelming, given the massive arrivals of refugees in a remote district with very limited preparedness to extend humanitarian assistance. This situation therefore necessitated urgent emergency interventions by a range of humanitarian actors in terms of provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); health and nutrition; child protection and education; and food and non-food items.

World Vision established a Child Protection in Emergencies Programme at Bubukwanga refugee transit camp, where the refugee population had reached nearly 30,000 by October 2013. Over half of this population were children.¹ In December 2013, as World Vision was concluding its humanitarian response in Bubukwanga, a new crisis emerged as thousands of new refugees from South Sudan entered Uganda through Adjumani District. South Sudan, the world's newest nation, which came into being on 9 July 2011, broke into a new cycle of conflict following fallout between former Vice-President Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir in December 2013. The conflict gradually heightened from political instability in Juba to an all-out civil crisis with ethnically divisive undertones, affecting much of the country.

By June 2016, 134,620 South Sudan asylum seekers and refugees had registered as refugees in Adjumani,² of whom about 84 per cent were women and children. Sixty-four per cent of the asylum seekers and refugees were children. Of these, 25 per cent were between 0 and 4 years, 45 per cent between 5 and 11 years and 30 per cent between 12 and 17 years of age.

This situation was aggravated by the resumption, in July 2016, of fighting in Juba between the two principle warring parties. At the time of field data collection for this case study, it was estimated that about 39,000 refugees had already entered Uganda to Adjumani. Unofficial estimates as of 12 August 2016 indicated that the number of refugees in the district could have risen to over 200,000.³ To accommodate this growing number of refugees, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Uganda, and United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have increased the number of refugee settlements in Adjumani from 16 to 19, and thousands of other refugees are being relocated to Bidibidi, a new settlement in neighbouring Yumbe District that has been planned to accommodate up to 100,000 refugees.

World Vision's Education and Child Protection in Emergencies Programming approach

World Vision's unifying education and protection framework engages its core components of Education in Emergencies (EiE) and Child Protection (CP). EiE and CP are core focus areas of World Vision's humanitarian programming.

Integrated into these components is mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). MHPSS ensures that affected children and adolescents are provided with the psychosocial and cognitive protection they need in order to more safely and confidently navigate their changed environments and circumstances.

In addition to health, shelter, water and sanitation, children and adolescents are able to access a full range of essential services and support. These include child protection, contextualised life skills interventions (including key health and hygiene messaging), peace education and conflict resolution.

¹ UNICEF Uganda, 'DRC refugee influx to Bundibugyo – Situation Report #3', 30 July 2013.

² Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Refugee Statistics, 1 June 2016.

³ Refugee Desk Officer Adjumani, New Vision Publication, 12 August 2016.



In addition to displacement and exposure to violence, communities in conflict and fragile contexts continue to be vulnerable to frequent and varied shocks, often for protracted periods of time.

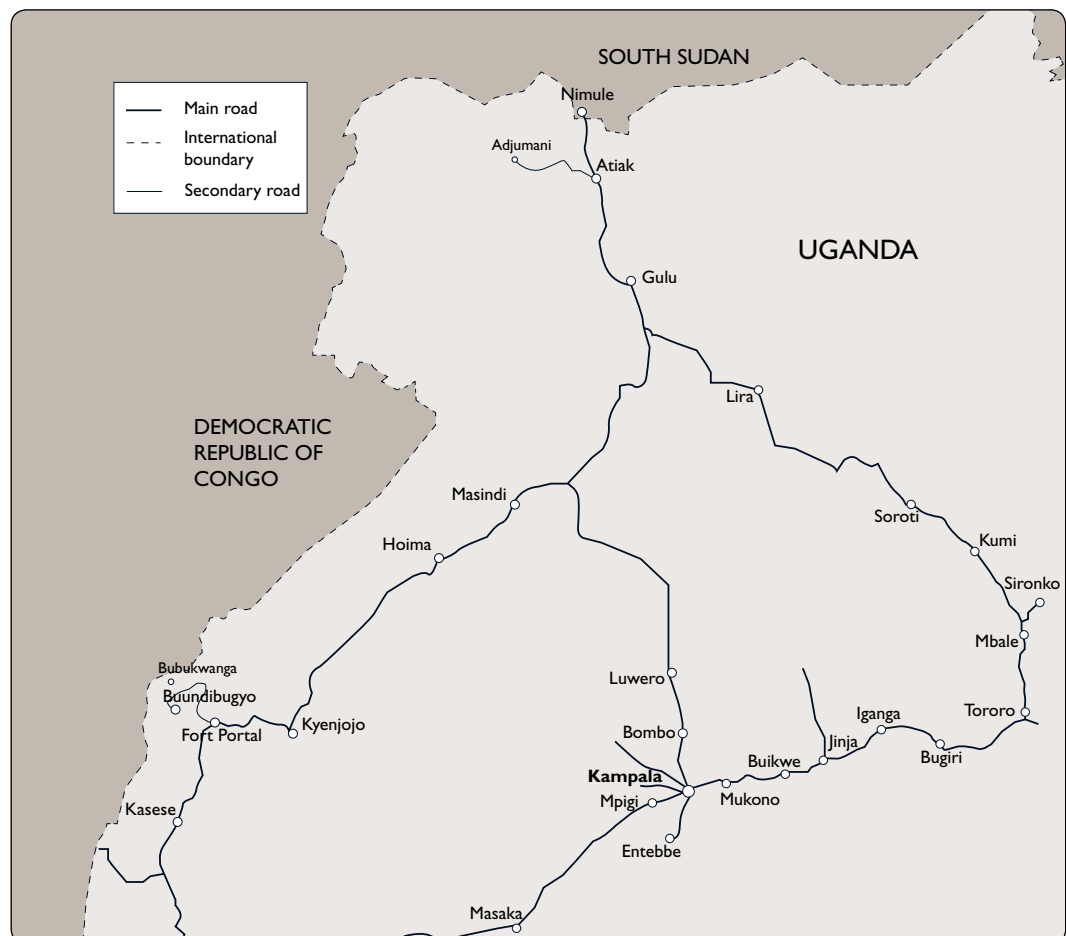
Children are especially vulnerable, with their normal support structures and coping mechanisms most likely destroyed. Resilience and life skills are an integral aspect of the Child Protection in Emergencies Programme. These provide a framework for children to build new support structures and learn a new set of coping mechanisms for their immediate and future situations.

Child protection as a sector cannot operate in isolation of other sectors. When children have safe spaces to learn and play and are able to access a full range of essential services and support, they become significantly less vulnerable to increased risks that go hand in hand with instability.

World Vision's CPiE integrated programme in Uganda

World Vision was well placed to respond to the influx of refugees in Adjumani and Bubukwanga districts. The organisation's experience in Child Protection in Emergencies programming, combined with its existing long-term development programmes in the two districts, made World Vision the go-to organisation for child-focused programming. Building on existing project models such as Child Friendly Spaces, World Vision was able to integrate other sectors to develop child-focused programming to address the needs.

Figure 1: Map of Uganda





Child Friendly Spaces

Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) were widely used by agencies in Bubukwanga and Adjumani. CFSs are quick to be established and respond to children's rights for protection, psychosocial well-being and non-formal education. They can also provide a means to transition from early recovery to long-term support for vulnerable children.

In Bubukwanga, World Vision supported the establishment of one CFS, along with one established by Save the Children. In Adjumani, World Vision facilitated four CFSs, and there are plans to set up two new ones at Maaji and Pagirinya refugee settlements, as well as two others in Bidibidi in Yumbe to cater to new arrivals. Other CPIE actors who are working with CFSs include the Pentecostal Church of Uganda, the Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation, Plan International and Save the Children.

What is a CFS?

Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) are safe places within a disaster-affected community where children's unique needs can be met. They help children return to a normal routine by offering structured activities, games and informal education.

World Vision's integrated approach uses CFSs as a platform on which other child-focused interventions have been integrated, broadening the range of services available to children and their parents. These include early childhood education and development; peacebuilding; inclusive WASH and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) centres; and functional adult literacy.

Other sector projects that have been built on the existing direct CPIE intervention include:

- an IYCF programme that targeted pregnant and lactating mothers and children younger than 2 years
- a child protection, peacebuilding and psychosocial support project (using the Empowering Children as Peace Builders approach), which targeted 20,000 children and adolescents in refugee settlements
- a refugee food assistance programme in collaboration with the World Food Programme, which targeted 129,450 refugees in Adjumani and the West Nile districts of Arua and Koboko
- an inclusive WASH project funded by World Vision that has been used to develop water and sanitation facilities at CFSs.

Child Friendly Spaces in Bubukwanga

World Vision's response in Bubukwanga was initially designed as a three-week response, based on the premise that the Government of Uganda would quickly relocate the refugees to Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Hoima District. However, owing to the slow relocation process, the response was stretched to six months. Implementation was focused on the protection of children mainly through the establishment of CFSs. Other activities included the provision of non-food items and improving WASH facilities at the Bubukwanga transit centre.

World Vision established one CFS at the Bubukwanga refugee transit centre, and it is estimated that a total of over 2,000 children used this facility. By the fourth week of the response, the CFS was receiving an average of 465 children per day. Unlike in Adjumani, operations in Bubukwanga were meant to be short term in nature. This determined many aspects of programming, including development of temporary infrastructure. By December 2013, when World Vision



phased out its interventions, less than 150 children remained in the camp, and they could be managed adequately by one agency in one CFS.

The CFS activities mainly centred on structured indoor and outdoor play and sports activities that aimed at improving the psychosocial well-being and protection of refugee children by helping them build their self-esteem and interact with others. Other activities at the CFSs included providing numeracy and literacy skills, targeting both refugee children and their parents. Children with special needs were identified and referred using a referral system established with the help of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Their needs were also discussed during periodic child protection coordination meetings.

At the CFS, children were supported in electing leaders. These child leaders were responsible for encouraging children to attend and assist the animators to sensitise other children through dance, music and drama. They also played a supporting role in monitoring the children who attended and identifying children with special needs. Child leaders also held meetings to develop and review action plans and to share any child protection concerns that arose.

Initially, 13 animators were recruited from the refugee population; they were trained and equipped with skills of handling children with trauma, providing psychosocial therapy and running activities at the CFSs. However, because of the refugee relocation exercise, it was difficult for World Vision to maintain the desired number of animators. This prompted the need for continuous recruitment and training of animators. To address this challenge and to integrate WASH into CFS activities, World Vision, in collaboration with actors from the WASH sector that included Oxfam, Lutheran World Federation and the District Health Educator, trained caregivers in good hygiene, water and sanitation practices.

Prioritising and focusing on CPiE interventions both in Bubukwanga and Adjumani gave World Vision a comparative advantage, visibility and a profile of being 'the CPiE responder'. This further provided a foundation for gradually integrating other sector interventions as the emergencies continued. When interventions such as food distribution were brought on board, it was also easy for World Vision to mainstream CPiE into these other interventions.

Child Friendly Spaces in Adjumani

The humanitarian context in Adjumani has been different from that in Bubukwanga in a number of ways. The precarious security and other factors such as drought and famine in South Sudan have continued to force thousands of refugees, mainly women and children, into Uganda since December 2013. Besides their overwhelming numbers, the refugees come from diverse ethnic groups that have been in conflict in South Sudan and are likely to stay in conflict for much longer. It is also worth noting that although most refugee settlements are 'stable' after being in existence for over two and a half years, the continued influx of new refugees and the creation of new settlements implies that CPiE actors need to continue with interventions of an 'emergency nature', especially in the area of CFSs.



World Vision staff member from South Sudan works in Uganda with refugees from his country.

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The four CFSs established by World Vision at Nyumanzi and Ayilo refugee settlements currently reach 7,001 children (4,163 boys and 2,838 girls). A total of 28 temporary learning structures were constructed to provide a safe playing and learning environment for girls and boys. However, given the persistence of the emergency in Adjumani, the initial CFS temporary structures have grown old and are being replaced by semi-permanent structures.



Children in Adjumani having fun at a CFS.
© Stefanie Glinski/World Vision

In Adjumani, World Vision supported CFSs for three categories of children and tailored age-appropriate programmes for each category. While all categories of children attend recreational structured play and sports activities, preprimary school children (3 to 6 years) specifically attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the morning hours and engage in structured play and recreational activities in the evenings. Children ages 7 to 12 years attend age-tailored activities such as DigiSchools (learning through using digital technology) in the evenings after attending schools in the morning, while older children (13 to 18+ years) attend life skills training sessions, which include topics on child

rights, public speaking, stress management and decision-making skills. Adolescent girls also attend menstrual cycle management sessions. Older children and youth are also introduced to vocational skills, though to a limited extent. Although the primary beneficiaries of CFSs are children, World Vision-supported CFSs also target young adults (19 to 23 years).

Also at the CFS, direct psychosocial support services to children include individual counselling, art therapy, indoor and outdoor games, storytelling, cultural songs and dances, sports and games. Other activities include hygiene sessions and 'peace road' sessions.

In Adjumani, CFSs have a different structure from those in Bubukwanga. Each CFS is managed by a Centre Management Committee (CMC) that is responsible for sensitising and mobilising community members; mobilising and monitoring children to attend CFSs; overseeing the day-to-day operations of the CFSs, including supervising caregivers; and mobilising community contributions, among other duties. Through the Child Protection Sub Working Group in Adjumani, actors have been able to learn from one another through sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned.

Other innovative approaches

World Vision introduced a number of innovations to complement the CFS and ECD activities, with support from UNICEF. These included integrating peacebuilding through the Empowering Children as Peace Builders (ECaP) model and Digital Schools. This was done to improve the effectiveness of its child protection and psychosocial interventions and to address the needs of populations who have moved out of the acute emergency phase. The ECaP model, which instills a culture of peace among children and young people across social, ethnic and religious lines, is used to enhance peacebuilding, participation and psychosocial well-being of children. The reason ECaP is perceived to be instrumental in the CPiE programme is to contribute to bringing together refugee children and local host-community children to understand and embrace the concept of peaceful coexistence.



In interviews with caregivers/teachers and parents/guardians, participants strongly emphasised that World Vision's peacebuilding initiatives had significantly reduced levels of fighting among children from the different refugee communities and between children from refugee communities and host communities, especially during play and at water points. When the children first joined the CFS and schools, many of them displayed aggressive behaviour and were difficult to manage. World Vision's efforts to integrate peacebuilding activities in CFSs were an appropriate intervention that has helped to reverse the negative behaviours.

'When we had just come to Nyumanzi, we used to fight a lot, even amongst ourselves and with children from other tribes and host communities. For example, if you were fouled when playing football, this alone would prompt a fight. This, however, has since changed; we no longer perceive children from other tribes as 'enemies'. In fact, we now play together and World Vision organises sports competitions between different communities.' – Child from focus group discussion in Nyumanzi

ECaP is also used in CFS and school-based peace clubs to strengthen children's and young people's life skills and resilience, and to transform them into peacebuilders that actively participate in rebuilding their communities. Using ECaP and the Peace Road Curriculum, World Vision has rolled out peacebuilding to 34 peace clubs, reaching 13,562 adolescents. This included conducting peacebuilding and conflict resolution training; supporting peace clubs to implement their action plans, including outreach to communities through debates; and holding peace-oriented creative and recreation activities. World Vision has also facilitated adolescent-led dialogues, sensitisation sessions on children's and young people's meaningful participation, media campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence, and training for resource persons in life skills for children and adolescents.

In addition, World Vision is piloting the DigiSchool (MobiStation) approach to enhance existing peacebuilding and psychosocial activities involving girls. The MobiStation innovation is based on an offline Wikipedia, a dictionary and multimedia resources on girls' education and sexual health that primarily target adolescents. It contains educational messages on child protection and peacebuilding. This approach also helps adolescents by engaging in face-to-face dialogue on various issues, such as hygiene and violence against children. So far, this approach has been credited for helping improve the attendance of adolescent girls in CFSs.

'The videos are a catalyst and a start up for adolescent dialogues on peacebuilding. Even a shy girl will feel motivated to contribute to something.' – World Vision field staff member

Other activities that are or have been conducted at the CFSs include the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) programme, which targeted pregnant and lactating mothers and their children younger than 2 years; functional adult literacy classes of parents of children attending ECD and CFS activities; and the Model Couple Family approach.

Through the Model Couple Family approach, parents/guardians are trained in good parenting practices and in providing counselling and guidance to others. This is aimed at reducing levels of domestic violence and also providing opportunities for the extremely vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly and orphans, to be better integrated in their own families as well as the community at large. Exemplary couples are selected based on a number of criteria that include



being a peaceful family, dialoguing, having children in school, practising good feeding and care for children, having good sanitation and hygiene at home and having no record of domestic violence. So far, 50 couples (25 per settlement) were identified, selected and trained.

World Vision has also been active in interagency initiatives to strengthen community child protection structures in the refugee settlements. Community protection structures, especially child protection committees (CPCs) and refugee welfare committees (RWCs) play a very important role of sensitising refugee communities about the benefits of sending children to CFSs and identifying children in need of protection and psychosocial support as part of a community-based referral pathway system. CPCs help in reducing risk while at the same time promoting protective environments for children in the refugee settlement.

Good practices in conflict contexts

Engaging with faith communities

World Vision's engagement of religious communities in establishing CFSs was found to be a unique approach that has helped CFSs supported by World Vision to avoid some of the challenges faced by other actors.⁴ Walking through the different refugee settlements in Adjumani, one will quickly notice the numerous churches constructed by the refugee communities, an indication of their importance as key community entities. Local stakeholders and community members (refugees and host communities) credit World Vision as a faith-based organisation for recognising and building on these existing important community organisations.⁵ The community participation and ownership aspect is reflected in names given to the four World Vision supported CFSs, two of which – Metku⁶ and Luktweg⁷ Community Centres in Nyumanzi – bear names from South Sudan, while the other two – St Emmanuel and St Joseph Community Centres in Ayilo – were named after churches. Facilities in these centres are not exclusively used for CFS activities but are referred to as community centres, making them inclusive even for adults.

Other benefits that accrued from working closely with religious communities included the identification of persons from within the communities who could serve as caregivers/animations/ECD instructors. This again helped World Vision-supported CFSs to address the challenge of high turnover of refugee volunteers, because refugee volunteers selected from Sunday schools of the respective churches are easy to support and monitor in terms of their performance and commitment.

Similarly, engaging trusted persons from religious communities has also helped to overcome the challenge of attracting girls to attend World Vision-supported CFSs. Earlier assessments revealed that girls, especially adolescents, had not fully benefited from play and recreational interventions, largely due to cultural practices that restricted them from interaction with boys and also because of engagement in household chores.⁸ Households benefitting from World Vision-supported CFSs find it easy to release girls to freely participate in recreational sports and structured play activities because they feel that their faith leaders are in control of processes at CFS and that their children are in the hands of persons they trust.

⁴ Source not mentioned for ethical reasons.

⁵ Over 90 per cent of the South Sudan refugee population subscribe to the Episcopal Church of South Sudan.

⁶ Meaning 'peace'.

⁷ Meaning 'We are moving forward'.

⁸ Child Protection and Psychosocial Rapid Assessment in Adjumani, Arua and Kiryandongo for War Child Holland, 2014.



Collaborating with other agencies

In Bubukwanga, good coordination with other agencies, such as Save the Children, was important in setting up CFSs as this ensured smooth running of activities, with no competition. Right from the start, World Vision, Save the Children and the Uganda Red Cross, which were the key child protection actors, worked in close collaboration, coordinating and complementing each other in conducting activities such as carrying out assessments, building capacities of psychological first aid providers and animators, and establishing CFSs and building the capacity of child protection structures. This helped to harmonise activities and avoid duplication of services. It was therefore not surprising that when World Vision phased out its operations in Bubukwanga in December 2013, it was quite easy to hand over the CFS facilities to OPM and Save the Children.

In Adjumani, the interagency education and child protection working group's collaboration around the implementation of CFSs/ECD provides a best practice that could be replicated in other emergencies. This included strong coordination with the district local government and the inspector of schools in charge of ECD, who played a critical leadership role and guidance for partners implementing ECD programmes. The local government in Adjumani ensured compliance with national guidelines for ECD to make certain that minimum quality standards were met.

Furthermore, through the Education Working Group, the main ECD/CFS actors often meet to streamline and harmonise approaches and practices. This has helped standardise interventions, ensure quality through joint supervision and avoid duplication and double counting of beneficiaries. It has also encouraged joint activities, such as setting criteria for selection and remuneration of volunteers, holding joint community entry meetings and registering and licensing ECD centres.

In addition to the training given to caregivers by individual agencies, interagency training spearheaded by the inspector of schools in charge of ECD and a phased institutionalised training based at Lodonga Primary Teachers' College supported by UNICEF have greatly improved the quality of caregivers at CFSs.

'World Vision was the first agency to respond in the area of child protection and education. Although initially CFSs focused only on the provision of structured play and recreation, we soon realised that we needed to integrate ECD since there were no schools, especially in new settlements like Nyumanzi and Ayilo. To bring the District on board, World Vision conducted training for district school inspectors, centre coordinating tutors and other agency staff. The setting up of CMCs and caregivers was done in collaboration with us. Since then we work closely with all actors engaged in providing education.' – Adjumani District Inspector of Schools in Charge of ECD



This young girl and her family live in Uganda after fleeing violence in South Sudan.
© Stefanie Glinski/World Vision



Integrating other sectors into CPiE

Integrating other sectors into CPiE programming brought a number of benefits. Apart from broadening services available for children, World Vision was able to tap into resources from other sectors, such as WASH, to build inclusive WASH facilities at all four CFSs. This allowed World Vision to use the available resources to further enrich activities offered at the CFSs. For example, CFSs supported by World Vision comparatively have had more space for conducting ECD classes and other activities. World Vision has also been able to rehabilitate the facilities. It has also been possible to cut costs of implementing CPiE programmes through cross subsidisation of projects by other actors.

'We also coordinate and synchronise activities and logistics. This has helped us cut down on the costs of operation. For example, during the food distribution days, we ensure the involvement of multidisciplinary teams to address the different programme components, including addressing protection needs of children.' – World Vision Staff

'Food is essential to everybody and thus has been used as an important mobilisation tool for child protection. For example, all the 38 Food Management Committees have received training on child protection and have been able to identify and monitor vulnerable children, especially child-headed households, and ensure that they receive food. In this way, we have been able to mainstream child protein in food distribution.' – World Vision Staff



A young boy from South Sudan plays at his new home in Uganda. © Stefanie Glinski/World Vision

Linking CFS and ECD centres with existing schools

In line with the Ugandan government directive, ECD centres are supposed to be attached to existing primary schools. World Vision did not have an opportunity to do this because its CFS/ECD centres existed before the schools were constructed. Fortunately, because the CFSs were also providing primary school for lower grades, new schools were built next to the CFSs. This has a number of benefits that include sharing of human resources, such as teachers, and physical facilities, such as playgrounds, sports equipment and WASH facilities. In addition, CFS caregivers obtain technical support and supervision from school head teachers so that older children can care for their siblings at the CFS. It is also anticipated that this will make the handover of the facilities easier, increasing the likelihood of sustainability.



Recommendations for delivering good-quality, integrated Child Protection in Emergencies projects in conflict settings

Build on existing community structures

To strengthen sustainability, World Vision needs to engage early on with beneficiary refugee communities to develop phase-out plans for older CFSs. This would enable World Vision to focus instead on establishing new ones as appropriate. Alternative approaches, such as using existing community centres, could be used to establish new CFSs and ECC centres.

Strengthen linkages with local schools

Given the strong relationship between CFSs and schools, World Vision could consider building on existing peacebuilding activities to engage more with schools by supporting safe school/child friendly school initiatives to improve safety and protection at school. This could also provide opportunities for World Vision to integrate best practices from CFS into the conventional primary schools.

Adopt longer-term programming approaches such as social cohesion between refugees and host communities

The long-term nature of the conflict in South Sudan could imply an extended stay of the refugees in Uganda. World Vision therefore needs to review its linking relief to rehabilitation and development (LRRD) approaches to fit with the Government of Uganda and UNHCR Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHOPE) Strategy.⁹ This could be achieved by starting longer-term development programmes in the host communities.

Adopting a social cohesion approach to programming in Bubukwanga and Adjumani will better help host communities cope with the increasing number of refugees. Examples might include initiating community-based disaster risk reduction strategies and approaches that take into account the protection needs of children from both refugee and host communities.

Strengthen child protection measures

To strengthen the child protection component of the emergency response in Adjumani, World Vision needs to explore integrating a case management and referral system to address needs of individual vulnerable children, as this is not being given the attention it deserves by most actors.

Target youth groups using livelihood programmes

Given the vulnerability of most refugee youth out of school and the fact that secondary education is less considered by most emergency response actors, World Vision should explore integrating youth livelihood programmes to help youth avoid risky behaviours related to idleness. This support could be in the form of supporting the development of vocational and entrepreneurship skills

⁹ The ReHOPE strategy aims to enhance community-led development and sustainable refugee protection, which will strengthen public service delivery and stimulate economic empowerment for refugee and host communities in Uganda.



Acknowledgements

This case study would not have been possible without the cooperation and collaboration of the World Vision Uganda Response Programmes Team; refugee and host-community members of Bubukwanga (Western Uganda) and Adjumani (Northern Uganda); Isis Sunwoo, Global Humanitarian Policy and Learning Advisor, World Vision International; Kate Eardley, Global Policy Manager, World Vision International; and the editorial support of Claire Cooper, Cooper PR; Tanya Penny, Director of Global Humanitarian Positioning, Reputation and Communications, World Vision International; and the World Vision Global Publishing team.

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A refugee transit centre in Adjumani, Northern Uganda.

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Families from South Sudan arrive at the refugee transit centre in Northern Uganda. © Stefanie Glinski/World Vision

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