

Norwegian Refugee Council's Country programme in Uganda

Uganda hosts about 1.2 million refugees and asylum seekers. NRC provides safety and protection to refugees in the country.

Our impact

NRC is supporting South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda with relevant, life-saving assistance. In response to the large influx of refugees, NRC has scaled up its response to reach thousands of beneficiaries, both refugees and Ugandan nationals.

In 2014, NRC started implementing a Refugee Response Programme targeting South Sudanese refugees in the West Nile region of Uganda and has been providing education, livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene services over the past two years. NRC is one of few partners addressing the needs of children and youth in West Nile through the provision of vocational skills training, accelerated learning, life skills, play and recreation. This is particularly important for the many children and youth who have been traumatised by violence and war before crossing the border to Uganda.

Lack of water is a major concern in the newly established settlements. NRC has been given responsibility by the UN Refugee Agency to provide water, sanitation and hygiene services to new arrivals in one of the settlement areas.

In 2016 NRC reached

81.414

Individuals, with education, water, hygiene and sanitation and food security.

Budget: 2017 40 M NOK | 2016 20 M NOK
Donor: NMFA, NORAD, ECHO, SIDA, UNHCR, Telethon, NRC Private
International staff: 4
National staff: 50
Established: 1997. Re-registration 2014

Humanitarian and political background

Uganda has surpassed Ethiopia as the largest refugee hosting country on the African continent. The country hosts more than one million refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and Somalia.



Areas of operation: Adjumani, Arua and Yumbe in the West Nile region.
Country office: Kampala

A generous refugee and asylum policy

Uganda has unique laws and regulations that promote the safety and wellbeing of refugees. The Refugee Act of 2006 stipulates that refugees have the right to free movement and work, to establish businesses, and to access public services like health care.

Uganda has also incorporated refugee protection and assistance programmes into its National Development Plan, through its settlement transformation agenda. The law and new strategies are positive signs for refugees’ prospects for future integration into local communities.

Influx from South Sudan

Following the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in December 2013 and escalation of violence in July 2016, the largest influx of refugees to Uganda in recent years has been from South Sudan. Currently, Uganda hosts around 590,000 refugees from the country and around 2,595 people are still arriving on a daily basis. They mainly reside in the northern areas of Adjumani, Arua, Yumbe, Kiryandongo, and the capital Kampala.

The number of refugees from DRC, likewise, is estimated at over 260,000. They are mostly settled

in Kampala, Rwamwanja, Nakivale and Kisoro. The number of refugees from Burundi has reached more than 53,000. They reside in Kampala and Nakivale.

Skewed demographics

A majority of refugees in Uganda are women and children: 86 per cent arriving from South Sudan, 78 per cent from DRC, and 73 per cent from Burundi are women and children. Children under 18 years constitute 64 per cent of the South Sudanese refugee population in northwest Uganda.

Children and youth continue to face a number of protection risks in the West Nile region, including early marriage, domestic violence, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Many have never had the opportunity to go to school in South-Sudan due to war and lack of available education services. In Uganda, the current education opportunities are overstretched due to a large refugee influx. In addition, girls are often not prioritized to go to school due to cultural practices; girls are supposed to help at home, take care of siblings, as well as early marriages.

NRC activities in the field

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Through our Uganda programme, we give both life-saving and long-term support to South Sudanese refugees.

NRC has offices in Adjumani, Arua and Yumbe in the West Nile region.

We are equipping refugee children and youth with skills to build their futures. Our experts work to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to succeed.

Water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH)

Our WASH teams are responsible for bringing clean water and sanitation to displaced and local communities. We provide life-saving WASH services to new arrivals including water, sanitation services and hygiene promotion. We also construct new WASH-appropriate buildings. Our WASH experts:

- Provide clean drinking water and latrines to settlements, as well as schools and vocational centres, in collaboration with our education teams.
- Construct water boreholes for refugee villages, schools and airport runways.
- In a newly established settlement in Yumbe, we work with UNHCR to ensure new arrivals have clean water, latrines and non-food items like soap and jerrycans.

Education

We want young refugees to receive quality education and have a safe space to learn. We work to improve attendance rates in school, especially among girls. We are the only agency offering catch-up classes for refugee children for them to be able to join the official school system as soon as possible. Our education teams:

- Offer catch-up classes and primary education for children and young adults.
- Give vocational training to young adults on self-employment and running small businesses.

- Conduct teacher training.
- Help construct additional classrooms, libraries, offices and latrines for schools and vocational centres. We do this in coordination with our WASH and food security teams.
- Help construct accommodation for teachers, together with our WASH teams.
- Furnish classrooms with new desks, chairs and chalkboards.

Food security

The lack of post-primary school opportunities is a major challenge for young South Sudanese refugees. To help them earn a living, our food security teams:

- Distribute agricultural tools and seeds.
- Offer vocational training for refugees and nationals on self-employment, agriculture, sewing, cooking, and basic literacy and numeracy.
- Promote small businesses through cash transfers.