

NRC's operations in Uganda

Humanitarian overview

Uganda remains Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, accommodating more than 2.04 million refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from South Sudan, DR Congo and Sudan. While the country continues to uphold its progressive refugee policy, ongoing arrivals, rising humanitarian needs, and declining funding are placing significant pressure on national systems and humanitarian services.

Refugees face persistent barriers to self-reliance, including limited employment opportunities, language constraints, challenges in recognising academic qualifications, and restricted access to financial services. As humanitarian assistance declines, many households increasingly rely on informal and unstable livelihoods, exposing them to poverty, exploitation, and negative coping mechanisms. Urban refugees, particularly in Kampala, face additional challenges related to high living costs and inadequate housing.

Food insecurity remains a major concern across refugee settlements. Funding shortfalls have reduced food assistance, leaving many families unable to meet their basic needs. At the same time, growing pressure on water, sanitation, shelter, and energy resources continues to affect both refugee and host communities.

Public services in refugee-hosting districts remain overstretched. Health facilities face shortages of personnel, medicines, and resources, while overcrowding and inadequate sanitation contribute to disease risks. Education services continue to struggle with limited infrastructure, teacher shortages, and overcrowded classrooms, affecting learning outcomes for refugee children and youth.

Protection risks remain high, particularly for women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Gender-based violence, child protection concerns, exploitation, psychosocial distress, and resource-related tensions continue to affect vulnerable populations. Sustained investment in protection, livelihoods, education, food security, and basic services remains critical to strengthening resilience among refugees and host communities.



Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling
and legal assistance (ICLA)



Protection
from violence



Water, sanitation
and hygiene (WASH)

NRC Uganda

Established	1997, re-registered 2014
International staff	4
National staff	114

Our areas of operation

West Nile Region: Terego and Madi Okollo Districts, Rhino Camp, Arua City

Mid-Western Region: Kiryandongo District (Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement), Kikuube District (Kyangwali Refugee Settlement)

South-Western Region: Isingiro District (Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements), Kisoro District, Bundibugyo District, Kyegegwa, Kamwenge, Kanungu, Ntoroko

Urban: Kampala Metropolitan Area, including Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono districts.



Our approach

NRC in Uganda delivers its programmes through two complementary approaches: first-line emergency response to meet urgent humanitarian needs, and durable solutions that support long-term self-reliance.

Both approaches are multi-sectoral, spanning education, protection from violence, WASH, and information, counselling and legal assistance, and are delivered in line with safe and inclusive programming standards. Cash and market systems serve as a cross-cutting theme, enabling NRC to provide flexible, market-driven responses that are relevant in both emergency and transition contexts, and to foster locally led partnerships that strengthen the overall impact of our interventions.



124,229 people reached in 2025 ▼

Education

NRC provides education for the most vulnerable children and youth affected by displacement, with a particular emphasis on girls and children with disabilities. We aim to enhance their transition to and retention in formal education systems, working closely with national authorities and collaborating with both national and international partners. Additionally, our education programmes address the challenges posed by climate change. Our initiatives include:

- providing language bridging programmes for new arrivals
- organising return-to-learning activities

- offering cash for education through the Accelerated Education Programme, covering access and scholastic materials
- conducting remedial and catch-up classes to support primary education for children and young adults
- providing vocational training for young adults to promote self-employment and diverse livelihood opportunities
- offering professional development support for teachers
- assisting with the construction and renovation of educational facilities
- enhancing the welfare of teachers in remote areas
- supplying school materials and multipurpose cash to overcome financial barriers to education
- delivering protection and psychosocial support services through the Better Learning Programme

- strengthening the capacity of local education authorities (such as school management committees and parent-teacher associations) to lead the planning and prioritisation of school activities



140,138 people reached in 2025 ▼

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

Our ICLA services help refugees and vulnerable host communities to know, claim and exercise their rights. Our ICLA teams:

- provide counselling and legal assistance to refugees and host communities to obtain legal identity documentation (e.g. birth registration)
- support newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees obtain the required documentation
- help resolve housing, land and property disputes
- secure access to land for livelihood programming (e.g. block farming)
- provide cash for rent for vulnerable families at risk of eviction
- support individuals and groups register business and obtain required licenses
- provide legal assistance on employment matters
- lead on durable solutions in relation to local integration of refugees into their host communities and family reunification (complementary pathways)



1,936 people reached in 2025 ▼

Livelihoods and food security

NRC has taken a strategic decision to gradually phase out Livelihoods and Food Security as a standalone core competency. This shift reflects the organisation's prioritisation of approaches that strengthen existing markets and empower households through more flexible, scalable solutions.



48,057 people reached in 2025 ▼

Protection from violence

NRC supports people affected by displacement to enjoy their right to freedom from violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation across all phases of displacement. Our protection team:

- work on community engagement and awareness to change community attitudes and behaviours
- provide cash-based interventions (CBIs) to meet domestic needs for registered populations
- build the capacity of community-based structures to effectively deliver protection assistance and increase refugee participation
- strengthen the mobile protection desks in communities to enhance ease of access for services
- identify and review the existing referral pathways to ensure people with specific needs are supported with all relevant services



53,505 people reached in 2025 ▼

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Integrated WASH in education provided a conducive learning environment for the new arrivals and existing refugees in targeted schools and host communities. A total of 53,505 people were reached with WASH services.

We invested in WASH in schools through the rehabilitation of latrines, mass sensitisation of learners, support to menstrual hygiene management and construction of communal latrines to respond to the needs of the new arrivals. This directly contributed to healthy communities by preventing possible outbreak of WASH-related disease in the target population.

Our donors

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- The Carter Centre (TCC)
- LEGO Foundation
- The United Methodist Committee on Relief of Global Ministries (UMCOR)
- UAE-AID
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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