

UGANDA

Promoting Partnership and Inclusion in Emergency Programming



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Country: Uganda

Project location: Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, Yumbe district, Uganda

Conflict: South Sudan conflict refugee saturation

Project timescale: January 2017 - ongoing (Dec 2018)

Target Population: People with Specific Needs (PSN) in Refugee and host communities

Project Budget (USD): \$ 1,097,927

Donor: Latter-Day Saints (LDS), Asante Foundation

Partners: Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, Oxfam Novib NL



“There was not enough space, it was not comfortable and every time we faced rain or strong winds we feared for our safety. I am very happy with my new home, I cannot thank CRS enough. I can now sleep in peace without fearing the rain or the wind, and I can also safely store my food rations and other belongings without worrying about it getting stolen.”

- Betty Poni, South Sudanese Single mother with a disability living in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement

What did CRS do?

- Construction of 725 shelters, 2 motorized water systems, 469 latrines and 365 communal waste pits
- Training of 30 water user committees, 37 community health promoters, 10 community health leaders, 490 community members in shelter construction, 20 masons and 122 community members in dome latrine construction
- Distribution of 1370 latrine digging kits, 2800 WASH kits, 1500 feminine hygiene kits
- Facilitate participation of 454 hosts and 36 refugees in their own shelter construction, 2,800 households in community health awareness visits, 4,000 participants from various stakeholders' groups in events to mark International Sanitation Week, World Water Day, and World Refugee Day and community youth teams in construction of waste pits.

Background

Since South Sudan gained independence in 2011, fighting between government and opposition forces uprooted more than 1.8 million people from their homes. As of November 2018, about 1.07 million South Sudanese refugees had fled to Uganda. To reach safety, most people traveled through the bush for several days without access to food or water. Most are women and children.

The Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in the Yumbe region of northwest Uganda, where CRS is working, is one of the largest in the world. It was declared saturated when the population exceeded 288,000 people. Since January 2018, only family reunification cases have been accepted there, while new arrivals are relocated to other settlements in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda.

The Sudan conflict is ongoing and expected to continue. Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is committed to a comprehensive refugee response framework until at least 2021.

Problem Statement

The government of Uganda adopted the global Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and developed its own Country Refugee Response Plan (CRRP) to respond to the needs of the huge population of refugees within its borders. Many are expected to stay long-term, since 82% are women and children and 3% elderly. The vision of CRRF is an emergency response where refugees are better included, where they are no longer living in camps, and are not entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance. It calls for greater support to refugees and the hosting countries by providing a more predictable and comprehensive response. Temporary shelters with plastic sheeting did not meet all needs. A UNHCR needs assessment indicated that families including People with Specific Needs (PSN) - defined as the elderly, female-headed households, child-headed households and people with disabilities - experienced a higher rate of emotional and physical abuse, compared to non-PSN households. Many of them were also unable to make their own homes.



82%

82% of refugees in the country are women and children



A community group receives their latrine digging kit.
Photo credit: CRS

Project Process

In response to these challenges, CRS coordinated efforts with UNHCR and the OPM—the leading coordinators for the Refugee Response Plan in-country—and included refugees and host communities in all phases of WASH, livelihoods and shelter interventions.

Since January 2017, CRS’ efforts focused on activities to assist vulnerable populations through holistic interventions that provide durable solutions. CRS worked in direct partnership with refugee and host communities to promote peaceful co- existence, and ensure respect to human dignity. It is a community-based approach that promotes social cohesion. CRS continually participated in humanitarian coordination meetings to avoid duplication of efforts, and improve targeting and information sharing with implementing and operating agencies in Bidi Bidi.

Shelter

CRS developed a Shelter Strategy and Bill of Quantities, which were presented to the OPM, UNHCR and Yumbe Local Government Authorities for review and approval. CRS teams then constructed a demo house to receive feedback from beneficiaries and other implementing partners. The shelter design was approved and eventually adopted by all implementing partners constructing PSN shelters in Bidi Bidi. Additionally, UNHCR selected CRS as the co-chair of the Shelter Working Group, and sole Implementing Partner for shelter and infrastructure across all five zones in Bidi Bidi.

Once the design was approved, CRS developed a strategy to construct 725 semi-permanent PSN shelters in Zone 5 by engaging both refugee and host community members. The initial target of 70-30% refugee and host community members as labor was unfeasible because few refugees were skilled in masonry or carpentry. To bridge the skills gap, CRS provided training in shelter

construction. At least 75% of participants passed the training and shared their skills and good practices with other community members, increasing overall capacity. Workers were paid based on the number of shelters completed. In addition to the paid laborers, host and refugee community members participated in the construction of their own shelters. For PSNs who were not able to participate in shelter construction, local labor was hired.

CRS considered the shelter design to be appropriate because it is sustainable, and more PSNs could be reached given the use of local labor and materials. The shelter model also meets protection needs through the two-bedroom design that provides improved safety, dignity and comfort to PSN families with children.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In January 2017, CRS finalized a 12-month WASH strategy focused on:

- Improving access to permanent water points, including the rehabilitation of existing boreholes and the construction of improved, solar-powered motorized water pump;
- Providing clean water storage and distribution options, with a view to eradicating the need for water trucking;
- Promoting WASH activities through the training of Community Health Promoters, as well a promotional materials and distributions of hygiene supplies.

CRS partnered with Oxfam’s WASH Technical Lead to provide motorized water distribution systems. This was due to operational and maintenance challenges of manual systems, coupled with the increased demand for safe drinking water. These were substantially costlier but led to a mutually beneficial partnership with Oxfam, with whom resources were pooled to deliver two systems. This partnership also led to the provision of trainings on the construction of dome-shaped slab latrines, widely adopted by other UNHCR implementing partners.

Livelihoods

An integrated livelihoods approach allowed for easier access to food and income in the following ways:

- Physical capital in the form of agricultural inputs.
- Human capital through various trainings in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and financial management using the CRS SMART Skills curriculum.
- Social capital through the formation of farmer groups, savings groups, and micro-enterprise groups.
- Financial capital through access to start-up capital and a social fund, through the CRS Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) methodology.



Outcomes of the 12-Month WASH Strategy
Graphic: Livia Mikulec / CRS



Asimtai Ruth and her family are facing water challenges. They have no water storage containers and they spend a lot of time waiting for their turn at the water point.

Photo: Flavia Lanyero / CRS

Outcomes

- Refugee families have a home in which they feel safe.
- Conflict and tension among refugee and host communities has been reduced through opportunities to train, coordinate and implement together, including participation in joint decision-making.
- Structures have been designed to be durable and sustainable, leading to reduced dependency on humanitarian aid.
- Leadership and representation of both communities improved, as did communication with and between relevant government and non-government stakeholders.
- Field monitoring and observation showed a reduction in WASH-related illnesses. No outbreaks were reported throughout the project period.

“I am very happy to have the latrine because now my children no longer defecate in the open. Disputes with neighbors over sharing our latrine have stopped, and one child who continuously used to suffer from diarrhea is no longer sick. I can now keep my family clean and healthy thanks to all this support”.

- Edina Tabu, 26, South Sudanese, Single mother in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement

Learnings & Recommendations

- Involvement of key community members and refugee leaders was essential for speedy start-up activities, and for planning processes such as the recruitment of community actors (especially masons, community hygiene promoters and helpers).
- To overcome the challenge of selecting beneficiaries from a large numbers of PSNs, it is recommended to have strong coordination with all stakeholders, including communities, government and donors.
- Participation by teams of community youth groups (both refugee and host) for the construction of PSN latrines and shelter created ownership and a sense of trust that resulted in a faster construction process. This also promoted peaceful coexistence and cohesion.

“My motivation for working has been the happiness and relief people with special needs show when we hand them a key to their own shelter. There is a look of hope that things will turn out okay”.

- Wilson Fevrin, Head of CRS Office, Uganda

- The costs of a shelter and latrine significantly varied from the initial figure. UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners agreed to adapt the payment scale to standardize the shelter end result. Despite an increase in the cost of a latrine, it is important to review the design and provide assistive devices to address the needs of people living with disabilities.
- It is essential to consider seasonal rains in the early stages, and negotiate any requirement and conditions with stakeholders. Heavy rains caused delays because mud bricks were not available. UNHCR/OPM and the technical working group advised to construct shelters during the dry months of January to March, and November to December. However, water was scarce in those months. The project team decided to harvest water in plastic containers and also trucked water in, which addressed the issue but resulted in increased cost.

Participant Selection

In this project, CRS targeted the most vulnerable families within the refugee and host communities: People with Specific Needs. Coordination with community leaders, UNHCR, OPM, and other stakeholders during beneficiary selection and verification ensured transparency and fairness in this process.

Where can I find out more?

[Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan](#) - UNHCR

[Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) - UNHCR

[CRRF in Uganda](#) - CRS

[Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework video in Uganda](#) - CRS



Water User Committee training session.

Photo: Manase Loboyong / CRS

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