

NAKIVALE SETTLEMENT PROFILE

ISINGIRO DISTRICT, UGANDA

JULY 2020



© Jonathan Weaver 2019

HS Number: HS/029/20E

Acknowledgments:

This project is funded by:
United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR)

The spatial and narrative analysis has been developed by UN-Habitat's Urban Practices Branch, Urban Planning, Finance and Economy Section, in collaboration with UN-Habitat Uganda teams and with support from UNHCR Uganda operations.

Contributors HQ: Anastasia Ignatova, Sammy Muinde, Lucy Donnelly, Jane Muriuki, Helen Yu, Jia Ang Cong

Country Support UN-Habitat: Destiny Ariye, Simon Mwesigye

Country Support UNHCR: Musa Timitwire, Ivan Kwesiga, David Githiri Njoroge

Project Supervision: Laura Petrella, Yuka Terada

Project Coordination: Jonathan Weaver

Disclaimer:

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, or regarding its economic system or degree of development. The analysis conclusions and recommendations of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme or its Governing Council or its member states.

Reference of this publication of any specific commercial products, brand names, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm, or corporation name does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favouring by UN-Habitat or its officers, nor does such a reference constitute an endorsement of UN-Habitat.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nakivale, Uganda is the oldest refugee settlement in Africa, and benefits from what is often lauded as the most progressive refugee policies in the world. Termed in a BBC media report in 2016 as “The best place to be a refugee”, this spatial profile provides a holistic analysis of the current situation of Nakivale and the surrounding Isingiro district. The profile’s analysis outlines the key trends, challenges and opportunities that frame the areas development potential through a spatial planning lens in order to understand what future interventions may be possible to ensure a sustainable future for the local communities.

This summary highlights the emerging issues from the analysis and provides an perspective on the potential way forward.

LAND & SELF RELIANCE

In Uganda, and particularly Nakivale, the concept of refugee self reliance is predicated on subsistence agriculture. The first and foremost challenge facing such a concept however is that large tracts of arable land are required to support this, and are rapidly becoming a scarce resource. To illustrate: In order to provide Nakivale’s 122,000 refugees and 35,000 (approx) host community (2019 figures) who live within the areas 185km² with the estimated 2 acres of land per household required for self sufficiency, there would be a need for another 50km² of land. This does not take into account the region’s high population growth rate. The current policy to allocate plots of just 30x30m is tangible evidence of this growing realisation. There is a need for greater recognition that this self-reliance policy may not necessarily culminate in self-reliance outcomes. For Nakivale, an alternative model for land usage and livelihood generation and the usage of land is necessary.

INFRASTRUCTURE & LIVELIHOODS

It is important to note that there is however some land available. The current methods of agriculture are characterised by low production, poor productivity and limited access to wider value chains. This is exacerbated by poor infrastructure which limits wider access to markets, energy for value-added processing, or connectivity to allow for new techniques to be learnt. Investing in infrastructure is therefore critical (together with “software programming i.e. education etc) to set the groundwork in place to allow

for improved livelihoods and pathways to self reliance. If this infrastructure is to be developed, it needs to be done cost and natural resource effectively and the proven manner in which to do this sustainably is through models that rely on compact development principles.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

The political enabling environment, particularly at the local level needs to be capitalised upon. The local government and in general the host community see that the presence of refugees can act as lever for development and do benefit from improved access to services, infrastructure and economic opportunities. However, despite investments in host areas and the inclusion of host communities in refugee assistance the reality often falls short of their expectations. It is clear that more action, and interventions such as increased investment in tangible infrastructure to provide the foundations of economic development is critical.

Ongoing programmes are already starting to take this trajectory. The World Bank funded USMID Programme (in addition to the ongoing DRDIP) are in the process of developing a physical plan for Isingiro District. At this point however, drafts show little incorporation of Nakivale settlement. It is critical to take this opportunity to develop a participatory spatial plan for the settlement, linked to the ongoing USMID programme and to allow for the “whole of government approach” to be put into action. Programmes such as USMID and DRDIP can be leveraged as demonstrations, but need to consider the camps infrastructure and economy through the lens of participation within the district’s system. The concept of leveraging the benefits of hosting refugees is understood, a strategy to do so, that begins by incorporating the missing piece of the puzzle is the starting point.

THE TIME FACTOR

These initiatives can be bolstered by existing national level commitments such as to consider refugee populations in the development of Uganda’s new National Development Plan 2020–2030. Together with funding such as the World Bank’s Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development Project under IDA18, and the fact that Uganda is a pilot ‘nexus’ country for the EU, it is clear that the ground is primed for substantive discussions on how longer-term approaches can

be applied. The time to take advantage of these opportunities is now. The political good will in the district remains, but there are signs of increasing tensions, not least due to mounting environmental impacts, particularly the depletion of natural resources including water and firewood and land. When this is compounded with the increasing effects of climate change, together with Uganda's booming population growth, it is likely that the window of opportunity to make sound investments in future plans will increasingly reduce.

Uganda is shifting from a response model to a pre-emptive model. To support this transition and shed light on potential pathways, it is critical that a holistic perspective of the situation is developed. This Spatial Profile aims to provide this overview through the lens of Nakivale and defines opportunities and entry points for plans to be made. The scenarios outline entry points to prepare the foundations and facilitate substantive discussions to be set in motion that support functional institutional mechanisms systems to target sustainable and resilient infrastructure investments to benefit both the communities of Nakivale and Isingiro District long into the future.

Population (2018)	42,723,139
GDP per capita (2018)	USD 642.8
Human Development Index (2018)	159 out of 189 countries
Gender Inequality Index (2018)	127 out of 162 countries
Vulnerability Rank (2015)	9 out of 182 countries
Climate Risk Index (CRI) (2015)	95 out of 187 countries
Urbanisation Rate (2018)	23.77%

Fig. 1: National indicators snapshot

District population (2020)	587,650
Settlement population (2019)	122,967
Juru	23,869
Basecamp	76,834
Robondo	22,265
Settlement area	209,1 Km ² (To be verified)
Juru	78,5 Km ²
Basecamp	76,1 Km ²
Robondo	54,5 Km ²
Settlement density (pp/km ²)	583,4
Juru (pp/km ²)	304
Basecamp (pp/km ²)	1010
Robondo (pp/km ²)	408

Fig. 2: Local indicators snapshot

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SPATIAL PROFILING WITHIN UGANDA'S CRRF CONTEXT

Uganda's policy to refugees is lauded as one of the most generous in the world, supporting open borders, non-camp policies, free integration of refugees, equal access to government-provided social services, a chance to work and land allocation for farming and shelter.¹ Further galvanised by the adoption of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by all UN Member States, many international actors have viewed Uganda as almost a 'proof of concept' for the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).² Settlements were first established in 1958 and, since 1999, refugee self-reliance through agricultural production has been central to Uganda's approach. Further paving the way for towards the CRRF, in 2006 Uganda had already passed the Refugees Act, and the 2010 Refugees Regulations which granted protection and freedom to refugees including property rights, freedom of movement, the right to work, and the provision of services, allowing them to establish their livelihoods and attain some level of self-reliance. In addition, refugees in Uganda do not live in camps, but in settlements, and are provided plots of agricultural land.

The CRRF in Uganda which was adopted in early 2018 adapts the principles and objectives set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to suit the Ugandan context. This also aligns with the calls to better support refugees and the communities hosting them, under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) specifically focusing on Humanitarian and Development actors to work together in a more cohesive and predictable manner to ease the burden on host countries and benefit refugees and host communities. The 5 Pillars of the CRRF build upon the 2006 Act and 2010 regulation to encompass five mutually reinforcing pillars as outlined by the global objectives: 1. Admission and Rights, 2. Emergency Response and Ongoing Needs, 3. Resilience and Self-reliance, 4. Expanded Solution and 5. Voluntary Repatriation.

Whilst the aims and commitments are justifiably laudable, the large influxes of refugees since 2015 numbers have resulted in major implications in limiting the ability to fully move towards development approaches to refugee hosting and the achievement of self-reliance. Furthermore, the strategies have suffered from a lack of development funding and experience to put them into practice. As such, unfortunately Uganda's

progressive policies and decades-long strategies promoting refugee self-reliance have unfortunately not been proven to be fully effective. Most alarmingly, studies suggest that under Uganda's current approach, refugees do not necessarily become more resilient with time.³ One of the foremost challenges is often attributed to limited access to land. It is indicated that between one and two acres of land is required for self sufficiency, which as this spatial profile will show is an impossible challenge as it is compounded by the countries rapidly growing population and demand for land amongst nationals, let alone the need to also provide for refugees. Indeed, when considering that the typical plot allocated for refugees now are only 30x30m, an alternative approach is clearly needed. Furthermore, across refugee-hosting districts, and clearly evidenced in Isingiro district and Nakivale settlement, agriculture is characterised by low production and productivity, limited access to agriculture technologies, tools and quality assets, high vulnerability to climate change and high post-harvest losses.⁴

The spatial profiling for Nakivale therefore is seen as a joint effort between UNHCR and UN-Habitat that is anchored in the Uganda's world leading commitments over recent years and is aimed to support the Government's shift from a focus on an encampment policy towards activities that promote refugees' welfare and inclusion in the country's socio-economic structures. It is hoped that it contributes to path-finding efforts towards piloting CRRF policy realisation. At the GRF in December, the UNHCR's Filippo Grandi linked the Forum to the SDGs' goal of leaving no one behind. He emphasised that situations only become crises through short-term thinking, failing to work together across sectors, and neglecting the communities where refugees arrive. The spatial profile is a direct response to this, and aims to outline the broad multi-sectoral conditions of Nakivale and the surrounding areas to provide a set of information that local officials as well as UN Agencies, Donors, NGOs and other stakeholders can use to inform potential scenario building, planning decisions and target sustainable infrastructure investment.

1.2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The collaboration between UN-Habitat and UNHCR on Spatial Settlement Profiles and Spatial Settlement Tool development supports a larger UN-UN partnership which under the “New Way of Working” aims at better coordination between humanitarian and development actors in pursuit of “enhancing the protection of persons of concern and building measurable progress... towards the Sustainable Development Goals.” The two outputs specifically respond to key areas of collaboration outlined in a renewed MoU between UN-Habitat and UNHCR, including: a) operational responses and programming; b) integrated policy support and capacity development and c) frontier issues, knowledge, data, advocacy and outreach.

The spatial profile for Nakivale, Uganda is developed utilizing a spatial profiling methodology piloted by UN-Habitat’s Urban Practices Branch. The profiling is essentially a process of high-level assessment that provides an overview of the social, environmental and spatial components of urban-like settlements affected by climate and conflict induced displacement. The authors do not claim for completeness of information, noting that this analysis is developed upon information in the public domain as well as key informant interviews with national and local governments, humanitarian actors, donors and the refugee communities. The result is contextualised repository of critical information about each area that reflects the challenges facing resilient urban development and social inclusion and identifies potential opportunities for sustainable interventions.

The process of developing the profiles is participatory and field oriented, with the aim to extract a tool as an output to allow for this process to be replicated locally in other contexts to facilitate informed decision making as part of longer term climate and socially responsive urban and regional infrastructure planning.

The profiles culminate in scenarios that help to build consensus on what interventions to prioritise and allows donors, governments and private sectors to target investment with confidence. This project carried out in collaboration with UNHCR aims to set out methods and entry points for identifying strategies that would enable sustainable development in settlements housing displaced communities of a protracted nature.

1.1. PURPOSE

The broad intention of the Profile is to prepare a multi-scalar and multi-dimensional set of maps and supporting narrative which serve as a basis for informing further study and future development scenarios. The document should be seen as a “snapshot” which can be developed upon, updated and improved.

Beginning with the settlement’s Strategic Context related to national and international trends (Chapter 2) and progressively zooming into the District Context at the macro scale (Chapter 3) followed by the Settlement Context at the meso scale (Chapter 4), the Profile provides a framework for spatially and strategically analyzing the settlement from a development perspective which aligns with UNHCR’s Masterplanning Approach. By both collating data and observations from primary sources and field operations and synthesizing narratives and opportunities for tangible development and potential integration, humanitarian actors, development agencies, local and national governments as well as other relevant stakeholders can be brought onto the same page.

This unified Spatial Settlement Profile should thus help serve decision-makers in prioritizing and streamlining funding and implementation modalities, benefiting not only PoC, but also host populations and coordination amongst international governments and partners.

1.3. TARGET AUDIENCE

The profiling tool should provide entry points for country-level/settlement-level practitioners to feed into both the profiles and longer term development process. The analysis aims to consider the various scales of work and the relevant outcomes, e.g strategic and country level information for senior humanitarian and development decision makers as well as settlement technical information to support the operational teams. It is envisioned that this could also be used as a basis for open and informed decisions with local government and community members.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised primary and secondary data collection, field visits, alongside key informant interviews, consultations with local and national government actors as well as three focus group discussions. A desktop review of grey and academic literature was undertaken to triangulate information from the primary data collection methods. Practice based toolkits, reports, guidance notes and case studies comprised the majority of the literature reviewed. This was then supported by detailed GIS analysis at national, district and settlement scale to synthesise and distil information into graphics and maps with a supporting narrative. The information is finally reviewed and validated by specialist field and headquarter teams in both UNHCR and UN-Habitat.







2

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.9. BASIC SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

ENERGY PROVISION

In Nakivale, the only access to the National Grid is within Base Camp zone and is provided by the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (UEDCL). A make-shift network of localised distribution can be observed extending from the formal national grid network. This network is both unreliable and can only support a few lights and small devices at the same time. Most disconcertingly, since this is not a formal network, the wiring system and connections pose a major fire risk particularly given the typical shelter construction etc.

Given that electric energy provision does not yet meet the refugee community needs, there continues to be a major reliance on firewood and charcoal as a cooking fuel. The impact therefore on the surrounding environment has been with huge loss in tree coverage. Refugees in Juro zone reported having to walk several hours per day to find sufficient firewood, often leading to potential conflicts with host community members. As women tend to have the familial responsibility for such activities, they tend to be exposed to increased risk of sexual and gender based violence.

Furthermore, investment into Energy generation is manifesting within the district through the construction of the USD 50 million Kikagati Hydroelectric Power Station in the south of Isingiro District, approximately 30km from Nakivale.

WASTE & SANITATION PROVISION

Whilst upon casual observation of the settlement there appears not to be a major waste management problem within the settlement, there was no evidence of a settlement wide system for managing waste in a sustainable way. Numerous reports have identified that there is substantial pollution affecting Lake Nakivale for which a substantial amount of the surrounding host community also rely upon. It is thus imperative that a formal waste management system is implemented before the issue reaches critical levels.

In terms of sanitation, household pit latrines are the norm. Despite the length of time that Nakivale has existed, due to the space within the settlement the use of pit latrines has not shown to cause major issues as within the time frame of one pit filling, the previous pit can be excavated and reused, or a third pit dug to allow for a cycle to occur. Where issues have been raised in particular during large storms, where the poor road conditions and limited drainage can create localised flooding as well as affecting pit latrines and spilling effluent. In the long term, as population levels increase, it would be wise to consider more formalised networked septic tank systems, to mitigate the risk of public health issues especially

within Basecamp zone where land is already limited and the density of people is high.

Related to this issue is the concern noted surrounding cemeteries. In multiple consultations, it was reported that the existing cemetery provision is low, with few spaces for burying the deceased. A common practice emerging is to bury relatives within the household plot.

COMMUNICATION PROVISION

According to the GSMA, a 3G communication network is available throughout the settlement. It should be noted however that access to this network beyond a smart phone is limited. The RWC in Base Camp zone emphasised that poor access to ICT services is a critical issue for youth in terms of access to information for education as well to allow for potential business opportunities.



Fig.51: Informal Electricity Network in Base Camp



Fig.52: Water Point in Burundian Village



Fig.53: Typical Road Conditions