

UGANDA



AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Implement the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS) for southern Sudanese refugees in northern and western Uganda; provide protection and assistance to Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and to Rwandan refugees, pending repatriation; provide essential services and subsistence assistance to Somali, urban and other refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities, including Kenyans, Ethiopians and Sudanese; support the Government of Uganda's efforts to strengthen the national system for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Sudan (Refugees)	200,600	180,600	49	56
DRC (Refugees)	8,000	8,000	48	59
Rwanda (Refugees)	8,000	7,900	50	54
Somalia (Refugees)	1,300	1,300	49	47
Ethiopia (Refugees)	190	190	39	47
Other Refugees	200	200	39	50
Asylum-seekers	180	0	0	0
Returned in 1999	240	240	0	0

Impact

- Through the SRS, the Government provided refugees in many settlements with enough land to achieve a substantial level of self-sufficiency in food. Where sufficient fertile land was made available, the amount of food distributed could on average be maintained at half the full ration.
- The number of urban refugees dependent on a subsistence allowance declined.
- The nutritional status of the refugees in all settlements reached an acceptable level (usually higher than that of the local population).

- Eighty per cent of refugee children were enrolled in schools.
- UNHCR continued to conduct protection training workshops for Government and NGO staff, which significantly improved understanding and attitudes towards refugees.
- The new Refugee Bill, drafted in 1998 with UNHCR's assistance, was presented to the Cabinet for review prior to presentation to the Parliament.
- As UNHCR continued to actively promote gender awareness, women participated fully in food distribution and in the management of water supply and agricultural activities.
- All refugee populations received environmental education. A fundamental change of attitude was observed in some cases.

Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

WORKING BUDGET	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS*	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE**	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
781,050	462,203	1,376,629	1,838,832	1,648,308

* Includes contributions earmarked for the Special Operation in East and Horn of Africa.

** Includes opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

UNHCR has a long-standing presence in Uganda, where large refugee populations have been hosted since the 1960s. In the late 1990s, the political and security situation in neighbouring countries such as Sudan and the DRC led to a constant influx of refugees into the northern and western parts of the country. In 1999, out of a total population of some 218,187 persons of concern to UNHCR, 200,565 refugees originated from southern Sudan. The prospect of repatriation for these refugees remained remote, given the on-going conflict in southern Sudan between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In 1999, less than 20 refugees returned to Sudan with UNHCR assistance. Of the Sudanese refugees, approximately 20,000 were people who had settled without assistance and spontaneously integrated among local communities in northern Uganda. The Government estimated that number to be 50,000. A four-year Self Reliance Strategy (SRS), jointly developed by the Government and UNHCR for Sudanese refugees in Arua, Adjumani and Moyo, was adopted by central and district authorities and is expected to continue until 2003. The SRS aims to help Sudanese refugees achieve self-sufficiency through the integration of refugee services into existing district structures.

The protracted fighting in the DRC, involving six neighbouring countries, led to the arrival in 1999 of more Congolese refugees, who settled in Kyangwali and Oruchinga settlements. Given their agricultural background and the quality of land made available to them in the settlements, these refugees rapidly progressed towards self-sufficiency in food.

With the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement by six nations in 1999, repatriation remained the preferred solution for the Rwandan refugees. However, due to the prevailing insecurity, only 231 Rwandan refugees were repatriated during the year.

UNHCR also assisted a total of 1,782 refugees and asylum-seekers, comprising 1,271 Somalis living in Nakivale settlement and 511 urban refugees of various nationalities in Kampala. UNHCR redoubled its efforts to resettle in third countries any individuals in need of special protection.

The year 1999 was a relatively safe one in most of the refugee settlement areas throughout the country.

Relative security in Achol-Pii district enabled UNHCR to relocate new arrivals in areas that were formerly inaccessible. Unrest in neighbouring countries, however, prompted UNHCR to update its contingency plans regularly and to monitor closely developments in border areas.

Constraints

The lull in hostilities in the north of the country, including Kitgum and Achol-Pii districts, was conducive to the free movement of people and commodities. It was, however, a short period of relative peace. Rebel incursions in the north intensified and, towards the end of 1999, attacks in western Uganda made movement difficult and dangerous.

Relations between refugees and local communities remained fairly stable and mostly amicable. However, disputes between different tribes in southern Sudan at times had a spillover effect, which affected relations between refugees and the local communities and within the refugee populations.

A major concern for UNHCR remained the lack of adequate health facilities in Uganda, especially in the north where Sudanese refugees live.

Funding

Expected additional funds from donors – on which the Government of Uganda based most of its planned activities under the SRS – did not materialise. As a result, the Government was unable to give any more agricultural land to some of the refugee settlements. In Kitgum District, for instance, UNHCR had to continue with its assistance programme as the Government could not make enough good land in the Alcholi-Pii area available for farming.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

The Government's policy towards refugees remained positive in 1999 and the refugee laws were generously applied. Asylum was granted to more than 1,800 refugees who had been residing in the United Republic of Tanzania. The asylum claims of Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum-seekers were also given favourable consideration. Sudanese and Congolese refugees continued to be recognised as refugees on a *prima facie* basis. Kenyans, who had previously been imprisoned in Uganda for political reasons, were also given asylum.

The refugee status eligibility committee met regularly and took important decisions on the status of individuals and groups of refugees. A new amnesty bill was passed into law, though its effect has yet to be assessed. The new Refugee Bill, drafted in 1998 by the Government of Uganda with UNHCR's assistance, had not passed into law by the end of 1999, but was under discussion in the Cabinet. UNHCR continued to conduct training of Government officials, as well as implementing partners, members of the judiciary and students at Makerere University, in order to raise awareness of refugee law.

Forced recruitment of refugees, mainly by the SPLA (southern Sudanese separatist forces) remained a matter of concern to UNHCR and the refugees. The recruitment prompted an increasing number of refugees to quit the settlements for the capital in search of protection. UNHCR took appropriate measures to strengthen its relations with the military and security contingents within the various refugee-hosting areas in order to ensure continued protection of the refugees. UNHCR also established a chain of early-warning and reporting mechanisms at its field offices to alert local authorities promptly in the event of security problems.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: Within the framework of the SRS, training was organised in order to raise awareness on issues such as nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, gender equity, girls' education, domestic violence, psychosocial well-being, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. In addition, several Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) workshops were held. In order to promote sustainable community structures, refugee welfare committees were established in all settlements, in accordance with the local council system in Uganda. These committees acted as liaison between the agencies and the refugee populations at large. Sectoral committees, comprising refugees and nationals, were created to manage health, food, water and gender-related issues. Female representation was ensured on all the committees. Extremely vulnerable individuals continued to be identified and registered, as were refugees with special needs, such as single-parent households, unaccompanied minors, the disabled, chronically ill or traumatised individuals and adolescents not at school. With the support of a UNHCR peace education consultant, a needs assessment was conducted in relation to peace education, whereupon peace education workshops were held for community workers, teachers, leaders, district officials and women representatives in all settlements.

Crop Production: As part of the SRS, the Government gave plots of land to the Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. Some 15,000 Sudanese refugees in the older settlements in the Adjumani district were relocated to a newly opened site in the Adjumani area where they had access to more fertile arable land. Refugees in all settlements were provided with the means to grow food and market their products. The nutritional status in all settlements reached an acceptable level, and in most cases, was higher than that of the local population. Refugee women were actively involved in food distribution and agricultural activities.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: All refugees were given a package consisting of plastic sheeting, blankets, household utensils and farming tools. Due to the high cost of living, a subsistence allowance was paid monthly to refugees in urban areas.

Education: In 1999, 80 per cent of refugee children were enrolled in schools (compared to average national enrolment of less than 50 per cent). About 40 per cent of the school children were girls, following a vigorous campaign by UNHCR and its partners to increase their enrolment. More than 16,000 refugee girls went to primary school and 1,346 went to secondary school. Under the SRS, all the refugee schools were licensed to operate in Uganda (except for the primary schools in Kiryandongo and one in Kyangwali). Scholarships were given to 1,550 refugee students at post-primary level. Of these, 850 had completed their studies by the end of 1999. In addition, over 2,000 refugees were enrolled in secondary schools. About 3,000 students attended self-help secondary schools, supported by UNHCR and its partners. The DAFI university scholarship and the Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize scholarship programmes funded 54 and 56 students respectively during 1999.

Fisheries: To add protein to the diet and create another source of income and greater self-sufficiency in food, refugees were encouraged to engage in profitable fishing activities. UNHCR provided materials on a loan basis for making fishing boats and nets.

Forestry: Refugees as well as the local populations were encouraged to grow trees as a way of protecting the environment. UNHCR provided them with seedlings and tree nurseries. Environmental education and awareness campaigns were intensified in an effort to curb the indiscriminate use and sale of firewood and charcoal. This resulted in a positive change

of attitude in some refugee settlements. Many refugees used mud stoves and, as a result, the need for firewood decreased. Several meetings were held at the national and district level with the Department of Forestry and the National Environmental Management Authority to identify strategies to sustain these activities in the long run.

Health/Nutrition: A primary health care programme was implemented in all health facilities for the refugees and local populations living in refugee-affected areas. Health and nutrition indicators were at acceptable levels in 1999, with a mortality rate for children under five of less than one per 10,000 population per day and overall acute malnutrition of less than ten per cent in most settlements. Some 95 per cent of the health centres were run by community members sitting on Health Unit Management Committees. Intensive sensitisation campaigns on the importance of integrating refugee health services into the national health system were launched and joint project plans developed with the Directorate of Health in the districts. The health services in Imvepi were successfully transferred to the national services in Arua. Reproductive health services were implemented with varying degrees of success. Maternal mortality was significantly reduced to 251 per 100,000 live births, which was almost half of the national rate. The rate of use of contraceptives, however, remained low, estimated to be less than ten per cent. A standardised health information system introduced in 1998 was adopted by all implementing partners in 1999. This provided comparative data on essential health and nutrition indicators.

Income Generation: In 1999, there was an extensive review and re-orientation of the income generating activities programme, with the participation of all implementing partners and district authorities, aimed at promoting rural finance and traditional financial systems and linking income generating activities with skills training and skills development. An NGO consultant assisted for three months in developing recommendations for the future orientation of the programme. Business training for small enterprises and households initiated in 1998 continued in 1999.

Legal Assistance: UNHCR continued to provide legal assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers. Protection training was carried out for implementing partners and selected government officials whose decisions affected the day-to-day running of refugee affairs. Registration of new arrivals, births, deaths and other

population data was an on-going process throughout the year.

Livestock: To broaden the strategy to promote self-sufficiency in food, livestock was given to refugees, including cows, goats, poultry and rabbits. Since bee-keeping was already practised among the refugees, UNHCR provided modern beehives on credit. The loan is to be repaid after the honey has been harvested. UNHCR also provided veterinary drugs and vaccines.

Operational Support (to Agencies): UNHCR covered some of the administrative costs incurred by implementing partners. UNHCR also continued to hold programme management discussions with most of the implementing partners, and give them on-the-job training, in order to help prepare them for a gradual phase out of relief assistance. To this end, UNHCR also involved district authorities in the day-to-day monitoring of assistance activities.

Sanitation: Latrines were improved in all settlements and refugee-affected areas. Improved ventilated pit latrines were constructed at community facilities. In areas with high water levels and loose soil, UNHCR provided cement to facilitate the necessary modifications in latrine construction. UNHCR conducted public information campaigns to alert refugees and the local population to the advantages of using latrines.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: Two bridges of vital importance to Arua District were repaired. Their repair not only improved local transport, but also facilitated marketing of agricultural and other products both by the refugees and the local population. In Arua, all the feeder roads leading to the settlement clusters, villages and other areas in Mvepi and Rhino Camp were upgraded to ensure uninterrupted movement of supplies. In Adjumani District, maintenance work was carried out on the road network in the refugee-hosting areas. The construction of classrooms, dormitories and laboratories was, in most cases, completed successfully. Some problems were encountered with local construction companies in Arua. UNHCR therefore set up a construction task force involving district engineers to oversee standards and supervise the construction work. Overall, improved infrastructure facilitated the delivery of services to the refugee-affected areas and enhanced relations with the district authorities and the local populations.

Transport/Logistics: The improved security situation in 1999 facilitated movement in northern Uganda and commodities were moved without the need for escorted convoys. In Kampala, UNHCR managed two warehouses, one of which provided services to the Great Lakes Operation. A commodity tracking system was maintained, which greatly improved control of commodity movement and stock management.

Water: A number of new boreholes were constructed and some existing ones rehabilitated in the refugee-affected areas in Moyo and in Kyangwali, resulting in an acceptable average of one borehole per 500 refugees in all localities. Furthermore, training was conducted in the settlements to ensure maintenance and management of wells by the refugees themselves. In all areas, women participated in such training and were given responsibilities in the management of water supplies.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR had its main office in Kampala, supported by four offices in Arua, Adjumani, Kitgum and Mbarara. In 1999, these offices were staffed by a total of 28 international staff, including three JPOs and five UNVs, and 88 national staff. Two Danish consultants, on secondment from the Danish Refugee Council, assisted during the first six months of 1999.

Working with Others

UNHCR was a member of the regular UN Heads of Agencies meetings of the UN Disaster Management Team and Contingency Planning Forum co-ordinated by OCHA. Furthermore, UNHCR conducted regular monthly inter-agency meetings with its implementing partners. The Office was also an active participant in the Consolidated Appeal Process for Uganda.

UNHCR worked with 18 NGOs on the implementation of its programme (including two national NGOs). New officers were elected for the Uganda-based PARinAC process in mid-1999 and improved systems of operation were put in place. One of the priorities of both UNHCR and the PARinAC group was to help build up the expertise of local implementing partners, but resources for that purpose were limited.

Regional co-ordination between UNHCR offices in the Great Lakes region took place through regular meetings, at which more streamlined services were discussed.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The objectives of the SRS were appreciated by all concerned, but it became clear that the modalities of implementation had to be discussed further with both the Government and donors. The eventual integration of refugee services into existing district structures is possible because of the positive relations between the refugees and the local population. But UNHCR is not in a position to bring about complete self-reliance. That calls for further capacity building at the district level and additional funds to the Government. In the long-run, and while UNHCR retains its international protection mandate for refugees, developmental assistance needs in the refugee-hosting areas should be addressed by development agencies.

Offices

Kampala
Arua
Kitgum
Mbarara
Pakelle/Adjumani

Partners

NGOs

Agency for Cooperation and Research Development
Action Contre la Faim
Africa Humanitarian Action
Africa Education Fund
Aktion Africa Hilfe
Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale
CARE
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
German Development Service
Inter-Aid Uganda
Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust
Jesuit Refugee Service
Lutheran World Federation
Maltese Hilfsdienst
OXFAM
Uganda Red Cross/International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
International Aid Sweden

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	General Programmes	Special Programmes*	Total	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	3,792,677	245,347	4,038,024	92,635	509	93,144
Community Services	284,063	41,466	325,528	94,290	7,098	101,388
Crop Production	510,197	9,888	520,086	113,503	1,142	114,645
Domestic Needs / Household Support	171,726	9,211	180,937	21,963	3,429	25,392
Education	1,814,967	197,011	2,011,978	1,044,163	94,827	1,138,989
Fisheries	9,166	0	9,166	0	0	0
Food	0	0	0	3,157	1,018	4,175
Forestry	118,210	180,558	298,768	42,580	33,446	76,026
Health / Nutrition	883,985	94,264	978,249	638,876	106,570	745,446
Income Generation	101,069	13,908	114,976	94,029	3,627	97,656
Legal Assistance	88,912	6,727	95,639	24,972	125	25,097
Livestock	33,052	0	33,052	8,102	0	8,102
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,048,308	112,414	2,160,722	811,437	54,009	865,446
Sanitation	43,097	0	43,097	23,508	1,116	24,624
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	428,698	22,647	451,345	201,867	4,746	206,613
Transport / Logistics	2,089,878	207,949	2,297,827	685,399	97,980	783,380
Water	275,592	0	275,592	259,090	118	259,208
Instalments with Implementing Partners	2,457,071	246,298	2,703,368	(3,688,644)	(392,478)	(4,081,122)
Sub - total Operational	15,150,667	1,387,687	16,538,354	470,926	17,282	488,208
Administrative Support	492,730	0	492,730	16,582	0	16,582
Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries	15,643,397	1,387,687	17,031,085	487,508	17,282	504,790
Unliquidated Obligations	1,089,991	260,621	1,350,612	0	0	0
TOTAL	16,733,388	1,648,308	18,381,696	487,508	17,282	504,790
Instalments with Implementing Partners						
Payments Made	9,559,299	1,003,061	10,562,360	729,794	0	729,794
Reporting Received	7,102,228	756,764	7,858,992	4,418,438	392,478	4,810,916
Balance	2,457,071	246,298	2,703,368	(3,688,644)	(392,478)	(4,081,122)
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	3,881,119	392,336	4,273,455
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0	49,247	5,295	54,541
Currency Adjustment	(829)	0	(829)	149,532	5,437	154,968
Outstanding 31 December	2,456,241	246,298	2,702,539	292,760	0	292,760
Unliquidated Obligations						
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	850,093	191,076	1,041,169
New Obligations	16,733,388	1,648,308	18,381,696	0	0	0
Disbursements	15,643,397	1,387,687	17,031,085	487,508	17,282	504,790
Cancellations	0	0	0	362,585	173,794	536,379
Outstanding 31 December	1,089,991	260,621	1,350,612	0	0	0

* Expenditure reported under Special Programmes includes USD 850,164 for activities related to the Great Lakes Operation (also reported in the Regional Overview for the Great Lakes).

