

Humanitarian Education Accelerator Project Evaluation

Community-Led Inclusive Quality Education for Refugee Children with Disabilities in Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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Context of the Evaluation

This is the executive summary of an external evaluation undertaken by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) of the Community-Led Inclusive Quality Education for Refugee Children with Disabilities Initiative. This Initiative is run in Uganda by Cohere¹ and its partner refugee-led organisations (RLOs). The Initiative is referred to in the evaluation and executive summary as the “Cohere Initiative”.

The Cohere Initiative is one of three innovations being supported by Phase 2 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR’s) [Humanitarian Education Accelerator \(HEA\)](#). The evaluation was commissioned by the HEA in order to:

- Identify good practices in, and lessons learnt from, the scaling process and to document evidence of impact in scaling; and
- Inform ongoing scaling and implementation, and to support evidence-based decision-making throughout the scaling journey.

The evaluation was undertaken from February to September 2022, and this executive summary captures important elements and highlights of the final report.

¹ Cohere was formerly known as the Xavier Project. It was rebranded in 2022 when Xavier Project joined forces with [Urban Refugees](#)

Overview of the Cohere Initiative

Refugee children in Uganda face barriers to accessing quality education, with these barriers being significantly greater for refugee children with disabilities. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities can struggle to provide adequate care and support to their children due to limited information, knowledge, skills and resources. The children and their families may suffer social exclusion because of community attitudes to disability. Teachers lack skills to support children with disabilities, while schools are not equipped with appropriate resources or strategies for inclusive education, nor are they safe and accessible.

Cohere and its partner RLOs aim to address this through their holistic and locally-led initiative. The Cohere Initiative brings together community leaders, parents, schools and teachers to improve access to quality education for children with disabilities in refugee hosting communities. Cohere strengthens RLOs' capacities, enabling them to identify children with six conditions (epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, hydrocephalus and microcephaly). Identified children are assessed by specialists and receive

follow up support through home visits or group mentoring sessions, as well as assistive devices where appropriate. A personalised learning plan is prepared for each child, and parents are encouraged to enrol children in school. Support is organised by RLOs, provided with help from education experts, physiotherapists and occupational therapists contracted by Cohere. RLOs lead in providing material support and training (for teachers and education administrators) to improve school physical accessibility and use of appropriate learning strategies.

Cohere also shares and strengthens RLO and community leaders' capacities in financial management and monitoring and evaluation processes. The initiative has collaboratively developed tools, a system of quality assurance, and other methodologies.

The project is part of Cohere's broader ambition to ensure that more funding is channelled directly to RLOs, thereby disrupting established modes of operation of humanitarian aid.

Scaling the Cohere Initiative

A first pilot phase of the Cohere Initiative was completed in 2019. The current phase of implementation and scaling is funded by Comic Relief and the HEA. The target is to reach and provide support to 1,200 children with disabilities (CWD) by 2023 across four refugee-hosting locations in Uganda.

The Cohere Initiative's longer term ambitions (beyond the HEA grant) are: by the end of 2024, refugee-led community educators will be impacting 6,000 refugee CWD in three countries, delivered by 12 RLOs and community educators; by 2031, refugee-led community educators will be impacting 45,000 refugee CWD in five countries;

and by 2041, support will be provided to at least 240,000 CWD in protracted refugee contexts, with 200–250 RLOs engaged.

Scaling approach: Decentralised scaling through refugee led organisations

RLOs are well positioned to establish and maintain stakeholder partnerships to ensure continued support for children with disabilities in their communities as well as coordinate locally to advocate and fundraise for community priorities. Cohere Initiative's scaling process involves activities along three dimensions:

1. Supporting decentralised delivery by RLOs in their locations by strengthening their capacity in areas such as: monitoring, evaluation, and learning; fraud and financing; identification of community challenges; and proposal writing.
2. Implementation of the initiative at an additional refugee settlement (Bidi Bidi).
3. Development of the [Reframe](#) network (Reframe) - a platform for RLOs to showcase their work and connect to international donors, networks, and opportunities. There are currently over 150 profiled RLOs from 7 countries.

Evaluation Sources

The evaluation was based on the following material:

- Documentation created through HEA support including the Theory of Change, Theory of Scale and Scaling Strategy.
 - Desk research (for example, on CWD in Uganda and on inclusive education policies).
 - Cohere evidence on results (through results reporting to HEA).
 - Cohere baseline and first follow-up data collection, including Child Progress Assessments (CPA) and parent/caregiver questionnaires that cover all service users, as well as the collection of data from schools.
- Primary data collection including:
 - » Key informant interviews (KIIs) with Cohere and RLO staff, staff of other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with CWD in Uganda, Government of Uganda officials, representatives of RLO networks in other countries, and representatives of donor organisations with an interest in direct funding of RLOs.
 - » Focus group discussions (FGDs) with community members, parents/caregivers, teachers, and RLO outreach workers, as well as KIIs with local stakeholders. Field data collection took place at two of the refugee settlements where the project is being implemented.



Main Findings of the Evaluation

Two elements were considered in the evaluation:

1. The education solution; and
2. The innovation process and scaling model.

In order to measure (1), the OECD-DAC six evaluation criteria were used: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.² To measure (2), ALNAP's criteria of comparative improvement, adaptation and learning, do no harm and uptake were used.³ The evaluation findings are captured below.

1. Evaluation of the Education Solution

Relevance

How appropriately designed is the Cohere Initiative education solution and its delivery model to achieve its intended results?

The Cohere Initiative's refugee-led, community-based approach provides an effective way to reach and engage with refugee CWD and their parents and caregivers, while providing flexibility to adapt implementation in different contexts. The Initiative is aligned with national policies on education for refugees and inclusive education, however, limited progress has been made in Uganda in implementing the latter policies so far.

- The Cohere Initiative is aligned with the Government of Uganda's draft National Inclusive Education Policy (NIEP). However, the NIEP has not yet been formally approved and there are significant challenges to its effective implementation, for example, finding finance for the initiatives when still dealing with the stresses caused by Covid-19 shut downs. The Cohere Initiative is also aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Education Response Plan (ERP) for refugees.
- The delivery model (involving RLO outreach workers and disability specialists) appropriately addresses some key barriers to service delivery and is strengthening local capability in refugee communities. However,

systemic problems of underfunding of education and limited access to health services constrain the results that can be achieved.

- There are context differences between Kampala and the other three refugee settlements. Kampala has a greater concentration of population and services (health, education etc.) but also larger class sizes. While it has more livelihoods opportunities, it also requires higher parental contributions for schools. In the refugee settlements there are relatively dispersed populations, which poses challenges in terms of transport costs and access, as well as more limited access to services and livelihoods opportunities. The Cohere Initiative seeks to address this through funding disability specialists located in refugee settlements, as well as providing some resources for outreach worker transport.
- The project is highly relevant to the needs of the intended beneficiaries (refugee CWD and their parents and caregivers, as well as RLOs), as evidenced by the positive assessment of the project expressed by parents and caregivers in FGDs. Stakeholders consider the implementation strategy to be generally

² OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet).

³ Obrecht, A. with Warner, A. and Dillon, N. (2017) *Evaluating Humanitarian Innovation*, HIF/ALNAP Working Paper. London: ODI/ALNAP

appropriate and participatory but some have concerns that insufficient training is provided to outreach workers and teachers. Given the many barriers to school access, the home learning component of the project offers an opportunity for access to some basic education.

- There are gender disparities in the results achieved which are being reviewed by Cohere but there is as yet no gender equality strategy to address them.
- The Cohere Initiative Theory of Change (ToC) sets out how changes are expected to occur and identifies relevant actors, but does not make reference to the

wider policy and financing context for health and education, or explicitly identify possible contextual differences. The ToC articulates the vision and process of change, however, there are some respects in which the formulation is not conceptually clear and causal pathways are incomplete. Key assumptions are holding in implementation, though it is too early to assess the causal pathway related to schools and there is limited evidence for that related to community attitudes. The ToC does not appear to be used explicitly in project management and there is no formal process for ToC review or revision.

Coherence

To what extent and how do interventions by other actors support or undermine the Cohere Initiative education solution?

Cohere works with partners in the refugee settlements where the Initiative is being implemented. Several other NGOs are implementing similar or related initiatives working with refugee CWD, and in some cases with RLOs, in other locations. There appears to be effective coordination at settlement level under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister who convene sector-level, zonal-level, and settlement-level meetings. However, these meetings tend to focus on education rather than specifically CWD. These meetings are intended to ensure there is no duplication of effort, and to build synergies between different agencies, and while there is some referral between the initiatives, there is no institutionalised referral mechanism.

There has been little sharing of experience and lessons between these initiatives beyond the local level, nor has there been formal cooperation to support coverage of services for children with different impairments or conditions through mutual referral across entities. So while local coordination is supporting implementation, the potential as regards learning from the totality of relevant experience has yet to be realised.

Some key informants noted that NGOs working in this space compete both for access to financial resources and for partners, which may to some extent militate against cooperation and lesson-sharing.

Effectiveness

To what extent is the Cohere Initiative education solution and delivery model producing its intended results?

The Initiative is on course to achieve its target of identifying and providing support to 1,200 CWD by 2023.⁴ The support that had been provided includes the provision of assistive devices, specialist treatment (for instance, physiotherapy), as well as advice and training for parents and caregivers to improve the quality of support. Each child had received a personalised home-based learning plan, and had their holistic wellbeing regularly assessed. 214 of the children identified had been enrolled in school and provided with uniforms (doubling the original target of 100).

Preliminary findings from the CPA indicate that average scores improved for all learning skills for CWD receiving support between baseline and follow-up with an average improvement of more than 35%.

Progress has been made in strengthening RLO capacity and in supporting parents and caregivers. Some progress has also been made in improving community attitudes to CWD and teachers have been trained to provide inclusive education. Progress includes:

⁴ As of September 2022, 1194 CWD had been identified and directly provided with support.

RLOs:

- The four partner RLOs that received capacity strengthening support (including in financial management, proposal writing, and monitoring and evaluation) reported positive results, with benefits both for their ability to implement the project and in their other areas of activity.
- RLO outreach workers have successfully identified CWD and provided support to parents and caregivers but there are challenges in ensuring they have adequate skills and are able to reach the large areas that they need to cover in refugee settlements.
- The capacity strengthening support was inclusive - allowing for participation of all core RLO management staff in each area of training - building organisational rather than individual capacity, and providing resilience in the event of staff departures.
- All the RLOs implementing the Cohere Initiative considered that their image and influence has been greatly boosted in the refugee settlements where they are providing services.

Parents and caregivers:

- Parents and caregivers reported that they and their children have benefited significantly from the support received, particularly from having a better understanding of their child's condition and how to provide support to them, as well as the opportunity to share experiences with other parents and caregivers through support groups.
- Parents and caregivers also appreciate that the Initiative takes the services directly to the homes, allowing outreach workers to engage and influence change in children's immediate social and physical environment in a way that is private and without significant costs for parents and caregivers.

Efficiency

How well is the Cohere Initiative education solution and delivery model using resources?

The Initiative appears to have been effectively managed and implemented but there are risks related to the ability of outreach workers in refugee settlements to deliver the project effectively. The main implementation concern identified relates to outreach workers having appropriate skills and being able to serve relatively large areas, with limited resources for transport.

Community awareness:

- There is some evidence from FGDs that community awareness of CWD needs and attitudes towards CWD have improved where the Initiative has been implemented over several years, though negative community attitudes remain prevalent and the quality of evidence is limited.

Teachers and schools:

- Teachers and education administrators have received training, which they appreciate and consider useful. However, given that school enrolment of CWD has only happened over the last few months of the evaluation, it is too early to assess how far teachers will be able to successfully apply new skills and approaches, especially in the context of very large class sizes and limited budgets, as well as whether the relatively small number of teachers trained in each school will be able effectively to share skills with other teachers. There is as yet no evidence on whether CWD who have been enrolled remain in school.

Factors influencing the results achieved so far include:

- The long period of Covid-19 school closures have delayed progress in implementing school-level activities;
- The lack of livelihoods opportunities available to parents and caregivers of CWD and/or stable income; and
- The lack of access to specialist services in refugee settlements.

A lack of developed financial models or benchmarks for comparison prevents a judgement being made on the cost effectiveness of the delivery model.

Sustainability

How sustainable are the results achieved by the Cohere Initiative education solution?

Implementation is at too early a stage to determine how far results achieved are being sustained. A number of factors affect the sustainability of the Cohere Initiative:

- The ability of parents and caregivers to provide continued care and keep children in school depends on livelihoods opportunities. All the RLOs are seeking to develop livelihood programmes in which parents and caregivers can participate.
- The sustainability of RLOs' increased capacity and ability to continue implementation depends on RLOs:
 - » Being able to retain or replace trained staff. Cohere is addressing this by providing comprehensive capacity strengthening training to all key staff in RLOs rather than focusing just on training tailored to the needs of specific roles.
 - » Maintaining community acceptance and meeting raised expectations. For example, communities

expect the Initiative to fund the school fees for enrolled CWD, even though this has not been budgeted for. Failure to meet these expectations risks undermining both the credibility of the service provided to support inclusion but also the strongest enabler of RLOs' effectiveness – social acceptance and credibility within RLOs' own communities – if they are perceived as preparing families to send children to school without resources being available to support their attendance. RLOs are seeking to maintain community support through continued engagement and communication with communities.

- » Being able to access and demonstrate effective use of financial resources received from donors. Cohere and its partner RLOs are developing approaches to enable RLOs to access funding sources as well as developing broad-based RLO capacity that is not dependent on key individuals.

Impact

What intended and unintended effects has the education solution produced?

The preliminary CPA results suggest that measurable improvements in learning by CWD have resulted over a relatively short period of time, including as a result of increased confidence and skills among parents and caregivers and increased access to individualised services or support plans and the provision of assistive devices.

The only negative unintended result reported is some frustration from parents and caregivers of CWD who have conditions that are not included in the Cohere Initiative's six focus conditions. It is understood that the decision to focus the Initiative on the six conditions reflects available resources, as well as what can be identified by outreach workers.

2. Evaluation of the Innovation Process and Scaling Model

Comparative Improvement

To what extent and in what ways does the education solution and its delivery model developed by Cohere provide improvements in effectiveness, quality or efficiency over current practices?

The core value proposition of the Cohere Initiative is “... a new model of humanitarian implementation that is led by refugee leaders and community educators. With support from HEA, we will transition ownership of the interventions supporting children with disabilities to four refugee-led organisations partners and the constituents of their communities.” This model (as opposed to service provision by NGOs) is intended to be more effective in engaging communities and more efficient. Importantly, it shows a focus and commitment to RLO leadership and implementation.

Stakeholders in refugee settlements saw the Cohere Initiative as innovative in its ability to reach the most vulnerable CWD - especially through the Initiative’s proactiveness in seeking eligible CWD (as opposed to projects which required parents and caregivers to actively seek assistance).

The project meets INEE Foundation Standard 1 Community Participation requirements, as well as more robust cross-sectoral standards for community engagement. However, the project has not developed measures of performance that can be compared directly to alternative models.

Adaptation and Learning

How effective was the Cohere Initiative innovation process in supporting adaptation and learning?

The design and management of the Initiative has facilitated learning and adaptation through close partnership with implementing RLOs and regular sharing of experience. The formal monitoring, evaluation, and learning system developed with HEA support has not yet been in place for long enough to be used for learning or adaptation.

The main adaptation in implementation was the expansion of the focus from cerebral palsy to cover six types of disability, while training and implementation approaches have been adjusted in response to experience.

Do No Harm

To what extent and how was any potential harm caused to end users and primary beneficiaries by the innovation process identified and mitigated?

Cohere has well-developed and appropriate safeguarding policies and is working with RLOs to strengthen their capacity for working with vulnerable people, as well as to assist them in meeting newly introduced requirements for the registration of RLOs. There is no evidence of harm

having been caused to intended beneficiaries or others, but ensuring both the appropriate training and supervision of outreach workers and the availability of routes for parents and caregivers to raise any concerns will be of critical importance for ensuring safeguarding.

Uptake

(1) To what extent is the Cohere Initiative's scaling model and theory appropriate and its objectives realisable?

- **Theory of Scale:** The Cohere Initiative ToS identifies considerations and factors relevant to the scaling plans, but does not contain detail about intermediate targets towards the longer-term objectives. The listing of assumptions does not include an analysis of the conditions under which specific causal relationships will hold.
- **Scaling beyond Uganda:** Cohere has a convincing strategy for supporting the empowerment of RLOs in an increasing range of countries through capacity building, strengthening networks and facilitating access to funding. There is potential interest from RLOs outside Uganda (for instance in Kenya, Malawi and South Africa) but as yet no firm commitment from them nor is there a detailed scaling plan for implementation in new countries. The problem that the Initiative seeks to address and the target group are relatively similar across diverse refugee settings, however the favourability of contexts for RLOs to organise and operate varies significantly across countries.
- **Evidence of effectiveness:** There is evidence that the Initiative has been effective in identifying and providing support (mainly through advice and home-based learning) to CWD and in improving their learning and well-being, as well as increasing the knowledge and confidence of caregivers. There is not yet robust evidence that the Cohere Initiative works in diverse settings or for the effectiveness of the school component which is still in the early stage of implementation, or for the effectiveness of the Cohere Initiative in changing community attitudes. The approach still needs to be fully documented and lessons communicated. The evidence so far collected is not sufficient to measure impact or the medium to longer term results of the Initiative.
- **Stakeholder engagement and funding for scale:**
 - » The credibility of Cohere's work is high with its partners and funding agencies, but international and national NGOs working with CWD and the Uganda Ministry of Education have limited knowledge about the Initiative and the results achieved. While it addresses a need that is sharply felt by its target group and that is part of the national policy agenda for inclusive education, it is not clear to what extent this is a priority for national policy in Uganda (for instance through the provision of additional public resources).
 - » RLOs indicated they have faced an uphill struggle in regard to attracting donor funding to run their programmes, and most of their priorities remain unfunded. None of the RLOs receives direct funding from institutions like the World Bank, UNHCR, Education Cannot Wait, or ECHO, which are the major donors or channels for financing refugee services in Uganda. However, there is a small but significant body of funding agencies (such as philanthropic foundations) that are actively supporting RLO empowerment and want to work towards direct funding of RLOs through initiatives similar to this one. RLOs and RLO networks are also strongly committed to this approach. While official international agencies and international NGOs are also committed to an agenda of localisation that implies the empowerment of refugees, in practice there has been some tension between this objective and existing power dynamics in the humanitarian sector. It is not clear to what extent different RLOs would prioritise support to CWD if they were able to choose how to deploy the very limited funding that is available to them.
 - » The Initiative is attractive to potential funders in that budget implications and costs will be clear, a small commitment of funds can be made to begin a transition to scale, and there are some funding agencies that are in principle prepared to make long-term commitments to similar initiatives. Longer-term sustainable funding that does not depend on donor support will depend either on absorption within government budgets (which appears unlikely in the medium-term in Uganda) or through generation of funds by RLOs.
 - » Some donors are interested in directly funding RLOs so as to empower refugee communities, though there has not yet been discussion with donors about funding specifically directed to CWD.
- **Replicability and adoption:** There is a good fit between the Initiative and the RLOs who could adopt it though their capacity will need to be built further. Cohere has developed strong networks and working relationships

with RLOs both in Uganda and elsewhere. The approach is strongly aligned with the objectives and leadership styles of potential adopting organisations and there are RLOs within, for example, [Reframe](#) would

in principle have the capacity to implement the Initiative. An expansion of the Initiative in line with the current targets would require further expansion of Cohere's capacity so as to support adopting RLOs.

(2) To what extent is the innovation on course to achieve its scaling objectives?

The Cohere Initiative is on course to meet its objectives for the phase of HEA support and progress has been made in building national and international networks of RLOs that are potentially interested in this project, as part of Cohere's wider objective of supporting refugee leadership. The project has been demonstrated to be effective in reaching and providing support to refugee CWD, though there is insufficient evidence as yet to determine its longer-term impact, including in regard to keeping CWD in school and improving their learning outcomes. The critical step for both ensuring the sustainability of the project where it has been implemented so far and for scaling beyond this will be securing funding from donors that are interested in supporting RLOs.

Progress made in each of the following areas identified in the scaling model:

Refugee-led networking and coordination:

- There has been significant progress through Reframe in refugee-led networking and coordination but this has not yet been specifically used to take forward this Initiative. Networking and coordination specifically related to work with CWD have therefore mainly been restricted to the four currently participating Ugandan RLOs, and have included work on developing an RLO consortium focused on refugee CWD. The ability of an

RLO consortium focused on support to CWD to access new sources of funding with which to take the Initiative forward needs to be demonstrated.

Sharing and use of collaboratively developed course materials:

- Course materials for building RLO capacity in general have been shared through Reframe. Materials for identifying CWD have been developed, but have not been shared on Reframe as there has not yet been engagement on CWD in Reframe.

Identifying and accessing funding sources:

- As discussed above, several funding agencies are interested in providing resources directly to RLOs but no additional funding sources have yet been accessed.

Advocacy for increased agency and leadership by refugee communities:

- The rebranding of the Xavier Project as Cohere and the launch of the new organisation provided an opportunity for highlighting its activities and the role of RLOs. Cohere has been supporting the opportunity for RLOs to showcase their capacity through Reframe. The most powerful advocacy approach is likely to involve demonstrating the ability of RLOs to access and effectively use the resources provided to them.

Conclusions

Cohere's Initiative to empower RLOs to identify and provide support to refugee CWD has been successfully expanded to a fourth location in Uganda, and is on course to meet its target of reaching 1,200 children. The Initiative has demonstrated that RLOs have made effective use of capacity strengthening support and have been able to lead implementation. They have successfully identified and provided advice and support to parents and caregivers that is valued by the recipients and regarded

as an improvement on previous forms of support to CWD because of its community-embedded model.

Cohere and its partner RLOs have collected baseline and six-monthly follow-up data, which are currently being analysed. Some preliminary results suggest that progress has been made in relation to all learning indicators. Completion of the analysis should provide further evidence about results. It is, however, too early to assess the extent to which support to schools will have improved

the learning environment for CWD, as well as whether CWD who are enrolled remain in school and have positive learning outcomes.

The Initiative faces system-level constraints relating to the limited resources available to schools in Uganda, which are reflected in extremely large class sizes, which may limit the extent to which teachers are able to effectively provide inclusive education. Other system-level constraints include limited livelihoods opportunities for refugees (especially in settlements), which affects the ability of parents and caregivers to meet the needs of CWD (for instance to meet school-related costs), and lack of access to appropriate health services for CWD.

There are also implementation challenges that require further investigation and resolution related to the extent to which the training provided to outreach workers and teachers is sufficient, as well as whether the outreach worker model is sufficiently resourced to provide ongoing support and ensure safeguarding. The Initiative requires a stronger gender policy and opportunities for involving disabled people in implementation could be explored.

There are reputational risks for the Initiative associated with expanding the number of identified CWD enrolled in school without a clear strategy and resources for meeting the ongoing costs of school attendance. While there are indications that the approach is likely to be cost effective compared with alternatives, more detailed and systematic cost modelling and analysis is required to demonstrate this. The Initiative may provide useful lessons for other

service providers and for government, but it is not well-known in government or by other service providers.

The extent to which the ambitious scaling targets beyond 2022 (which largely depend on rolling out the approach to other countries) can be achieved remains uncertain. The sustainability of the Initiative in its current settings, as well as further scaling, depend, in line with Cohere's objective of moving away from being a conduit towards being a facilitator of donor funding, on the ability of RLOs to access funding either individually or on a consortium basis, as well as on their being able to retain staff capacity and community acceptance. While initiatives are underway to seek such funding, and while there are potential donors with a strong interest in supporting RLOs, none have as yet been secured.

The global humanitarian funding system does not actively support direct funding of RLOs, while at the country level the scope for refugee collective action may be constrained by regulatory arrangements that make registration of refugee organisations difficult. The RLO consortium model is promising but needs to overcome challenges to effective coordination and trust, as well as a lack of resources for investment to develop consortia. However, relatively small amounts of funding provided in a flexible way could potentially enable RLOs to build on their strengths of community embeddedness to demonstrate their ability to deliver services effectively, while also achieving greater organisational sustainability.

Lessons

The Cohere Initiative has demonstrated:

- The capacity of RLOs to use their advantages of community embeddedness to take the lead in managing and delivering a complex project, as well as how capacity development support to RLOs may be effectively delivered and used.
- That CWD, who have been largely invisible within refugee communities, can successfully be identified and provided with support that improves their lives and those of their parents and caregivers using a community-based and refugee-led model.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Implementing the Initiative

Cohere and its partner RLOs should:

- Address issues relating to RLO outreach workers including the quality of service provision, and training by and adequacy of, resources available to them. This could include developing blended models including formal training, the development of communities of practice, and virtual as well as in-person on-site coaching.
- Manage expectations when it comes to ongoing financial support for attending school. Use communications to explain how far support can go, and importantly, what it cannot do or cover.
- Work with partners to establish (mutual) referral mechanisms and decision trees for outreach workers so they can direct parents and caregivers of CWD to sources of support regardless of whether the condition is one covered by the Initiative.
- Develop strategies to encourage the representation and participation of persons with disabilities among Cohere staff and RLO staff.
- Develop a gender policy for the Initiative, including considering different aspects of the relationship between gender, disability and refugee status, especially the gendered economy of care. This should highlight the heightened vulnerability of single mothers supporting CWD.
- Developing a communication strategy for the Initiative that will effectively reach all key stakeholders (refugee and host communities, Government of Uganda, potential funding agencies and the education in emergencies community internationally). This should include adopting a concise and descriptive name for the Initiative with CWD.

Recommendations on Strengthening the Evidence Base

Cohere and its partner RLOs should develop an evidence strategy to support effective implementation, sustainability and scaling that includes:

- Completing the analysis of baseline and follow-up data that has been collected and preparing a comprehensive (peer reviewed) report on the results and implications.
- Undertaking a modelling exercise to provide a full costing of the Initiative, including how it can be sustained beyond the initial identification of CWD including a systematic comparison with alternative models.
- Collecting evidence about community attitudes to inclusion and CWD with a view to tracking changes over time and informing programming accordingly – particularly to address discrimination against, and stigmatisation of, CWD and their families.
- Obtaining evidence on the extent to which teachers are able to effectively use the training and other resources provided to improve the school environment for CWD. Research on the value of continuing professional development including blended models for coaching and teacher training should be considered, as well as how pedagogical changes (differentiation) designed to support inclusion may impact children both with and without disabilities in schools.
- As part of the communication strategy, document and share lessons from implementation nationally and internationally, including through Reframe and relevant publications and practitioner networks, for example, through practitioner notes in the Journal on Education in Emergencies.

Recommendations on Scaling Strategy

Cohere and its partner RLOs should:

- Complete revision of the strategy for scaling the Initiative (in Uganda and internationally) within the context of Cohere's wider strategy for RLO empowerment, focusing on identifying interested RLO partners, providing complementary capacity development support, and establishing practical and effective consortium arrangements among RLOs to take forward support to CWD.
- Ensure the sustainability of funding for implementation of the Initiative at existing sites (particularly to provide ongoing support to CWD and parents and caregivers) prior to any substantial scaling of the Initiative to new RLO partners and locations.
- Participate actively in national consultations in Uganda to support the NIEP and in taking forward the ERP for refugees and host communities, with a view to ensuring that the voices of refugee communities and the interests of CWD and their parents and caregivers are reflected in policy and resource decisions, and that the capacity and potential of RLOs is fully recognised.

Recommendations to Humanitarian Agencies and Other Donors

Humanitarian agencies and other donors should:

- Develop clearer guidelines for localisation that encourages and enables direct funding of RLOs (including incentives for collaboration between RLOs) noting that there is evidence that RLOs can make highly effective use of relatively small amounts of funding.
- Incentivise localisation in funding grants to international NGOs in crisis settings, for instance by requiring that respondents in calls for proposals ensure that responses include a minimum of one national or local entity within a consortium or partnership.



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