



Uganda

National Refugee Youth Consultation

Summary Report

10th – 13th November 2015



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Global Refugee Youth Consultations

Background

The Global Refugee Youth Consultations (GRYC) were launched in July 2015 at the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in Geneva. A joint initiative of UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission, supported by the Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE)¹, the GRYC are supported by a Coordinator, Project Officer and Advisory Committee (consisting of national and international NGOs, youth representatives and an independent youth expert).

Refugee youth are often left out of activities and programmes organised by the UN, NGOs and other organisations. Youth have skills, capabilities, aspirations and needs that often go unrecognised and are not understood. There is a need to reach out and hear from them about the challenges they face, their visions and what support they need to shape positive futures. The consultations are providing opportunities for refugee youth to discuss issues that affect them with host country youth and representatives from the United Nations, international NGOs, national NGOs and other organizations working with youth in the country. The process aims to place youth at the centre of decision making processes that affect them and to recognize their potential. The target group for this project are young refugees that fit the United Nations definition of 'Youth' which is all boys and girls, young women and young men between the ages of 15-24 years.

The consultations are taking place between November 2015 and June 2016. They will include national level consultations in Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa. The 'National Consultations' are led by national NGOs from each country with UNHCR and an international NGO partner. Similar consultations will also be held with refugee youth in North America, Australasia and Europe. Opportunities to participate in smaller consultations and online are also being provided through a designated toolkit and a Facebook platform. The process will culminate in a global consultation in Geneva in June 2016 and participation by young people in the 2016 annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations, the overarching theme of which is Youth.

Objectives and design

Underpinning the design of the national consultations are the four core objectives of the GRYC:

1. To create structured spaces for young refugees to have a voice and engage in participatory dialogue with other youth and relevant stakeholders at local, national, regional and global levels
2. To improve access for young refugees to local, national, regional and global youth alliances and networks
3. To foster and support participation, leadership and empowerment opportunities for young refugees

¹ The Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE Group) includes representatives from more than 15 humanitarian organizations that are committed to achieving better outcomes for young people in humanitarian situations.

4. To consolidate and channel the learning from the consultations into the development of guidelines and policy recommendations on youth-inclusive programming, to improve the humanitarian sector's understanding of, and work with, young refugees

A participatory approach is being used throughout. The session plans were developed by the GRYC Coordinator, in consultation with UNHCR and WRC. They were designed through a collaborative and iterative process, including:

- An extensive review of literature and other materials relating to consultations with youth, displaced populations and participatory research methods, in order to learn from previous experience and to adapt relevant pre-existing models.²
- The active input of a group of young refugees and asylum seekers during a two-day residential workshop in Malta, in October 2015, organised in partnership with UNHCR Malta and a Maltese NGO, Organisation for Friendship and Diversity (OFD). The group consisted of males and females representing the full age range of the global consultations (15-24 year olds), and five countries - Libya, Somalia, Mali, Eritrea and Palestine.
- Input into the development of the session plans and the content of the national consultations was also sought from members of the GRYC Advisory Committee - in person with the Regional Leads representing Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America during a two-day meeting in Geneva, and by email and skype with the full GRYC Advisory Committee.³
- This consultation in Uganda was the final stage of the development process, as running a full consultation for the first time provided an opportunity to observe the practical delivery of the session plans, to learn from the participants and facilitators, and to adapt the approach and session plans accordingly.

Uganda National Consultation

National NGO Partner

The Uganda Consultation was organised at the national level and run by a youth-led organisation from the refugee community, CIYOTA (COBURWAS International Youth Organisation to Transform Africa)⁴, in coordination with staff from the UNHCR Uganda country office and World Vision (Uganda, Kenya and World Vision International). This team was supported by the GRYC team, including the GRYC Coordinator, Project Officer, and global representatives from UNHCR and WRC.

Significant support was received from CIYOTA, World Vision (East Africa Regional Office and Uganda office) and the UNHCR Uganda Office, including regular skype meetings prior to the consultation,

² Some examples of key resources accessed include: *Youth Consultations for a Post-2015 Framework: A Toolkit*. Youth in Action (2013); *A Kit of Tools for Participatory Research and Evaluation with Children, Young People and Adults*. Save the Children Norway (2008); *Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents*. UNHCR (2012); *Community Consultations Using Extended Dialogue Methodology*. UNHCR (2010-11); *Post 2015 Youth Engagement Event Planning Kit*. World Vision (2012); *Considering Consulting? A Guide to Meaningful Consultation with Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds*. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (2007).

³ The Advisory Committee Regional Leads include: World Vision (Africa); Save the Children (MENA); RET (Americas) and APRRN (Asia-Pacific).

⁴ <http://www.coburwas.org/>

and their partnership was excellent. Multiple staff from all organisations were provided for the set up and delivery of the consultation which helped ensure that all consultation roles were covered and increased staff familiarity with the young people for post-consultation activities.

Facilitators

- The Ugandan national consultation was led by two local facilitators – a refugee youth facilitator from CIYOTA, and a Ugandan national youth facilitator. Utilising local facilitators is a critical part of the overall GRYC approach, to ensure empathy and connection with the participants, to create meaningful opportunities for youth leadership and to create alliances with national youth focussed organisations.
- The local facilitators and a team of co-facilitators from UNHCR Uganda, CIYOTA and World Vision were supported by the GRYC Coordinator, GRYC Project Officer, a representative from WRC Geneva and one from UNHCR Geneva.
- A co-facilitator was assigned to each of the five small groups, to support where and when required. These small groups formed the basis of many of the activities. This small group format was maintained throughout the consultation to provide the refugee and national youth participants with meaningful opportunities to participate, discuss and share ideas and experiences.



Interpreters

The primary language of facilitation in Uganda was English, with one Kinyarwanda-speaking participant utilising an interpreter throughout.

Venue and Accommodation

The venue for the workshop and the accommodation was on one site at a large hotel in Kampala, the Silver Springs. A large conference room was utilised, which accommodated the group well, and extra spaces were available in the grounds of the hotel and the café for small group activities.

Evening social activities

As a pilot consultation, limited time was allocated to planning the evening activities on this consultation, and as a result, the activities ended up being quite ad hoc and often determined by more confident members of the group. The most successful evening activity was a discussion group on the second night. It was organised as a result of feedback from some participants that they wanted space to discuss the projects they had set up were involved in and to learn from others' experiences. This was a good example of the need to maintain enough flexibility at the consultations to be able to respond to specific requests.

Application and Selection Process

Information about the Uganda consultation was disseminated widely by UNHCR to partners nationwide, as well as to national Ugandan youth organisations. The participants were selected based on a set of criteria determined by the GRYC team in consultation with the GRYC Advisory Committee, which included:

- Age (15-24)
- Willingness and ability to participate in an interactive, participatory 4-day consultation
- Proven experience as participants of an existing youth programme (for refugee youth) or national youth organization (for host country youth)
- Openness to engage on refugee issues
- A statement of motivation which included details about why the applicant was interested in being involved in the consultation, what they could contribute and what they hoped would be the results of the consultation.

Selection guidelines were provided to the Uganda team to ensure that the participants were as representative of their communities as possible. For example, particular attention was paid to ensuring that the chosen applicants represented a diverse range of gender, age, nationality, geographic locations in Uganda, education and employment background and ability, marital and parental status, and a range of experiences of youth and community work.

The selection committee consisted of staff from CIYOTA, UNHCR Uganda country team and World Vision East Africa Regional Office. In total, 63 young people applied to participate in the Uganda consultation and 25 were selected. One selected participant did not attend.

Youth Participant Profiles

24 young people aged between 15-24 years participated in the Uganda consultation. All youth completed a participant application form as part of the application process, from which we obtained their demographic data. This data can be summarised as follows:

- 19 refugee youth/5 national youth
- 13 female/11 male
- 22 aged eighteen and over/2 aged under eighteen
- The refugee youth came from Democratic Republic of Congo (10), South Sudan (6) and Somalia (3)

- The national youth came from Kampala, and the Kitgum and Karamoja Districts in the far-north and far-east of Uganda.
- Of the refugee youth, 3 identified as living in a 'large town or city', and 14 as living in 'camp' or 'refugee settlement' (2 chose not to answer this question)
- 8 of the refugee youth identified as having been away from their home country for more than 10 years, 4 have been away for 5-10 years, 5 have been away for 2-5 years, and the remaining 2 identified as having been away from their home country for 1-2 years
- In terms of the highest level of education the refugee youth had completed –
 - 3 identified as having completed primary school
 - 14 identified as having completed secondary school
 - 1 identified as having completed a postgraduate degree
- In terms of current education or employment status of the refugee youth, they identified themselves as follows (multiple choice was possible) –
 - 6 in formal education
 - 2 in non-formal education (e.g. vocational or skills training)
 - 2 employed part time
 - 1 is looking for a job
 - 11 in volunteer positions (e.g. with an NGO or community group)
- 15 of refugee youth identified themselves as living with family, 2 identified as living with friends, 1 identified as living alone, and 1 identified themselves as living with 'other'
- 3 of that number identified themselves as the head of their household, 7 identified their father as head of their household, 3 identified their mother, 2 identified their aunt/uncle and 2 chose 'other', specifying a nephew and an elder brother (1 chose not to answer this question)
- None of the participants identified themselves as married
- 4 of the participants identified themselves as parents, two of whom were mothers with babies under the age of two.
- 14 of the participants identified themselves as taking care of a member of their family on a regular basis, with 12 caring for young siblings, 3 caring for older family members and 2 caring for a niece and nephew.
- None of the refugee youth identified as having a disability

In terms of the motivation of participants to take part in the national consultation, expressed through the application forms, the key reasons can be summarised as follows:

- To be able to work with others to develop solutions faced by refugees, for example: *"To share ideas by working and learning together to build stronger communities"* and *"As a youth leader, I want to be part of the conversation because I want to be part of the people who are willing to help the refugees in the refugee camps with the problems they face as youth. Besides as a youth leader, I concern myself with everything that concerns young people in every society"*
- To have an opportunity to express opinions and challenges/ to be heard, for example: *"I will share different ideas and problems facing our communities with my fellow youths and to be heard"*

- To network with other youth, to connect with mentors and to add their voice to a wider group, for example: *“As a young youth, I feel this consultation can help me network with other youth internationally and nationally who are having initiatives to change our communities. It will help me to add my voice to other youth in order to change our communities and also link with mentors and people who can inspire me to achieve more”*
- To meet and influence stakeholders, for example: *“To network with other professional participants to solve challenges in my communities”*
- To gain new skills and knowledge, for example: youth and women’s empowerment, developing and growing networks, advocacy, the situation of refugees in Uganda, talent development, and project design and management.

In terms of the expected results of participation in the consultation, expressed through the application forms, these can be summarised as follows:

- Taking the new knowledge and skills gained through the consultation back to their communities, for example: *“I hope to learn various skills, abilities and opportunities from this consultation of which I will share with my fellow youth in Kyangwali and also hope my ideas will be useful to others that will attend”*
- Becoming a role model for other youth, for example: *“Become an example in the community, especially Somali. Be a strong peer educator I want to advocate more on girl education”*
- New national and international connections
- NGOs and other organisations will be better informed about the challenges that refugee youth face, and as a result, their responses will be improved, for example: *“I also hope that through my participation different NGOs will be able to understand our needs and views. This way, these organisations will be able to help us better ourselves”* and *“Youth refugee will also hope that now the gap between them and the NGOs or other professional participants is bridged”*
- Better coordination of stakeholders and positive impacts at a national policy level, for example: *“National working group for stakeholders to promote participation and empowerment of young refugees nationally and internationally. Policy proposal to ensure mainstreaming issues of young refugees across board”*

Group dynamics between youth

Bringing together host community and refugee youth

One of the objectives of the national consultations is to provide an opportunity for refugee and host country youth to meet, exchange ideas, build friendships and alliances and establish connections. It is hoped that as a result of the consultations, refugee and host country youth will have gained a better understanding of the issues they face – as youth – and that there will be opportunities for refugee youth to work more closely with national youth organisations. The Uganda group were asked the question on day one, *“Why do you think we invited refugee and national youth to this consultation?”* and the answers focused on – learning about each other, acknowledging the equality of youth, promoting cooperation to solve challenges, building networks to connect national and

refugee youth and share ideas, and gaining skills to benefit the host community and home communities of the refugees. In conclusion, a Ugandan member of the group explained that “not many Ugandans understand about refugees; because many Ugandans think that refugees have come to take their jobs & health-care – but any of us could be refugees at any time.”

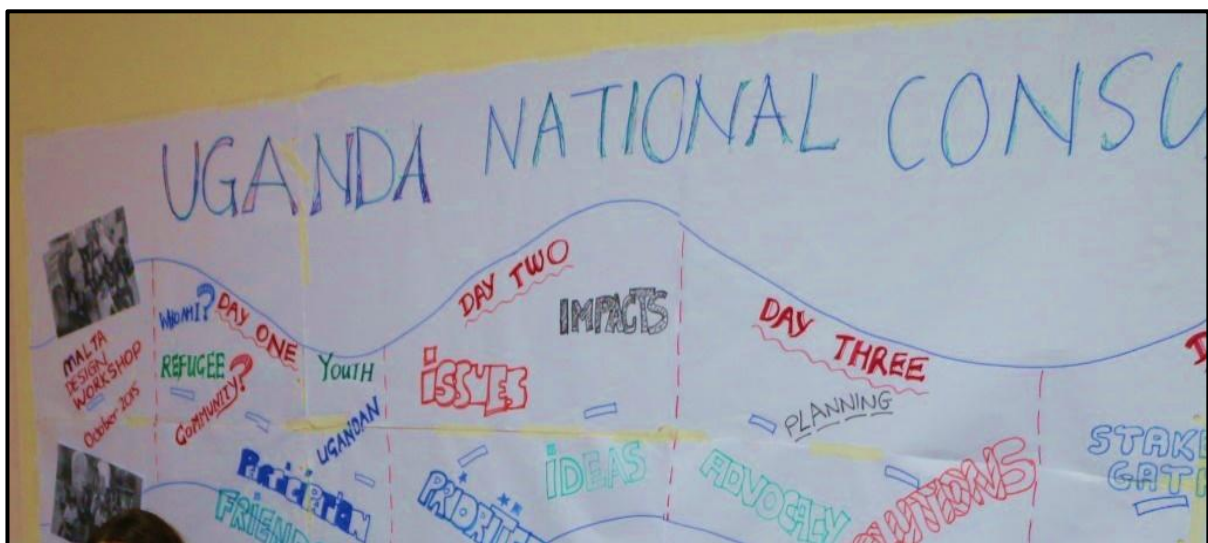
As well as informal, social time outside of the formal sessions, the small group discussions provided an opportunity for refugee and national youth to get to know and understand each other better, and created space for the young people to listen to each other and ask questions.

Group Profile and Representation

There was a good gender balance in the group, and there was excellent geographical representation, with refugee youth attending from 7 of the 9 settlements in Uganda, and national youth attending from Kampala and the north and east of Uganda. There were only 2 participants who were under 18, which meant that minors were under-represented in the group. There were also no participants who identified as having a disability. As well as 4 parents attending, more than half the group identified as having a caring role for a member of their family. There was also a broad range in terms of educational attainment and employment status.

National Consultation Structure

The National Consultations have two components, with the same structure for all locations. The first component is a three-day consultation with 20 refugee youth and 5 host country youth - working together to be heard, develop ideas, build alliances and networks, and contribute improving work with and for young refugees globally. The second component is a half-day ‘stakeholder dialogue’ where participants share consultation outcomes and recommendations with key local, national and international agencies and organisations and develop next steps for the post consultation period.



Day One

- Getting to know each other, building trust and teambuilding
- Identity and Community
- Youth Participation

Day Two

- Identifying and prioritising issues
- Analysing issues and identifying causes and impacts
- Creative problem solving
- Planning for the stakeholders meeting

Day Three

- Addressing the issues and developing solutions
- Advocacy/Communicating our messages and recommendations
- Stakeholder analysis

Day Four

- Stakeholders meeting
- Group action planning – what next for this group

Main Themes from Uganda Consultation

The following is an overview and analysis of the main themes that emerged during this consultation:

Lack of Space for Youth Voices and Participation

The issue of ‘non-participation of youth in project design and policies’ featured highly in the Uganda consultation and was chosen by the youth as an issue to present to the stakeholders on the final day. The group were very clear that they have the desire, the most accurate understanding of their needs and context and the potential to be involved at all levels of decision making that impact on their lives and their communities. As they told us: *“Youth are powerful and more capable of running their own projects”* and *“Youth is the majority plus youth should be consulted on what concerns them”*. Yet they are so often excluded, as one participant explained in relation to their interactions with NGOs and UNHCR: *“Youth are not given a chance to express themselves in meetings”*. In many of the discussions, participants also emphasised the consequences of not involving youth or listening to their voices, which were serious at both a personal and societal level. This topic was so significant to the group, that it was raised in the conclusion of the stakeholders meeting, as one young woman from Uganda requested in her closing speech: *“We’re just calling on the partners, governmental representatives, everybody out there: “give us more space”*.

Importance of Youth Networks

The participants were very clear on the importance of building networks and connections amongst themselves, and to network and make connections at higher levels, in order to achieve changes that might not be possible alone. This desire featured on most participants’ application forms as a core motivation to apply, and the atmosphere of teamwork and mutual learning was evident throughout the consultation. During the World Café exercise on day two, the youth identified that building strong and professional youth networks was a crucial step towards increasing the voices of young people and being heard. A young man from South Sudan explained to the group at the end of the stakeholders meeting the importance of moving forward together – *“there are leaders here who will*

make an impact in their communities... coming together is the beginning, then keeping together is our progress..."

Lack of Information

On day one, participants raised this issue as a barrier to their active participation in their communities, and the theme continued through the 4 days. They argued that poor communication with communities, and youth, lead to a lack of awareness of available services and other crucial information that could benefit them. On several occasions during this consultation, youth talked specifically about the importance for youth and refugees of having a good knowledge of their rights, and highlighted that this kind of information would increase their protection. For example, this topic was first raised during an exercise on identity on day one: *"Refugee rights they are there, but these rights are not known by refugees themselves"*, and *"even Ugandans we don't know and exercise most of the rights we have"*, and then it was highlighted again by another participant during the round table discussions in the stakeholders meeting – *"We the youth need to know our rights, most of us don't know our rights – and most of us end up being exploited and you end up doing something just because you need something – so it would be helpful for us to know our rights."*

Psychosocial support

This group felt strongly that there was a need for more, and better quality, options for psychosocial support, for example, counsellors who really understand youth issues, and are prepared to listen without judgement. This was an issue raised by refugee and national youth, particularly in relation to sexual exploitation. For example, during the round table discussions in the stakeholders meeting, several youth identified this gap in available services: *"Even as nationals we face the same issues going to counsellors – they will treat you like trash – but remember you've been exploited and you can't talk to family, the next person is a counsellor"*; *"This has happened to me – and I needed someone to support me – If you don't show any support I will never come back to you"*; *"We find it difficult to go to counsellors – we need more youth-friendly counsellors"*.

Key sector specific themes/ issues to emerge:

- The need for increased and improved educational opportunities for youth, including at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and for vocational training. Issues raised including cost, quality, overcrowding, and poor infrastructure.
- Improved access to basic services. This group specifically highlighted the inadequacies of health care facilities for refugees.
- Unemployment, limited access to jobs, and conditional access to jobs – issues raised by refugees and national youth.
- The need to address sexual exploitation, for example, within schools and workplaces, and the need to provide support and follow up for those who have experienced sexual exploitation.
- The prevalence of corruption and nepotism, for example within hospitals, education system, during recruitment processes in workplaces, and within UNHCR and NGOs.
- The need for youth to be listened to and included in project design, development of policies, and decision making processes.

Summary of Findings

The following section provides a summary of the main points to have arisen in each session during the four-day consultation with refugee youth in Uganda. The structure of each exercise is described followed by the main findings:

Youth Participation within Communities – Identifying Sources of Support and Barriers

Following on from a whole group discussion about the meaning of ‘community’, this exercise involved small group work. The participants were divided into 5 groups and asked to identify and discuss the resources and sources of support youth have in their communities, and the barriers to youth participation in their communities.

In terms of available sources of support and resources, across the groups the participants focused heavily on infrastructural resources including access to a safe water supply, roads and transportation, street lighting, agricultural land, and emergency services such as police and hospitals. Youth also highlighted youth centres as a key resource and some explained different services available within those centres, including sports. Most groups identified religious buildings such as mosques and churches, and their important role in providing “*spiritual nourishment*” or guidance. Home was emphasised as a supportive space in the community, and the importance of parental support was mentioned. Finally, job centres were included by several groups, along with projects related to livelihoods.

With regards to barriers to youth participation in their communities, several key themes emerged. Corruption was raised as an issue by several groups, and examples were shared of corrupt practices in schools - “*In schools some teachers impregnate girls*”, and hospitals - “*Sex for medication and/or other support.*” Prejudice and discrimination against young people was a common concern, and youth were keen to highlight that because of their age, they often feel ‘put aside’ and have a ‘lack of authority’. Discrimination against refugees by the police was raised by two of the groups, and as a consequence youth felt they could not go to the police with their concerns. For example: “*By the time you look for help, police say: ‘in Uganda you have security, you only want to be resettled’; so I don’t go to the police*”. Another participant highlighted a fear of harm or retribution as the reason that they do not feel able to go to the police, and this theme of fear as a barrier was mirrored in two of the other groups who referred to ‘violence’ and ‘vulnerability’ as barriers. Domestic violence, forced marriage and GBV were identified as barriers by several of the female participants in particular. Meanwhile, many participants raised limited access to information, a lack of communication and a lack of awareness as barriers to youth participation. Finally, several groups highlighted issues of unemployment and being unable to access education as significant barriers to their participation, as well as poverty more generally.



Youth Participation

This exercise was divided into two parts, with the first part structured around a set of three questions which the young people voted on and then discussed:

Question 1: Should NGOs and UNHCR listen/engage with youth in designing and planning their services and activities for refugee youth?

All participants considered that it was important for NGOs and UNHCR to listen and engage with youth in designing and planning services and activities for refugee youth. Reasons that refugee and national youth gave for engaging with refugee youth included: *“Because by using youth, they can help run projects. For example, the UNHCR vulnerable person program that can help youth get involved”*; *“Youth are powerful and more capable of running their own projects”* and *“Youth is the majority plus youth should be consulted on what concerns them.”*

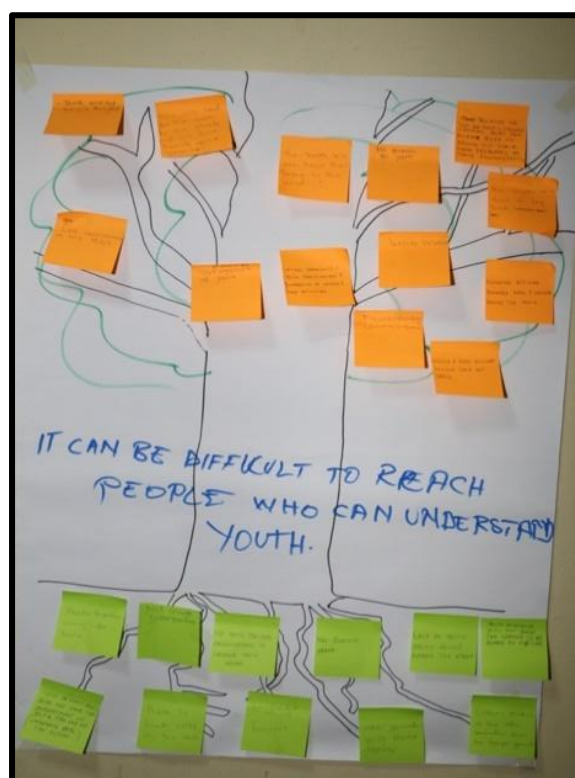
Question 2: Have you taken any steps to communicate with NGOs and the UN to talk about the issues you face?

In response to this question, all participants answered yes. Two of the participants from South Sudan and Congo shared their experiences, including advocating for the rights of children and youth through the creation of a youth social advocacy team, and advocating for girls out of education to be involved in vocational training.

Question 3: Do you feel it is easy to interact with NGOs and UNHCR to talk about what you face?

2 youth voted that it was easy, 8 that it was ‘quite easy’ and 16 that it was difficult. For those who said it was easy, the reasoning focused on several points – the need for patience and sometimes luck, the need to know the right channels or people to be heard and for a prompt response, and a trust in the system at UNHCR.

For those who did not find it easy, they highlighted several main reasons – bureaucracy and excessive paperwork; delays in resolving issues; ‘tribalism in some NGOs’, the need for evidence; limited capacity in NGOs, for example: *“NGOs have insufficient human resources/ need more community workers in the field”*; unclear selection criteria, for example: *“Officials are harsh/ unfair selection process – some people left out”*; discrimination against youth or a lack of commitment to youth issues, for example: *“Youth are not given a chance to express themselves in meetings”* and *“takes a long time to find a partner to solve youth issues”*.



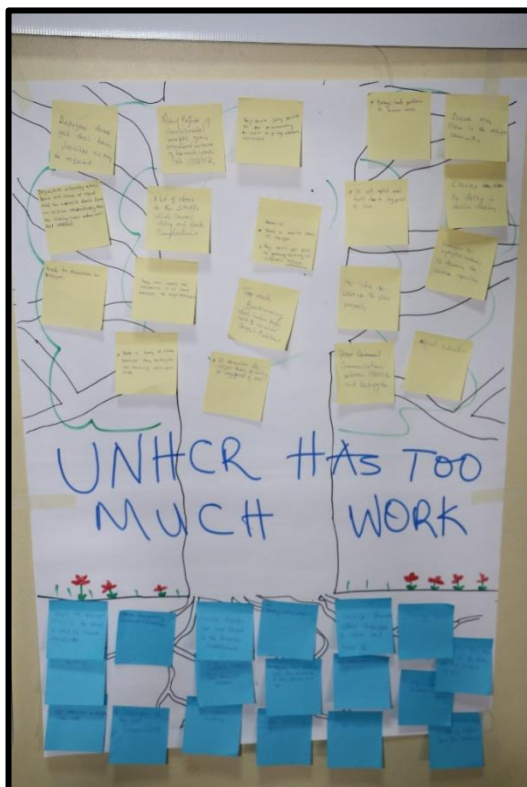
Analysing the Barriers to the Youth Participation

In the second part of this exercise exploring youth participation, 5 examples were selected from the answers to the last question about why it is not easy to interact with NGOs and UNHCR to talk about issues that youth face. The participants were then divided into 5 groups to identify the causes of these difficulties/barriers and the impacts on refugee youth. The ideas were then presented using a 'problem tree' model.

For the first barrier - "It can be difficult to reach people who understand youth" - the group highlighted multiple causes, including: language barriers and a lack of interpreters; lack of staff skilled in working with youth, or a lack of youth focused organisations; and discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping based on age. The impacts on youth that they identified included a lack of purpose and focus for youth, no space for youth to express themselves, a feeling of isolation, an increasingly negative attitude towards NGOs and UNHCR amongst youth, limited youth participation and ownership of activities led by NGOs and UNHCR, neither youth nor NGOs/UNHCR will achieve their goals, and at the most extreme end of the spectrum - disaffection of youth and possibly violence.

The group that identified the causes of the second barrier, "Selection process is poor", came up with several ideas, including: language barriers; poor communication with communities which they felt resulted in a lack of awareness; nepotism and favouritism – for example, one participant perceived preferential treatment being given to communities closer to UNHCR offices; and lack of resources,

which meant that organisations did not take the time needed to access information/do research. The impacts of this barrier were considered to be very serious, and included: conflict between community members and anger/hatred amongst youth, and an absence of youth in the delivery of community development activities.



The third barrier was "Youth are not given space to express themselves", and the group analysing this issue considered some of the main causes to be: corruption and community leaders blocking the involvement of youth, which some participants explained to be based on a fear of youth taking over the positions of current leaders; and negative attitudes towards youth, including a lack of belief in their abilities. The group discussed the many serious impacts that do and could result from this lack of space to express themselves, including: school drop-out, early pregnancy and early marriage, and

substance abuse; conflicts within the community, for example, between social workers and youth; and negative psychological effects of not being heard or being able to speak.

"UNHCR has too much other work" was the fourth barrier selected and the group highlighted some of the following causes: the refugee crisis and limited capacity to respond to it, and limited offices in

close proximity to the refugee population. The group identified multiple impacts of this issue on youth, including: poor communication between UNHCR and refugees, death if serious issues are not addressed efficiently, a lack of provision of basic services, and increased stress for refugees and UNHCR.

The fifth barrier analysed by a small group was “It’s hard to find available people”, and the group considered some of the key causes to be: bureaucracy making it hard to access support; prejudice and favouritism towards certain people and groups based on for example, religion, sex or tribe, and as a result of personal grudges; conditional services offered, which depend for example on monetary payment or sexual favours; and a lack of information available about who to access and how. The group identified the following impacts of this issue: violation of rights, a lack of faith in the system leading to not attempting to access services in the future, and frustration and desperation.

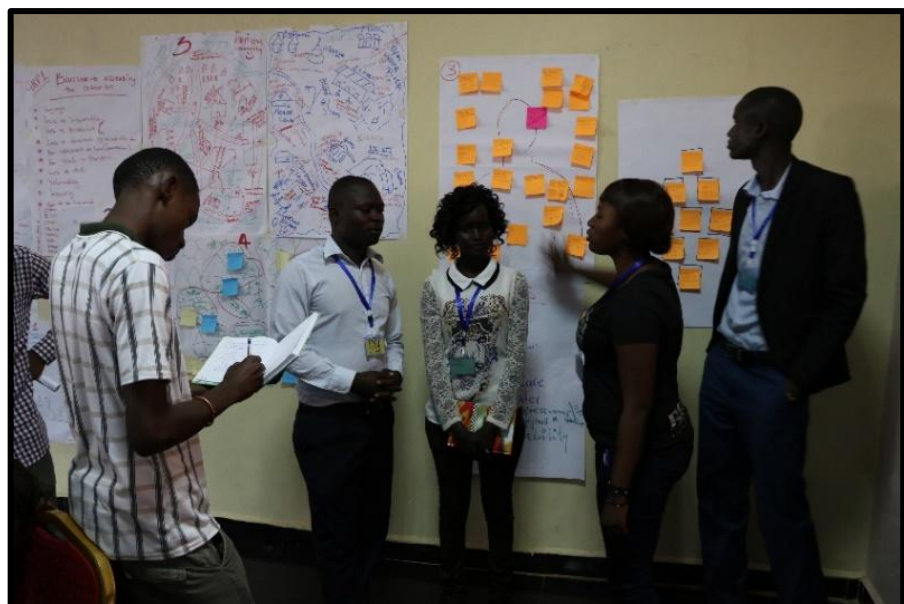
Identification and prioritization of needs and issues

During the second day of the consultation, the youth participants worked in small groups to identify and discuss challenges and issues of importance to them.

While this exercise focused primarily on the needs and issues faced by refugee youth, national youth participants were encouraged to participate and use this exercise as an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the challenges facing their refugee peers, which is crucial for developing mutual understanding and empathy.

The main needs and issues identified by youth in this exercise focused around several broad themes, which corresponded with many of those faced by refugee youth around the world. These themes included education, food security and livelihoods, protection, language barriers, corruption, health and psychosocial support, security, discrimination and stigma, gender based violence, poverty and financial insecurity, non-representation and non-participation of youth, isolation, and access to basic services, e.g. clean water.

After identifying the core issues faced by refugee youth in Uganda, participants were asked in small groups to prioritize the top nine issues they faced, through an exercise called Diamond Ranking. This activity is designed to encourage debate and deeper analysis of the issues and to teach participants about the



importance of reaching consensus and compromise. The top five issues chosen by the participants were: poverty, insecurity, gender imbalance, non-representation of youth in project design and policies, and inadequate access to health centres. Other issues that ranked high and which provoked the most debate included: access to education, unemployment, sexual exploitation, discrimination within camps, corruption, and access to basic resources.

Storyboards Part One: Identifying causes and impacts of issues

Participants began this exercise by selecting an issue from the top three in their diamond ranking charts and discussing its causes and impacts. They then prepared a series of 'frozen images' to demonstrate the issue, its causes and impacts, which were photographed to form the first three panels of their storyboards.

Two of the groups chose to focus on education: 'lack of access to quality education' and 'lack of access to education'; the third group focused on 'non-participation of youth in project design and policies', the fourth group selected 'sexual exploitation', and the final group chose 'inadequate access to health services'.



Amongst the many causes of a lack of access to quality education, the participants identified overcrowded classrooms, poor quality of teaching, lack of teacher training, and lack of school infrastructure. They identified some of the main impacts of this to be high school drop-out rates, low achievement levels, early pregnancy,

begging, drug and alcohol abuse, and poverty. The second group considering the issue of a lack of access to education more broadly focused on the financial causes of the issue, resulting in empty classrooms as potential students cannot afford the fees and other associated costs of attending school. Similar to the first group, this group identified the main social impacts of this issue such as prostitution, early pregnancy and substance abuse.

The group considering the issue of 'non-participation of youth in project design & policies' focused their analysis at government level, and considered some key causes to be the failure to consult with youth or to include them in policy discussions or discussions concerning the national budget. They then highlighted that this results in policies and budgets being approved with limited relevance to youth, and in terms of the social impacts of not including of youth, these include: school drop-out, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, and uncertain futures for youth.

Regarding the issue of ‘inadequate access to health services’, the group highlighted the main causes as poorly paid and poorly trained doctors and medical staff, lack of medicines and medical equipment, long distances to health facilities for many communities, and high costs of medical care. The impacts they identified were high levels of sickness and disease, and a lack of adequate care for the population, including children and pregnant women.

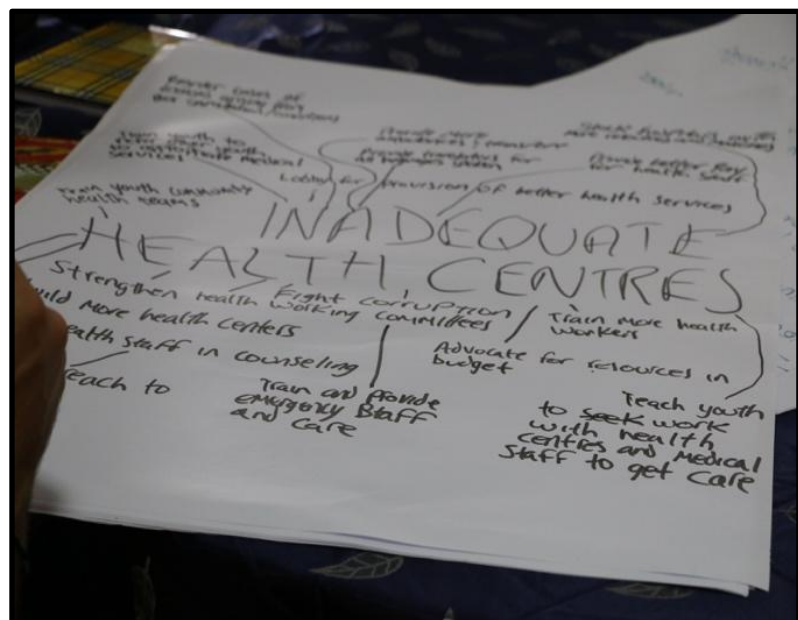
In terms of ‘sexual exploitation’, the group identified a range of causes, including: poverty, a lack of employment and educational opportunities, and illiteracy. They also commented on the problem of cultural attitudes, ignorance and gender discrimination. They cited some of the impacts of this issue as follows: stigma and alienation from peers for those who have experienced sexual exploitation, and psychological trauma. They also identified rape and sexual abuse, early pregnancy, and school drop-out.

Finding solutions to priority issues

A World Café exercise was used at the end of day two to encourage youth to begin to identify creative solutions to the problems they face, and to promote teamwork. The top five issues from the diamond ranking exercise were used, which were:

1. Inadequate access to health services
2. Lack of access to education
3. Non-participation of youth in project design and policies
4. Poverty
5. Gender imbalance

Youth participants identified several solutions to the issue of inadequate access to health services. For example, addressing corruption within the health system, which might include training health workers around ethics in the workplace and not stealing medicine. They also highlighted the need for more resources in terms of medicine and equipment and personnel. Finally, they emphasised the potential of youth to be trained and to take on support roles in their communities, for example, to share basic health information.



To address the issue of lack of access to education, the youth generated many solutions. These included the provision of more inclusive educational opportunities and facilities, for example for illiterate youth, those with disabilities and girls (e.g. by providing separate changing rooms for girls).

They also highlighted the need for teacher training around child rights, and increased awareness amongst parents about the importance of education. In terms of financial support, they also felt that reducing the cost of school fees and increasing access to financial assistance was very important.

Solutions to the issue of non-participation of youth in project design and policies concentrated on three areas - awareness raising and advocacy around youth rights and capacities, developing youth networks, and the provision of more opportunities for youth involvement, e.g. through internships.

The solutions suggested for the issue of poverty focused on mitigating against the issue, for example, through investment in education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, with a focus on girls' education, as well as investing in vocational training and business skills centres. Also by reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and early marriages. There was also a comment as to the importance of lobbying the government to respond more effectively to this issue.

To address the issue of gender imbalance, the participants suggested the need for empowerment of both sexes, including economic empowerment, and they highlighted that for this to happen, practices and attitudes need to change. They felt that this should happen at local and national levels, i.e. through community sensitisation on gender equality, and through changes in government policy and better enforcement of laws.

Storyboards Part Two: Identifying Solutions and Strategies

On day three, the next stage of the storyboard exercise took place. This session focused the small groups on finding solutions to the issues selected on day two, identifying the role of youth and other stakeholders in realising that solution, and identifying the impact of solutions on the lives of refugee youth.

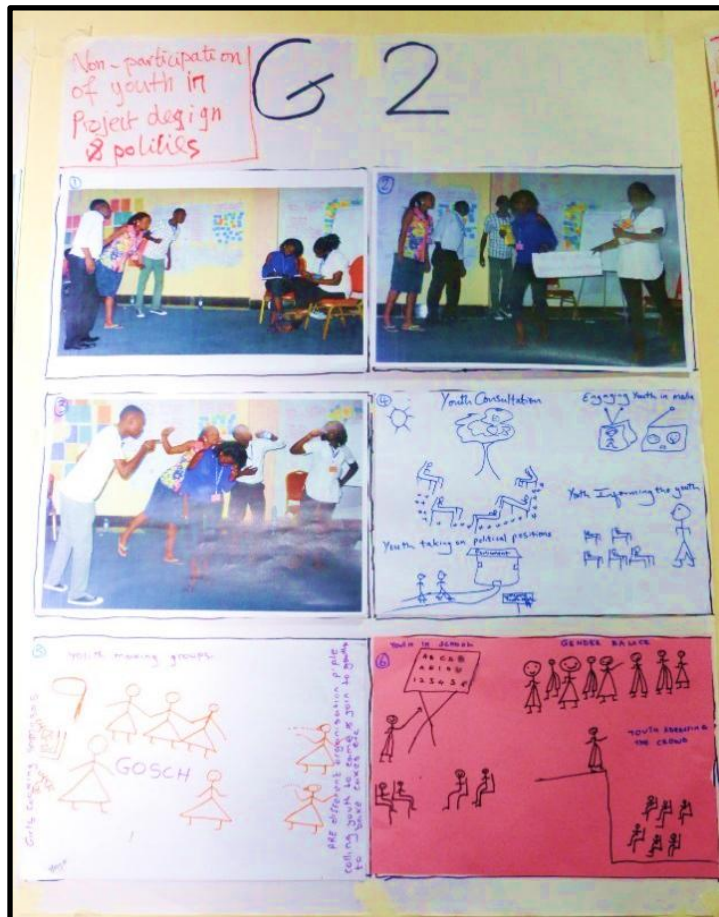


The solutions proposed by the youth focusing on the 'lack of access to quality education' included capacity building, such as teacher training; incentives such as an emphasis on improved teacher welfare and better salaries; more investment into school infrastructure; provision of scholarships to enable more youth to access education; and the provision of more educational opportunities, such as vocational training. In terms of the role of youth in realising these solutions, the group identified several options, including helping to identify venues for teacher training, providing labour for school construction projects, and paying their taxes to contribute to the wider educational system. The

group also considered sources of external support, and focused on the following organisations – the government needs to provide more funding, teacher training, provision of scholarships, and improvements to school infrastructure; they also felt that the private sector could assist with funding; and that NGOs and the UN could assist with scholarships. Their recommendation to all the stakeholders is to listen to youth, involve and consult youth, and raise awareness about youth rights. The group predicted the impacts of these solutions to be improved attendance, access to quality education, more classes and spaces available, more teachers available, and better school facilities.

The other group focusing on lack of access to education more broadly decided that scholarships were the solution,. Their request to stakeholders was to provide opportunities in vocational training, for example in nursing, hairdressing, or catering, and to provide loans or start-up capital. The group identified that the impact of this would be that youth could return to education as they would have the financial resources to do so.

The group focusing on the issue of ‘non-participation of youth in project design and policies’ suggested a range of solutions which took into account grass roots and higher level actions. At a grass roots level, the group felt that youth awareness raising around their rights was needed, for example, through the media; that networks should continue to be built with refugee and national youth involvement; more youth consultations should be held to bring youth together to discuss these issues; success stories should be shared to motivate others; youth could get involved in village committees. At a higher level, the youth also recommended that youth should be able to take on political positions, internships should be made available to youth to get more involved in project design and policy making processes, laws should be implemented to ensure the involvement of youth, and voting rights should be reassessed.



To address ‘inadequate access to health centres’, this group highlighted the following solutions: Firstly, in terms of capacity building, they saw the need for better training for medical staff and training of youth community outreach volunteers to increase the number of available trained personnel in the community. In terms of resources, they identified the need for increased availability of medication, and from a logistical perspective, prompt delivery to medical facilities. Within the

community, they suggested the importance of public health and hygiene awareness raising to reduce the number of people needing to access health centres. Finally, at a systems level, they identified the need to fight corruption in relation to funding and resource allocation. In terms of the role of youth in making these solutions work, they focused on leading public health and hygiene campaigns, e.g. hand-washing campaigns. Then they saw the role of stakeholders such as the government, UN agencies and NGOs as focusing on provision of funding and training for health staff, and improving health facilities and the supply chain for medicines. The group considered that the impact of these solutions would be improved maternal health, and more time to attend to mental health issues.

Finally, the group focusing on the issue of 'sexual exploitation' identified solutions that concentrated on capacity building and awareness raising. For example, they emphasised the need for skills training and life skills for girls, more investment in girls' education, and awareness raising in the community to reduce sexual exploitation. This group highlighted the role of youth in these solutions at a community level, including sensitisation of the community, involving parents in tackling the issue, and mentoring of younger girls. They felt that key stakeholders to be involved were the police, to arrest and prosecute perpetrators, and religious leaders and the media to raise awareness of the issue and to sensitise communities. A key impact would be to allow youth who have experienced sexual exploitation to be able to go back to school.

Stakeholders Dialogue

The Stakeholders Dialogue component of the consultation took place on the morning of the fourth day. The meeting was attended by more than 20 stakeholders representing the following organisations:

- OPM (Office of the Prime Minister)
- Windle Trust Uganda
- Ministry of Gender
- LWF (Lutheran World Federation)
- Students for Global Democracy, Uganda
- ACDIPE (Action for Disadvantaged People)
- Ugandan Youth Society for Human Rights
- Kayunga District Youth Network
- Agency for Youth Development
- IOM
- Inter-Aid Uganda
- Yunus Social Business Foundation
- Everyday Hope Project
- UNICEF
- UNDP
- AIRD (African Initiatives for Relief and Development)
- UNHCR
- BPRM Uganda Office
- DFID
- ARC (American Refugee Committee)
- EDUKANS
- Federation of Ugandan Football Associations
- Kenya Airways
- IOC (International Olympic Committee) Uganda



Stakeholder dialogue structure

The dialogue ran from 9.30 – 12.30. Two youth participants opened the meeting with a welcome speech outlining the purpose of the consultation and provided an explanation of the previous three days. An ‘ice breaker’ game was run with youth and stakeholders to help everyone relax and get to know each other.

Group presentations

On day three of the consultation, the youth created group presentations to showcase the issues they had been focusing on and explain both the actions they could take to bring solutions to their communities, and the recommendations they have for stakeholders to support and supplement these actions. They rehearsed their presentations during the previous evening and on the morning of the meeting, before presenting to the stakeholders. With the participation of all team members, each presentation lasted for about 5 minutes and included role plays, music, and spoken word. The topics selected included lack of access to (quality) education, inadequate access to health centres, sexual exploitation, and non-participation of youth in project design and policies.

Round table discussions

After the presentations, the participants had the opportunity to engage in more focused conversations during small round table discussions. The purpose was to create a space that was more conducive to discussions and building relationships and reducing the feeling of ‘them’ and ‘us’. Discussion suggestions were placed on each table and then groups were divided to ensure that there was a roughly equal number of youth and stakeholders at each table. Due to lack of time, the groups were not able to rotate around the tables as planned.

Recommendations and Open Discussion

Space was provided at the end of the meeting for an 'open mic' session, allowing anyone in the room to speak in response to what they had heard or discussed during the morning. Stakeholders and youth were free to speak.

Key Discussion Points and Outcomes

- Several stakeholders expressed their congratulations for the achievements of the group during the consultation, including government, NGO and corporate representatives, and they committed to partnering with them in the future. For example, in terms of capacity building and skills training opportunities, and exploring funding opportunities for specific projects. One stakeholder from an international NGO also encouraged the youth to approach their teams in the camps to share their opinions and ideas.
-
- Several refugee and national youth spoke at the closing of the meeting, and used the opportunity to re-emphasise many of the key points and issues that had been shared with the stakeholders and during the consultation, including: access to education and training – *“we’re asking for space because our challenges are the same; they cannot access quality education, a lot of people even in the cities we cannot access quality education”*; the importance of building links between national and refugee youth – *“when we come together as a force both young people who are nationals and those who are refugees, we have the ability to create an impact”*; access to jobs; sexual exploitation; and corruption.

Next Steps/Future Action

The partners - COBURWAS, World Vision and UNHCR Uganda - have committed to sustain the momentum created by the consultation, to follow up directly with the stakeholders, and to support the participants to develop and realise the project designs that they began during the consultation. They will also be managing the process of selecting youth representatives for the global youth consultation which will be held in Geneva in June 2016.



During the final debrief meeting with youth on day four and in their final written evaluation forms, many of the participants expressed an interest in future engagement, including: Utilising social media for networking and to coordinate future action; Sharing the outcomes of the consultation with other youth and leaders in the community; Preparing proposals for new projects; Engaging

national youth organisations to discuss opportunities for involving refugee youth; Learning more about the national and legal frameworks for refugees to strengthen advocacy efforts.

Evaluations

Daily Youth Evaluation

A different evaluation tool was used at the end of each day to capture ideas, learning and recommendations from the participants. Aside from collecting feedback, we also wanted to be sure that the youth were recognised as active participants in the consultation process, with the power to directly influence it. Targeted questions and interactive exercises facilitated the collection of their feedback on what they liked, didn't like, what they had learnt and new skills they had acquired, what had been useful to them, and also what they would recommend to the organisers/facilitators for the next day or for future consultations. Some examples of participant feedback mechanisms used include:

At the end of day two, participants were asked to rank how useful they had found the day using sticky dots on a scale, and to share their responses verbally to the question - "What have you learned today?" The results of the ranking exercise, came out as 100% useful, and answers in the discussion included: teamwork, communication skills, creativity, freedom of expression, and problem solving.

At the end of day three, participants shared one word that summed up the day for them, and some examples are as follows: motivation, inspiration, ideas, friendship, knowledge, sharing, rights, experiences, impact, transformation, awareness, courage, advocacy, fun, advice, unity, community, amazing, and talent.

Final Participant Evaluation



At the end of day four, participants had the opportunity to share their opinions of the consultation and what they were taking away from it, as well as their suggestions and recommendations for future consultations through a written evaluation form. The written evaluation form was an important tool for participants to provide dedicated time for anonymous, individual feedback at the end of the consultation.

The questions in the written evaluation concentrated on an in depth review of the consultation

process and outcomes for youth, and requested recommendations for future consultations and ideas for individual or group action after the event. Some of the comments from participants are captured below:

Do you feel that you have been listened to at this consultation? Please explain your answer:

“Yes, my colleagues and facilitators were all attentive to hear me when giving my ideas and approved them”

“Yes I do feel that I have been listened to on this consultation because the presence of the stakeholders has given me hope for better improvements for the youth”

What suggestions do you have for future National Consultations?

“Give more time for stakeholders to account for what they have done for the youth and probably get more chance to fully interact in the meeting”

“More training in knowledge and skills” and “skills for us to train others”

Did this consultation meet your expectations? Please explain your answer:

“Yes I did because I learned new things from others, I met new faces, I have enough knowledge to deal with youths and organisations in my community. I’m really different from how I came here”

“Yes because all I wanted as a national was to hear experiences from my fellow youth from refugee camps and find a mechanism on how best we can work together since the challenges they face inflict a lot of pain on this generation”

What learning are you taking away from this consultation?

“From this consultation I’m going to take away more experiences, talents, and knowledge to other refugee youth in my settlement”

“I will take awareness to the community and commitment because we need to commit ourselves to achieve what we want in our life”

What ideas do you have for action based on your involvement in this consultation?

- *“Engage national youth focused civil society organisations on how best to partner with organisations working with young refugees”*
- *“Read more and learn as much as possible about the national and legal frameworks for refugees to see what can be used to make the situation of refugees better as well as create spaces for interaction”*
- *“Informing my fellow youth about the existing opportunities in our community that they can be able to take on”*

Conclusion

As the first of the national consultations, the Uganda Consultation was a crucial opportunity for learning and listening in order to ensure the relevance and practicality of the approach that had been developed. The youth and facilitators were remarkable in their willingness to share their ideas and feedback, and all future consultations will benefit from it. The participating youth were engaged and passionate, and brought a great deal of experience of community and social work to this consultation. As a result, the discussions were rich and they provided significant insight into the situations of refugee youth in Uganda, as well as exploring the potential for interaction and collaboration between the refugee and national youth in the future. The next steps are dependent on everyone present at the consultation – youth, stakeholders and partners – in order to find the most productive ways to realise the many solutions and recommendations that this group has already shared.