



Youth Skills Development

Lessons from CARE International in Uganda

This Knowledge Model paper on community based GBV mobilization and prevention forms one of a series of papers developed by CARE International in Uganda to provide an evidence base of promising practices and models to inform future long-term development and humanitarian programming. The Knowledge Model papers identify lessons learnt and provide recommendations to inform the implementation approach of the recently developed Women and Youth Resilience Project (WAYREP). WAYREP is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and aims to strengthen the resilience of refugee and Ugandan women, girls and youth to live a life free from violence in rural and urban contexts in West Nile and Northern Uganda.

Uganda: understanding the context

Whilst Uganda has transformed itself from a country with a troubled past to one of relative stability and prosperity, today it faces a number of pressing challenges including a growing refugee crisis and rapid urbanisation.

Uganda is now the largest host country of refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa, with over 1.3 million refugees living within its borders¹, primarily from South Sudan but also from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia. Over 86% of these refugees are women and children, and women now head a large proportion of households in refugee settlements within host communities. Both refugee and host community women and girls face cumulative and complex gender-based violence and protection risks in these areas as a result of constrained resources, poor

¹ UNHCR. September 2019. Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>



access to basic services and harmful socio-cultural norms. Studies have shown in particular, that their inability to generate sufficient income (largely due to limited assets and capital, a lack of core skills in literacy and numeracy, and fragmented social networks) combined with continued dependence on food distribution, increases the risk of gender-based violence for both refugee and host community women and girls, who often have no choice but to engage in high risk behaviors (transactional sex, exploitative labour and early or forced marriages) to feed their families and meet their basic needs. Strengthening refugee women and girls' resilience and reducing their risk of gender-based violence requires building both social and economic capital.

Uganda's population has rapidly expanded in the last ten years, and as the population grows at 3.3% annually, so too does urbanisation. Currently 20% of the population is urban (a quarter of which is located in slum areas) and this is estimated to reach 50% by 2050.² Rural-urban migration is increasing for both national and refugee populations seeking better employment opportunities. However, conditions in urban areas are challenging and employment opportunities are limited, especially for those with limited literacy and numeracy skills. Municipalities and city councils are also poorly prepared for absorbing a rapidly growing number of urban dwellers and access to social services is competitive. This increases the vulnerability of women and girls to negative coping strategies such as transactional sex, early marriages, unwanted pregnancies and trafficking, a growing and insufficiently understood risk. Whilst the majority of refugees are hosted in rural settlements, a significant number are also moving to urban areas or maintain livelihoods between rural settlements in order to access services and nearby towns to seek additional income. Unlike refugees that stay in designated refugee settlements, urban refugees are expected to be more self-reliant. Most of them do not receive the assistance accorded to settlement refugees like shelter or food assistance. In addition to being exposed to the same challenges that are faced by the urban poor, urban refugees experience a double burden of adapting to new culture, learning a new language, and overcoming stereotypes.

Focussing specifically on youth, Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 78% of its population being under 30 years of age.³ Many youth decide to migrate from the rural areas to the urban areas based on factors that include kinship ties and friendship ties, low rural incomes, and education and employment opportunities. However, it is estimated that Uganda's unemployment rate for youth is one of the highest in Africa, standing at 83% for young people between ages 15–24, and informal sector work accounts for the majority of young workers in Uganda - only 3.2% of youth work for waged employment, 90.9% work for informal employment, and 5.8% are self-employed⁴. With young people forming the majority of the country's population and very few jobs available, developing effective approaches for developing youth skills in both urban and humanitarian contexts has become central in tackling the country's social and economic challenges over the medium to long-term.

WAYREP was designed in response to these challenges and aims to 'strengthen the resilience of refugee and Ugandan women, girls and youth to live a life free from violence in Uganda'. WAYREP will work in two regions of Uganda, West Nile (Arua District – Arua town and Rhino refugee settlement specifically Omugo extension settlement) targeting refugees and their host communities; and Northern Uganda (Gulu town which is facing a rapid urbanization with new urban dwellers comprising youth, women and girls from rural communities who increasingly struggle to survive on a primarily rain-fed agricultural system that can no longer support families).

The Youth Skilling Pathways Model

Over the last decade CARE International in Uganda (CARE Uganda) has designed a number of innovative models to meet young people's needs today whilst preparing them for the future. The Youth Skilling Pathways (YSP) model, combines the village savings and loans (VSLA) model together with a suite of targeted skills and training programs, and in doing so, aims to improve the skills, employment opportunities and social inclusion of disadvantaged refugee and Ugandan youth (see CARE Uganda's Women and Girls' Economic Empowerment Knowledge Model Paper for further information on the VSLA methodology).

² UNFPA. September 2019. UNFPA Transparency Portal Uganda. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/transparency-portal/unfpa-uganda>

³ UNFPA. 2017. 'Population Matters: Uganda Population Dynamics'. UNFPA.

⁴ Ibid.



The YSP model supports out-of-school youth between 15-24 years of age and combines market-orientated vocational skills development for youth with linkages to financial services and education. The model's process represents a coordinated approach, where both employer skill-gap needs and youth learning needs are identified and addressed, and youth participants are provided with supported pathways into training, hopefully leading to further employment opportunities (see Figure 1 for more detail).

As a first step, the model initially identifies youth using either a needs-assessment (NAT) or vulnerability assessment tool (VAT), which prioritizes vulnerable families, including youths who have dropped-out of formal education, female-headed households, households with disabled members, and families with HIV/AIDS members. Then the model utilises adaptable and diverse approaches to effectively engage youth participants. Following their selection, youth are placed into short-term (4-6 months) supervised placements within those small to medium enterprises considered to represent

trades and skills in high demand. During these placements, youth work alongside a trainer or mentor for on-the-job learning and foundational skill development, and are actively case-managed by CARE Uganda and the trainer/mentor to ensure training and support is tailored to both the individual youth and hosting business.

Parallel to their placements, youth are also engaged in a diverse range of complementary trainings including life skills; financial literacy; small business management and are actively encouraged and supported to join youth savings groups. Towards the end of their placement youth work together with their case-manager to identify post-graduation opportunities for employment and complete an exit questionnaire on their experience in the program.

The YSP model is different to other youth employment programs in that it matches the diverse needs of youth together with the needs and realities of potential employers (market-orientated youth skills development) and, instead of producing job-seekers it aims to produce job creators and entrepreneurs. YSP is also unique in that, although being an apprenticeship-based model, it places a strong emphasis on developing youth soft skills in matters such as communication and negotiation.

The model has been recognized by the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as an innovative approach with potential for addressing youth unemployment at scale. CARE Uganda is currently advocating for the Ministry of Education and Sports to formalize and adopt the model so that youth are able to gain nationally recognized skills and vocational certification/qualifications.

Lessons Learned

CARE Uganda's YSP model has primarily focused on Ugandan youth in peri-urban settings to date (SCORE) but with urban dwellers increasingly comprising unemployed youth (many of whom are also refugees) CARE is now starting to explore programming approaches and models for youth skilling in urban and humanitarian contexts (NFMA; ADA). The

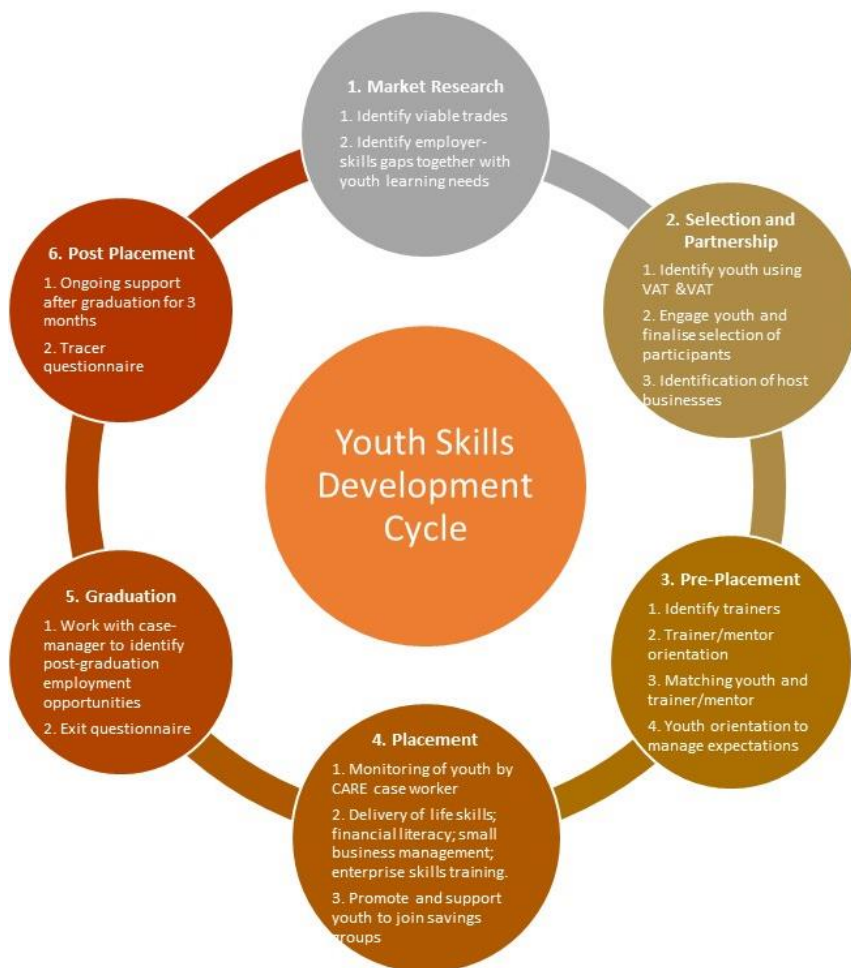


Figure 1: Youth Skilling Pathways Model



lessons learnt and knowledge generated through adapting youth skilling models to suit the needs of different target groups and implementing across different contexts can provide a solid evidence base to inform the WAYREP program.

The following sections document lessons learned with regards to WAYREP's target groups and contexts, and draws not only on CARE Uganda's program experience but also others such as CARE Ethiopia, the Innovation Consortium and UNFPA which also have experience in designing and implementing integrated youth employment programs.

Working in urban contexts

What aspects of the model have contributed to its success in urban contexts?

Unemployment continues to be one of the key socio-economic challenges for urban youth in Uganda. Urban youth are more likely to be unemployed (12 percent) than rural youth (3 percent). In addition, female youth are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to male youth.⁵

In response to this, **YSP can be seen as a resiliency-based model – its greatest strength lies in its focus on enabling youth to become self-reliant and resilient to change.** It achieves this through **youth skill development in: 1) technical skills acquired through training and/or learned on the job** and which are specific to a particular enterprise and **2) a set of transferable soft skills – life skills** that are not specific to a particular job but are needed to apply their technical skills and knowledge - such as communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, negotiation, professionalism. **The model's comprehensive approach is effective in creating livelihood aspirations among youth and making youth ready for employment.**

CARE Uganda, under the Sustainable, Comprehensive Responses for Vulnerable Children and Their Families (SCORE) program **reached almost 3000 urban youth through the YSP, of which 95% following graduation subsequently applied the knowledge and skills acquired through their training through formal employment or as self-employed young entrepreneurs.** 67% of youth were employed by the small-medium enterprises where they had their placements, while 33% started their own income-generating activities or small-scale enterprises (e.g. salon and hairdressing, bicycle repairs, tailoring, motorcycle maintenance and repairs).⁶ **The active case-management of individual youth under the YSP model was behind this success and ensured continued youth engagement** (following youth skill preferences during initial assessment) **and high rates of completion/graduation** (continued mentoring and support and problem-solving).

The **centrality of technical and life skills building** to the SCORE program, is reinforced by the experience of CARE Ethiopia's Women for Women (W4W) program which focussed on women (including young women) living in the slums of Addis Ababa and developing their business and entrepreneurial skills. W4W delivered three levels of enterprise training: 'Reach-up' which included identifying skills and passions, finding and keeping customers, and how to save money; 'Start-Up' training which included how to develop a business plan and 'Scale-up' which included business assessments, coaching and improvement planning. These three levels of

Adapting the Youth Skilling Pathways Model for Urban Programming

- Focus should be on **youth becoming self-reliant and resilient to change**
- **Invest in mobilisation** and create positive image for vocational training
- Design must be **demand-driven not supply driven** and training programs should align with emerging labour market demand
- Design of skills-development must **combine both technical skills development and transferable soft life skills**
- Design should **combine savings groups and skills-development training** for greater entrepreneurship
- **Active case-management** through pre-placement, placement, graduation and post-placement phases
- Design should keep it **simple to implement and low-cost to ensure adoption** by partners
- **Flexibility** for those that have family commitments (young mothers and fathers)

⁵ Byamugisha, J., Shamchiyeva, L., Takaaki, K. 2014. 'Labour market transitions of young women and men in Uganda'. IOM.

⁶ Cannon, M., Charyeva, Z., Nascimento, N., Namisango, E., Ddumba-Nyanzi, I. 2017. 'Sustainable, Comprehensive Responses for Vulnerable Children and Their Families (SCORE) Mixed method Performance Evaluation'. Measure Evaluation.



training were combined with life and interpersonal skills training. As a result, women were able to diversify and expand their business activities and women reported doubling their working capital after the project.⁷

The YSP model is **different to most in that it seeks to align training programs with emerging labour market demand, compared to other apprenticeship models which tend to be supply-driven rather than demand-driven. Engaging employers and the business community is very important.** Employers are looking for skilled personnel and youth need access to actual work-based learning. The YSP model involves a win-win collaboration with the business community and this has led to interest in the model from the Ugandan government with potential for adoption and replication. The model is simple to implement, cost-effective, and sustainable and as such CARE Uganda's **implementing partner organisations have quickly adopted the model and are continuing to roll it out** under their own programs.

The YSP model is highly relevant and appropriate to youth in urban areas compared to rural areas - partly due to unequal access to the wage labour market. Under SCORE, where vocational training was closely linked with potential employers it achieved impressive employment rates (with 95% in direct employment within 6 months of graduation)⁸. This is likely related to the fact that in urban areas self-employment and formal-sector jobs are more readily available compared to rural-settings. **The YSP model's combination of saving groups and skills-development training would also appear to be relevant in urban areas** where access to financial services is essential in boosting household incomes and social welfare. Savings groups are also key to initial capital for starting and running a business after training, if not engaged in direct employment.

The life skills component of the model is particularly important in enabling youth to smoothly transit from the learning phase to the self or formal employment stage. For example, the SCORE program found that the life skills imparted during the training improved youth employability and strengthened their personal relationships (through increased self-esteem, self-confidence, increased negotiation capacity, and knowledge of one's rights).⁹

The YSP model has proven empowering for girls, enabling them to resist early marriages and sexual exploitation and to become more assertive in making sound life decisions as a result of the life skills modules that form an integral part of the model.¹⁰

What have been the challenges of the model in urban contexts?

Currently vocational training is not popular among Ugandan youth. It is mostly regarded as being inferior compared to a university degree. Youth skilling development **models need to concentrate on developing a positive image of vocational training during mobilisation for trades** (e.g. welders, carpenters, electricians and others as in general), as these vocations provide more employment opportunities¹¹ and the option of becoming self-employed. CARE Ethiopia's approach under W4W was to invest in positive awareness-raising – this was done through four short films for national broadcast which told inspiring stories of aspiring entrepreneurs and their vision, documentary films of four women project participants with updates shared via social media and events, and a number of celebration and awareness-raising events where successful Ethiopian businesswomen from various sectors were invited to speak to women participants.¹²

Vocational training in urban (and rural) areas is mostly taken up by boys. Girls account for only about one fourth in public vocational training centres in Uganda and most of them are concentrated in what is called: 'traditionally female occupations' – cooking, hairdressing, seamstresses. The focus on traditional trades tends to also be reflected in young women's choices – for example, under the SCORE project, young women chose salon and hairdressing only out of the available options. There is an opportunity to be gender-transformative in promoting and supporting young women to take up more non-traditional trades. **Women's participation in youth skilling programs tends to focus on**

⁷ CARE Ethiopia. 2018. 'End Line Evaluation Women for Women'. CARE International and H&M Foundation.

⁸ Cannon, M., Charyeva, Z., Nascimento, N., Namisango, E., Ddumba-Nyanzi, I. 2017. 'Sustainable, Comprehensive Responses for Vulnerable Children and Their Families (SCORE) Mixed method Performance Evaluation'. Measure Evaluation.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Byamugisha, J., Shamchiyeva, L., Takaaki, K. 2014. 'Labour market transitions of young women and men in Uganda'. IOM.

¹² CARE Ethiopia. 2018. 'End Line Evaluation Women for Women'. CARE International and H&M Foundation.



shorter-term training, and for young women in particular, shorter-term or less time-intensive vocational training programs allow them to balance educational interests with family commitments and responsibilities at home.¹³ CARE Uganda is working to address social norms change through its Entrepreneurship Training Manual, which explores gender dynamics in business and has a number of core modules including: Gender Equality Promotion; Business Building in her Environment; and Gender and Reproductive Health, which aim to build awareness of how gender roles can interact with young women's employment and business opportunities.¹⁴

Ensuring sustainability of youth skills development programs requires continual upgrading of training programs, modules, curricula and trainers' skills, maintaining and upgrading training equipment and facilities, all of which requires considerable resources, often beyond the lifetime of a development program. Considerable investment is required in strengthened linkages with partners and government to ensure certification and/or support for resource mobilization to sustain the quality and relevance of skills development by CSOs. The Ugandan government is aware of this challenge and is implementing the 10-year strategic plan 'Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) Strategic Plan 2011 – 2020' also known as Skilling Uganda.

The YSP model is an affordable, quick and sustainable response to youth financial inclusion, economic empowerment and employability. However, under the SCORE program, it was found that **for those small enterprises requiring greater start-up capital such as carpentry and tailoring, although offering attractive returns and opportunity, youth are not able to afford the start-up costs compared to less expensive trades.** A one-year apprenticeship phase for skills development and savings accumulation (through youth savings groups) may be required for some enterprises to enable youth to procure necessary start-up equipment.

Working in humanitarian contexts

What aspects of the model have contributed to its success in humanitarian contexts?

The majority of refugees have mainly settled in the West Nile region in the north of the country. The poverty rate in the West Nile and Mid-Northern regions is significantly higher than the national average.¹⁵ Despite the progressive and development-oriented framework that Uganda has set up for the integration of refugees, **local governments in Northern Uganda have so far made little headway in establishing a dialogue between the private sector, providers of training courses, refugees and the local population in order to create jobs and thus promote inclusive socio-economic development.**¹⁶ Indeed, a baseline study undertaken in Rhino settlement (Arua District) found that only 7.8% of youth were engaged in informal or formal income-generating activities.¹⁷

Refugee youth, after staying in the settlements for an extended amount of time, with limited employment opportunities find themselves engaging in negative coping mechanisms, including transactional sex, alcohol and drug use. Many refugee youth in settlement areas were forced to discontinue their schooling in order to seek refuge and often have little or no technical or business training skills.¹⁸ **Equipping young refugees with technical skills which support the integration process and help them find employment or encourage them to become entrepreneurs and to find sustainable ways of living in refugee settlement areas is highly relevant to the context.**

CARE Uganda has recently implemented youth skilling development activities in humanitarian contexts at a small-scale under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs', Shelter and Livelihood Assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees (NMFA) project, and the Austrian Development Agency's, Integrated emergency response program for South Sudanese Refugees and affected Host Community Members (ADA) program. There is also an opportunity to draw on the

¹³ Cannon, M., Charyeva, Z., Nascimento, N., Namisango, E., Ddumba-Nyanzi, I. 2017. 'Sustainable, Comprehensive Responses for Vulnerable Children and Their Families (SCORE) Mixed method Performance Evaluation'. Measure Evaluation.

¹⁴ FRIENDS Consult. 2017. 'CARE International in Uganda: Entrepreneurship Training Manual'. CARE Uganda.

¹⁵ World Bank. 2016. 'The Uganda Poverty Assessment Report 2016'. World Bank.

¹⁶ Interview with Community Development Officers in Arua and Gulu Municipalities (05/09/2019).

¹⁷ CARE Uganda. 2019. 'Shelter and Livelihood assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees in Uganda: Baseline'. NFMA2, CARE Uganda.

¹⁸ CARE Uganda. 2018. 'Shelter and Livelihood assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees in Uganda: Endline'. NFMA, CARE Uganda.



experience of others such as the Innovation Consortium and UNFPA, currently piloting vocational training models in this space.

Under the NMFA program, **the model selected young women and men from within both refugee and host communities to become Business Skills Trainers (BST) and undergo an intensive two-week training of trainers (ToT) course** using CARE Uganda's Entrepreneurship Manual. The BST then delivered business skills training (supported by CARE and partners) to over 200 youths from both refugee and host communities. Refugee youth themselves highly value the business management skills training stating that 'with such skills in the mind no business can collapse' and 'even if we are to move and return to South Sudan the knowledge will help us begin again there'.¹⁹

Based on the training, **youths were able to successfully develop business plans (based on market-research) and qualify for in-kind start-up grants in small enterprises** such as retail trade, catering and bakery, tailoring, hairdressing, produce and phone charging. The **development of business plans grounded in market research by youth was seen as a mechanism for ensuring youth were motivated and realistic** (locational advantage/disadvantage; supply and demand, cost-effective pricing). The importance of youth engagement was reinforced during interviews with Arua and Gulu Municipalities which under a youth livelihood program found that **youth ownership was stronger when provided with the opportunity to build business management skills and choose their own income-generating activities** compared to selecting from a supported but pre-determined list of options.²⁰

In-kind grants were preferred rather than cash-grants to primarily reduce misuse of funds, but in the West Nile refugee context where there is a greater household dependency on young women for income and support than for young men²¹, this may also be a strategy for ensuring young women are able to establish and pursue their income-generation activities amongst competing priorities. In-kind grants consisted of items related to business plans, for example, a restaurant business received pots and pans, 1 table and two chairs, oil, maize and a cook stove. **Suppliers of inputs were linked to individual youth to establish market connections and improve the confidence of youth to interact with suppliers in the future.** One month of vocational skills training was also offered to those youth with successful business plans in specialized areas such as hairdressing, tailoring and carpentry. Youth reported that they have been able to increase their income and are able to meet their basic needs and contribute to their families which as increased their self-esteem and confidence.²²

Under the ADA program, refugee youth also received livelihood skills training in areas such as hairdressing, building houses, animal rearing such as goats, cow, and carpentry and motor vehicle repair. **The majority of youth went on to participate in those income-generating activities they received training in.**²³

Adapting the Youth Skilling Pathways Model for Humanitarian Programming

- Mentors and **vocational and/or business skills trainers should be selected from within both refugee and host communities** to promote social cohesion
- Youth selected from **vocational training should come from within refugee and host communities** to promote social cohesion
- The **development of business plans through market research are important in ensuring youth are realistic** and that there is sufficient demand in their location
- **In-kind grants preferred to cash grants for start-up** to reduce misuse of funds and to ensure young refugee women, who are often the sole income earner, are able to pursue their income-generation activities
- **Youth linkages with input suppliers to build confidence** and ability to interact with markets

¹⁹ Focus Group Discussion with Youth Skilling Participants (NMFA) in Omugo Settlement (07/09/2019).

²⁰ Interview with Community Development Officers in Arua and Gulu Municipalities and Stephen Ssekyanzi, Executive Director of RISE-UP (05/09/2019)

²¹ CARE International. 2018. 'End line evaluation of integrated emergency response program for South Sudanese refugees and affected host community members program in Imvepi settlement, Arua district.' CARE Uganda., ADA.

²² CARE Uganda. 2018. 'Shelter and Livelihood assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees in Uganda: Endline'. NFMA, CARE Uganda.

²³ Interview with Alan Assa CREAM (09/09/2019) and CARE International. 2018. 'End line evaluation of integrated emergency response program for South Sudanese refugees and affected host community members program in Imvepi settlement, Arua district.' CARE Uganda., ADA.



CARE Uganda can also draw on other youth skilling models being implemented in refugee settlement areas including West Nile and Northern Uganda, where for example, UNFPA is implementing a program known as ‘Youth Safe Spaces’. Youth safe spaces is a model which has emerged as a key strategy for the protection and empowerment of women, girls and young people affected by the refugee crisis. UNFPA is using the **youth safe spaces model as a platform to support young refugees to meet and engage, access information and services and acquire contextually relevant livelihood skills and opportunities. The model involves the selection of skilled adults from within the refugee or host community to offer structured training to youth, especially out-of-school girls.** To date such livelihood and income-generation skills have included: hairdressing, soap making, jewelry making, tie and dye, baking and cookery (see Knowledge Model Paper on GBV Community-based Mobilisation and Prevention for more detail on the Youth Safe Spaces model).²⁴

The Innovation Consortium in partnership with the French Embassy, are implementing the RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES Program (commenced in April 2018), which is a **social enterprise that uses sustainable and innovative business models to create economic opportunities for young urban refugees. The model consists of six phases: 1) mobilisation of urban refugees** through information sessions, **2) needs assessment** to better understand refugee past professional experiences, future ambitions, skills gaps and needs. This was considered an important exercise because it ensured the project activities were aligned with the individual needs of the clients (refugees) but at the same time **a market survey was undertaken to prioritise skills development** – of the 20 skills identified as being held within the refugee clients, 10 were chosen as being the best small businesses relevant to Kampala that can be established with limited start-up capital (fashion and tailoring; hairdressing and make-up; motorbike repairs, baking, ice tea, multimedia, taxi driving, metal fabrication, construction); **3) Leadership training focused on personal development** meant to enable the urban refugees who would be potential clients of the project to reflect critically about which technical and/professional trainings they were interested in. The sessions also provided life skills training, such as, the value of hard work, being focused and determined, overcoming negative mind-set and attitude change among others; **4) Entrepreneurship training** focused on business development and financial literacy; **5) Innovation Camps where there were practical sessions** on hairdressing, fashion and design, metal fabrication, baking and facial-make-up meant to equip them with basic practical skills. The technical exercises were combined with motivational talks by private sector professionals to inspire refugees and **6) Apprenticeships with private sector partners.** Private sector partners are motivated by the potential for up to six-months of free labour, no cost to the organisation with the program covering transport and lunch for refugees and social responsibility.²⁵ Being implemented as a pilot project RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES will test the viability and performance of the model. **Thus far, 100 urban refugees have benefited from an intensive six-month apprenticeship programme coupled with entrepreneurship trainings, leadership and capacity development seminars, information and computer training among others.**²⁶

What have been the challenges of the model in humanitarian contexts?

Mobilisation and outreach phases of youth skills development programs with urban refugee youth can be challenging especially given that many are still trying to meet their basic needs – establishing a small enterprise can seem daunting and out of reach to many. Under RISE-UP, staff reported that, ‘most times the urban refugee youth they have the mind-set that I can only handle life by day, so you cannot teach someone a skill to start a business and make money when they see themselves as surviving day-to-day. The leadership training is therefore about empowerment and supporting refugee youth to focus on what is beyond survival – because for someone who is just looking at survival it’s hard to appreciate the skills being shared. We had to first change that mindset and support refugees to think about what they would like to be and what they would like to do next. We cleared the mental blocks before the actual skills training’.²⁷

²⁴ United Nations Population Fund. 2018. ‘Women and Youth Safe Spaces in Refugee Settlements: Guidance Note Uganda.’ UNFPA.

²⁵ Interview with Pidson Abaho, Bashir Kasita, Christine Luwedde from RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES Kampala (12/09/2019).

²⁶ Innovation Consortium. 2019. ‘RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES’ available at: <https://riseupforrefugees.org/about-riseup/> accessed 19/09/2019

²⁷ Interview with Pidson Abaho, Bashir Kasita, Christine Luwedde from RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES Kampala (12/09/2019).



Refugee youth represent a diverse group sharing many different nationalities and languages which presents a challenge for delivering business skills training in a cost-effective way during project implementation.²⁸

Refugee youth report a lack of access to financial services and start-up capital/working capital as a significant barrier in establishing or expanding a small enterprise.²⁹ For example, many South Sudanese youth report having pre-existing skill-sets in hairdressing, motorbike repairs, mobile phone repairs and retail before seeking refuge in Northern Uganda, but without start-up capital they have been unable to re-establish themselves. Such capital would be expected to come in the form of a loan, however, this is not a straightforward procedure for refugee youth, who are perceived to be high-risk and who rarely have acceptable collateral to support a loan application. Under the NFMA project, refugee youth reported using their lunch/transport allowance (intended to facilitate training participation) for start-up capital whilst awaiting their grants.³⁰

Under the ADA program, **refugee youth cited lack of developed markets and the high cost of doing business in the settlements as a significant challenge in building their enterprises.**³¹

The fact that many refugee youth in settlement areas have been forced to discontinue their schooling in order to seek refuge, means that **refugee youth, especially young women, have low literacy levels and find the business skills training around recording-keeping and budgeting challenging as well as writing down their business ideas and learning as part of developing a viable business plan.**³²

Refugee youth together with local governments report that **a lack of technical training and a central business/job centre in settlement areas meant only ad hoc guidance and support was available to youth as they established their small enterprises.** For some refugee youth, this was seen as increasing the potential risk of failure and a deterrent to starting a new venture.³³

The high levels of mobility within the refugee community presents a challenge for the retention and completion of apprenticeships and placements by urban refugee youth. For example, RISE-UP had a 28% drop-out rate for its apprenticeship programs as refugee young men and women moved away to resettle in other areas, returned home or sought employment in other areas.³⁴

It can be **challenging to develop a culture of entrepreneurial thinking and encourage refugee youth to consider self-employment as a career choice.**³⁵ Stacked up against such a choice are many experiences of small business failures in the community, negative attitudes towards business, and misconceptions about what makes a business succeed (the common view is that all you need to succeed is 'capital'). **This challenge equally applies to youth skilling in urban contexts.**

Community attitudes and perceptions of refugee youth by others within the community is seen as a barrier to establishing small businesses. Refugee youth report facing discrimination on the basis of their age (beliefs such as wisdom only comes with age), and the fact that refugee youth are seen as irresponsible and troublemakers by the host community.³⁶ **This perception may also contribute to the difficulty in obtaining credit by refugee youth.**

Young refugee women sometimes found it difficult to attend trainings during their menstrual cycle due to a lack of access to menstrual hygiene options including sanitary pads. Under the NFMA project, the dropout rate of young refugee women was addressed through the provision of menstrual hygiene kits.³⁷

²⁸ Focus Group Discussion with Youth Skilling Participants (NMFA) in Omugo Settlement (07/09/2019) and Interview with Pidson Abaho, Bashir Kasita, Christine Luwedde from RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES Kampala (12/09/2019).

²⁹ CARE Uganda. 2018. 'Shelter and Livelihood assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees in Uganda: Endline'. NFMA, CARE Uganda.

³⁰ Focus Group Discussion with Youth Skilling Participants (NMFA) in Omugo Settlement (07/09/2019).

³¹ CARE International. 2018. 'End line evaluation of integrated emergency response program for South Sudanese refugees and affected host community members program in Imvepi settlement, Arua district.' CARE Uganda., ADA.

³² CARE Uganda. 2018. 'Shelter and Livelihood assistance to South-Sudanese Refugees in Uganda: Endline'. NFMA, CARE Uganda.

³³ CARE Uganda. Knowledge Harvesting Workshop on Urban Programming. Arua (10/09/2019)

³⁴ Interview with Pidson Abaho, Bashir Kasita, Christine Luwedde from RISE-UP FOR REFUGEES Kampala (12/09/2019).

³⁵ CARE Uganda. Knowledge Harvesting Workshop on Urban Programming. Arua (10/09/2019)

³⁶ International Organisation for Migration. 2017. 'Strengthening Social Cohesion and Stability in Slum Populations: Baseline Study Kampala, Uganda'. IOM.

³⁷ Ibid.



Programming implications for WAYREP

Research demonstrates the YSP model is relevant and appropriate in equipping vulnerable youth in urban settings and refugee settlement areas with technical skills which help them find employment or encourage them to become entrepreneurs and to support the integration process. There is some evidence that in turn can promote the social and economic empowerment of vulnerable young women and girls enabling them to resist early marriages and sexual exploitation and to become more assertive in making sound life decisions. Together these outcomes can increase self-reliance and reduce dependency on humanitarian support. As such, youth skills development is an intervention which, implemented appropriately under WAYREP, can deliver some of the ambitions of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

WAYREP intends to establish YSLAs and support members to develop viable micro and small business ideas as the main platform for building social and economic capital amongst its target groups of vulnerable youth in urban settings and refugee settlements. Working with refugee and national young women, girls and youth through youth skilling activities and youth savings groups will contribute to: Outcome 1, 'Enhanced safe, sustainable and dignified livelihoods/incomes for women and female youth', specifically their increased capacity to engage in economic activities and access financial services.

Based on this meta-analysis, programming implications for WAYREP to consider as it refines its implementation approach include:

Expand the YSP model to include multi-purpose cash transfers for vulnerable youth in urban settings and refugee settlements: Formative research shows that many urban and refugee youth, have low and irregular incomes and are focused on meeting their basic needs day-today - the start-up capital/working capital required to establish a small enterprise or join a savings group is beyond their reach. WAYREP should consider expanding the YSP model to include a multi-purpose cash transfer component over defined period (likely between 3-6 months) as a stepping stone to enable youth who do not have established IGAs or family support networks, to participate in and benefit from vocational skills development and employment and small business opportunities.

Expand the YSP model to include a literacy/language training component: WAYREP plans to provide training and support on financial education (YSLAs); soft and life skills (Women's Leadership and Psychosocial support); and vocational skills (SPM, YSP) – however experience has shown that low levels of literacy and multiple languages amongst refugee youth, particularly young women is a significant challenge to participation. WAYREP should consider a literacy/language training as a key life skill delivered upfront in combination with all other activities – though literacy training is resource-intensive the impact cannot be underestimated – a young woman's ability to read a GBV prevention/support poster or explain her situation to health clinic staff or to negotiate with business suppliers and customers may not be tangible or quantifiable but the impact is significant and long-term. In addition, where resources do not allow for trainings to be delivered in multiple languages – WAYREP should consider building on the NMFA experience and continue to adapt training to use simple language with activities that rely on memory games and other low-literacy techniques for learning.

Balance market-orientated skills development and existing youth skill-sets: WAYREP plans to support youth to take up self-employment opportunities through establishing small enterprises and to link youth to formal job opportunities through placements with employers. To facilitate this WAYREP has undertaken a market assessment during its inception phase, to identify viable business and employment opportunities. One of the strengths of the YSP model is that it is market-orientated identifying the emerging labour demands of employers and aligning skills development accordingly, however formative research shows that many refugee youth, especially from South Sudan have pre-existing skill-sets in small businesses such as hairdressing and saloons, bicycle repairs, electrical repairs and catering. WAYREP should consider combining the market-assessment together with a capacity assessment to identify existing skill-sets and based on the two, prioritise those business opportunities that are not only in demand but also which refugee youth have a basic level of skill in and can be established with relatively small amounts of start-up capital (see recommendation on multi-purpose cash-transfers). This balanced approach may go some way to supporting refugee youth to establish small businesses/income-generating activities quickly and successfully thereby enabling them to meet their basic needs in turn making such activities more sustainable.



Targeting to deliver a holistic package for vulnerable youth in urban settings and refugee settlements: The ability of WAYREP to achieve its overall objective and outcomes will depend on an effective targeting strategy that delivers an integrated and comprehensive suite of interventions to the same cohort of direct beneficiaries, thus ensuring they work in a complementary way and reinforce the outcomes of individual activities. WAYREP should deliver an integrated package of activities for vulnerable youth either in urban or refugee settlement areas – this could involve the following sequence of: literacy training + life skills training + cash transfers + vocational skills development/placements in parallel to YSLA + financial education and enterprise development training. Sequencing could be flexible based on the capacity of the youth participants.

Engage youth through creative exposure and events: Experience shows that youth are likely to be more engaged and enthusiastic when training curriculum is developed specifically for youth. BoC has developed specific materials for youth savings group and WAYREP could consider completing this through youth-friendly, fun activities and events similar to the RISE-UP innovation camps, as a mechanism for enabling youth exposure to different employment/ self-employment options and employers thereby enabling informed choice.

Develop youth business role models: Currently youth report that there is a lack of young successful business role models to emulate, ‘the only role models we have are older. These old role models, though good, seem to send the message you can only make it when you are very old’. WAYREP should consider investing in positive awareness-raising through social media – short films telling inspiring stories of aspiring entrepreneurs and their vision, updates of successful youth participants shared via social media, and celebration and awareness-raising events where successful youth businesses from various sectors are invited to speak to participants.

Develop a WAYREP Learning and Communication System: The WAYREP program represents a unique opportunity to achieve deep impact at significant scale and therefore the production of knowledge and a strong learning agenda should be at the heart of its implementation. Developing a clear and focused learning and communication system around a set of core learning themes (based on assumptions and knowledge gaps) to generate evidence will support this. Core learning themes in relation to youth skills development could include: 1) understanding the interaction between multi-purpose cash transfers and youth savings groups and their effectiveness in facilitating investment in income-generating activities and increased resilience and 2) understanding and documenting a youth skills development model tailored to refugee youth in urban contexts.



KNOWLEDGE MODEL PAPER SERIES

This knowledge model paper is part of the following series:

1. Women and Girls' Economic Empowerment
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CARE INTERNATIONAL

CARE is an international humanitarian aid organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on empowering women and girls to bring lasting change to their communities. CARE International has implemented development and humanitarian assistance projects in Uganda since 1969, targeting the most vulnerable communities, with a special focus on poor women and girls, who are the most at risk of rights' abuse and exploitation. Reaching 705,000 direct beneficiaries to date, our three programs, across 62 districts, consistently address the key drivers of poverty and social injustice in Uganda, namely prevailing gender inequality, widespread corruption and poor governance, and lastly the growing threat of climate change.

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