

**BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION WITH CHILDREN
WEST NILE, UGANDA**

2018



Grace a 5 year old from Morungatuny, Uganda, returns home after collecting water from a nearby swamp. With her 3-year old Sister, they start and end their day with walking to gather water for their family.

INTRODUCTION

Recurring conflict in South Sudan has pushed over one million people to seek safety in Uganda. Today, Uganda has the highest refugee and asylum seeker numbers in Africa.

Figures indicate that 82 per cent of those fleeing South Sudan are women and children, with children making up more than 61 per cent of all refugees.¹ The majority of the newly arrived refugees have been settled in the West Nile area of Northern Uganda, an area which has suffered from high levels of pre-existing vulnerability.

World Vision Uganda has been responding to the refugee crisis since January 2014. Activities were scaled up following the increased influx of refugees in June 2016. Initial programming included provision of high-energy biscuits to new arrivals, general food distribution, child protection and interventions in the field of water sanitation and hygiene. On 8 May 2017, the response was re-categorised to the highest category within World Vision (an equivalent of the UN Level 3 Emergency), meaning further international resources were deployed to support the work of the team on the ground.

World Vision Uganda West Nile Refugee Response is currently implementing projects in child protection; livelihoods; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); food assistance, including cash transfers; reception center management and distribution of core relief items within five districts in the region, namely, Adjumani, Arua, Koboko, Moyo and Yumbe districts.

So far World Vision assisted more than 835,000 people. It is playing a significant role in child protection within the settlements, as well as in distributing food assistance. It also assists families with livelihoods support, provision of clean water and sanitation and distribution of core relief items.

The increasing number of refugees entering Uganda daily has strained the delivery of public services to host communities around refugee settlements. This has especially affected sectors such as health, education and water as host communities have to now compete with refugees for most of these services.

Based on its experiences working in humanitarian contexts, World Vision has developed analysis tools in order to ensure development of conflict-sensitive programming in its responses. One of these tools is the Good Enough Conflict Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR)² that provides an analysis of a country's context and needs, key actors, sources of social cohesion and division and likely future scenarios. It includes internal and external recommendations that inform organisational strategies, operational and security plans, program designs and external messaging.

In July 2017, World Vision conducted GECARR in Northern Uganda (Bidibidi, Imvepi and Rhino settlements), consulting 267 people. The analysis was conducted through 12 focus group discussions with men, women, boys and girls, including 130 children from both refugee and host communities. Key informant interviews were also held with NGOs representatives, UN Agencies, local and national Government representatives, faith and business leaders.

Based on this GECARR³ analysis, this brief outlines community informed ways to foster social cohesion between host communities and refugees, but also within South Sudanese refugee communities. It further highlights the need for host communities and refugees to be treated equally without discrimination and in line with the Government of Uganda's refugee frameworks.⁴

1. UNHCR, *Uganda Refugee Response: South Sudan situation*, Infograph, 4 August 2017, available at <https://ugandarefugees.org/category/policy-and-management/situation-reports/?r=48>

2. World Vision International, *Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR)*, <http://wvi.org/sites/default/files/GECARR-Design-Final-A4.pdf>, 4 July 2016

3. World Vision, *Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) for West Nile, Uganda*, July 2017, available at <http://wvi.org/publication/good-enough-context-analysis-rapid-response-gccarr-west-nile-uganda>

4. These frameworks include the REHOPE (Refugee And Host Population Empowerment) Strategic Framework, the STA (Settlement Transformative Agenda) and the CRRF (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework), among others

IDENTIFIED TENSIONS

The purpose of the GECARR tool is to provide decision makers in the response setting the likely scenarios that could happen over a 6 to 12 months period which might require change in programming and operations. The analysis conducted in the West Nile region showed that tensions exist within the host communities and within the South Sudanese refugee communities, as well as between refugee and host communities and that these might increase in the coming months.

Tensions within host communities are largely seen as tribal in nature and driven by disagreement over land rights. Tensions within refugee communities are largely carried over from South Sudan and include conflict between ethnic groups aligned with rival political factions.

Competition over limited resources and general misunderstandings due to cultural differences is fanning tension between host communities and refugees. Conflict often arises over collection of firewood or materials for construction, concern over land degradation and animal grazing rights. Unconfirmed rumors regarding what refugees may be bringing in with them, such as weapons, creates suspicion amongst the host community, while refugees are quick to accuse host communities of profiting from their presence in Uganda. For instance, refugee communities consider host communities to be benefiting from the influx of government and international aid funding, development of infrastructure (including roads and schools), and opportunities for new markets for trade. Mutual distrust is also fueled by a rise in opportunistic crime.

Further tensions between communities are mounting as a result of feelings of inequitable treatment, both in quantity and quality of support received, despite similar vulnerabilities among refugee and hosting communities. A report from USAID⁵ highlighted that, in some cases, host communities are registering as refugees in order to benefit from the same relief items, including food.

Inequitable treatments are also felt when it comes to implementing partners' hiring practices. The implementation of the 70/30⁶ split the Government of Uganda has conceptualized in its ReHOPE strategy⁷ and Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA) leaves uncertainty as to what both communities are entitled to.

Several promising practices could be considered to ease community tension and build social cohesion within and between communities. These include inter-faith dialogues, children-led peace clubs and the Do No Harm principles. All these are further explored below.

5. USAID. *Uganda: Conflict Assessment Report for the Month of April 2017* <http://safcprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/April-MCA-2017.pdf>, 12 May 2017.

6. According to this guideline and except for food distribution, 70% of the beneficiaries of humanitarian interventions should be refugees while 30% should go to the host communities.

7 REHOPE—Refugee And Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework, Uganda, <https://ugandarefugees.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-08.03.17-Rc-HoPE-Strategy-clean-version.pdf>, 3 February 2017, § 19, page 25



INTER - FAITH DIALOGUE

World Vision's GECARR showed that faith leaders are well respected by both host communities and refugees. They are seen as spiritual guides with good understanding of the social issues, though they are not considered very familiar with issues such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) or legal frameworks. Communities identified their primary role as to guide, promote peace, encourage co-existence, counsel, connect and educate communities on religious matters. Faith was identified as a key bridging factor for communities, despite language differences.

World Vision has a long history of brokering inter-faith dialogue by creating safe spaces for faith leaders and faith communities to learn, share and debate. These dialogues have enabled social and behaviour changes in other communities dealing with issues such as combatting stigma against people affected by HIV & AIDS, fostering better approaches towards Gender, responding to Maternal and Child Health, Child Protection or Ebola in various contexts in Lebanon, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Indonesia, among others.⁸

Inter faith dialogue is already taking place to some extent within some communities. For instance, refugee communities have inter-religious councils that bring together all religions. While it is well-known that South Sudan is in its majority made up of people who identify as Christians⁹, Muslim believers make up the majority of the host community in Yumbe¹⁰, Bidi Bidi, for instance, which is now considered to be one of the biggest refugee settlement in the world.

Working with and establishing partnerships with faith leaders could foster peaceful dialogue. Inter-faith dialogue has a real opportunity to bring about positive change and address community tensions. Partnering with faith leaders for peace could have a significant impact to strengthen awareness, building social cohesion among and between displaced and host communities.

Investing in building the capacity of faith-based leaders to understand existing legal frameworks and humanitarian entitlements could go a long way in providing relevant information to the host and refugee communities and mitigating tensions created by expectations and misunderstanding.

8. World Vision, *What is Channels of Hope*, <http://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/what-channels-hope>

9. Pew-Templeton, *Global Religious Futures Project*, http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/south-sudan/#/?affiliations_rcligion_id=0&affiliationsyear=2010®ion_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2014, accessed August 3rd, 2017; United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, International Religious Freedom Report for 2015, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/256285.pdf>, accessed August 3rd, 2017.

10. Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *Table B: Religion by District for the Population*, http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/cen2014/cen2014B7.pdf, accessed August 3rd, 2017.



EMPOWERING CHILDREN AS PEACEBUILDERS

In line with a broader strategy to address longer-term social cohesion and peacebuilding issues, World Vision began implementing the Empowering Children as Peace builders (ECaP) project model in multiple settlement areas.

This project model promotes participatory community-based management of Peace Clubs. The Peace Clubs are designed to help children and adolescents become agents of peace and change for themselves, their families and their communities.

The Peace Road Curriculum implemented in the Peace Clubs helps targeted children and youth to:

- 1) protect themselves and make good decisions;
- 2) treat others with respect, tolerance and peace;
- 3) foster relationships that result in a safer, more cooperative community for all.

Led by children and youth themselves, the Clubs structures seek to promote peace and dissolve tensions within and between communities, including by fostering peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities. These are linked to Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs)¹¹, to schools (primary and secondary), churches and existing community structures. To date there are 77 Peace Clubs being facilitated by World Vision in the West Nile Region. These clubs are located in Adjumani, Arua and Yumbe districts and have over 2,300 members.

Each Club is made up of approximately 30 members aged between eight and 17. Members meet at agreed times out of school schedules within the school premises, at the CFS, church to reflect on their participation in child-led initiatives aiming at protecting themselves, treating others with respect, resolving tensions before they escalate, among others.

These peace clubs serve as a basis for child-led community peacebuilding. Within each club, five children are self-selected to familiarise themselves with the Empowering Children as Peace builders (ECaP) model¹² in order to develop their skills¹³ as peace builders. These children will draw action plans and create activities and modalities to mobilise other children, irrespective of their tribe or refugee status, to join the club. Each child has an enrolment target of five children per term.

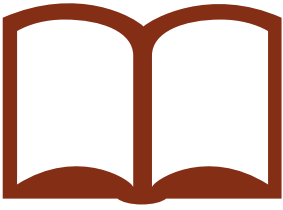
Reflection meetings on what needs to change within the community are conducted and children come up with initiatives or action plans that they aim to implement. Community meetings, outreach activities and peacebuilding dialogues on child rights and peaceful co-existence are initiated by the children where they seek commitments from the communities.

11. A child friendly space is a safe and friendly space set up for children from 3 to under 18 years of age in refugee settlements and host communities. It is led by community volunteers willing to help their own children access structured play, recreation, leisure and learning activities that support children in restoring a sense of normalcy, provide opportunity to continue learning and increase their resilience.

12. World Vision International, *Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: Empowering Children as Peacebuilders, A World Vision Project Model*, <http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/empowering-children-peacebuilders>, 2010

13 Skills that are promoted include: Interpersonal relationship skills, Problem solving, Decision making, Critical thinking, Coping with emotions and stress, Communication skills and Self-awareness.

In order to spread and replicate this model, members of the community are trained, by facilitators, in the peace road curriculum¹⁴ so that they can facilitate life skills sessions in schools and CFSs. Promising examples as a result of the activities by youth peace builders include:

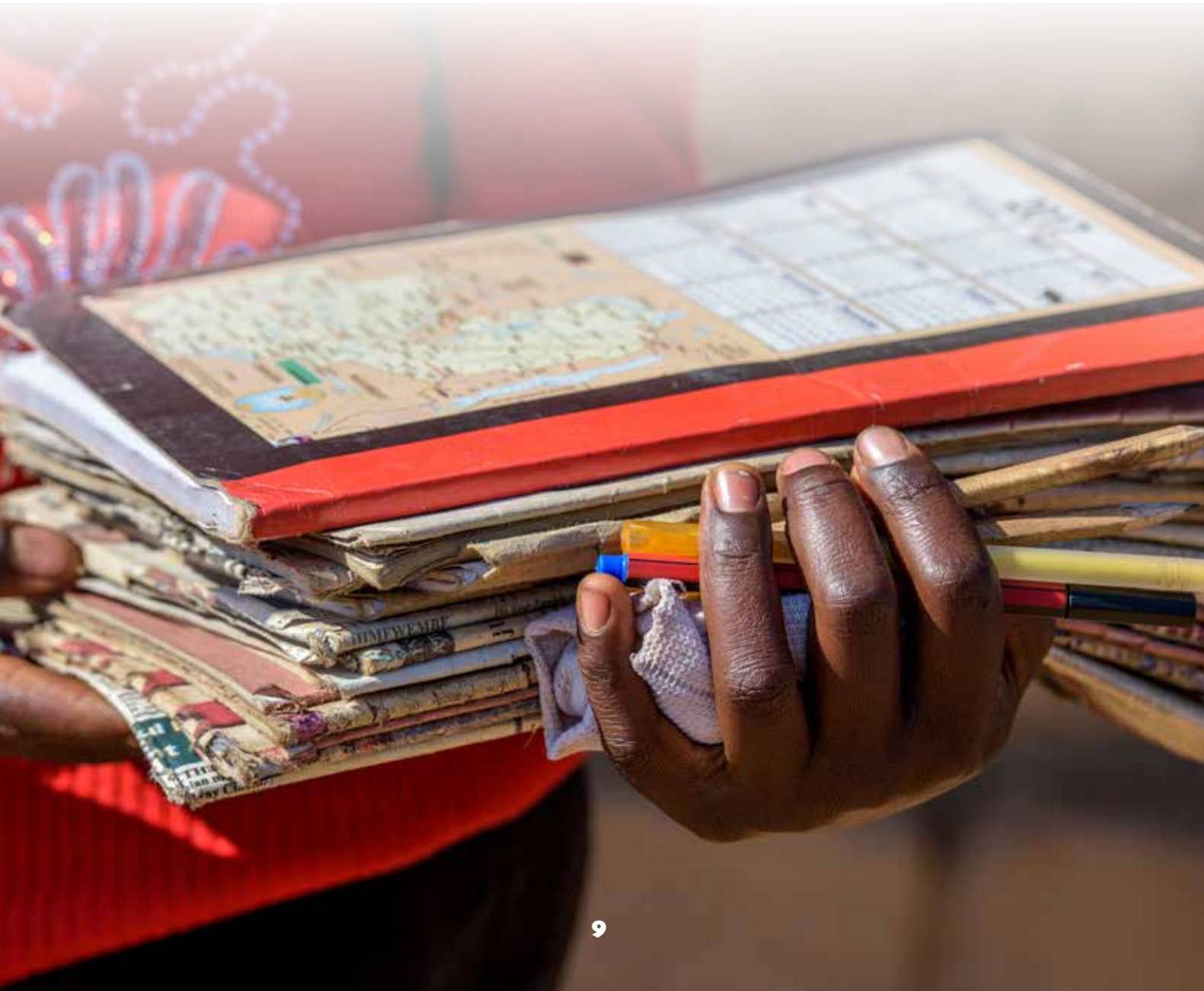


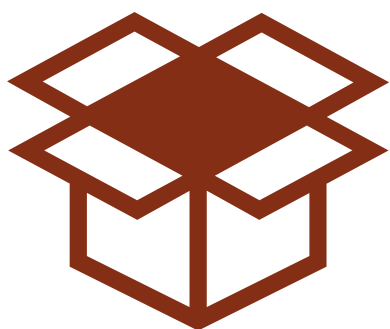
EDUCATION

Language is a barrier that can prevent people from talking or understanding each other. In Mungula I Primary School, language was one of the causes for fighting between pupils. It could escalate as to involve the broader community. Misunderstanding led some pupils to believe children from other tribes or country were mocking or insulting them. Child-led initiatives helped ease the tensions. Peace club members would interpret and also explain to their peers what the other children meant in their languages so as to minimise suspicion that they were being disrespected. Finally, messages on peaceful coexistence were passed on to local leaders and parents during meetings and media platforms.¹⁵

14. Lucy Figueroa, Bill Forbes and Kristine Mikhailidi, *The Peace Road Curriculum, User's Manual*, World Vision International, <http://storage.cloversites.com/worldvision5/documents/PEACE%20ROAD%20USERS%20GUIDE%20FINAL.pdf>

15. World Vision Uganda, UNICEF, *Peace Road Curriculum Sessions and Child Led Initiatives Ease Tensions in Mungula 1 Primary School*, in *Restoring Smiles as Children Take Lead in Peace Building Processes, Success Stories, Best Practices*, 2016, p 10.





COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION

During their child-led reflection meetings in the same school, refugee children suggested to share some of the items distributed to them with the host community children. The main reason behind this proposal was that some of their peers from the host community are more vulnerable than the refugee children.

A consultative meeting was held with some peace club members to design a distribution plan. Refugee children suggested that the commodity distribution (clothes, sanitary towels and shoes) should benefit everyone and be carried out in an orderly manner. This would change the norm of only refugee children benefiting from Gift-In-Kind donations.

Children from both communities worked together to come up with a more organised approach to the distribution by sorting shoes by the right size and pairs, as well as sorting clothes that fit by size for everyone. This exercise gave them the opportunity to interact and build better bonds with one another.





MEDIA CAMPAIGN


Media campaigns through radio talk-shows have been used as platforms to diffuse and address potential conflicts. Children and adolescents formed radio panels during the radio talk-shows on peaceful co-existence. All the tribes involved were represented and information was shared in their languages.

Children explained to the audience how they were using the peace clubs to resolve conflicts. They developed messages in their local languages and English which were recorded and played during different intervals on both different radios.

As parents were part of the audience, they encouraged their own children and others to join the peace clubs.

The District Education Officer in Adjumani has reported that in areas in which peace clubs have been active, schools have experienced no strikes as a result of peaceful co-existence activities. ¹⁶

¹⁶. Idcm, p 15.



Joseline Kagoya,
9, carrying a clay toy
radio made for her by
her mother Christine
Nakyamu, 34, and a
neighbour- Geoffrey
Mugoya, 14.

INTEGRATING DO NO HARM ACROSS SECTOR INTERVENTIONS

The aim of the Do No Harm approach¹⁷ is to ensure any assistance provided to communities does not create or exacerbate tension, but rather connects men and women, girls and boys as well as groups of different ethnic or religious backgrounds.

The Do No harm approach ensures that the community is consulted in the design of humanitarian projects and interventions. Local structures¹⁸, host communities, refugees, children, parents and leaders have their say in the decisions made. Further to consultations, risk assessments are conducted to highlight potential risks associated with a project, intervention or activity and measures taken to mitigate identified risks before and during the implementation. This approach is followed across all sectors of interventions.

Implementing partners have reported difficulty implementing the “70/30” split mandated by the Government of Uganda, where “30 percent of the humanitarian support should be provided to host communities and 70 percent to the refugees. The principle recognizes the generosity of the host communities and also means they receive some of the dividends of hosting refugees”¹⁹. While it might be hard to ensure precise targeting of both host communities and refugees, it is paramount to inform the host and refugee communities of the situation and discuss mitigation measures.

For instance, in the case of participation at the CFS, implementing agencies, such as UNICEF and World Vision, measure and count participants, refugee and host communities. Extending peacebuilding activities to ensure these interventions reach all intended beneficiaries has proven to help in mitigating potential tensions. World Vision has engaged peace clubs in schools that host both refugees and host communities. Schools attended only or mostly by host communities were involved as well to ensure broad and equitable participation.

In the West Nile response, World Vision conducted Best Interests Determinations²⁰ in consultation with the affected child, to ensure their protection needs were fully addressed and to avoid causing further harm in a difficult situation by considering children’s opinions from the outset. In the process of elaborating Do No Harm strategies, child participation is critical to ensure children’s views are fully considered and their needs are effectively taken into account. World Vision’s experience shows that decisions and solutions have proven to be more durable when children meaningfully participate in all steps along the way.

17. World Vision is committed to abiding by international and internal standards and policies that affirm our commitment of accountability to stakeholders and to children and communities in particular. World Vision’s Humanitarian Accountability Framework is made up of 4 core pillars: Providing Information, Consulting with Communities, Promoting Participation, Collecting and Acting on Feedback and Complaints http://cdn.worldvision.org.uk/files/1814/4069/6145/Integrated_Programme_Accountability_Framework.pdf

18. These structures comprise, but are not limited to: Child protection committees, Faith leaders, Community leaders, Community watch groups, Foster care networks, Peace clubs, Other children/adolescent and community groups, Government structures like probation office, police, from the local to the national level

19. UNHCR, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework – The Way Forward*, October 2017, p 19. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CRRF%20brochure%20.pdf>

20. UNHCR, *Guidelines on Formal Determination of the Best Interests of the Child*, May 2006 <https://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/BID%20Guidelines%20-%20provisional%20calcase%20May%2006.pdf>



Eva, 16, a future nurse:
We are all one people.
Strife should not separate
us. We are all called South
Sudanese. We need to
have love among us.



**Sam, 17, a future
politician:**
When I go back, if I go
back, I have to encourage
peace. I want to become
a politician so I can show
love to people. As a
country, we're supposed
to love each other as one
people to build unity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aid agencies, donors, local and national government should:

- Address insufficient staff capacity for humanitarian protection, peace building and conflict sensitive programming, including through recruitment of specialists, integration of conflict sensitivity into all upcoming grants, and by using peace building as an approach across different programming sectors.
- Integrate Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity into all new projects and programmes to ensure that interventions are building on local capacities for peace. Do No Harm allows interventions to be inclusive of both refugees and host communities and ensures they can both contribute to project interventions equitably.
- Expand the Empowering Children as Peacebuilders methodology, where possible and relevant, to bring peace clubs to more communities and engage children and youth in activities that contribute to peace and social cohesion.

Aid agencies should:

- Establish clear and transparent communication with communities, in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)²¹, to ensure expectations by the affected refugee and host communities match the reality of the humanitarian response, and ensure regular interaction with local leaders and structures.
- Aid agencies should ensure that when service delivery cannot meet the 70/30 requirement, intended beneficiaries are informed in due time and mitigation measures are taken to avoid creating or exacerbating tensions.
- Given that the majority of the population is made up of adherents of different faiths, engagement with faith leaders should be harnessed to its full extent by aid agencies to contribute to peace among different communities.

Donors should:

- Scale up investments in conflict and context analysis and in projects that foster social cohesion and peacebuilding in line with recommendations and promising practices outlined in this briefing.

21. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of humanitarian action. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. Commitment 4: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them <https://corchumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf> The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the centre of humanitarian action. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. Commitment 4: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them <https://corchumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf>

SOURCES

Lucy Figueroa, Bill Forbes and Kristine Mikhailidi, The Peace Road Curriculum - User's Manual, World Vision International,

<http://storage.cloversites.com/worldvision5/documents/PEACE%20ROAD%20USERS%20GUIDE%20FINAL.pdf>

Pew-Templeton, Global Religious Futures Project, http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/south-sudan#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010®ion_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2014, accessed August 3rd, 2017.

ReHOPE—Refugee And Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework, Uganda, <https://ugandarefugees.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-08.03.17-ReHoPE-Strategy-clean-version.pdf>, 3 February 2017

Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Table B: Religion by District for the Population, http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centableB7.pdf, accessed August 3rd, 2017.

UNHCR, Uganda Refugee Response, South Sudan situation, Infograph, available at <https://ugandarefugees.org/category/policy-and-management/situation-reports/?r=48>

UNHCR, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework – The Way Forward, available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CRRF%20brochure%20.pdf>, October 2017.

United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, International Religious Freedom Report for 2015, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/256285.pdf>, accessed August 3rd, 2017.

USAID, Uganda: Conflict Assessment Report for the Month of April 2017 <http://safeprogram.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/April-MCA-2017.pdf>, 12 May 2017

World Vision, Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) for West Nile, Uganda, available at <http://wvi.org/publication/good-enough-context-analysis-rapid-response-gecarr-west-nile-uganda>, July 2017

World Vision, Programme Accountability Framework, http://cdn.worldvision.org.uk/files/1814/4069/6145/Integrated_Programme_Accountability_Framework.pdf, April 2010

World Vision, What is Channels of Hope, <http://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/what-channels-hope>

World Vision International, Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR), <http://wvi.org/sites/default/files/GECARR-Design-Final-A4.pdf>, 4 July 2016

World Vision International, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: Empowering Children as Peacebuilders, A World Vision Project Model, <http://www.wvi.org/development/publication/empowering-children-peacebuilders>, 2010

World Vision Uganda, UNICEF, Restoring Smiles as Children Take Lead in Peace Building Processes, Success Stories, Best Practices, http://cdn.worldvision.org.uk/files/3414/6428/0924/Restoring_smiles_as_children_take_a_lead_in_the_peace_building_process.pdf, 2016.



CONTACT: National Director - Gilbert Kamanga

World Vision Uganda
Plot 15B, Nakasero Road
P.O Box 5319 Kampala-Uganda

<https://web.facebook.com/wwuganda/>
<https://twitter.com/WorldVisionUg>

Tel: 0417114200 [EL line]
Fax: +256-414-258587

Email: uganda@wvi.org



like us
WorldvisionUganda



follow us
WorldVisionUg