

Annual Results Report

2025

Uganda

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Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

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- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

Uganda's operational environment became increasingly complex over the past year. While the country continued to uphold its progressive refugee framework under the 2006 Refugee Act guaranteeing freedom of movement, access to land and the right to work rising refugee arrivals and overstretched public services placed growing pressure on the asylum space. Security conditions along border areas deteriorated as intensified conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan triggered new cross-border movements.

Tensions increased in several settlements as limited services and environmental degradation affected both refugees and host communities, particularly in underserved areas. Economically, droughts, floods and shrinking livelihood opportunities deepened hardship for both groups. Severe funding shortfalls significantly constrained the humanitarian response, resulting in major reductions in essential assistance, including food ration cuts beginning in May 2025. Although humanitarian access remained open, partners increasingly prioritized life-saving activities amid operational constraints.

Demographically, Uganda's refugee and asylum-seeker population grew by 9.8 per cent, from 1.80 million in 2024 to 1.97 million by end-2025, with daily arrivals averaging up to 422 people mainly from South Sudan, eastern DRC and Sudan. By end-2025, South Sudanese and Congolese refugees accounted for 52.4 per cent and 32.6 per cent of the population respectively, while women and children comprised 77 per cent overall. These trends intensified protection needs, particularly for survivors of gender-based violence, separated and unaccompanied children, and individuals requiring education, health and nutrition services. New arrivals faced acute food insecurity and medical vulnerabilities.

Urban refugee populations also expanded, further straining housing, services and livelihoods. Collectively, these pressures significantly increased demand for emergency reception, registration, protection and basic services.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

By 2025 Uganda's asylum space is maintained and unhindered; access to territory is preserved; and international protection standards are adhered to.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

Throughout 2025, Uganda registered 153,933 new asylum-seekers and recorded 29,010 refugee births, demonstrating the continued effectiveness of its open-door refugee policy and sustained registration efforts. Conditions at border and reception points remained generally favourable, supported by improved registration systems, expanded coverage and faster issuance of identity documentation. These measures strengthened protection outcomes by enabling timely access to services, referrals and assistance for new arrivals. Uganda's domestic legal framework continued to uphold key rights, including freedom of movement, while inclusive policies ensured access to health, education and livelihoods, contributing to stronger social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

The asylum space largely remained intact, with access to territory preserved and international protection standards upheld. However, significant reductions in funding and staffing constrained protection delivery, slowing case management and limiting system capacity. Child protection, GBV prevention and response, legal counselling and access to justice were particularly affected, leading to higher caseloads and increased risks for individuals with complex needs.

Despite these constraints, community-based structures including refugee-led organizations, peace committees and settlement volunteers played a critical role in risk identification, referrals and community engagement. Local authorities increasingly led child protection and community-based protection oversight, supported by targeted capacity building. Although freedom of movement remained guaranteed, undocumented individuals faced heightened protection risks. UNHCR continued to promote protection-sensitive alternatives, strengthen coordination with authorities and expand communication with communities to reduce irregular onward movement, contributing to a more sustainable and integrated protection environment.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

By 2025 all forcibly displaced and host communities benefit from a healthy natural environment, and improved social services, including health, education, water and sanitation, and social welfare, provided through national systems where possible.

By 2025 life-saving humanitarian needs of refugees and asylum-seekers are met, with attention to any specific needs.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2.00%	6.41%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	93.50%	93.55%

In 2025, Uganda finalized the second Health Sub-Program Integrated Refugee Response Plan II (2025–2030), developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Health with technical support from UNHCR. Broad consultations were held with key actors, including development partners, humanitarian agencies and representatives from relevant government sectors, ensuring that the plan reflected national priorities and operational realities across refugee-hosting districts. Health services for refugees and host communities were delivered through a system comprising 2,639 village health team members, 2,506 health workers and 89 functional health facilities. Among eligible facilities, 92% were coded and therefore able to receive human resources for health as well as bimonthly medicine deliveries from the National Medical Stores. By the end of the year, District Local Governments in refugee-hosting areas were contributing 25% of the health workforce, amounting to 623 personnel, demonstrating growing national ownership of service delivery.

Health outcomes continued to show improvement. The crude mortality rate (CMR) declined from 0.04 in 2024 to 0.03 in 2025, remaining well below the emergency threshold of 0.75 per 1,000. Under-five mortality also improved, decreasing from 0.09 to 0.07 within the same period. The leading causes of mortality in refugee settings included malaria (22%), upper respiratory tract infections (13%), gastric ulcers (7%), skin diseases (6%), urinary tract infections (5%) and lower respiratory tract infections (5%). While a 2024 UNHCR results monitoring survey indicated an increase from the baseline of 84% in 2023 to 94% of refugees and 96% of host community members who needed health care were able to access services, no equivalent survey was conducted in 2025, limiting comparative analysis of access trends.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

By 2025 all forcibly displaced and host communities live peacefully with each other, and progressively attain self-reliance in a conducive environment for livelihoods opportunities.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	88.15%	79.51%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9.15%	10.31%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52.00%	51.87%

In 2025, demand for education and training in the refugee response increased significantly. The population of refugees aged 3–24 rose by 7.7%, from 1,155,515 in 2024 to 1,251,325 in 2025, while the number of host community learners declined from 248,898 to 224,224. Refugee and host learners accessed primary and secondary education across 331 settlement schools, of which 41% were government aided, 28% supported by humanitarian actors and 31% private. Overall, 31% of refugee learners were enrolled in public schools, with 49% enrolled in primary and 2% enrolled in secondary schools.

Despite the growing school-age population, the refugee gross enrolment rate fell from 51% to 47%, leaving many children not in education, employment or training (NEET). Enrolment trends showed pre-primary participation holding steady at 34%, primary decreasing from 88% to 80%, and secondary rising marginally from 9% to 10%. During the same period, 2.2% of refugees, totaling 6,271 individuals, accessed tertiary education and training. Refugee secondary enrolment remains far below the national average of over 25%, while primary enrolment continues to lag behind the national rate of more than 99%. Significant gender disparities persist, with girls representing 47% of primary learners compared to 53% for boys, and only 37% of secondary learners compared to 63% for boys.

Transition rates remained low due to high costs and limited post-primary opportunities. Additional barriers included overcrowded classrooms, long travel distances, shortages of trained teachers and inadequate learning materials across settlements. Many adolescents faced pressure to engage in informal work, contributing to reduced attendance and early dropout. Humanitarian partners continued supporting accelerated education and skills programs, but funding gaps limited expansion to match rising needs. These challenges highlighted the need for greater investment in inclusive education systems for refugees and host communities.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

By 2025 refugees and stateless persons access durable solutions, including confirming their citizenship, voluntary return or third country solutions.

Indicator		
Population Type	Baseline	Actual (2025)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,249	1,177
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,047	939
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	8,407	2,863
4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed		
Stateless Persons	0	0
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,796,609	1,971,983

In 2025, prospects for voluntary repatriation remained limited as security conditions in the region deteriorated. Renewed conflict and large-scale displacement increased civilian protection risks, reducing return opportunities for South Sudanese, Sudanese and Congolese refugees. By year end, only 331 households (1,177 individuals) were assisted to voluntarily repatriate to Burundi, with a total of 4,527 households (15,893 individuals) having returned since the programme began. Returns declined sharply compared to 2024, when 2,248 individuals were voluntarily repatriated, representing a 47.6% reduction largely driven by the temporary suspension of movements during the Marburg outbreak, with operations resuming in April.

Resettlement delivery occurred in a highly constrained environment marked by chronic underfunding, reduced staffing and shrinking global quotas. Despite decreasing opportunities, protection needs grew more complex. UNHCR strengthened prioritization frameworks and pipeline management to safeguard integrity and ensure available slots supported the most vulnerable. In this context, 939 refugees were successfully resettled in 2025.

Complementary pathways gained importance as traditional resettlement opportunities declined. Building on 2024 system strengthening efforts, implementation shifted toward more decentralized and sustainable models. Partnerships with private sector actors, educational institutions and pathway organizations expanded, while community-based structures, peer groups and alumni networks played a growing role in outreach, counselling and self-access services.

Labor mobility pathways delivered tangible results through a train- to- hire model linking vocational training to employment abroad, enabling refugee job placements in Italy and the region. Overall, 2,860 refugees departed through complementary pathways in 2025, underscoring their rising significance in the broader solutions landscape.

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Progress toward durable solutions for refugees and stateless people remained limited in 2025, constrained by persistent insecurity, structural challenges and resource shortages. Worsening conditions in South Sudan, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to undermine the safety, voluntariness and sustainability necessary for return. Escalating conflict, large-scale displacement and heightened protection risks rendered safe and dignified repatriation largely unfeasible.

In Burundi, where facilitated repatriation continued, weak basic services, limited livelihood opportunities, and unresolved land and property disputes constrained meaningful reintegration and increased vulnerability for returnees. Looking ahead, progress will hinge on improved security and political stability in countries of origin, coupled with greater investment in reintegration areas, stronger cross-border coordination, enhanced monitoring, targeted community engagement and deeper collaboration with development.

Efforts to resolve in situ statelessness in Uganda also stalled. Recognition of long-standing stateless communities requires constitutional amendments and high-level administrative reforms within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Despite a 2023 petition by affected communities supported by UNHCR, a partially debated 2022 Constitutional Amendment Act remains pending before the Constitutional Review Commission. Bureaucratic delays, legislative inaction and diminishing political will continue to impede progress.

Access to meaningful local integration for long-term refugees likewise remained limited. Advocacy for naturalization faced administrative barriers and persistent discriminatory attitudes, despite enabling provisions under the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act. No known cases of naturalization of long-term refugees were recorded, underscoring the need for sustained advocacy by UNHCR and partners to advance this pathway.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

In November 2025, with UNHCR's support, the Government of Uganda convened the first national Global Refugee Forum stock-take meeting, bringing together ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, development partners, the private sector and refugee representatives. The meeting reviewed progress, identified challenges, and set shared priorities. A Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus Forum, organized with

JICA and UNDP, further showcased Uganda's advances in coordinated, multisector collaboration.

Through the Netherlands-funded PROSPECTS partnership, UNHCR, ILO, UNICEF, IFC, and the World Bank continued strengthening protection and socioeconomic inclusion. In 2025, issuance of identification credentials rose by 42%, with 271,053 documents provided, while 1,832 jobs were created. Collaboration with EU INTPA and UNICEF enabled birth registration for 188,975 children, improving legal identity and access to services. To advance localization, 32 grant agreements were signed with refugee-led and community-based organizations, along with partnership frameworks with two national NGOs.

Through the Inter-Sector Working Group, the Interagency Coordination Unit led development of the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2026–2030 and updated the 2026 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan to guide coherent, system-aligned planning. These processes strengthened national ownership, improved alignment between humanitarian and development objectives, and reinforced the importance of inclusive participation across all sectors.

The GRF stock-take marked a significant milestone, providing a structured platform for assessing progress and mobilizing commitment toward future action. Stakeholders emphasized the need for sustained coordination, increased investment, and stronger partnerships to ensure predictable, long-term support for refugee protection and inclusion in Uganda. Continued engagement will remain essential to sustain momentum and ensure that national systems can support durable solutions.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Reception conditions Improved

Refugees and asylum seekers are registered on an individual basis and issued with identification documents

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99.95%	100.00%	99.97%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	67.07%	40.00%	0.00%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97.40%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	153,933
01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	153,933

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

By the end of 2025, Uganda hosted 1,971,983 forcibly displaced people (1,936,723 refugees and 35,260 asylum-seekers) across 531,364 households, representing a 10.2% increase from 2024. This growth resulted from new arrivals fleeing mainly conflicts in the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan (84.1%), and new births registered during the year (15.9%). Three nationality groups, Congolese, South Sudanese and Sudanese comprise 90% of all registered individuals in Uganda, while 51% are female, 52% are aged under 18 years, 34% are aged under 12 years, 77% are women and children and 3% are elderly. A total of 8% of the population comprises urban refugees based in Kampala. The remaining 92% of the registered population resides in 13 settlements, with 55.1% hosted in Nakivale, Adjumani, Bidibidi, Rhino and Kiryandongo settlements.

Biometrics (2 iris and 10 fingerprints) enrolment was expanded by 12% in 2025 to cover 79.3% of eligible individuals aged 5 years old and above, who comprise 85% of the population. During the year, group documents (refugee family attestation and asylum-seeker certificate) were issued to 159,023 households, while 80,682 refugees aged 16 years and above were issued individual ID cards. Over 6,000 children born in Uganda were issued birth certificates by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) during the year.

Through UNHCR's support, infrastructure facilities in reception centers and settlements such as Nyakabande, Nyumanzi, Lokung, Nakivale, Kyaka, Rhino and Kiryandongo were scaled up to handle peak arrivals and continuous registration demands. Trained registration and technical personnel with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), working across Uganda increased from less than 70 in 2024, to 128 in 2025. The increases in infrastructure facilities and human resource capacity resulted in the scaling up of reception, registration and documentation, improved the timeline from arrival and seeking asylum to biometric registration to within 7 days, and enhanced lifecycle inclusion (birth registration) on a timely basis - to within the same year in which they occur. The availability of biometrics enhanced the roll out of facial verification technology, which was introduced in the delivery of assistance services, reducing the distribution timeline from weeks to within days, while also enhancing accountability.

With these improvements, protection and service access have been enhanced, while data integrity and accountability were reinforced. As such, refugee registration data is consistently regarded by stakeholders in the Uganda refugee response as the single source of factual and reliable information concerning this population.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

Asylum seekers have access to fair and efficient refugee status determination (RSD)

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	389.00	547.86	400.00
2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Throughout 2025, Uganda registered steady improvements in the fairness, efficiency and overall functioning of its refugee status determination (RSD) system, despite operational constraints and growing numbers of new arrivals. Strengthened institutional capacity, expanded digital tools and targeted accelerated processing initiatives contributed to a more predictable and accessible asylum process.

The Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) convened 10 sessions during the year and adjudicated 10,376 applications involving 18,099 individuals. This marked a 25% decrease compared to 2024, when 24,162 applications (34,105 individuals) were processed. The overall recognition rate stood at 92%, down slightly from 96% in 2024. Average processing times increased marginally from 389 to 400 days, reflecting fewer REC sittings due to funding constraints. Despite continued prima facie recognition for asylum-seekers from the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan, the backlog remained substantial, with 35,260 individuals awaiting initial interviews or decisions at year-end.

Following sustained advocacy, the Government informed UNHCR that it had lifted temporary suspensions on the registration of asylum-seekers from Eritrea, Somalia and other countries considered “peaceful,” presumed to include Ethiopia, although not explicitly referenced.

A key milestone was the accelerated RSD exercise implemented over 25 days in December 2025. During this operation, 7,195 households (10,488 individuals) were processed through expedited procedures, achieving a 92% recognition rate. The exercise demonstrated strong inter-agency coordination and highlighted the benefits of digital RSD tools, including electronic forms and digital signatures, which reduced congestion, strengthened data integrity and minimized reliance on paper-based processes.

Government ownership of the RSD system continued to deepen, supported by enhanced technical capacity and more consistent application of the Refugees Act and Regulations. Screening and referral mechanisms improved, enabling earlier registration, better counselling and reduced protection gaps, particularly for large prima facie caseloads. The Refugee Appeals Board (RAB), however, operated at reduced capacity due to funding shortages and challenges in contacting appellants. During 2025, it reviewed only 50 applications involving 173 individuals, while 182 households (602 individuals) remained pending at year-end.

UNHCR continued to support both REC and RAB through technical guidance and by ensuring asylum-seekers received information and counselling on their rights, including access to appeals. In parallel, the Office of the Prime Minister’s Department of Refugees advanced consultations on the draft National Refugee Policy. By December, stakeholder inputs had been consolidated, and revisions were underway to align the policy with the Regulatory Impact Assessment, the Refugees Act and its Regulations.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

Stateless persons are sensitized on statelessness and supported to acquire Ugandan citizenship

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned
3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness			
None	Not yet aligned	Broadly aligned	Not yet aligned

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Uganda’s national legal framework remained largely consistent with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The Refugees Act of 2006 and the Refugee Regulations of 2010 incorporate key international protection standards, including the principle of nonrefoulement, access to fair asylum procedures, safeguards against discrimination, freedom of movement, and access to documentation, education, work, and public services.

Uganda’s legal framework remains broadly aligned with the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons to which the country is a signatory. Its legislation aligns with several of the Convention’s safeguards including against childhood statelessness. The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act provide pathways for acquiring nationality by descent or registration, incorporates measures that mitigate the risk of childhood statelessness, and is supported by a functional birth registration system. While these features contribute to preventing statelessness, the absence of formal accession and incomplete legal guarantees leave considerable protection gaps. Uganda has not acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness even after having pledge to do so in the 201 UNHCR therefore continues to advocate for Uganda’s ratification of the 1961 Convention and full incorporation of its safeguards into national law.

There were no statelessness-related legislative reforms in 2025. Progress in addressing in-situ statelessness and advancing durable legal inclusion remained limited throughout 2025. Recognition of Uganda’s nonmigratory stateless communities requires constitutional amendments and administrative reforms within the Ministry of Internal Affairs processes that have stagnated. Despite a 2023 petition to Parliament, supported by UNHCR, the partially debated 2022 Constitutional Amendment Act has not been revisited by the Constitutional Review Commission.

Similarly, pathways to naturalization for long-term refugees saw little advancement. Although the legal framework technically allows naturalization, administrative hurdles and restrictive practices prevented eligible refugees from accessing this option. As a result, no long-term refugees have successfully naturalized, limiting opportunities for durable solutions.

Despite these challenges, UNHCR maintains consistent engagement with the Government of Uganda to ensure that statelessness, legal identity, and naturalization remain active components of national protection dialogue. Community leaders from affected groups continue to advocate for recognition, supported by development partners and NGOs providing research, legal expertise and evidence-based advocacy. While legislative and administrative barriers persist, ongoing engagement by all stakeholders continues to lay important groundwork for future reforms that could strengthen legal identity and durable inclusion for stateless persons and long-term refugees in Uganda.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

By 2025 Refugee communities change their attitudes and contribute to reduced risk of gender-based violence incidents.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services			
Host Community	88.91%	28.00%	88.91%
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	85.19%	97.00%	85.19%
4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	66.07%	73.00%	66.07%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	92.00%	100.00%	97.00%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	87,912

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, the gender-based violence (GBV) sector continued efforts to prevent and respond to GBV across Uganda's refugee hosting regions, despite significant funding constraints. The sector prioritized gender-sensitive approaches, community participation, and strengthened coordination. A total of 5,189 GBV incidents were recorded in the GBVIMS, representing a 26% increase from 2024. Women and girls remained disproportionately affected, accounting for 98% of all survivors.

Awareness raising campaigns reached 505,498 refugees and host community members. Capacity building efforts expanded, with 1,947 partner staff trained on GBV response, and 9,691 women and men trained on GBV prevention and core concepts. Community ownership also grew, with 85,815 individuals participating in settlement level prevention activities. Additionally, 1,618 satisfaction surveys indicated a 97% satisfaction rate with regard to available services.

Strategic partnerships with refugee women-led organizations (RWLOs) strengthened outreach and service accessibility. UNHCR advanced its localization agenda by funding six RWLOs under the Safe from the Start initiative, enhancing the capacity of local and community-based organizations to sustain GBV prevention investments. Capacity building workshops on the SASA! Together methodology was conducted for 191 staff across operational locations, strengthening facilitation skills and promoting community-driven behavioral change. UNHCR also trained 36 sector leads and partner staff from livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and health on data driven GBV risk mitigation, leading to revisions of sector action plans and stronger mainstreaming of GBV considerations.

As a result, 85% of forcibly displaced people and 89% of host community members knew where to access GBV services. The 26% rise in incidents was linked to the influxes from the DRC (48%) and South Sudan

(43%). Intimate partner violence was most prevalent at 72%, followed by psychological abuse (37%), physical assault (22%), rape (21%) and denial of resources (17%). Staffing shortages, particularly the low number of case workers, hindered timely support. The caseworker ratio stood at 1:120, double the global standard of 1:60. To address these challenges, the sector strengthened coordination platforms to improve service mapping, referral pathways, and accountability mechanisms.

Community structures, including women's groups, youth networks and male engagement forums, played an essential role in early reporting, dissemination of messaging amongst communities and supporting survivors to access services safely. GBV partners also expanded safe spaces and mobile outreach to reach remote settlements. These initiatives helped reinforce a survivor-centered approach and improved consistency of services across locations. Continued investment remains crucial to reducing caseworker workloads, expanding psychosocial support and strengthening long-term community systems for GBV prevention and response.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

Children are protected from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation and are able to develop positively in a nurturing environment

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	74.70%	75.00%	63.16%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27.19%	30.00%	54.82%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.54%	85.00%	25.73%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	113,991

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

By December 2025, children represented 52% (1,020,498) of the refugee population, with 112,886 identified as having specific protection needs. Out of the annual target of 37,500, Best interest procedures were initiated for 23,684 children at heightened risk, achieving 63%, while 12,895 cases were closed. However, funding cuts significantly affected child protection programming, limiting support to 89,202 children with specific needs and 55,153 requiring case management. Staff shortages increased the case workers to child case ratios to 1:275, far above the global standard of 1:25, undermining service quality as well as the achievements of the annual target set.

Out of the annual target of 271,000, child protection community-based activities reached 148,574 children aged 5–17 through structured play, recreational support and psychosocial first aid, representing 55% achievement of the annual target. Additionally, 48,891 adolescents benefited from empowerment programmes, including life skills, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), peaceful coexistence, and sports for protection, achieving 74% of annual targets. Community structures remained active, with 1,113 parasocial workers engaged, while 27,396 caregivers completed positive parenting sessions and 913 were trained on child protection, helping to strengthen the overall community led protective environment.

With an annual target of 6,200, a total of 1,595 unaccompanied children were placed in appropriate care, representing 26% of the annual target, while 211 were reunified with their families. Progress was slowed down by funding gaps, high caseloads and reduced foster care willingness due to economic pressures. Older adolescents received support through supervised independent living arrangements where family-based care was not feasible.

Throughout 2025, UNHCR strengthened coordination with UNICEF, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) to harmonize child protection standards, improve national systems and enhance monitoring and evaluation. Collaboration expanded to IOM and ILO on child labour and trafficking issues, while the capacity of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) to integrate refugee women and children into national systems was reinforced through targeted support and advocacy efforts.

MGLSD advanced national protection systems through PROSPECTS 2.0, completing a national assessment on integrating child protection and GBV into refugee response plans. The Ministry finalized national guidelines for GBV and child protection shelters, and rolled out key information systems including SAUTI 116, the National Gender Based Violence Database (NGBVD), Child Wellbeing Management Information System (CWMIS) and the e-directory across PROSPECTS districts. Capacity building improved frontline case management and strengthened referral pathways.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Refugees and asylum seekers live in safety and have access to legal remedies

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52,692

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

During 2025, UNHCR and partners delivered essential legal assistance to 199,046 refugees and asylum-seekers (105,930 females and 93,116 males) including detention monitoring, legal counselling, mobile court sessions and legal representation. However, limited resources significantly constrained access to justice, leading to the de-prioritization of several critical activities. These gaps were compounded by the Government of Uganda's continued suspension of admission and registration for asylum-seekers from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. As a result, many new arrivals lacked documentation required for lawful stay and were subsequently arrested for irregular entry or presence. Joint incident reports from the We.Link helpline (formerly the Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism - FRRM) and partners indicated that around 253 individuals were held in a detention facility outside Kampala. UNHCR and OPM followed up 18 immigration related cases and intervened on behalf of 114 asylum-seekers whose right to seek asylum had been initially denied.

Despite these challenges, substantial progress was made toward improving safety, legal protection and

access to remedies. Settlement level protection systems were reinforced through regular protection monitoring, active community feedback mechanisms and timely incident response. Refugees benefited from legal aid services, strengthened police collaboration and mobile court sessions that reached remote areas. Civil registration also improved, with continued issuance of birth certificates reducing risks of statelessness.

UNHCR played a coordinating role by guiding protection interventions, supporting community-based protection structures and conducting awareness sessions on rights and legal pathways. Capacity building for police, judiciary actors and settlement authorities enhanced understanding of refugee protection standards and improved service delivery. Survivors of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) and individuals at heightened risk received psychosocial support, safe shelter and referrals to specialized services. Peaceful coexistence initiatives such as community dialogues and mediation forums helped foster safer and more cohesive settlement environments.

Key stakeholders made vital contributions, with OPM leading refugee management and policy implementation, police and security agencies strengthening settlement security and crime response, legal aid partners provided counselling, mediation and representation, NIRA improving civil documentation processes and district authorities supported child protection and community safety. Community structures, particularly refugee welfare councils, played a central role in identifying risks and referring cases for timely action. Overall, the protection environment in Uganda remained generally stable, enabling improved access to justice and stronger protection mechanisms for refugees and asylum-seekers across the country.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

All women, men, boys and girls of concern, including those of diverse backgrounds, are able to enjoy rights and play a central role in activities and decisions that affect them, and co-exist peacefully with neighbouring communities.

Persons with specific needs (PSNs) have timely access to appropriate services and participate in community activities and decision-making on an equal basis with others

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	50.00%	46.00%	39.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15,603
07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40,609
07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	719,630

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, while the number of suicide-related protection incidents reported across Uganda's refugee settlements reduced by 36% to 179 cases, compared to 279 incidents in 2024, this issue remained a serious concern. The highest number of incidents were recorded in settlements hosting South Sudanese refugees. Palabek Settlement registered an increased number of incidents (26 in 2025, compared to 19 in 2024), while Palorinya reported a sharp decrease (18 incidents in 2025, compared to 50 in 2024). Bidibidi remained stable at 40 incidents. Settlements hosting Congolese refugees also reported notable figures, including Kyaka II Settlement (18 incidents in 2025, compared to 23 in 2024) and Rwamwanja Settlement (17 cases in 2025, compared to 46 in 2024). These patterns highlight the persistent mental health and psychosocial needs within refugee communities and reinforce the importance of strengthened MHPSS interventions.

To address these needs, UNHCR conducted MHPSS Minimum Standards training in Kampala, comprising a one-day orientation workshop which brought together 13 key stakeholders including programme managers, agency heads and development partners. This was followed by a three-day technical workshop for 23 staff, including programme leads, M&E managers, and MHPSS technical teams. In Mbarara, 37 participants attended the first day of the training, with 23 completing the full programme.

Refugees continued to rely on the We.Link helpline (formerly FRRM) for safe feedback and support. In 2025, the helpline received 290,777 calls, representing a 20% increase from 2024, including 45,477 individual queries and 23,537 follow-ups. Women comprised 51% of all callers. Of all queries, 68% were resolved directly at the helpline using improved FAQs and stronger partner coordination, helping mitigate staffing gaps and enabling staff to prioritize complex protection referrals. Only 32% required referral to UNHCR or partners. Nakivale Settlement recorded the highest number of new queries, while notable improvements were observed in Bidibidi Settlement and Rhino Camp following targeted awareness campaigns.

Key components of the upgraded We.Link system were rolled out, including rebranding and expanded services through protection desks, community structures, contact forms, a help page, WhatsApp and SMS. Integration of the mobile app, contact form and WhatsApp chatbot faced technical delays in 2025. However, these are planned for implementation in 2026. Thousands of new and refurbished awareness materials — posters, banners, wristbands, billboards, and vests — were produced in multiple refugee languages to strengthen visibility and use of complaints and feedback mechanisms. In 2025, three Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) sessions and two District Engagement Forum (DEF) sessions were held, reinforcing refugee participation in national decision making. Additionally, 32 RLOs received small grants totaling USD 239,439.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

By 2025, refugee and host communities access an environment where natural resources are managed through sustainable settlement land use plans

By 2025, refugee and host communities adopt and use affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.

Comprehensive settlement planning to ensure a conducive environment and access to sustainable natural resources and ecosystem services for socioeconomic transformation and resilience in all refugee settlements and hosting communities.

Refugee and host community populations have improved well-being and functioning including very vulnerable people.

Refugees have greater dignity of choice in meeting needs through provision of domestic items and monetization of NFIs

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	82.12%	100.00%	92.00%
8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	44.46%	29.00%	43.22%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	135,476
08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	135,444
08.3.1 Number of people supported with improved cooking options	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14,687

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, UNHCR assisted 135,476 newly arrived refugees (60,674 households) through a combination of in-kind support and cash transfers delivered via mobile money, disbursing a total of USD 5.4 million. Immediate distribution of essential items ensured urgent needs were met on arrival, while cash enabled households to prioritize expenditures once registration and mobile money enrolment were completed.

To uphold dignity and hygiene standards, households received sleeping mats, blankets, basins, jerry cans, soap, sanitary pads and women's underwear in line with UNHCR's entitlement scale. Due to funding cuts, transfer values were revised twice, with the average cash transfer for a family of three declining from USD 100 to USD 60 by yearend and the level of in-kind support increased to compensate for this reduction. While cash remains the preferred modality, adjusting the mix ensured all new arrivals were supported, reduced slow-moving stock and allowed resources to be redirected to underfunded sectors.

The results of post-distribution monitoring demonstrated an 87% satisfaction rate amongst refugees who valued cash for flexibility but also cited insufficient amounts to meet shelter and basic household needs, as most cash was spent on food.

Cash assistance proved particularly effective during the influx of new arrivals from the DRC during the first quarter of the year. Over a period of eight weeks, 18,370 transfers reached 30,519 individuals, totaling USD 1.8 million. Cash enabled faster delivery compared to full in-kind responses, while also reducing time spent by new arrivals in reception centres, and lowering health, protection and operational risks. A cost-benefit analysis is planned for 2026.

From June onwards, UNHCR distributed one basic mobile phone per household, reaching 11,000 families. This improved access to mobile money, communication, and engagement with UNHCR and partners. Longer-term partnerships with mobile operators are being explored to reduce costs and expand choice. Providing phones, mobile money accounts and digital literacy supports early financial inclusion and strengthens refugees' familiarity with digital tools. Targeted menstrual hygiene management support

was provided to school-aged girls, while donated clothing and shoes were distributed across settlements, helping to mitigate the impact of reduced assistance.

Progress in clean cooking expanded significantly. A total of 230,001 households received Lorena or Jiko Matawi stoves across major settlements, reducing firewood use, household fuel costs and time spent collecting firewood — benefits particularly felt by women and children. Communities reported faster cooking times, reduced smoke and improved indoor environments, with many households adopting the improved stoves as their primary option.

At institutional level, five schools transitioned to energy-efficient institutional cookstoves, cutting firewood costs, improving kitchen safety and reducing pressure on nearby forests.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

Improved access to adequate preventive, promotive and curative services for communicable and non communicable diseases.

Improved Sexual Reproductive Health services, HIV/Tuberculosis (TB) prevention, care, treatment services

Reduced Global Acute Malnutrition, Anaemia & Stunting

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	98.10%	98.00%	96.71%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97.46%	100.00%	97.47%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
10.1.1 Number of individual consultations in UNHCR supported health care services	
Host Community	459,132
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,352,309
10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services	
Host Community	11,009
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	134,753

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, UNHCR strengthened access to health and nutrition services across refugee-hosting districts through its implementing partners. A total of 1,766 health workers and 2,600 village health teams (VHTs) were supported, complemented by an additional 117 health workers from partners and 623 deployed by district local governments. UNHCR also provided buffer medicines and medical supplies to complement deliveries by National Medical Stores.

Access to primary health care was improved for new arrivals, with 136,935 individuals screened at transit and reception centres. Among 23,536 children aged under five years screened for malnutrition, 871 were treated for severe acute malnutrition and 2,437 for moderate acute malnutrition. Measles vaccination reached 38,969 children, achieving 96.7% coverage, while polio and DPT3 coverage stood at 91.7% and 90.6% respectively.

Overall, 1.8 million outpatient consultations were recorded (1.35 million refugees and 459,132 nationals), reduced from 2.1 million in 2024. Leading causes of morbidity included malaria (20%), upper respiratory tract infection URTI (13%), gastric ulcers (7%), skin diseases (6%), and lower respiratory tract infection (LRTI) (5%). Mental health needs continued to rise, with 72,144 MHPSS consultations conducted in 2025 compared to 45,602 in 2024, largely linked to epilepsy and seizures (50%), post-traumatic stress disorder (7%), depression (7%) and bipolar disorders (5%). VHTs delivered 77,585 integrated community case management (iCCM) consultations, representing a reduction of almost 50% compared to 2024.

Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV services also improved. A total of 65,880 women attended first antenatal care (ANC) visits, while facility deliveries increased to 58,599 in 2025 compared to 52,852 in 2024, with 97% attended by skilled personnel. Postnatal care reached 55,011 mother baby pairs. Family planning uptake was significant, with 62,194 new injectable clients, 32,512 implant users and additional uptake of IUDs and oral contraceptives. Health facilities managed 642 SGBV cases reported within 72 hours, with 533 receiving PEP, 417 receiving emergency contraception and 617 treated for STIs.

HIV services reached 219,725 individuals who were tested, with 1,011 positive cases identified. ART coverage reached 19,118 clients with a 61% retention rate and 94% viral load suppression. TB services identified 2,337 cases, with a 92% treatment success rate.

Nutrition indicators deteriorated as Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rose from 5.4% in 2024 to 7.8% in 2025, driven by reduced Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) service coverage, food assistance cuts, poor Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and increased morbidity. Child anaemia increased to 42.5%, while minimum dietary diversity reduced to 14%. Across health facilities, 9,700 children were treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), 12,700 children were treated for MAM, while 6,608 women were treated for malnutrition.

11. Outcome Area: Education

Inclusive, equitable and quality education at all levels for all refugee and host communities

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2.14%	3.00%	2.24%
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	32.53%	35.00%	30.74%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	608,212

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, UNHCR contributed to improved refugee education outcomes by prioritizing long term integration into national systems, supporting government leadership and promoting enrolment. UNHCR also strengthened Education Management Integration System (EMIS) integration for refugee data, advocated for transitioning community schools into government management and leveraged development resources. Despite limited financing, UNHCR sustained support to teachers' recurrent costs, provided scholarships for orphans and children with special needs, and supplied teaching and learning materials to support classroom delivery.

However, challenges prevailed. Integration of refugees into Uganda's public education system remained below standard, with only 31% of refugee learners accessing public schools (49% at primary level and 2% at secondary). During 2025, refugees and host community learners were enrolled in 331 settlements-based schools, of which 41% (135) were government aided, 28% (92) were supported by humanitarian partners, and 31% (104) privately operated.

In 2025, growth in the school age refugee population did not translate into improved access. Enrolment stagnated or declined across most levels. Overall Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for refugees dropped from 51% in 2024 to 47% in 2025, leaving a substantial number of children not in education, employment or training (NEET). Pre-primary GER remained at 34%, while primary GER fell from 88% to 80% and there was a slight increase in secondary GER from 9% to 10%. Only 2.2% (6,271) of refugees accessed tertiary education. Refugee secondary enrolment remained far below the national average of over 25%, while primary enrolment was below the near universal national rate of over 99%.

Gender disparities persisted, with all students enrolled at primary level comprising 47% girls versus 53% boys. and 37% girls versus 63% boys at secondary level. Transition rates remain low despite strong examination performance, largely due to high costs and limited post primary opportunities.

While national examination results showed improved pass rates from 83% to 91% in primary, 84% to 99.7% in lower secondary and above 80% in upper secondary, learning outcomes remain poor. The 2023 National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) assessment revealed low literacy and numeracy among learners in schools hosting refugees. In P.3, numeracy proficiency stood at 45.4% (boys 52.6%, girls 36.3%) against a 57.5% national average, while literacy was 29.6% (boys 33.5%, girls 24.6%) compared to 53.9% nationally. For P.6, numeracy reached 42.9% (boys 52.7%, girls 29.5%) versus 58% nationally, while literacy was only 19.5%, far below national achievements.

Achievement rates were further affected by the influx of Sudanese new arrivals whose education background poses integration challenges, including language differences (Arabic vs English), lack of certification of prior learning, cultural and religious barriers, and the high cost of schooling.

12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Satisfactory and dignified conditions of sanitation and hygiene for refugee and host communities

Water services are integrated in national structures

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95.00%	100.00%	94.60%
12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	86.00%	90.00%	86.10%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
12.1.1 Number of people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,216,967

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, the WASH sector prioritized lifesaving service delivery for new arrivals while advancing the Government's transition agenda to integrate refugee water systems into national utility management. Although the sector made meaningful progress, persistent funding constraints limited-service delivery levels and affected operational continuity across several settlements. One key milestone was the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Northern Umbrella for Water and Sanitation – a regional public water utility – establishing a structured framework for transitioning refugee-hosting water systems to utility-led management.

By the end of 2025, over 10% of all systems serving refugees—equivalent to 24 motorized schemes—were under the direct management of national utilities. The sector also launched the second Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan 2026-2030 (WESRRP II), aligned with the fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) and SDG 6, to further embed refugee-host WASH integration into national systems.

Due to severe funding shortfalls, the annual WASH Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey could not be conducted in 2025, making it impossible for the sector to reliably measure qualitative indicators at the end of 2025. In its absence, reporting relied, partly, on the Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA) conducted in July 2025 and on the proportion of the population accessing at least the basic water service threshold of 7 litres of safe water per person per day (lpd). The FSNA reported that 94.6% of the refugees have access to protected water sources, including piped tap stands, hand pumps, water kiosks, protected springs, bottled water and tanker deliveries. All refugee populations achieved the basic water service threshold of 7 lpd, receiving an average of 9 lpd.. These gains were made possible through the operation and maintenance of 230 motorized water systems, 1,147 hand pumps and 10 protected springs. Notably, 77% of water from motorized systems was pumped using solar and hydro power, contributing to energy efficiency.

Reduced funding also led to reduced supply and a decline in dependence on diesel fuel—from 13.3% in 2024 to 11% in 2025—and a reduction in water trucking from 0.7% to 0.5% of total water supplied. Sector partners drilled and solarized seven new boreholes, installed six new water reservoirs, equipped five boreholes with hand pumps and extended 91 km of pipeline to expand service coverage.

Assessment of access to safe household toilets was limited due to the absence of the KAP survey. Available data indicate that 86.1% of households used their own latrine, up from 71% in 2024. Household latrine construction declined sharply—from 11,738 units in 2024 to fewer than 1,000 in 2025—owing to funding challenges. The FSNA report indicated that 86.1% of the population have access to a safe household latrine (shared or owned).

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

Refugee and host communities have improved short and medium-term self-reliance measures, actively participate in the local economy through food production and income generation for self-sustenance.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	61.53%	65.00%	61.53%
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5.77%	11.50%	5.77%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,104

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), Uganda's refugee economic inclusion agenda, and the Government's 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledge to create 300,000 economic opportunities for refugees and host communities, UNHCR's livelihoods and economic inclusion strategy in Uganda in 2025 focused on advocacy, coordination and strengthened partnerships. This marks a shift away from direct implementation toward reinforcing an enabling environment that supports sustainable livelihood initiatives by the government, development partners, the private sector and NGOs.

The 2025 Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA) showed that 74.1% of refugees had access to arable land—an improvement from 68% in 2024. This progress reflects collaboration between the Government of Uganda, UNHCR and partners to secure land for food production and income generation. Most of the food produced, however, was consumed at the household level rather than sold, limiting

agricultural contributions to self-employment income.

Access to financial services remains mixed. While 62% of refugee households held mobile money or bank accounts, over 51% relied on informal credit sources such as savings groups, while less than 1% accessed formal credit. Household savings declined from 39.8% in 2024 to 34.9% in 2025, with only 25% of households in West Nile reporting any savings due to increased financial pressures. These trends underscore the need for strong policy reforms, derisking mechanisms, and blended finance programmes to encourage financial service providers to expand into refugee-hosting areas.

Private sector engagement yielded concrete results. In partnership with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, 18 energy companies expanded operations into settlements, employing refugees as agents and distributors and connecting approximately 3,000 refugees to new markets.

Skills development initiatives also advanced economic inclusion. Through the UNHCR–Toyota Tsusho–CFAO Mobility partnership, 32 refugee youth (24 males and eight females) from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo received training in trades including general mechanics, bodywork and paint. An additional 72 Sudanese youth (58 males and 14 females) were trained in agriculture, auto mechanics, carpentry and ICT, and were provided with start-up kits to support self-employment. UNHCR and its partners continued to offer enterprise development support to these graduates.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

Refugees are supported to return voluntarily to their countries of origin in safety and with dignity.

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,904

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Voluntary repatriation to Burundi continued in 2025 despite regional complexities, with 331 households (1,177 individuals) assisted to return, bringing the cumulative total to 4,527 households (15,893 individuals). However, returns decreased by 48 per cent compared to 2024, when 2,248 individuals were repatriated. The decline is primarily attributed to the low interest in voluntary return to Burundi as well as suspension of movements during the first quarter of 2025 following the Marburg virus outbreak, with operations resuming in April 2025.

To address low return rates, cost-efficient approaches were adopted including livestreamed information sessions with authorities in Burundi and partners on education, livelihoods, land and property rights to support informed decision-making. Despite these efforts, interest in voluntary repatriation remained low, driven by persistent protection concerns such as fear of renewed insecurity, limited reintegration and limited livelihood opportunities, and unresolved land and property issues.

In 2025, an intention-to-return survey covering 4,084 households was conducted, with results indicating that 98.9% of respondents were not willing to return to Burundi within the next 12 months, with only 0.9% undecided and 0.2% willing to return. Key barriers cited included insecurity, fear of renewed conflict and the absence of a political solution. The few respondents willing to return referred to improved security conditions, livelihood prospects and family reunification as motivating factors. Broader concerns were also raised regarding safety, access to basic services and land issues. Specific groups, including persons with specific needs, women, and youth, highlighted additional challenges such as disability-related barriers,

limited healthcare access, and gaps in education and employment opportunities.

While self-organized return was largely rejected, 92% of respondents expressed willingness to participate in a facilitated return process. Notably, 83% reported lacking sufficient information to make an informed decision, particularly regarding the security situation and available assistance upon return. Resettlement emerged as the preferred durable solution (74%), followed by local integration (16%) and complementary pathways (9%), with only 1% indicating a preference for return to Burundi.

In Burundi, national and local authorities continued to collaborate with UNHCR in monitoring conditions, supporting community-level reintegration initiatives and facilitating access to civil documentation for returnees. These efforts, alongside regional dialogue frameworks, contributed to reinforcing confidence in the return process and promoting the safety and dignity of those who opted to repatriate.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Vulnerable or at risk refugees benefit from larger opportunities for resettlement while complementary pathways are sought for talented refugees and advocacy for stateless persons.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,855	3,500	738

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, UNHCR sustained resettlement delivery despite significant operational constraints, including reduced staffing and shrinking global resettlement quotas. Protection needs across the refugee population became more complex, with an increasing share of cases involving acute vulnerabilities. Within this difficult environment, UNHCR strengthened strategic prioritization, case triage and pipeline management to safeguard the integrity of the resettlement process and ensure that limited opportunities were directed to the most at-risk refugees in line with country specific criteria. As a result, 939 refugees were resettled in 2025, demonstrating continued delivery and high-quality case selection despite reduced capacity.

Complementary pathways continued to expand as an essential durable solution, targeting refugees whose protection needs, skills or educational aspirations aligned with available third country admission channels. Building on systems strengthening efforts initiated in 2024, UNHCR advanced the shift toward more decentralized and sustainable models, engaging more actively with private sector actors, education institutions and pathway providers. Community-based outreach mechanisms and self-access tools were

further integrated, enhancing refugee participation, transparency and informed decision-making.

Innovation in labour mobility remained a key achievement. The “train-to-hire” model codesigned with partners linked vocational training directly to employer demand, demonstrating how protection objectives can align with market needs. This approach resulted in tangible labour placements in Italy and within the region, reinforcing the viability of market-based pathways as a credible and durable solution.

Overall, 2,860 refugees departed through complementary pathways in 2025, highlighting their growing importance within the broader solutions landscape and their potential to complement traditional resettlement options. Although structural barriers such as administrative requirements, financial limitations and documentation challenges persist, complementary pathways continued to emerge as scalable, cost-effective and protection-driven avenues for refugee mobility.

Together, resettlement and complementary pathways represent measurable progress toward diversified, sustainable and protection-focused third-country solutions for refugees, even within a highly constrained operational and global environment.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

Coordination with Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), District Local Government and Partners strengthened

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.24%	1.00%	0.26%
16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	19.47%	20.00%	20.45%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Limited

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Progress in coordination with OPM, District Local Governments and partners continued during the reporting period, strengthening the environment for local integration and area-based solutions. Joint planning, district-level coordination platforms and collaborative service delivery contributed to more effective national systems serving both refugees and host communities.

Access to secure land and housing tenure improved due to stronger engagement with district authorities on settlement demarcation and documentation. Local governments increasingly formalized land use arrangements, providing greater predictability for households investing in shelter, agriculture and

livelihoods. In urban areas, partners supported refugees to formalize tenancy agreements, further enhancing security of tenure.

Refugee inclusion in national social protection systems expanded, with increased access to government programmes in health, education, civil registration and social assistance. Alignment between development partners, ministries and district leadership helped ensure refugee-hosting districts benefit from broader national reforms.

Ongoing efforts focused on integrating protection services into government structures, shifting from settlement-based approaches toward stronger community-based protection mechanisms. This included gradual incorporation of protection case management, referral pathways, and child protection and SGBV services into district systems to strengthen sustainability and reduce parallel service structures.

UNHCR provided technical support to OPM and district authorities, promoting inclusion in national planning frameworks, and addressing barriers related to documentation, mobility and access to services. Development partners strengthened delivery systems and district infrastructure, while local governments facilitated integrated service delivery and community participation. Protection and livelihoods partners supported access to documentation and essential services, helping to advance local integration prospects. Overall, these incremental but steady gains demonstrate positive momentum toward achieving sustainable local integration outcomes for refugees.

Other Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Baseline	Target(2025)	Actual(2025)
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12.12%	5.00%	12.12%
9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70.66%	70.00%	70.66%

Other Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Actual (2025)
09.1.1 Number of people who received shelter and housing assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	351,826

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

During registration, OPM and UNHCR applied age, gender and diversity (AGD) principles to ensure interviews were safe, respectful and confidential. Interviewers considered age, gender and cultural sensitivities, and provided counselling in languages understood by applicants. Individuals could choose the gender of their interviewer or interpreter and request individual interviews when necessary.

A People with Specific Needs (PSN) verification exercise resulted in the number of PSNs increasing by 35.4% to 113,627 individuals compared to pre-verification figures, with serious medical conditions (29%) and disabilities (26%) comprising the largest categories identified. In 2025, 98% of GBV survivors reporting incidents were female. Despite limited resources, the GBV Sub-Sector reached 85,815 individuals through GBV prevention and awareness activities and disseminated information, educational and communication (IEC) materials to 34% of the population. Service quality remained strong, with a 97% satisfaction rate reported from 3,182 surveys.

No major protection incidents involving refugees with LGBTQI profiles were recorded. However, UNHCR

supported the return of three individuals refouled from Zambia due to their profiles, who were then referred to a national NGO for comprehensive protection services.

The interagency helpline strengthened communication across refugee responses, receiving 290,777 calls, handling 45,477 individual queries and managing 23,537 follow-up cases. Operating seven days a week, the helpline was staffed by 29 agents who speak 38 languages.

UNHCR reaffirmed its commitment to disability inclusion, supporting initiatives aligned with the 2025 Global Disability Summit themes, including providing a small grant to a disability organization producing assistive walking devices. Cash assistance was expanded to all eight settlements receiving new arrivals.

Section 3: Resources

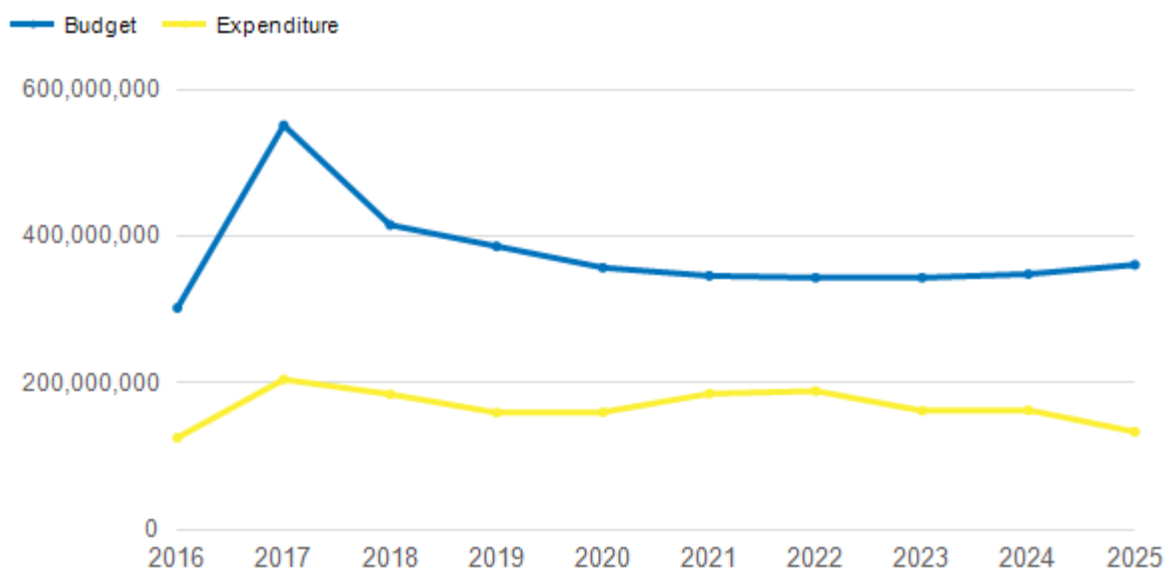
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

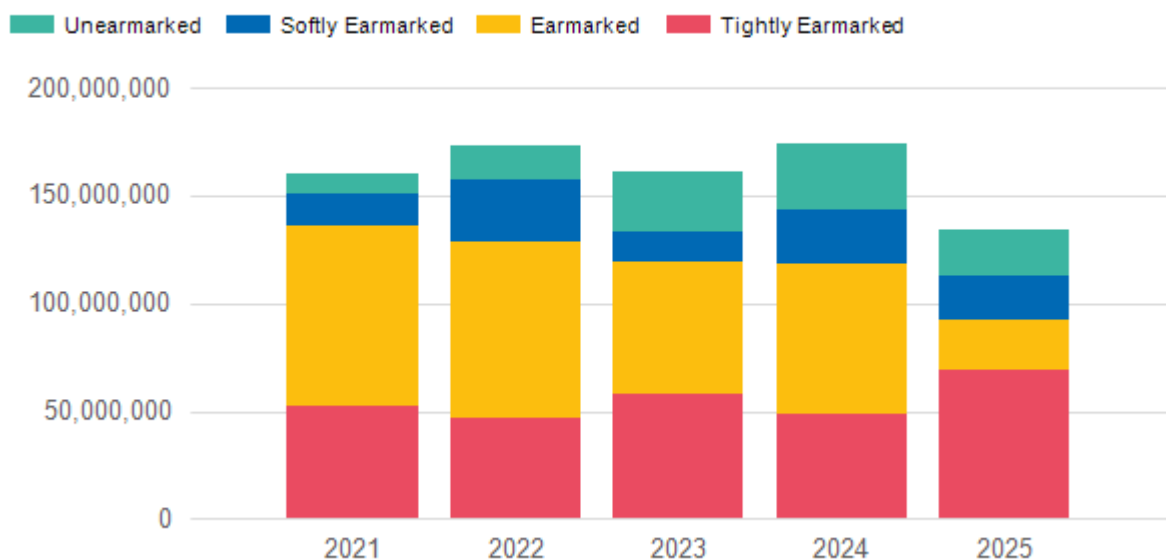
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	114,699,368	41,340,698	36.04%	41,340,698	100.00%
IA2: Respond	206,297,105	85,146,848	41.27%	85,039,971	99.87%
IA3: Empower	27,209,092	5,139,460	18.89%	5,139,460	100.00%
IA4: Solve	12,746,878	1,958,016	15.36%	1,944,062	99.29%
All Impact Areas		304,016			
Total	360,952,443	133,889,037	37.09%	133,464,191	99.68%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	43,644,943	7,587,676	17.39%	7,587,676	100.00%
OA2: Status	4,353,390	223,153	5.13%	223,153	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	531,828	75,000	14.10%	61,046	81.39%
OA4: GBV	13,833,114	2,604,567	18.83%	2,415,550	92.74%
OA5: Children	11,225,152	2,363,925	21.06%	2,363,925	100.00%
OA6: Justice	2,459,327	1,245,628	50.65%	1,245,628	100.00%
OA7: Community	23,076,416	4,382,197	18.99%	4,382,197	100.00%
OA8: Wellbeing	63,621,637	33,265,674	52.29%	33,265,674	100.00%
OA10: Health	50,294,600	25,141,271	49.99%	25,034,394	99.57%
OA11: Education	51,499,287	18,256,767	35.45%	18,256,767	100.00%
OA12: WASH	21,669,973	4,885,220	22.54%	4,885,220	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	12,119,130	1,991,253	16.43%	1,991,253	100.00%
OA14: Return	4,710,787	1,289,481	27.37%	1,289,481	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	7,504,263	593,534	7.91%	593,534	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	12,154,981	10,957,491	90.15%	10,957,491	100.00%
EA18: Support	38,253,612	18,911,200	49.44%	18,911,200	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		115,000			
Total	360,952,443	133,889,037	37.09%	133,464,191	99.68%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

In 2025, UNHCR’s operational presence in Uganda evolved significantly in response to continued largescale displacement and increasingly complex humanitarian needs. Uganda remained Africa’s largest refugee-hosting country, sheltering 1.77 million refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. This sustained influx required reinforced field presence across the 13 refugee hosting districts, expanded multisectoral programming and adaptive operational modalities to meet rapidly changing needs.

UNHCR continued to coordinate one of the world’s largest refugee responses through the Uganda Country

Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP), bringing together more than 100 humanitarian and development partners. Operational coverage remained robust across protection, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education, shelter, energy and livelihoods. As climate-related shocks, floods, droughts, and environmental degradation intensified across settlements, UNHCR expanded climate resilience initiatives, ecosystem restoration and natural resource management interventions. Collaboration with the Government of Uganda was further strengthened to advance refugee inclusion within national systems, particularly in education, health and local governance, consistent with Uganda's progressive asylum policy.

Severe funding constraints remained a key factor shaping operational decision-making. Having received a little more than half of its financial requirements in 2025, UNHCR was obliged to prioritize lifesaving and critical protection activities. Resource allocation was guided by the demographic profile of the refugee population, comprising over 80% women and children, as well as by high arrival rates, at times exceeding 450 individuals per day. Together with WFP, UNHCR implemented strengthened, data-driven targeting models to manage significant reductions in food assistance, ensuring that the most food-insecure households continued to receive support.

Consequently, the operational focus centered on emergency reception, registration, child protection, GBV prevention and response, primary health care and emergency shelter. Meanwhile, interventions in livelihoods, self-reliance and certain -community-based services were scaled back to maintain- continuity of critical aid. The 2025 UCRRP hyper-prioritisation exercise provided further strategic direction, ensuring available resources were used coherently across all response partners.

The operation continued to advance the localization agenda by deliberately prioritizing partnerships with local actors, with 29 of the 43 partnership agreements established during the period signed with local organizations. Through these arrangements, local partners received 24 per cent of the total operational budget, reflecting a sustained commitment to strengthening national and community-based capacities and ensuring more locally led, responsive, and contextually appropriate programme delivery.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

During 2025, UNHCR drew several key lessons from its annual review, strategic reflection exercises, and analyses of assessment and evaluation data. A major insight was the need for stronger anticipatory planning amid increasingly unpredictable refugee arrivals and climate-related shocks. Multisectoral assessments revealed gaps in emergency preparedness, especially in reception capacity, protection screening and rapid deployment of frontline staff. Evaluations further stressed the importance of improved early warning systems and scenario-based planning to enable faster, coordinated responses.

Another lesson learned was the need for more intentional prioritisation. Resource reviews showed that funding shortfalls disproportionately affected non-lifesaving sectors, limiting community-based and self-reliance initiatives. This highlighted the need for a clearer, evidence-driven prioritisation model balancing urgent protection needs with long-term resilience. Joint analysis with partners, especially on food assistance targeting, demonstrated the value of harmonised data systems, shared vulnerability criteria and stronger accountability to affected populations.

Protection trend analysis also showed rising vulnerabilities among women, children and persons with specific needs, calling for more integrated approaches to GBV prevention, child protection, mental health and disability inclusion. Social cohesion assessments underscored the importance of expanding host community support and improving natural resource management to mitigate tensions heightened by climate pressures.

These lessons will guide the new multi-year strategy. UNHCR will embed anticipatory and risk-informed planning into programme design, including contingency budgeting and flexible deployment. Data systems will be further integrated across sectors to support real-time decision-making. Prioritization frameworks will be refined to ensure transparent, evidence-based resource allocation aligned with protection risks and resilience goals. UNHCR will also scale up localization, strengthen collaboration with district authorities, and deepen the participation of refugees and host communities in planning and feedback. Together, these measures aim to deliver a more agile, accountable, and sustainable response in the next strategy cycle.



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