



**The role of non-state actors in refugee Social  
Protection:**

**A case of South Sudanese women in Kiryandongo  
Refugee settlement, Uganda**

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## List of Acronyms

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SRS	Self-Reliance Strategy
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
LC	Local Council
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
RMF	Real Medicine Foundation
IRC	International Rescue Committee
WFP	World Food Program
OUA	Organization of African Unity
UAMs	Unaccompanied Minors
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
UPE	Universal Primary Education
SAGE	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
CARA	Control of Alien Refugee Act
PSNs	Persons with Specific Needs
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
NDP	National Development Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTSD	Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder
US	United States

## **Abstract**

With the current persistent global insecurities and vulnerabilities that are caused by a number of factors ranging from the economic, political and social risks, Social policy has been sought as response to these challenges through its element of social protection. To this, many governments and organisations have sought to provide social protection to vulnerable groups of people in such circumstances. Unfortunately social protection is often confined within the boundaries of states leaving the fate of non-citizens especially refugees in a state of uncertainty despite stipulated rights and protection through International bodies like UN and OAU to host states. As host states do not fully take up their responsibilities, non-state actors are seen to increasingly take on the provision roles. This study focuses on examining the role of non-state actors in providing social protection to South Sudanese women in Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Uganda. Findings indicate success in ensuring access to services like health education and food provisions, hence enabling refugees to live. However the sustainability and accumulation to ensure transformation of women from the social- structural and economic constraints through these services is lacking and this continues to maintain the vulnerability of these women. It is thus evident that there is need to provide services in a more sustainable and accumulative to enable transforming refugee wellbeing.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Being one of the major challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world over, refugee situations require more attention. Although non-state actors have been working with refugees for a notable period of time, there is not much written about their social protection role towards refugee wellbeing In Uganda. Yet looking at the impact of non-state actors in refugee situations is crucial in informing development policies that are directed towards the livelihoods of the refugees since refugee wellbeing is increasingly now dependent on humanitarian non-state actors in many parts of the world, as more countries embark on restrictive policies such as interdiction and re-admission agreements. This study therefore adds to the existing knowledge of refugee studies by highlighting the extent to which non-state social protection can transform refugee wellbeing with a gendered lens into their social protection.

## **Keywords**

Refugees, vulnerability, women, social protection, non-state actors.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

Social policy has become increasingly adopted as response towards global insecurities and vulnerabilities that are caused by a number of factors ranging from the economic, political and social risks with its element of social protection taking over the social policy agendas. Social protection has been defined as the public actions that are undertaken in response to the risks, vulnerabilities and levels of deprivation that are regarded as socially unacceptable in a given society (Barrientos, Hulme 2008:3). Social protection is said to have been spearheaded mainly by the need to avert the risks of poverty and vulnerabilities that resulted from the 1980s and 1990 economic crises around the world thus the argument that the rise of social protection has been fuelled by the globalisation effects of increased vulnerability on weaker participants due to open market policies and economic crises (Rodrik 1997, 2001 as cited in (Barrientos, Hulme 2008:6). However, the continuous and rising levels of conflict in many parts of the world especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are seen to further and constantly increase people's vulnerability and insecurity (Barrientos, Hulme 2008).

Social Protection policies are often confined within national borders and yet with few effective international provisions for non-citizens like the asylum seekers, migrants and refugees (Makhema 2009:4). This leaves queries on the fate of these groups and the latter being seen to rely more on humanitarian agencies although it is argued that refugees' social protection is more recognised by local and international authorities compared to that of migrants (Taran, 2000;Clandestino Project as cited in (Sabates-Wheeler, Feldman 2011:54).

This study journeys around social protection for refugees in Uganda focusing on a case study of South Sudanese women in Kiryandongo refugee settlement. The core argument of the paper is that refugees in Uganda are increasingly becoming part of the country's population as they stay longer and will thus require sustainable solutions that can lead to transformation of their well-being in line with the overall poverty reduction goals in the country for an inclusive development. However, despite government's upper hand in refugee issues, its role seems minimal and non-state actors have taken up the responsibility. However, in addition to the limitations in their scope in terms of operation and financial capabilities, non-state actors are also overwhelmed by the influx of large numbers of refugees who are mostly women and children. The paper thus examines the role played by non-state actors in refugee social protection in Kiryandongo.



## 1.1 Background, relevance and justification of the research

Refugees have been accorded rights by international instruments which among others include the right to asylum and the right to social protection but their legislation and interpretation in host states varies and therefore questioned (Sabates-Wheeler, Feldman 2011:52). This uncertainty has been translated by Weiss to define a refugee as '*a vessel on the open sea, not sailing under any flag*' (Weiss 1954:193).

In Africa there has been a notable shift of events in refugee policy with the 1960s being a period where countries were open to refugees and asylum seekers, a wave that was defined as an 'open door' policy and though there was encampment of refugees as it continues to be in most refugee situations, they were provided with sufficient security, basic needs and countries were willing to take on durable solutions of naturalization and integration. This changed since the 1980s despite a correlated increase in refugee populations, with countries now preferring refugees to either remain in their own countries and flee to 'safer zones' or be repatriated back to their countries after war, with repatriation being the most desired solution (Rutinwa 2002:13). This has been accelerated by Africa's own challenges ranging from internal economic constraints and globalization effects of external influence in democratization and liberalization which have made the continent poor and unstable yet expected to host refugees (Milner, Loescher 2011).

Uganda has been ranked ninth in the world for refugee hosting and third in the region according to UNHCR country representative in Uganda, Ms. Neimah Warsame<sup>1</sup>. Uganda has for long been home to many refugees from her neighbouring countries of Rwanda, Congo, Kenya and Sudan due to constant unrests in her neighbouring countries and her geographical position that puts her almost at the Centre of the continent (Meyer 2006). Uganda started receiving refugees in the 1940s with Polish refugees who were mainly women and children (Lwanga-Lunyiigo, 1998 as cited in (Mulumba, Olema 2009:10). The country has also been a producer of refugees herself beginning with the expulsion of the Asians by President Amin in 1972 and the recent war in Northern Uganda by the LRA that has seen many flee to other countries as asylum seekers and refugees (Mulumba, Olema 2009).

This study focuses on South Sudanese who are one of the largest groups of refugees in the country and also have a longer history with their fleeing to Uganda dating as early as the 1980s fleeing to the northern part of the country (Hunter 2009). The recent civil war that re-emerged in December 2013 in South Sudan has seen a total of 169,648 by April 2015 and 174,795 flee to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/670024-uganda-9th-largest-refugee-host-worldwide.html> Accessed 22-10-2015.

Uganda by 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (UNHCR 2015), with this number expected to rise up to an approximate of 210,000 refugees by December 2015.

One of the main challenges identified by aid agencies is the vulnerability nature of a larger number of this refugee population who are women and children approximated at 87% (UNHCR 2014), a population that requires much attention and social protection. Unfortunately, much of the social protection programming, design and implementation is also said to indicate a gap of a gender-sensitive approach, despite increased awareness of the potential of mainstreaming gender in vulnerability and poverty alleviating programs (Holmes, Jones 2013, Martin 2004). This challenge informs the focus of this study on the role non-state actors have played in provision of social protection to refugee women.

This research is thus informed by the continued need for refugee social protection due to the continuous civil war in South Sudan that has and is still forcing many to flee to Uganda, especially women and children according to UNHCR statistics (UNHCR 2014:40), a population categorized as vulnerable in need of more attention (Lwanga-Ntale, Namuddu et al. 2008:11, Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2002), and yet, the current status of social protection in Uganda does not fully embrace refugees despite their situations being a responsibility of the state. With state social protection proven limited and in some cases unreliable non-state actors working in the refugee community provide much of the services needed assuming some of the state roles.

However there is a) continued reduction in funding for UNHCR and its implementing partners which has led to operation on small budgets in fulfilling the needs of these large numbers of refugees as well as ensuring that the needs of new arrivals will also be catered for, where on average about 100 refugees come into the settlement per day (UNHCR 2014). For instance, total budget required to run activities in 2015 had only received 10% funding by May 2015 (see table 1 below for figures) yet World Food Program (WFP) was also cutting down its food rations which reduced up to 50% since January 2015 (<http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/> accessed 8<sup>th</sup> -05-2015).

**Table 1: 2015 Uganda’s South Sudan Regional Response Plan budget as at 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 (in US Dollars).**

Total Requirements	Total funding level	% requirements funded
\$220,607,768	\$21,495,864	10%

**Source:** UNHCR South Sudan Portal: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/> Accessed on 4-06-2015.

And b) the fact that social protection by NGOs is susceptible to unsustainability as it takes the form of ‘programs’ that have a timeframe mainly

tagged to resources and interests where in case an organization runs out of funds or interests change, then the provision is halted until another partner shows interest. With all this, women often become shock absorbers to mitigate the effects of such situations by ensuring the continuous household survival through their care roles (Elson 2012, Mulumba 2005). And although the situation of refugee women particularly in developing countries may not necessarily be different from that faced by those who are not refugees especially in terms of needs like lack of adequate food, good health, jobs among others, refugee experience is worsened by the trauma, persecution, and the after effects of war that require resettlement and rebuilding their lives, all which tend to have adverse effects on the women and children (Martin 2004:5). It is thus imperative to look at the role that non-state actors have played and its impact on the well-being of women in the settlement.

## **1.2 Research Objective and Questions**

### **1.2.1 Objective of the study**

This research aims to examine the extent to which Social Protection by non-state actors helps mitigate the vulnerability of refugee women

### **1.2.2 Research question**

How has non-state social protection impacted on the wellbeing of refugee women?

#### **Supporting questions**

1. What needs do women consider most pressing regarding their wellbeing and that of their dependents?
2. What role has non-state actors played in improving the wellbeing of the women?
3. In the instance of gaps left, who then is responsible for filling these gaps?

## **1.3 Methodology**

In attempt to find answers to the above questions, the study used a mixed methodology of both qualitative and quantitative data focusing on a case study of South Sudanese women in Kiryandongo refugee settlement. Preference for mixed methods was a result of need to better understand the findings both in narrative and figures (O'Leary 2014), allowing to be both deductive and inductive in this study (O'Leary 2010:128) as well as ensuring that the results attained are neither influenced by a single methodology nor the difference being a result of the character of the methodology, other than a result of underlying factors (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie et al. 2007).

A case study of south Sudanese women was carried out in Kiryandongo refugee settlement a home to an estimated 39,483 refugees where 19.2% are women in the age group of 18-59 years making up nearly 7,845 female individuals as of April 2015<sup>2</sup>. The study area Kiryandongo settlement was particularly chosen for being one of the main hosts for majority of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda as well as its historical records by UNHCR and OPM as a model settlement, one that has been referred to as a success story for SRS (Kaiser 2002).

### **Selecting the sample.**

Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the key informants for in depth interviews and this was driven by need to target respondents with more knowledge on the subject (Gray 2014:217). In this case, refugee women were of choice due to their lived experiences while the local leaders in the community, the settlement commandant, the chairperson Refugee Welfare Council III (RWC III) and NGOs (IRC, TPO, RMF) who are working with women would be in position to give information relevant for the study, and this was achieved as the information required was obtained in detail. With the help of a sample size calculator<sup>3</sup> the sample size was reached at. The total population of refugee women in Kiryandongo approximated at 7,845 by April 2015 was used as the population and using a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 10, a sample size of 95 respondents was reached at. This constituted 77 respondents who were in the survey, and 18 respondents who made up the three Focus Group Discussions (two for women and one for local traditional leaders both men and women) each with 6 members. Key informants named above but not being part of the sample population were selected due to their activities that closely involve women. Thus the total number of respondents was 100.

### **The research methods**

A survey: Using questionnaires with close ended questions, a household survey with the sample of 77 respondents among refugee women was conducted and respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaires. This was carried out to aid in gathering quantitative data on issues that required statistics for example the number of members in households and percentage of people accessing or lacking a given service to make quantitative data analysis possible. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in the annex.

Focus Group Discussions (FDGs): These were used in order to help in stimulating discussions bearing in mind that the study population is one where

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<sup>2</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm> accessed on 20-09-2015.

most are often not outspoken (Scheyvens 2014:169) especially in Africa settings where women tend to be quiet in public gatherings. Three focus groups were organized, two groups consisting of only women one for the Dinkha and the other for the Nuer women which are the two major ethnic groups of the South Sudanese in the settlement. Separation into tribes was only done for the purpose of interpretation. The third group constituted the local / traditional leaders who included the clan leaders. These discussions were guided by a set of semi structured questions a list of them included in the annex.

Semi structured interviews: These interviews were used to enable me gain insightful qualitative information from the respondents and were guided by a set of open ended questions to enable respondents have room to provide detailed information as well as being able to tap information that, was not intended, but useful for the study (O'Leary 2010:195, May 1993:93). A total of 5 interviews with key informants was conducted, with the settlement commandant who is directly a representative of the government/ OPM in the settlement, the chairperson RWC III elected by the Local council leadership among refugees in the settlement, and 3 staff each from one of the NGOs visited that is; TPO Uganda, IRC and RMF which are based and operational in the settlement. These interviews were conducted after the survey data collection and the Focus Group Discussions as a platform for these key persons to respond to the concerns from the group discussions and survey (especially the commandant and the RWC III), and also acquire more information from the service providers on their roles and responsibilities.

Secondary data: As a result of the small sample size that was taken and a comparatively limited time in the fieldwork, the research also utilized secondary data on issues relating to refugees, women, vulnerability and social protection. Much of the secondary data used is from UNHCR reports and updates on the situation of South Sudanese emergence, International documents relating to refugee status, works on gender and vulnerability and reports from other researchers conducted on refugees in Uganda and Kiryandongo in particular and Social Protection to be able to supplement, analyse and triangulate my primary data (Scheyvens 2014:42).

### **Data presentation and Analysis**

Quantitative data from the survey will be further analysed using Microsoft excel to present data numerically as well as correlation of various datasets to explain relationships between given key variables.

Qualitative data has been analysed with reference to the research questions and coming up with themes under which narratives have been made on key findings.

## 1.4 Reflexivity and ethical considerations.

In elaborating on ethical considerations, John Barnes defines what ethical decisions are by arguing that these decisions arise out of moral obligation to do something that is considered right due to set standards and not as a result of competence and convenience in deciding between courses of action (Barnes 1979:16 as cited in (May 1993:41-42). It is thus important while conducting social research to consider the moral obligations as a way of limiting personal changing aspects.

Before embarking on my fieldwork, I sought for consent and my research being one with the refugees, I obtained a letter of introduction from the Commissioner at the main Department of Refugees which I had to present to the settlement commandant to be allowed to interact with the study population. And then the settlement commandant introduced me to the Refugee chairperson for welfare (RWC III whom I worked with for coordination of the rest of the research. Following the right protocol in acquiring consent to do the research enabled easy mobilization for all respondents as well as creating a conducive atmosphere for both I and the respondents and it helped me overcome issues of resentment and language barrier. Additionally, as it is with most research studies, respondents are fond of expecting something in return for their participation and time (Laws et al. 2003:6). This was the same during this study but having presented myself as a student reduced their expectations.

(Scheyvens 2014:149) recognises the fact that it is often unavoidable to encounter power relations while conducting research whether one likes it or not and that these relations are always in favour of the researchers (Scheyvens 2014:151). This was evident in my field study with respondents at local levels during household survey and focus group discussions for example on several occasions during the household survey, women even those older than me would offer me a seat as they opted to sit on the floor or stand. But my constant decline to these special treatments helped in increasing their cooperation. Views of the respondents were also given priority for example in determining the time and place for meetings.

It has been suggested that research in third world countries intensifies the sensitivity of ethical issues when participants are women (Scheyvens and Leslie, 2000 as cited in (Scheyvens 2014:169). This is attribute to the social cultural constraints that women in third world countries encounter for example not being able to speak freely in public spaces and this was encountered as women would first reserve their responses until they feel the environment is free for them to speak. On one occasion during the local leaders' meeting, two women representatives that came for the meeting were less active and to get more views from them I would request men that we hear from these women.

More so, being a woman on a research about women was of great importance in enabling me understand the situation of these respondents as I po-

sitioned myself in the lives of these women reflecting on myself as an African woman and how demanding it is sometimes for me to meet the needs of my own family. It also enabled me gain the women's trust, feeling free to express their concerns and views on the subject.

## **1.5 Structure of the paper**

This paper is organized in six chapters. Chapter one includes the introduction and background about refugee issues as well as discussing the relevance of need for a gendered lens into refugee social protection. Justification and statement of the problem are also explained in relation to the challenges at hand in refugee social protection on the side of the duty bearers indicating how this is transferred to the refugees in terms of provisions. Research questions and objectives are then discussed followed by the methodology and tools used for data collection and analysis in attempt to answer the research questions.

Chapter two discusses the conceptual framework that is used as a guiding tool in analysing refugee situation and the role of non-state actors in ensuring their protection. A brief review of policies and institutional workings toward refugees in Uganda is also highlighted in chapter three. Chapter four discusses the fieldwork findings, chapter five constitutes of the analysis part and chapter six gives the conclusion of the paper.

# Chapter 2 Conceptual and analytical framework

## 2.0 Conceptual framework

This research rests on an underlying assumption that refugee situations aggravate women's vulnerability thus having a gendered-lens in programs directed towards refugee programs is crucial. In this case, the use of the concepts of gender, vulnerability, wellbeing and social protection is deemed necessary in understanding and analysing women refugee lives in line with the role played by non-state actors. The chapter discusses the meaning of vulnerability, wellbeing, gender and social protection and then identifies conceptual frameworks that have explained vulnerability and social protection in relation to gender. Thereafter it draws on these frameworks to devise an analytical framework used to examine the role of non-state actors and refugee situations, in the rest of the chapters of this paper.

### Vulnerability

Vulnerability has been defined as the exposure of a household or an individual to the risk of a shock or a stress (Holmes, Jones 2013:16). Moser's definition emphasis two main elements in understanding vulnerability; *resilience* and *sensitivity* where *resilience* is the ease and rapidity of a system's recovery from stress), and *sensitivity* (the magnitude of a system's response to an external event addressing issues of risks, hazards, shocks and stress. Moser argues that this resilience and sensitivity is mainly determined by the ownership of assets which individuals or households can mobilise or can access to manage shocks. Thus 'the more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are and the greater the erosion of the assets, the greater the insecurity' (Moser 2006, Moser 1998:3).

An asset is defined as 'the stock of financial, human, natural or social resources that can be acquired, developed, improved and transferred across generations. It generates flows or consumption, as well as additional stock' (Ford 2004 as cited in (Moser 2006:5). In this paper I use the term asset to refer to what households have or can access that once attained, enables them to overcome constraints that keep them vulnerable.

People are often said to be vulnerable when faced with circumstances that expose them to risks and are not able to help themselves without extra assistance either from the state, or non-state actors like family or community. Risks include a) economic risks of losing a job as a result institutional failures like economic crises, b) social cultural risks like social exclusion on grounds of ethnic minority, religion, gender or race and abuse of certain groups like women and children through domestic violence due to socially constructed male dominance, c) political risks causing insecurity and displacement in case of wars, d) physical/ health risks of illnesses leading to permanent disability, death leading to changes in household compositions and e) periodic vulnerability that



occurs at given stages in the life course like childhood, youth, and women during pregnancy and lactating or in old age (Kyaddondo, Mugisha 2014).

Using the concept of vulnerability in this study rests on the circumstance that women are often made vulnerable by the social cultural constraints, the effects of wars that often leave them hopeless as well as economic risks of having limited or no alternative sources of income apart from relying on humanitarian aid.

### **Gender**

Gender has been defined as the socially constructed meaning attached to being woman or man, the different roles and responsibilities that are influenced by cultural, social, economic and political factors in a given society (Holmes, Jones 2013).

It is said that gender aggravates vulnerability and for the women, it has been assumed that even when faced with the same challenges, men and women respond differently as a result of the gendered roles in homes and communities as some of these roles tend to enforce the vulnerability of women. For instance women being caregivers in case of illnesses of family members even when their own health is at risk. And yet even when it comes to coping strategies women often have less assets compared to men, which also get depleted faster than the men's since their assets cover for other dependents in a home (Holmes, Jones 2013:27).

This has however been contested arguing for a more positive mind in looking at women in crises, with an argument that such situations instead make women more empowered as they renegotiate and assume new roles of heading their households and striving to attain equal access to the services provided (Krause 2014).

### **Wellbeing**

Defining wellbeing is regarded a challenge in itself but there seems to be a general understanding that refers to wellbeing as something that is considered decent and a wish for human beings to attain it (Helne, Hirvilammi 2015:170).

Two major schools of thought attempt to define wellbeing; the hedonistic and the Eudaimonia. The latter argue that wellbeing refers to the presence of happiness and the absence of pain where happiness is derived from quest of 'sensation and pleasure' achieving full satisfaction of self-interests (Ryan, Deci 2001:144).

The former takes a divergent approach arguing that wellbeing based on personal gratification is 'slavish' and makes people 'followers of desires' yet true wellbeing comes from realising those needs that are driven by human nature and beneficial to human growth not those needs/desires that are subjectively felt (Ryan, Deci 2001:145). For if only one individual is contented that

s/he is doing well in life, this cannot be a representation of the rest of the people (Bourne 2010:17)

In this study, wellbeing is conceptualised to refer to the condition or situation where refugees, women in particular have better standards of living and their social, economic and physical needs are met, enabling them to have self-sustaining abilities to overcome vulnerabilities that are caused by lack and deprivations.

### **Social protection**

Social protection in all its forms; formal and informal is regarded vital in sustaining human lives especially those who are vulnerable (Niño-Zarazúa, Barrientos et al. 2010, Bilecen 2013, Bilecen, Bargłowski 2014) helping them to cope with disasters and other situations like being trapped as refugees (Mohan-ty 2011). It has often been categorized into two; Formal and Informal Social Protection. Formal Social protection perceived as being provided by the state and organizations whereas informal social protection is regarded as being provided by other actors other than the state (Bilecen, Bargłowski 2014) although this is contested due to the fact that these categories often overlap with formal social protection being complemented by the informal mechanisms like family provisions (Bilecen, Bargłowski 2014).

Definitions and components within social protection have thus remained debatable where to some, Social Protection involves promotive (giving relief from deprivation for example safety nets thus providing social assistance), preventive (averting deprivation for example programs aimed at poverty alleviation thus providing social insurance) and protective (to enhance capacities for example feeding programs in schools and micro credit schemes to smoothing income and consumption) components whereas to others, transformative interventions need to be included on the above components to cater for social equity in reducing vulnerabilities related to marginalization and social justice (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004)

The WB's definition refers to social protection as interventions aimed at improving human capital that include market, publically mandated to targeted incomes to enable households or individuals and communities better manage risks that expose them to vulnerability. ILO'S definition looks at social protection as public or collective benefits aimed at reducing the risks of low standards of living (World Bank 2004, van Ginneken 1999 as cited in (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004:3) and lastly the ODI's definition considers social protection as 'public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk, and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society' (Conway, de Haan and Norton 2000 as cited in (Holmes, Jones 2013:3, Barrientos, Hulme 2008:3). However, these definitions have been contested due to their problem prioritization which is seen to leave out a number of so-

cial challenges like domestic violence, armed conflicts and only concentrate on economic and income risks (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004).

Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler have defined social protection as;

the set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide: social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004:9).

Whereas to some Social Protection refers to only public interventions aimed at social assistance and social insurance, Devereux and Sabates argue that it should include a mix of all public and private interventions in social assistance, social insurance and social equity thus tackling both economic and social vulnerabilities of exclusion and marginalization (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004:3-10)

## **2.1 Analytical framework**

By situating (refugee) women's social protection to understand the impact of the role played by non-state actors, this paper adopts the transformative definition by Devereux and Sabates as basis for its analysis arguing that social protection ought to provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households, put in place social services for people in need of special care or those who, in any way would be denied access to basic services, social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and most of all social equity to reduce social risks such as discrimination or abuse.

Transformative social protection is adopted due to its broader consideration of needs beyond material needs. It not only looks at the economic but argues for more inclusion of a 'social' stand in reducing vulnerability. More to economic risks, women's vulnerability is embedded in social-cultural risks of gender inequalities, abuse and discrimination thus refugee women's social protection should be in position not only to aim at protecting, preventing and promoting, but be transformative to result in and ensure their wellbeing.

Although this does not mean that social protection ultimately solves the issues of gender inequality, it is argued that transformative Social Protection enables women regain their assets that help them cope and be more resilient to risks and shocks that in the first place lead to their vulnerability, by providing a gendered approach to reduce the gaps that in the first place are by gendered issues (Holmes, Jones 2013:5). Thus the need to include a gendered lens into

social protection programs, not only ensuring economic recoveries but also social equity for transformation.

Using the vulnerability framework by Moser (1998) a comparison of what makes refugee women vulnerable in relation to the strategies in place for refugee social protection will aid in assessing non-state actors' role in providing social protection. Although not all women in refugee situations may be vulnerable nor are all households poor, majority are as Kabeer and Subrahmanian discuss that though not all women may be poor or vulnerable, all women are likely to suffer from different kinds of discrimination that lead to their vulnerability (Kabeer and Subrahmanian 1996 as cited in (Holmes, Jones 2013:17). The kind of social protection provided therefore needs to ensure addressing gendered vulnerabilities, thereby promoting the overall wellbeing of these women (Holmes, Jones 2013).

Consequently as a result of women in refugee situations becoming vulnerable due to their unmet material and non-material needs, the use of a transformative element of social protection in analysing their wellbeing after engagements and interventions by non-state actors is crucial and deemed useful for this study in examining the role played by these actors in providing social protection.

## Chapter 3 Policy and Institutional review

### 3.1 Refugee policy in Uganda

As earlier noted, refugee issues are a responsibility of the government of Uganda, ensuring refugee protection and settlement. However, since the 1960s the perception of refugee crises being temporary emergency situations has informed much of the programs directed towards refugees and yet, refugees are now often caught up in protracted situations (Mulumba, Olema 2009:32). As such, refugee social protection has been mainly aimed at providing relief assistance to meet basic needs.

Uganda's refugee policy is derived from its historical experience with refugees as well as international policy tools on the protection of refugees like the 1969 OAU (Organisation of African Unity) and the 1951 Refugee Convention (Dathine 2013 as cited in (Omata, Kaplan 2013:5) to which Uganda is a signatory. A new Refugee Act was enacted in 2006 replacing the CARA Cap. 62 that initially guided refugee issues but was for all aliens and not refugees specifically yet there was need for a consolidated department for refugee issues, which is now the Department of Refugees (DoR) under the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness in the OPM headed by a commissioner (Milner, Loescher 2011:28, Mulumba, Olema 2009:28). Refugee issues are therefore centralized giving the state full responsibility of refugees and the DoR working with Public Service Commission to recruit settlement commandants who manage the rural settlements (Mulumba, Olema 2009:29). This however has led to bureaucracies in refugee policy and programs as they remain highly centralized despite the decentralization of most national programs in the country (Mulumba, Olema 2009:33).

The policy with reference to the 1951 International refugee convention article 1 (a)2 defines a refugee as a person outside his/her country of nationality due to fear of persecution on the basis of his religion, race, nationality, being a member of a social group or due to his political opinion and thus is unwilling to return to his country or, one who has no nationality but is also out of his former country of refuge due to similar circumstances and is also unwilling to return to that country (UNHCR 2010:14).

There are mainly two ways in which one can be granted refugee status in Uganda. For an individual, the Refugee Eligibility Committee chaired by OPM and Ministry of Local Government representatives conducts an interview using the Refugee Status Determination tool (a set of questions used in interviewing people seeking refuge and asylum) to determine whether that person is a refu-

gee. For people from a conflict zone, refugee status is determined on *prima facie*<sup>4</sup> basis as is the case for South Sudanese and screening is done on arrival at the settlement area to determine whether they are nationals from that area.

Uganda's Refugee Policy has been hailed as unique compared to her neighbouring refugee hosting countries like Kenya and Tanzania who have more restrictive policies. In Uganda refugees are apportioned a piece of land in designated settlements on which to build a structure for shelter and also be able to use the remaining land for agriculture to promote self-reliance (Meyer 2006). The policy also stipulates the rights of refugees which include the right to work, the right to equal legal justice, freedom of movement, and entitlement to all privileges accorded to Ugandans by law for instance education and health. Women refugee rights are also specified to include the right to equal treatment as other refugees, and protection from discrimination using affirmative action (Government of Uganda 2006).

However, contradictions between theory and practice of the policy have also been highlighted. For example, the settlement program for refugees in Uganda that is said to have led to changes in the meaning of the term refugee where only persons who have been registered and/ or are living in a place designated by the government of Uganda are considered for all provisions to refugees except those living in urban centres on purposes of attaining education and those who prove that they can sustain themselves outside a camp after a process of assessment (Kaiser 2006). The freedom of movement is also contradicted as refugees in settlements require a pass from the settlement commandants to move out of the settlement to other parts of the country by explaining reasons and dates for travel (Mulumba, Olema 2009, Hunter 2009).

As such, refugee protection especially in host countries has been said to be influenced by other factors including limitations and urgencies that do not entirely relate to the question of refugees themselves but fears of security and capacity to development by the host states (Milner, Loescher 2011:19).

### **3.2 Social Protection in Uganda; its history and current status.**

Social Protection in Uganda is recognised as key in alleviating poverty and reducing vulnerability (National Planning Authority 2015). Traditionally, social protection has been embedded in the cultural norms and values in various indigenous societies of Uganda. Often perceived as caregiving to those regarded

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<sup>4</sup>Same as Group determination of refugees where persons are part of a large group of people fleeing one region are regarded as refugees without prior individual assessments ((UNHCR), Department of International Protection (DIP) et al. 2006:10).

vulnerable (Kyaddondo, Mugisha 2014), informal Social Protection has been regarded as an obligation and a form of solidarity for those who have to respond to the needs of others in society for example family providing for orphaned children of a deceased relative, and at community level, members devising means of helping each other especially in times of shocks and disasters (Beatrice, Rebecca et al. 2012). In the Central part of the country in Buganda this collective action is termed as '*munno mu kabi*' which translates as a 'friend in need' (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004:15).

Although there seems to be no clear boundaries of what social protection is, to some it is a 'new label' to safety nets and welfare, others extend the meaning to a 'political' lens to include transformative elements of social equity and empowerment while others see it 'broadly' to include programmes like UPE, microcredits and relief programs to mitigate shocks (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2002:3).

On this note, social protection in Uganda currently takes on three main aspects; promotive, protective and preventive as described by (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004, Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2002). Protective measures mainly targeting the chronically poor aimed at providing relief in form of social assistance through social services like free access to education and health; Preventive measures through social insurance targeting those who are economically vulnerable like the aged and the disabled who cannot actively continue with their jobs reducing their deprivation through provision of health insurance and pensions. But these are based on contributory terms between the employees and employers, and the state for their workers in the formal sector; Promotive interventions on the other hand aim at enhancing people's capacities to resist vulnerability by improving their incomes and capacities through programs like micro credit schemes to increase their financial bases and school feeding programs that aim at keeping more children in schools<sup>5</sup>, as a way of achieving higher literacy levels to promote future involvement in gainful employment thus reducing poverty (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004:10).

However, like many other developing countries, Uganda had no consolidated national social protection policy but only programs that could give periodic relief assistance for emergencies (Niño-Zarazúa, Barrientos et al. 2010) until recently when a commitment was made to include Social Protection in the overall PRSP framework. Basing on the recently concluded SAGE pilot project, the government has set commitment to expand social protection to cover the whole country but this is questionable as these plans are reliant on the prospects of the new Oil industry that is yet to begin and also the fact that most

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<sup>5</sup> Hunger in schools has been identified as one of the major causes of school dropout in UPE schools in Uganda.

policies in developing countries are fronted by donor countries, raising more concern on the sustainability and political will for social protection (Niño-Zarazúa, Barrientos et al. 2010:15).

The second NDP (NDP II) indicates that only 0.78 percent of GDP is invested in Social Protection and only 0.33 percent on Direct Income Support (DIS) placing Uganda's DIS at 1.1 percent lower compared to other low income African countries (National Planning Authority 2015:70). This means that only a few benefit from non-contributory targeted state social protection, with only 2.8 percent public servants being covered by the Public Service Pension Scheme (PSPS) and only 2.3 percent formal employees benefiting from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) (National Planning Authority 2015:70) leaving the majority 80% of Ugandans mainly women who are in the informal sector out of formal state social protection thus their reliance on informal social protection mechanisms (Kasente 2000, Du Toit, Neves 2006, Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler 2004).

### **3.3 Refugees and social protection**

Having looked at Social Protection for nationals, it is evident that refugees' access to these main social Protection forms could be a challenge for them since a) they are not part of the public service to benefit from the formal social protection like social insurances and pensions, b) are not fully incorporated into the labour market to tap from the market oriented contributory social protection and c) whose families have been disintegrated by war and therefore the structures of the family/ household have changed thus making kinship informal mechanisms also loose.

Although refugees are incorporated into state protective social protection of accessing social services there is continued unsatisfactory provision for their needs due to a number of factors that have been raised (both political and economic although these are disguised into limited resources) (Mulumba, Olema 2009). For example UPE schools have no teachers and enough structures, health centres having no medical equipment and medicines (Mulumba, Olema 2009:29). This has resulted in assumption of much of the roles of the state in protection of refugees by non-state actors in this case the NGOs, though this is covered up by 'partnership' between the state and non-state. Government role is now limited to the provision of the plots of land for refugee housing and cultivation as well as keeping law and order through the settlement commandant while UNHCR takes over in provision of humanitarian assistance through its partners (Mulumba, Olema 2009:33) both Implementing and Operating partners. Despite these gaps, government role cannot otherwise be undermined however minimal it may be, for it ensures physical protection, provides refugees with land that has enabled them settle and are no longer homeless. This minimized role however, leaves other demanding issues unat-



tended and thus justifies the need to examine the role of non-state actors that are now taking up most of the programs in the settlement.

### **3.4 Non-state actors and Social Protection**

The role of non-state actors has been considered influential in the implementation of social protection in Uganda either as partners to government or as implementers of donor funded programs in empowering and meeting the needs of the marginalized from economic needs, social empowerment to human rights (Okello 2015), and NGOs in emergency situations have been regarded as more receptive to social protection for their long term solutions (Barrientos, Hulme 2008). Non-state actors include NGOs, CBOs, family and community organized groups, and the private entities but are classified as either formally recognized legal entities (those that work in partnership with the state or independently) or informal ones (whose operations are based on collective action and may have no legal and formalized governance structures) (PASGR 2012:11).

Focus in this study is limited to local and International NGOs working within Kiryandongo settlement as partners to UNHCR, the main body responsible for refugee issues. These are classified into implementing partners (IPs) who are funded by UNHCR, and Operational partners (OPs) who work in coordination providing their expertise on specific issues but are funded by other donors other than UNHCR. They are mainly involved in education, health, water and sanitation, child protection, vocational training, among others carrying on the mandate by signing agreements with UNHCR. In Kiryandongo settlement, partners include UNICEF, War child Canada, Windle Trust Uganda, Inter Aid Uganda, RMF, TPO Uganda, IRC, Samaritan's Purse and Save the Children.

A number of initiatives have been put in place towards refugee Social Protection with emphasis on support and protection of PSNs as well as female headed. These are mainly driven by the elements of protection and lifesaving.

Protection; this entails protection from the crisis by relocating refugees to camps and settlements, ensuring registration and granting of protection documents aimed at protecting them from possible arrests, physical protection within the camps and settlements, protection from physical abuse and neglect for example sexual and gender based violence and child neglect.

Lifesaving assistance; this is classified into provisions of services in life saving sectors of health, food, water and sanitation, whereas delivery of protective services like education, are expected to build an enabling environment and 'sense of normalcy' (UNHCR 2014:7). In addition, provision in refugees is driven by needs and not a consolidated social protection policy, but rather one

that is flexible to address urgency of any issues. For instance, due to the increase in the number of refugees humanitarian response has had to rethink and reconsider its strategies over time to meet new challenges (UNHCR 2014).

### **3.4.1 The Self Reliance Strategy (SRS)**

Among the most vibrant mechanisms in place to ensure refugee wellbeing has been the RAD approach. This has been fronted as one way of promoting refugee self-reliance. Introduced around 2000 -2004, RAD has been part of the need for durable solutions for refugees. This approach was partly instigated by the need for UNHCR to change its frameworks from humanitarian assistance of care and maintenance to self-reliance of refugees in order to manage refugee issues in protracted situations (Milner, Loescher 2011). UNHCR working with host governments introduced various approaches and in Uganda the SRS was launched (Milner, Loescher 2011:10). Introduced in 1999 (Meyer 2006:19), it was apparent that self-reliance would meet the needs of refugees by reducing their dependency.

Self-reliance thus meant that refugees have the ability to survive without relying on humanitarian assistance and can cater for their needs like paying for health and education services, be able to actively involve themselves in income generating economic activities, as well as being able to respond to issues in community by the refugees themselves (Meyer 2006:20).

It is against this backdrop that refugees are given land in Uganda to be able to engage in agriculture for sustaining themselves and their dependents with proceeds that come from selling part of their produce.

Hunter argues that Self-reliance as a concept in itself presents a positive approach towards enabling refugees cope and recover from shocks, building their asset bases as well as ensuring sustainability (Hunter 2009:6). Conversely, it is asserted that although presented as a strategy for refugee self-reliance, SRS was intended to lift the burden from UNHCR and government of Uganda onto the refugees (Meyer 2006) by reducing their dependence on assistance as a result of the declining donor interests in refugee protection (Hunter 2009:2). However, despite all the failures and arguments against SRS, UNHCR still looks at self-reliance as one way of ensuring sustainability in refugee settlements.

What is not clear about this approach is the way it translates in practice since it is evident that the productivity of the land onto which refugees are settled is in most cases not reliable. Accordingly, it is argued that there was no prior assessment of the capacity of this land before embarking on this SRS approach (Ayine, Nuwategeka 2013:1) as established by the type of land the refugees acquire; much of it flat land suitable for small gardens and less of it is suitable for cultivation which has kept production at subsistence level (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:17).

## Chapter 4 Findings

### 4.0 Setting the scene-overview of Kiryandongo refugee settlement

A first time visit to Kiryandongo refugee settlement that is welcomed by the view of the OPM and UNHCR offices will leave you astonished and anxious to go deeper and find out the kind of life refugees live. A few kilometres into the settlement and reality sets in first at the Transit/Reception Centre, a place crowded with men, women and children with a few belongings awaiting registration which indicates an emergency situation. After the registration process which normally takes not more than two weeks, each refugee family or individual is allocated a piece of land in one of the ranches of the settlement. This land is offered by the government of Uganda through the office of the OPM, which is represented by the settlement commandant in the settlement. Refugees are then given start up kits that include non-food items like tarpaulins, pangas, slashers and jerry cans by UNHCR and its implementing partners<sup>6</sup>(Kaiser 2002). On this land which is equivalent to 2 acres, each family or individual is expected to construct a structure for shelter and use the remaining land for agriculture as one way of settling and attaining self- reliance.

The settlement is organized on a ranch system, a name that originates from the previous activities that took place in this area as a cattle ranching area (Kaiser 2002). The settlement has two ranches (1 and 37) that are further divided into 19 clusters. Ranch 1 has 9 clusters (A,B,C,D,E,F&S,K and P) and Ranch 37 has 10 clusters (G,H,I,J,L,M&R,N,O&Q). (Information from office of RWC III). There is no standard criteria for clustering the refugees but a team of individuals (refugees) allocated per ranch, together with OPM work on identifying available land in a given cluster, where refugees from the transit/reception centre are then relocated.

### 4.1 The findings

Discussion in this chapter concentrates on research findings and reference to secondary data. Findings are presented based on key themes and sub themes developed by the researcher in line with the research questions;

1. Description of the household; family composition, assets and needs
2. Strategies in place to ensure protection to women
3. The gaps left; whose responsibility?

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<sup>6</sup> UNHCR carries on the role of overseeing in the settlement

### **4.1.1 Description of the household: its composition, roles, assets and needs.**

More than half of the total households in Kiryandongo settlement are headed by women with an estimate of 69%, leaving only 31% headed by men<sup>7</sup>. This difference is said to be a result of death of many men during the war and others joining the army back home in South Sudan thus leaving women as widows or single parents. On average, every household has a total of five (5) children majority being below the age of 18 but this number goes as far as up to 20+ children in a single family. In such cases, some of the children are separated or UAMs<sup>8</sup> that families take on voluntarily at the Transit Centre while others are orphaned children from the relatives of these families.

#### **Roles**

Women's roles in the settlement remain as the traditional gendered roles within most African cultural settings; cooking, taking care of the children and doing all household chores and this is the same for both families- those that are female headed and the ones that are male headed thus indicating the continuation of gendering roles even in such situations as refugees. However, there is change of roles for female headed households as women become breadwinners in the absence of a male head which doubles their responsibilities.

#### **Assets and vulnerability**

With reference to the assets as highlighted by Moser (Moser 2006), the most tangible asset households have is land that is given by the government of Uganda to which refugees have been able to lay structures for shelter and practice agriculture. Kiryandongo settlement is said to have the highest access to land percentage which is rated at 89% (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:16). Labour is not fully developed due to higher numbers of young children and yet women's labour is constrained by the caseload of other household activities that portion their manpower as well as lack of the necessary skills that are required in the labour market to attain formal employment, due to high illiteracy levels. Limited access to other productive assets like good healthcare and credit also continue to keep these women vulnerable as will be discussed in the following section about their needs.

The gender of the household head is also reflective of the vulnerability of the household and thus for those women who had their husbands, they were seen to be less vulnerable compared to female headed households.

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<sup>7</sup> Research household survey data July 2015

<sup>8</sup> These are children that flee from South Sudan without parents or guardians.

The main source of livelihood for most households is the humanitarian assistance provided in form of food and non-food items with the research indicating only an approximate of 12% of the women having personal additional incomes from other jobs and 88% not working<sup>9</sup>.

#### **4.1.2 The needs of refugee women**

This part of the paper discusses the needs of refugee women. These views came from the women focus group discussions and the household survey. The needs reported include those being met for instance provision of healthcare, water, food, but not satisfactorily according to these women, while others are not catered for instance adult education, access to credit and secondary schools for their children as discussed below.

Access to water is still one of the most urgent needs for women: Although boreholes have been provided and the current water provision improved now rating at an estimated 15 litres per person per day, there is still a challenge for women to move for longer distances within the settlement to access these water points. The settlement relies mainly on bore holes which make up to 99.3% of water sources (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:47). During the field visits, the main reason for absence of mothers at home was fetching water. At the time of the study, it was a dry season and the settlement is located in what is referred to as the 'cattle corridor', areas that are characterised by low and unreliable rainfalls and severe seasonal droughts (Ayine, Nuwategeka 2013:1) thus continuous lack of enough water, which women reported as one of their biggest burdens. And having many children, this means need for extra water to wash their clothes and other home needs.

Need for improved access and health care services: Refugees showed dissatisfaction in the current provisions of healthcare and stressed need for increased availability and access to enough drugs, while noting other limitations as the distance to reach the Centres. The large numbers of refugees in need of medical attention increases as the influx of refugees into the settlement continues yet the medical facilities have not matched this trend. Thus with a number of three health Centres in operation, refugees reported gaps in the availability of drugs and having to wait for an entire day due to overcrowding, with a few medical attendants especially at Panyandoli Health Centre III. I visited Panyandoli health Centre III during the morning hours and the patients waiting to see the health workers were already filled to capacity. One of the respondents in the household survey with a girl whose leg had a chronic wound expressed her dissatisfaction narrating her experience with the services at the Centre;

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<sup>9</sup> Research household survey data July 2015.

My daughter developed a wound that has turned into a chronic one. When I took her to Panyandoli, the nurse told me to take her for an x-ray in Bweyale and also buy medicine she wrote for me. But because I don't have money I have decided to keep her at home so now I go to the health Centre and I get pain killers for her (*female respondent at Magamaga on 9/7/2015*).

Another woman commented on the use of the ambulance that the health centre uses for emergency cases. Asserting that even when requested for, response is for some but not all. 'Even if you ask for that ambulance, for someone like me who is poor I will not easily get response; not like some rich people among us who are known' (*female respondent at Panyandoli on 9/7/2015*).

New tarpaulins to renovate shelters was one of the unmet needs. On arrival at the settlement as families are allocated plots of land, UNHCR provides them with tarpaulins to help them in building their semi structured houses. Some use them as walls while others integrate the tarpaulins in their roofing materials. However, as time goes by, these tarpaulins are worn out and they start to leak in case it rains as well as allowing the cold to reach inhabitants in the night who use tarpaulins as walls thus posing health related threats to those in such structures. Unfortunately, refugees reported that this provision is a one-off and there is no program in place to distribute new ones.

Mothers with young children stressed the need for baby feeds especially milk. 'Our children were used to taking milk back in South Sudan because we had our cattle' was the common statement women gave to justify their need. It was found out that the Nuer back home are mainly cattle keepers. The nutrition programs in the settlement are administered to those children who come to the settlement when they are already malnourished and so these women were in argument that lack of nutritional feeds for their children was the main cause of malnutrition.

Other needs included soap. The need for soap was also emphasised by many women especially for the hygiene of their children and themselves as well. 'We don't get soap and it is expensive yet we need to wash clothes and bath' (*female respondent in a group discussion on 11/7/2015*). Soap becomes an issue due to the large numbers of members especially children in households. They wish it would be included on the items provided to them at least every month.

Lack of access to credit was also stressed as a hindrance to acquiring start-up capital at least to be able to run small businesses and therefore a key hindrance to attaining self-reliance. Due to lack of assets that can be used as collateral, refugees cannot be given loans from financial institutions and yet there are also no formal financial institutions in the settlement (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:24). Even the land that they possess remains a property of the government and cannot be used since they do not get land titles for it. This has

been said to lead refugees into informal borrowing which exposes them to risks of high interests leaving them with no disposable incomes thus prolonging their vulnerability (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:24)

At least if we could get capital and start self-help projects among women because for instance we have women groups but they are not helping much. We lack money to run programs. Even women who have training they don't have what to do because there is no money. So how can you afford to buy books for your children or soap at home. (*Female local leader in a focus group discussion on 11/7/2015*).

Need for more schools and access to education. Education is regarded important by most parents and a number of them referred to education as one of the reasons for them to stay in Uganda even if peace is restored in South Sudan commenting that Ugandan education is better and free. 'I don't want to go back to Sudan until my children at least finish studying but we lack secondary schools' (female respondent in household survey). Parents insisted on having secondary schools due to the trend of their children dropping out of school after primary level and not being able to join private schools because they can hardly afford the fees in private schools. Although primary education is free with about five primary schools in the settlement, there are no free secondary schools but only one community school, Panyandoli which is not free.

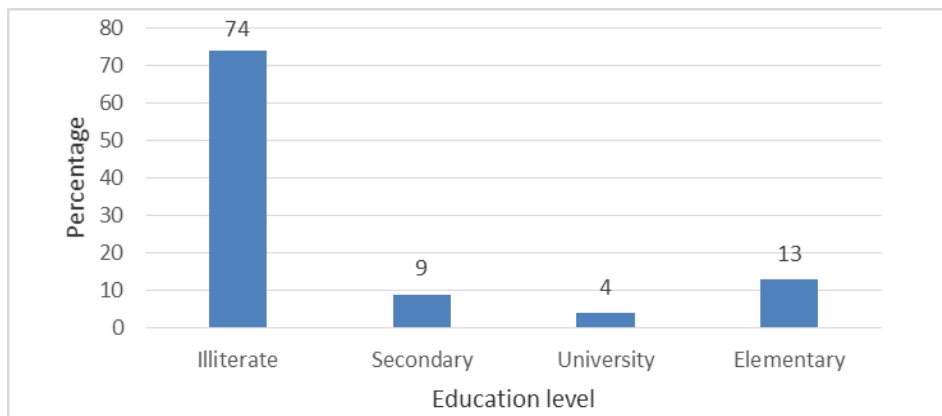
Women not only yearn for their children's education but theirs as well. They refer to their lack of education as one of the hindrances for getting jobs to be able to provide for their households thus requesting for provision of adult literacy. Men in the settlement are more educated and English speaking than women whose illiteracy levels are approximated at 74% (see figure 1 below), which enables more men to get voluntary jobs within organisations working in the settlement as Village Health Teams, Community policing and research assistants and interpreters to many researchers who come to the settlement. Rita (not real name), narrated her wishes for learning English; '...If I knew English I would be able to work at least as other volunteers in the settlement' (*interview on 9/7/2015*). Lack of education among women is seen to increase the superiority of the already patriarchal oriented society.

Back in South Sudan, level of literacy have been rated among the worst in the world with only 27% adult literacy level (also reflected by the findings in the study as indicated by the graph below) and up to 70% of children from 6-17 years said to have never been to school (UNICEF 2008)<sup>10</sup>.

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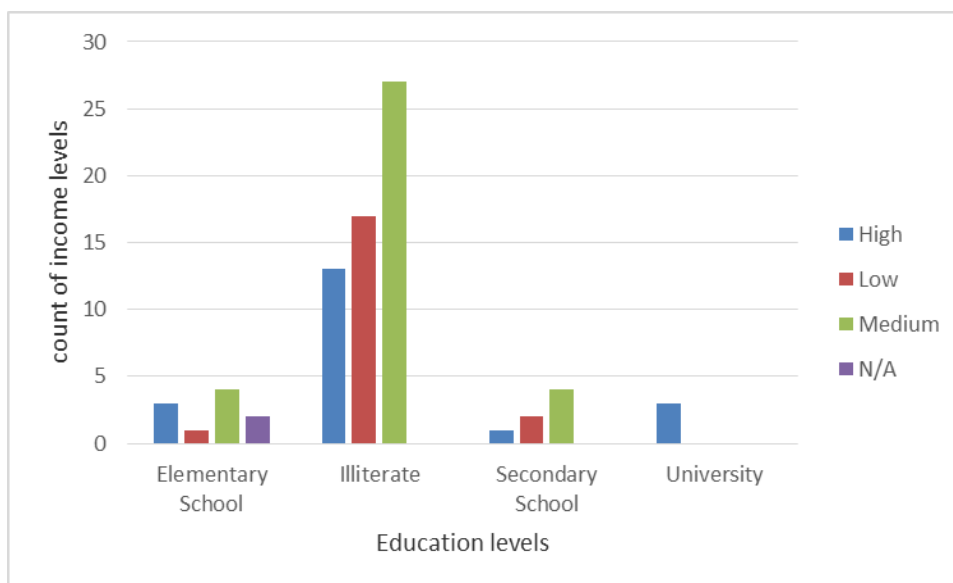
<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/southsudan/education.html> accessed 07-10-2015.

**Figure 1: Adult literacy levels among S. Sudanese women in Kiryandongo refugee settlement in July 2015**



*Source:* Household survey findings July 2015

**Figure 2 : Relationship between refugee women’s income and levels of education while in South Sudan in July 2015**



*Source:* Household survey findings July 2015

This second graph, highlights the relationship between education and incomes. Although those who are illiterate present higher levels of income, this is due to their large numbers compared to those who are educated. Thus in reality, compared with those who are educated, the levels of incomes for the illiterate are low.



## **4.2 Strategies in place to ensure refugee protection**

As explained before, refugee protection is hinged on a number of key elements that guide provision by the actors; life- saving assistance( health, sanitation , water), protection( physical security and legal documentation) and protective services like education as well as community based protection of women and children against Sexual and Gender Based Violence, child neglect and peaceful co-existence. It is also important to note that all services within the settlement apart from relief are shared with the host communities. Thus schools, health centres, water points, and also the vocational training are also used by nationals around Kiryandongo settlement. Below is the discussion of what is in place to ensure refugee wellbeing.

### **4.2.1 Health service provision**

Health is fundamental for human wellbeing. Services provided in ensuring the health of refugees include antenatal care, immunization for their children and reproductive health services that include family planning, HIV/AIDS, sensitization and counselling and community sensitization on sexual and gender-based violence and hygiene promotion. There are three health Centres within the settlement; Panyandoli Health Centres II and III and the Transit/ Reception Health Centre II. Coordination and facilitation of these centres in terms of medical supplies, staffing is done by IRC and RMF in collaboration with UNHCR. These centres are centred in one locality of Panyandoli apart from the one at the reception centre which is also a few kilometres from Panyandoli. This makes distance for some refugees to access health services a challenge. Lack of enough medical supplies is another major constraint that was also noted by the medical worker interviewed during my visit at Panyandoli health centre III. Of the three health Centres, this received more patients to the extent that one medical worker would serve 20 patients an hour leading to overcrowding, and absence of medical supplies more often as a result of more demand.

Of great concern to the health of women is the issue of SGBV. This is rampant within the settlement as reported by the health worker although statistical data was not given. It was also noted that due to fear of stigmatization and cultural barriers many women do not report these cases although there is a procedure for legal measures through the Settlement commandant and the Police. Educational background is also considered key with women who are literate more aware of the dangers of SGBV and also seeking medical attention in case of any illnesses compared to those who are not educated. However, there are some mechanisms that have been put in place to increase access to the services and these include; home care outreaches by the VHTs and community sensitization especially on hygiene and male involvement through Male Action Groups to teach them the dangers of SGBV. An ambulance in case of

emergencies is also available. However in relation to the increasing number of refugees, one medical worker had this to say;

Although an ambulance is available, it cannot fully serve the emergency needs of all refugees due to their large numbers and the costs involved. There are still limitations in our service provision unless we get more finances to acquire more equipment (*Interview with key informant at Panyandoli Health centre III on 10/7/2015*).

Despite the above challenges, a great number of refugees have access to health services. This is indicated by the household survey conducted during this research (see graph 3 in analysis).

#### **4.2.2 Psychosocial assistance.**

In relation to health, psychosocial assistance is availed to those with mental stress and PTSD by TPO Uganda. Refugees are examined using an assessment tool called Global Mental Health Assessment Tool (GMAT) to check for anxiety and depression. Victims to trauma are then put on a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Trauma (CBTT) and are given support through counselling. Women and children were reported as the main victims and this was seen to lead to violence especially among the youth in community as well as in homes but through counselling and community sensitizations results were visible leading to peaceful co-existence among refugees.

Constraining the efforts of TPO is the challenge of most refugees being hesitant to come for such services as ‘...they cannot self-examine themselves as traumatized’ (*Social worker, TPO Uganda interview on 10/7/2015*). Thus collaboration with the health Centre to identify patients who need psychosocial support and refer them to the psychiatrist at the health centre is the main way used in identifying these victims. However not all medical workers are trained to be able to identify and use the best measures in dealing with such patients and the entire settlement relies on one psychiatrist who attends to all cases in the settlement and refers extreme cases to Kampala (which is 223 kilometres from Kiryandongo) where there are mental clinics and a national mental hospital.

Another major challenge identified towards the constraints in the success of this service has been described as the lack of coordination between the psychosocial and physical/ material needs. The social worker said,

...after stabilizing the mind, there is need to provide the body with material needs in order to give a holistic service to the person. However the challenge currently in the settlement is that material needs are not fully provided to these refugees. When you treat the mind and the body is needy, the mind will automatically be affected. (*Interview with social worker at TPO Uganda on 10/7/2015*).

### 4.2.3 Vocational training

A free vocational training Centre run by RMF with support from JICA and UNHCR provides hands on training for refugees in bricklaying and concrete practice, carpentry and joinery, hairdressing and tailoring. Although local nationals are also enrolled, priority is given to refugees who take up 80% of the admission and 20% is left for the host community. Both men and women are enrolled but tailoring and hairdressing are targeting women who must be 40 years and below but not of school going age. These trainings are aimed at equipping these refugees with vocational skills and enable them use these skills to better their lives. Criteria used for intake is advertising and selecting those who are interested but should have some basic education, no matter whether they were taught in English or Arabic<sup>11</sup>.

These trainings take up to 3 months thus having 4 intakes per year. There is however a limited number of intake per semester with every department taking on average 30 members yet some people drop out during the course of the intake. It was reported that in 2013, there were 118 graduates, and in 2014 only 98 graduated. Comparing the total number of women in the settlement for example who were about 7845 as of April 2015<sup>12</sup>, intake is still low as this would translate into an average annual intake percentage estimate of 3.5% , an annual graduate percentage of about 1.37% and a 2.13% drop out rate.

Success has been recorded with some refugees now working within the settlement and others in Bweyale town but majority of graduates are still jobless. However some are said to reluctantly make less efforts towards using the knowledge acquired to find something they can do as explained by the program officer.

...it is as if some of these refugees even after acquiring skills, they want us to go ahead and get for them jobs. They just sit home without trying anything. Instead, they just turn our uniforms into daily clothes. However some are constrained by lack of start-up capital or kits after graduating which is one other challenge that is currently beyond our capacity (*Interview with program officer at RMF on 13/7/2015*).

### 4.2.4 Education

Primary education is free following the Universal Primary Education program in Uganda established by the government and this has been extended even to the refugees. However due to need for financing school programs due to limited government funding, primary schools are aided by non-state actors and in the settlement this responsibility has been taken up by Windle Trust Uganda. The organization operates in the 5 primary schools within the settle-

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<sup>11</sup> Most refugees from South Sudan have been instructed in schools using Arabic.

<sup>12</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/> accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

ment recruiting and paying teachers' salaries as well as providing housing to teachers. Parents' role in primary is reduced to providing their children with Uniforms, books and other scholastic materials. However, parents reported having asked for money for example for report cards and firewood but this was later reported to the settlement commandant and it has been dealt with.

In secondary education, Windle Trust provides scholarships which are awarded to the best performing pupils, those who get first and second grades in primary leaving examinations. Tertiary education is also catered for on the basis of availability of any scholarship either from government or well-wishers. A joint committee comprising UNHCR/ OPM and representatives from the local leaders do select the best candidates that are eligible for the scholarships. The challenge identified is the limited number of scholarships available making it more demanding for the students and pupils to be able to win these scholarships thus leaving a big number of children's education under the responsibility of their incapable parents.

#### **4.2.5 Food Provision**

WFP in collaboration with Samaritan's Purse ensure the distribution of food. Monthly food rations are given to the refugees where each individual in a family is given 11.5 kilograms of maize floor or sorghum alternatively. On some occasions, refugees are provided with cooking oil, beans and salt but this does not all come at once. The monthly distribution is therefore not uniform. Distribution takes about four to five days for WFP to cover the whole settlement (between 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of every month) and this is done at various Centres within the settlement where refugees living near a given point gather for their rations. The food being provided is quite enough but beneficiaries complain about the irregularity of some provisions that do not come on a monthly basis.

#### **4.2.6 Protective environment**

It is a prerequisite that for anyone to start receiving any assistance, they have to be registered with UNHCR while still at the transit/ reception centre in the settlement. Here registration and assessment for all refugees is done as they await relocation to the allocated plots of land. Registration includes biometric registration, identifying PSNs and the vulnerable as well as profiling and then proper documentation is done.

Uganda Police in coordination with OPM and UNHCR provides physical protection and also referral for access to justice. All actors are involved in ensuring providing a protective environment to all refugees.

### 4.3 The gaps left; whose responsibility?

Looking at the provisions in the above section, there are notable gaps and constraints that have translated into limited access and provision of services. Much of the responsibility to ensure access to what is not provided falls back to the women thus an indication of the burden women carry when there are institutional failures to protection (Mulumba 2005). But as often perceived, women's gendered roles for instance caretaking and social reproductive roles are regarded as altruistic and therefore a 'natural' obligation of women to carry on these roles yet in situations like displacement, these roles add to the burdens of the women and this has resulted into tendencies of neglecting women issues especially in African settings that are treated as normal day to day challenges.

In response to this, women devise coping mechanisms which are strategies employed to ensure survival in difficult times (De Vriese 2006:11). These are discussed below from information collected during group discussions. As illustrated by Moser, these mechanisms largely depend on what someone has at their disposal to enable them overcome the risks and vulnerability (Moser 1998), which leads to differences in the coping mechanisms employed. For instance human capital that is gained from skills training and education influences the kind of work one does while financial capital determines incomes that an individual or household possess.

#### 4.3.1 Coping mechanisms

**Use of social networks:** Women in Kiryandongo settlement have groups amongst themselves through which coping and overcoming difficulties has been achieved. One of the most interesting activities by the groups is cultivating each other's plot of land. A group of women will have one's land cultivated and then move to another member's plot until they all have their plots cleared. This is used as one way of trying to have more use for the land given productively by using cheap labour. Neighbouring households also help each other in care giving; for example some women who were not found at home during the household survey had left their children in the company of their neighbours and relatives. However, those households that did not have such networks, their children were found left alone at home in cases where the mother is away. This indicates how one who does not have social or family ties cannot benefit from these networks thus being exclusive.

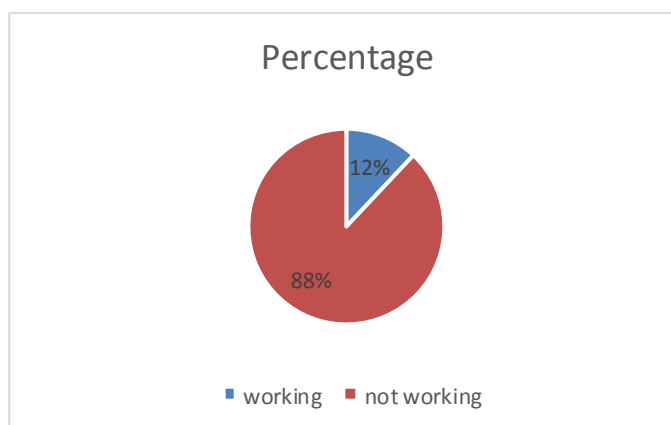
These informal networks are also said to be sources of credit in order to meet food needs, pay for private health expenses and education needs like scholastic materials for their children. However, it has been found out that in Kiryandongo these informal household credits are lower than in other settlements with only 11% of households having debts (Wamani, WFP AME unit

2015:23), an indication of the limited potential among households to help each other.

**Relocating to nearer plots:** As argued by the settlement commandant, there is still enough land within the settlement but interest towards specific pieces of land is a challenge as everyone wants to stay nearer to the centre of the settlement. To this, refugees decide to jointly settle on one nearby plot as either relatives, friends or clan mates and they use the far off plots allocated to the other families for cultivation. This is done as a way of being near the centre of the settlement for easy access to the social amenities. It is therefore common to find more than two homes on the same plot of land.

**Starting up survival businesses:** A few women are involved in small scale economic activities within and outside the settlement in Bweyale town. Some refugee women in the trading centre roast maize from their gardens especially in the evenings on the streets of the town and others have small stalls of merchandise they sell besides the roads within the settlement. Similarly, other women are employed informally in Bweyale, as house maids and also as attendants in salons and shops. The number of these women seems very small as represented by the research data in this study where out of the 77 women interviewed in the survey only 9 were working thus representing only an estimate of 12% who are working as illustrated by the figure below.

**Figure 3 : A Pie chart showing the employment status of refugee women in Kiryandongo as at July 2015**



**Source:** Household survey findings July 2015

**Reliance on family support/ remittances:** Some families have relatives in other parts of the world who send them money which complements on the support received within the settlement. There were single also women who were not living with their husbands but they stated that their husbands were part of the soldiers back in South Sudan and they continued supporting their

families in the settlement. However, these are few compared to those who entirely depend on the assistance provided in the settlement.

### **Negative coping strategies**

Just like any other household, refugee households resort to negative coping mechanisms when they run out of options. Women painfully talked about selling part of their food rations as a way of covering costs for the other needs that are not provided by the aid agencies. As noted in their needs, some food and non-food items like soap and milk, fuelwood are not catered for yet needed. They thus get part of the food provided and sell it to the surrounding host community. However, this in the end the local leaders argued, it leads to shortage of food before the next round of food supply in these households and thus a cause of hunger and health deterioration for these mothers and their young children (De Vriese 2006:23).

Other families take on more unaccompanied children as a way of getting more food rations but these children often increase on the burden of the family in meeting other needs. In extreme cases, women have been said to engage themselves in sexual relationships in exchange for money or having 'regular' partners to help in taking care of the family needs (Conway 2004; Levron 2006; Dick 2002 as cited in (De Vriese 2006:22).

## Chapter 5 Analysis

In this section analysis of the findings is presented with an aim of understanding whether these provisions by non-state actors have provided the necessary and required social protection to the refugee women. The analysis indicates mixture of success and failure and also highlights some of the reasons for the failure.

### 5.1 Gender, vulnerability and social protection

In conducting the focus group discussions and household survey, it was observed that most women had similar cross cutting issues in the settlement when it comes to their needs. This reflects Kabeer and Subrahmanian's argument about women and vulnerability where, although not all women are poor and vulnerable, they are susceptible to different forms of risks that make them vulnerable (Kabeer and Subrahmanian 1996 as cited in (Holmes, Jones 2013:17). All women (both single and those with husbands) had similarity in their challenges and needs. In addition, reflecting on the views of these women deeply reflected on women's gendered roles as caregivers within the households for they attach their needs to the wellbeing of their dependants especially children and yet even those that directly benefit them for example access to credit, skills training and adult education, their aim is to better their lives and be able to sustain the needs of their children and dependents. Thus meeting the needs of women could easily transfer the benefits to the rest of the family reducing vulnerability and inequality within households and society.

Moreover, the level of vulnerability varies basing on the assets one has. For those who have other sources of survival for example remittances from relatives in other parts of the world, husbands and jobs, their lives are better off and far from the imagination attached to the state of being a refugee. This population is therefore not homogeneous and yet it is treated as one, in terms of what is provided as all refugees receive the same assistance.

In addition, the burden that rests on women as a result of their gendered roles in relation to health, nutrition and education, also becomes visible by their concern towards these services and provisions. Although these have been part of the development agenda of non-state actors in the settlement, continued need for better provision is vivid relating to the gaps that the actors themselves have identified and also the scope of their provisions. It is however important to appreciate the efforts towards ensuring access to the services by refugees. Most refugees in the settlement indicated that they do access whatever is intended for them despite the dissatisfaction expressed by most of them as illustrated by the following graph. Agencies working in the settlement are



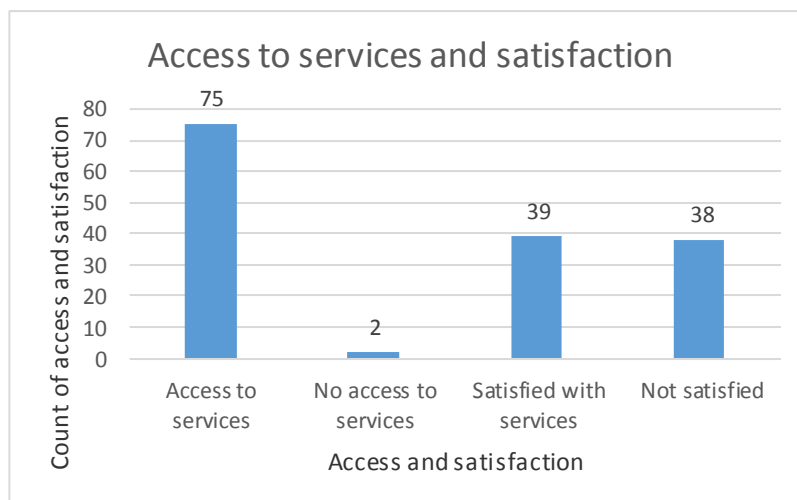
being overwhelmed by the large numbers of refugees. On average, there are 100 new arrivals per day in the settlement since the crisis in 2013 (UNHCR 2014). These numbers are constraining the quality of the services provided and also the availability of the resources. This partly explains the gaps in ensuring refugee livelihoods since there is need to sparingly use whatever is available in order to meet the needs of those arriving tomorrow.

Although it has been argued that women tend to become empowered when they are faced with such situations as refugees (Krause 2014), this empowerment stressed is disputed referring to how women struggle trying anything that can lead to survival and in the end they get more stressful, which often adds to their trauma (O'MAHONY, Donnelly 2010, Tempny 2009). Moreover, it is argued that the poorer the household, the harder women work (Moser 1998:9).

The mechanisms women employ are loose and may not be in position to solely enable women come out of their situations unless they are backed up by formalised and more transformative provisions. Looking at the social ties that women rely on for borrowing and for other support like child care, they are not reliable and are influenced by many factors like the ability that rests within these social groups in terms of willingness and capability to cater for sharing. This relates to the weaknesses of informal mechanisms of social protection where the permanence of social capital is not guaranteed especially in times of crises where those who have are more likely to withhold their support in order to cater for their own future needs and therefore less likely to help others (Moser 1998).

In addition, in a situation where families have been separated and with background of ethnic related conflicts as it is in Kiryandongo, reliance on social mechanisms becomes discriminatory and insufficient. This has been confirmed in a recent study on food and nutrition assessment that indicated the highest percentage of households not adopting to livelihood coping strategies of 73% being in Kiryandongo compared to other settlements (Wamani, WFP AME unit 2015:28).

**Figure 4 : A comparison of access and satisfaction of services provided to women as of July 2015**



**Source:** own construction from field data July 2015

Note: The number of those who indicated satisfied and those not satisfied is almost equal but those who said are satisfied, some indicated having no option but being contented since they are ‘refugees’. Thus their satisfaction was based on the fact that they cannot ask for more than what is given. ‘...if it was in our country we would complain but now what can we do. We accept and appreciate what they give us’ (*female respondent in a focus group discussion on 9/7/2015*). This statement indicates lack of decision making and inclusion of the refugees in planning processes within the settlement programs that are aimed at refugee wellbeing. The services above that were mentioned include food, non-food items that refugees receive on arrival at the settlement that include jerry cans, tarpaulin, slashers, as well as access to health and education services (see questionnaire in annex questions 11 and 12).

With reference to education, the role of non-state actors in funding education has helped keep children in school but since this only applies to primary education, lacking accessible secondary education may render these efforts useless thus the key to ensuring the development of skills and literacy levels can be promoted in one way by building and financing free secondary schools instead of awarding scholarships. This would enable even the ‘not so bright’ students to have access for further education.

Additionally, the current criteria for provision of skills to women through vocational training seems to be limiting in itself ; the need for prior basic education to be able to join vocational training seems to be one major factor that keeps women out of this program. As earlier noted, the level of illiteracy is very high and with about 74% of women being uneducated, targeting only those with basic education to qualify for the vocational training translates into excluding this 74%. More so, this program runs from 08:30 to 16:00hrs; this indi-

cates neglect of the fact that women who are said to be the main target for these trainings have other roles to play and keeping them in class the entire day conflicts with the need to take care of other household chores which can hardly be postponed or replaced. In this case several women would decide to remain home other than enrolling for these trainings.

Consequently the main constraint for a transformative social protection from the provisions by these actors is the lack of continuity for example in education where primary level leavers are not certain of joining secondary education, while the provision of assets like land have not been followed by assessing the suitability of the land given for production thus leading to lower yields and yet looking at skills and training, yes women gain the knowledge but are constrained by start-up capital to put the knowledge to use. Thus education, health, incomes and other provisions can only lead to transformation if they are continuous and therefore capable of reproducing the benefits for a longer period of time. If not then these provisions remain mere safety nets and cannot be transformative enough and others also end up targeting a few beneficiaries, a factor that excludes others who are equally in need for example the sponsorship for the best students for secondary education which does not give equal chance for higher studies to all children.

## **5.2 Women and participation**

Structural and social- cultural constraints that highlight women's vulnerability are still persistent in Kiryandongo and as argued by Devereux, Baulch et al., someone being able to resist, cope and manage risks depends on their previous ability and experiences, yet these are also liable to external influence from factors like policy which may be limiting (Devereux, Baulch et al. 2006:14). For instance women lag behind in leadership even at local levels which continues to affect their potential in decision making. Avenues for refugee inclusion into decision making are mainly through the local leaders and the Refugee Welfare Council leadership. The RWC local leadership structure is dominated by men and this was evident during the local leaders' focus group meeting where only 2 women out of six members were in the meeting and active participation was done by men, reflecting their superior position over women in society. In addition, as earlier discussed the few jobs within the settlement being dominated by male refugees as VHTs, peer educators also continues to accelerate unequal gender relations within the settlement as men remain the decision makers both in homes (for the male headed households) and in society.

It has been argued that if gendered inequalities in refugee situations are to be averted, women should be part of the decision making at all levels in determining resource allocation and societal goals but unfortunately this is uncommon in refugee situations yet as noted by Martin Forbes, refugee women participation is key;

The participation of refugee women in decision-making and programme implementation is a necessary step to ensuring that they are effectively protected, obtain assistance on an equal footing with men, have the opportunity to lead productive, secure and dignified lives, and are enabled to provide assistance when needed to vulnerable groups (Martin 2004:216).

The advocacy role of non-state actors for the wellbeing of these refugee women although exists, its scope is minimal and only confined to the operations within the settlement. For instance, advocating for peaceful co-existence between refugees and host states has been done and it has helped in ensuring peace and security, sensitizations on child protection and women and SGBV in community and also advocating for legal measures as well as inclusion of men for the latter is also ongoing. Despite this, it seems that the advocacy role of these actors does not stretch beyond their lifesaving assistance and ensuring a protective environment. Often, laws, policies and regulations influence the operations of non-state actors (Okello 2015). In Kiryandongo for example, NGO operations centre on the frameworks of UNHCR (for the implementing partners) as well as their donors (for the operating partners).

### **5.3 Assumptions underlying refugee protection**

These assumptions are based on the policy frameworks that have guided the implementation of programs among refugees.

The assumption that providing refugees with land would lead to increased agricultural productivity and therefore lead to self-reliance seems not to be evident. Despite the access to land by all registered refugees in the settlement, an indication of lack of enough tools for use on the land and lack of enough manpower have rendered access to land of less importance. In addition, these plots of land get depleted over time and yet refugees do not have other farm-lands for rotation (Mulumba, Olema 2009). A study on the evaluation of the suitability of the land in Kiryandongo that found differences in the soil fertility, concluded by emphasising the need for a full assessment of the land to ensure that the most fertile areas are the ones dedicated for profitable agricultural activities if self-sustenance is to be realised (Ayine, Nuwategeka 2013:6). Not until there is provision of other needs like skills training in modern agriculture, provision of fertilizers as well as making access to the market easier, agriculture will remain at a subsistence level not able to lead to economic returns.

Also, access to employment as stipulated in the legal framework for refugees in the constitution of Uganda is dependent on the assumption that jobs are available. However, it is evident that in rural areas where most of the settlement camps for refugees are established, the levels of employment are low and people rely more on agriculture with Uganda's current population in agri-

culture at 72 percent (National Planning Authority 2015:52) while the country's labour force in formal paid employment has declined from 21.5 percent in 2009/10 to 18.5 percent in 2012/13 (National Planning Authority 2015:65). As evident in the research findings, those who have jobs are very few and a comparison between men and women indicated men standing a better chance of tapping from the few employment opportunities within the settlement for example as VHTs, research assistants, water attendants and food distributors.

Last but not least, refugee issues are caught up in the midst of conflicting interest between the state, non-state actors and the refugees themselves. With the non-state actors at the centre of this cycle, a transformative element of social protection may not be a near-future goal due to policy related issues that stretch beyond their capability in terms of provision and advocacy.

As earlier mentioned, refugee issues in Uganda are highly centralized and yet disguised as being decentralized. And despite this centralization there have been less benefits to follow this 'privilege'. It has been argued on several occasions that this tendency is only a backdoor to containing refugees for security purposes (Mulumba, Olema 2009, Milner, Loescher 2011). Yet non state actors are also torn between satisfying the needs of their donor countries as indicated by use of threats to withdraw funds in the spearheading of the SRS by UNHCR, narrated by a UNHCR manager in Geneva at the Convention Plus process;

a few of the European countries, especially the United Kingdom, had actually very clearly announced, publicly so, that if UNHCR was not a relevant organisation, and if the Convention did not make sense anymore, then probably they would have to find other ways...to see how their interests could be better taken care of by other institutions...So, we were sort of at this crossroads and we had to say – what can UNHCR do?...at the same time, we were faced with so many refugee crises in Africa, so we were saying – what can we do to make the burden sharing better, and how can we find solutions ? (Interview, 23/5/05 as cited in (Meyer 2006:18).

Although this paper does not discuss these constraints in detail, it is highly evident that these interests play a great role in influencing any policies and decisions taken about refugee issues, as cautioned by UNHCR's ExCom on the need to take into consideration the political context under which humanitarian refugee work takes place (Milner, Loescher 2011:9).

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

Reflecting on this study, its primary objective was to examine the extent to which non-state actors' Social Protection helps to mitigate refugee women's vulnerability and transform their lives. The main question which the study attempted to find answers to was understanding how non-state Social Protection has impacted on the wellbeing of refugee women in Kiryandongo refugee settlement. Therefore, this paper has attempted to discuss the role of non-state actors towards refugee women's social protection looking at how it has enabled women live better lives and be transformed from the social cultural constraints that impede women vulnerability.

It is evident that non state actors have played a great role despite refugees' view of what has been provided being expressed in dissatisfaction. At least refugees are assured of food, shelter, security and medical care although this may not be adequately provided to the desired standards. Emphasizing how little has been done to give them all they need and yet even what is provided, they say is '*not enough*', refugees' desires may not be possible, given the uncertainty of the war back in South Sudan that continues to force many to flee to Uganda thus creating more need in order to sustain the current influx of refugees. This dissatisfaction indicates gaps and therefore needs not to form basis for reluctance on the side of the providers and instead it ought to be a driving force to ensure that provisions are not merely soothing people's livelihoods but transformative in order to achieve a more sustainable approach towards refugee wellbeing.

More so, analysis of the policies and approaches used still indicate that non state actors' approach to refugee issues is still more of emergence response than seeking for durable solutions. However, even if this is the case, it is important to consider the fact that when refugees repatriate back to their countries, they would still require a stronger foundation to rebuild their lives and if their potentials have been enhanced through skills training, empowerment and equity, they become more productive in their new life. This had better therefore inform policies so that more sustainable provisions are given to refugees instead of mere safety nets as they await for durable solutions. In the meantime, it is more likely that a reasonable number of these refugees may remain in Uganda due to the relentless periodic outbreak of war in South Sudan as approximately 31%<sup>13</sup> of respondents (see graph in annex B) would rather stay in Uganda even if peace is restored in South Sudan. Note that this percentage is only representative of women and therefore trends would be higher if we look

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<sup>13</sup> Research household data in Kiryandongo settlement, July 2015

at the men, the children, and if we look at it at national level then the magnitude of the necessity for practical durable transformative solutions could be understood better.

This research thus concludes by arguing that the current social protection mechanisms employed by non-state actors are not transformative enough due to lack of a practical gendered lens into these programs treating refugees as a homogeneous population coupled by the absence of continuity in these provisions.

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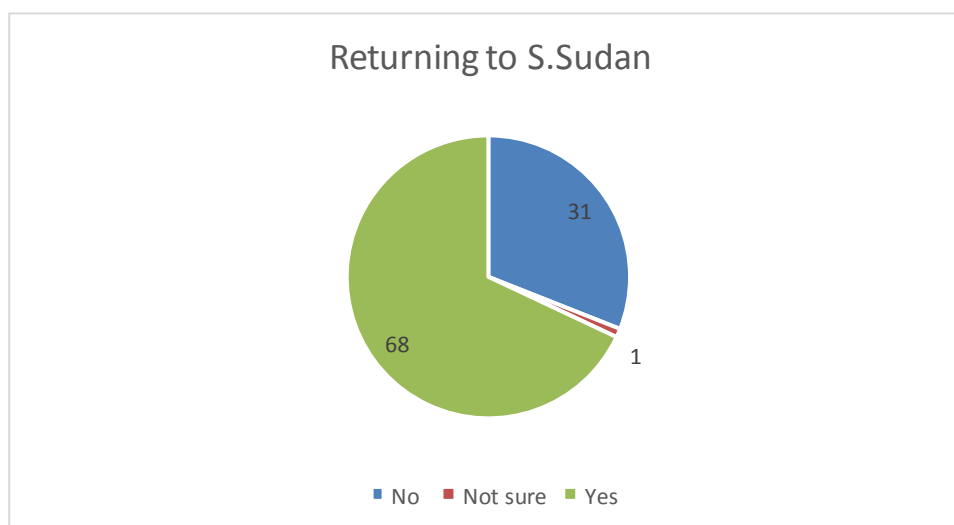
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## Annex

### Annex A: Semi structured questions for group discussions

1. Questions for women groups
  - **How do you describe your experience as women in refugee situation compared to the life back in South Sudan?**
  - What perceptions do you have towards the support given to you within the settlement by NGOs or any other non-state actors?
  - What coping mechanisms do you use as women for the survival of your families?
  - What are some of the challenges that are still persistent and you feel need urgent attention?
2. **Questions for the Local leaders Focus Group Discussion**
  - What role do you play as local leaders within the settlement?
  - How do non state actors help you in the execution of your roles within the settlement?
  - What are the challenges you identify as leaders, that affect women and how do you help them overcome these challenges?
  - What challenges do you face as leaders in executing your roles?

### Annex B: Comparison of willingness to return to S. Sudan



**Source:** Household survey data July 2015

## Annex C: Questionnaire for household survey

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY ON SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES

Dear respondent, the researcher is a student from the International Institute of Social Studies carrying out a survey on the impact of Non-State Social Protection on the livelihood of women. The answers in this survey will be treated with utmost confidentiality and the research is for academic purposes.

Please fill in or tick where applicable. Your response is highly appreciated. Thank you

#### Personal information

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your educational background? Illiterate / Elementary school / Secondary school / University
4. What was your financial situation in South Sudan? Low / Medium / High

#### Arrival and household information in Uganda

5. When did you arrive in Uganda? Year \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you gone back to South Sudan in the meanwhile? Yes / no
7. How many family members are with you here in Kiryandongo? number \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there family members under the age of 18? Yes / no - If yes, how many are they? number \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is your husband with you in the settlement? Yes / no
10. Are you registered with UNHCR? Yes / no - If no, why? I don't know how to register / I am afraid to reveal my personal information / I don't think it will be useful for me / I don't think I am a refugee / other \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you receive help since you arrived in Kiryandongo? Yes / no - If yes, which kind of help do you receive? From who? **Who** (specify if local people/families, religious associations, other local associations, UNHCR, NGOs, governmental services) **what** (food, non-food items, cash, health assistance, psychosocial assistance, and others)
12. Are you satisfied with the assistance received? Yes / no -If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Access to employment

13. Are you working in in the settlement? Yes / no - If yes, what is your job? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do children in your family (under 16 years old) go to school in the settlement? Yes / no / no children with me - If yes, which school do they attend? Public / private - If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Which are your most urgent needs that still need attention? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Would you go back to South Sudan? no, I will prefer to stay in Uganda / yes, as soon as the security situation is ok / yes, I will go back soon regardless of the security situation.

*Thank you for your time*