

FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND RAPID URBANISATION: MOVING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT CITIES AND TRANSLATING IDEAS INTO ACTION

Fifth Learning Exchange for the CRRF: Inclusive
Urban Development and Mobility – Regional
Network and Dialogue Action

6 – 8 June 2023
Koboko, Uganda



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Overview: This report provides highlights of the discussions at an in-person peer learning event co-organised by the Municipality of Koboko, ACAV, and Cities Alliance and financed by the European Union (EU) in Koboko, Uganda from 6 to 8 June 2023.

It was the fifth - and final - learning event of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action, which is implemented by Cities Alliance and financed by the EU through the European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa).

The theme for the event was *Moving Towards Inclusive and Resilient Cities in an Era of Rapid Urbanisation and Mobility: Translating Ideas into Action*. It provided partner cities with an in-depth look at how Koboko Municipality has used the Action to transform itself - using inclusive, participatory, and sustainable strategies to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery for migrants and host community alike.

Through the Action, Koboko Municipality received direct support to address severely stressed or pre-existing low coverage of basic services and a high concentration of refugees. The municipality implemented the project together with ACAV. The activities in Koboko represented the second of three components of the Action, which also included a similar pilot project in Assosa, Ethiopia and establishing a regional network of cities.

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Koboko, Uganda

Summary



Cities are the first point of entry for most migrants and displaced persons seeking work, shelter, and safety, and where they will attempt to integrate and realise their aspirations for a better life. Whether they do so, or live excluded from opportunities in the city, depends on how a city responds to migration.



The CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action is supporting secondary cities in the Horn of Africa to manage and integrate refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). It has three components: 1) Creating a regional network that will help cities facing similar migration-related challenges share experiences and strengthen policy development for greater social cohesion; and 2) piloting approaches to refugee management and integration in Koboko, Uganda and Assosa, Ethiopia. The Action is implemented by Cities Alliance through its Cities and Migration Programme and financed by the EUTF.



This peer learning event in Koboko was the fifth in a series of five events organised through the Action. Partner cities had the opportunity to learn more about the work that has taken place in Koboko since the Action launched in 2019. It was a response to severe challenges Koboko Municipality was facing with a rapidly increasing population combined with limited budget allocations from the central government and other resource constraints.



The Action provided direct support to the Koboko Municipal Council to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery. ACAV provided technical support to Koboko Municipality to develop and implement inclusive, participatory and sustainable strategies for urban planning and service delivery, and they implemented the project together.



Panel sessions highlighted the Action's work and reflected on the future of the regional network. Each day, site visits gave participants the chance to experience first-hand the results of the activities in Koboko.

Participants

UGANDA

ARUA

Draecabo Trinity Ceaser, President, Arua City Development Forum and Private Sector Representative
 Hellen Drabrezu, Host Community Representative, ACTogether
 Cornelius Jobile, Deputy Town Clerk, Arua
 Wadri Sam Nyakua, Mayor, Arua City Council
 Solomon Osakan, Senior Settlement Office Department of Refugees, Arua
 Stella Wawa, Dean of Students, Muni University

KAMPALA

Stephen Koma, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Local Government
 Ssonko Moses, Senior Economist and Desk Officer, Ministry of Finance

KOBOKO

Remo Ajobe, Secretary for Works and Technical Services, Koboko Municipal Council
 Florence Ajonye, Deputy Mayor, Koboko Municipal Council
 Chandiga Amos, Committee Chairperson Social Services, Koboko Municipal Council
 Banga Joseph Ata, Mayor, Koboko South Division
 Charles Ayume, Member of Parliament, Koboko Municipality
 Joel Azabo, Focal Point, EU Programme, Koboko Municipality
 Mambu Ashirafu, District Chairman, Koboko District
 Ambassador James Baba, Member of Parliament, Koboko County
 Emmanuel Baiga, Speaker, Koboko Municipal Council
 Malish Bonjira Asu, Refugee Representative, Executive Director, South Sudanese Refugees Association (SSURA), Koboko Municipality
 Dapala Donald, Representative and Chairman of LC 1 Koboko MC
 Abdu Elly, Mayor, Koboko West Division
 Dramuke Idoru, Representative of the Councillors Koboko Municipal Council
 Mambo A. Ismail, Project Accountant, Koboko Municipality
 Mawa James, Mayor, Keri Town Council, Koboko District
 Kenyi Naftali, Mayor Oraba Town Council Koboko District
 Musa Noah, Member of Parliament, Koboko North
 Olinga Tom Otukol, Resident District Commissioner, Koboko District
 Lemeriga Sabino, Mayor Koboko North Division
 Mambo Simon, Secretary for Social Services, Koboko Municipal Council
 Aate Sharifah Taban, Member of Parliament, Koboko District
 Sanya K.F. Wilson, Mayor, Koboko Municipality

WEST NILE REGION

Chandiga Ceaser, Mayor, Moyo Town Council
 Dritoo Fred, Town Clerk, Inde Town Council, Madi Okollo District
 Ngiriker Geoffrey, Mayor, Nebbi Municipal Council

Ismail Gift, Mayor, Moyo Town Council
 Muzayidi Khemis, Mayor, Arua Central City Division
 Mangapi Lawrence, Mayor, Adjumani Town Council
 Anguyo Tom Male, Yumbe Town Council
 Avutia Malon, Mayor, Ayivu City Division
 Abdul Mahamoud Mutalib, District Chairman, Yumbe District/ Representative of Local Governments to CRRF Steering Committee Uganda
 Atiku Nixon, Town Clerk, Maracha Town Council
 Innocent Onegi, Mayor Phaidha Town Council
 Warom Patrick, Mayor, Pakwachi Town Council
 Wibale Wilson, Town Clerk, Ledju Town Council, Terego District

NGOs

Iraku Bashir, Coordinator, Community Empowerment and Rehabilitation Initiative for Development (CERID)
 Elly Gift, Program Coordinator, Support Trust for Africa Development (STAD)
 Mawa John, Programme Coordinator, Support for Peace, Education and Development Programme (SPEDP)
 Rahuman Kerim, Programme Coordinator, Umoja Rescue Agency (UREA)
 Gizelle Kapalata, Coordinator, Congolese Refugees Association (CORA)
 Sumbua Naima, Executive Director, Koboko Civil Society Network (KOCISONET)
 Ropani Sauda, Executive Director, Partners in Community Transformation (PICOT)
 Benson Khemis Soro, Executive Director, Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI)

PARTNERS

Ejibua Sam Anguzu, Resident Programme Manager, VNG International
 Arayo Esther Mirriam, Senior Field Officer, REACH Initiative
 Theodore Jaspers, Assessment Officer, IMPACT Initiatives
 Ayiko Joel Nackson, West Nile Regional Coordinator Speakers Association
 Elias Ngugi, Protection Officer, UNHCR
 Moses Akuma Odims, Executive Secretary, West Nile Development Association (WENDA)
 Hon. Anyama Williams, District Chairman, Moyo District/ Chairman WENDA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

David Ckukia Kakwa, Chief, Ingbokolo
 Denaya Remo, Accountant, Chefferie des Kakwa, Ituri Province
 David Tsukia Likambo, Chief, Chefferie des Kakwa, Ituri Province

ETHIOPIA

Abdikadir Mohamed Aden, Host Community Governor, Kebribeyah/Jigjiga
 Mustefa Mohammed Ahmed, Host Community Representative, City and Social Affairs, Assosa
 Friezer Feleke Guggsa, Refugees and Returnee Services (RSS), Assosa
 Abdulkarim Abdurehim Hojele, Mayor, Assosa
 Keder Muhumed Ibrahim, Head, Jigjiga City Administration Mayor's Office
 Mohamed Hassen Ibrahim, Refugee Representative, Jigjiga
 Andualem Tenaw, Ethiopian Cities Association, Addis Ababa

Medhanit Mulugeta Tesfaye, Somali Region Coordinator, Refugee and Returnee Services, Jigjiga
Hashim Fuad Yonis, Senior NGO Advisor, Jigjiga Mayor's Office

KENYA

Peter Akono, Minister, Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Areas Management, Turkana County

Abubakar Rugamba Kabura, Youth and Refugee Representative, Kakuma Settlement

Victor Lekaram, Director, Urban Areas Management, Turkana County

Maimunah Melisa, Host Community Representative, Kakuma Settlement

SOMALIA

Mohamed Omar Abdi, Mayor, Gabiley

Ahmednur Fahie Ali, Protection Department Leader, National Authority for the Refugees and Displaced People Office, Gabiley

Zakaria Dahir, Senior Advisor, Vice President of Somaliland, Hargeisa

Mohamoud M. Duale, Civil Society Representative, Takulo Somali Community

Hibo Hassan Harun, Director of the Planning Department and Representative of the Mayor, Gabiley Municipality

Omar Mohamoud Qayaad, Civil Society Representative, Director, Horn Migrants Support Organisation (HOMSO), Borama

Mohamed Ahmed Warsame, Mayor, Borama

PROJECT PARTNERS

Charlotte Brown, London School of Economics

Jerome Byukusenge, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Yaoundé

Angelo Di Giorgi, Programme Officer, Migration Management and Displacement, EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window

Bongo Patrick Namisi, Head of Programme/Project Manager, Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari (ACAV), Uganda

Charles Obila, Migration Officer, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Djibouti

Meseret Teferi, Senior Grants Manager, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Ethiopia Programme

Yayehyirad Yemaneh, Assosa Field Coordinator, IRC, Ethiopia Programme

CITIES ALLIANCE

Anais Fasano, Senior Administrative Assistant, Cities Alliance

Brigitte Hoermann, Acting Head of Global Programmes and Senior Migration Officer, Cities Alliance

Caroline Kihato, Technical Expert to the Cities Alliance and Visiting Fellow, Oxford Department of International Development (ODID), Oxford University, and Director, Frame45

Loren Landau, Technical Expert to the Cities Alliance, Oxford University and University of the Witwatersrand

Florence Lozet, Project Manager and Urban Analyst, Cities Alliance

Samuel Mabala, Country Urban Adviser, Cities Alliance, Uganda

Tsigireda Tafesse, Country Urban Adviser, Cities Alliance, Ethiopia

The CRRF - Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action

Context for the Action

Today, an estimated 60 per cent of refugees globally live in urban or semi-urban areas instead of camps or purpose-built rural settlements, which are often geographically separated from host communities with limited access to livelihoods. The Horn of Africa hosts one fifth of the world's refugees. These include urban-assisted refugees who have been moved to urban areas for protection concerns or medical treatment; refugees who can sustain themselves economically; unregistered or self-settled refugees living in urban areas; and refugees living in settlements or camps.¹

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework developed out of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which reaffirmed the importance of international refugee rights, including the need to strengthen their support and protection. The Declaration called on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to apply the CRRF in specific situations that featured large-scale movements of refugees in order to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The CRRF was incorporated into the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the non-binding global framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing which recognises that solutions to refugee situations require international cooperation.² The CRRF is currently being rolled out in Africa, Asia, and South America.

1 EUTF Action Fiche for the Implementation of the Horn of Africa Window T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/bt05-eutf-hoa-reg-67_-_crrf_urban_development_and_mobility_incl_rider.pdf.

2 Hammond L., et al. 2020. *Comprehensive Refugee Responses in the Horn of Africa: Regional leadership on education, livelihoods and durable solutions*. Research & Evidence Facility, EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. Available at: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-homresearch/files/2020/03/CRRF-report.pdf>.

Delivering the CRRF in the Horn of Africa

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) plays an important role in supporting the delivery of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa. The 2017 Nairobi Declaration forms the basis of IGAD's regional approach, which is leading to an incremental shift towards greater freedom of movement for refugees. Many are attracted to urban areas, presenting new sets of challenges and opportunities for service delivery and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods and protection.³

Perceptions of the CRRF vary from country to country, and its implementation relies on national policy coordination and institutional arrangements. Urban displacement is, however, only partially reflected in national policies. Support to host governments in the region through the CRRF remains mainly centred on camps or rural settlements, with little attention paid to

urban and semi-urban areas that host (or will host) an increasing number of refugees.

Additionally, secondary cities in the Horn of Africa are rarely represented in international discussions and panels to share the challenges and opportunities they face when trying to implement global agendas, such as the GCR or the CRRF. When questioned, municipalities point out that even if national plans are adopted, local implementation faces challenges in the availability of technical, human, financial, and logistical resources.

Refugees and host community representatives generally believe that they are not consulted enough and not well integrated into urban policies.⁴ In most cases, growing populations are not matched by increased municipal budgets, and host governments argue that they do not have the necessary financial resources to fully extend the CRRF at the local level. –

The Nairobi Declaration: A Fundamental Change in the Approach to Refugees



The 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia has been central to delivery of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa.



In the Declaration, heads of state and governments committed to improving protection space and solutions for displaced people and providing educational and economic opportunities for some four million refugees and forcibly displaced people residing in the region.⁵



It represented a dramatic turn towards addressing displacement and migration from a development perspective, rather than a humanitarian one.



The Nairobi Declaration was originally formulated to address the protracted situation of Somali refugees, but it has since been extended to cover all refugee situations in the region.

³ EUTF Action Fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/bt05-eutf-hoa-reg-67_-_crrf_urban_development_and_mobility_incl_rider.pdf.

⁴ Annex 1: Workshop survey.

⁵ IGAD. 2017. Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees. Available at: <https://igad.int/communique/1519-communique-special-summit-of-the-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-durable-solutions-for-somali-refugees>.

Overview of the Action

The rationale of the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action is that by strengthening the capacity of local authorities to deliver services and undertake contingency planning, refugees and their host communities will benefit from better services and a better quality of life. This will also improve the ability of local authorities to implement the CRRF and other global agendas.

The Action has selected municipalities from four partnering countries in the Horn of Africa to address the dual challenges of the rising number of displaced people and wider urbanisation.

It is divided in three components: a regional network and dialogue, and two pilot projects (one in Koboko, Uganda and a second in Assosa, Ethiopia). All three components aim to equip secondary cities with tools to increase the safety and well-being of displaced populations and their host communities in urban or peri-urban settings. By providing knowledge and technical assistance to local authorities and increasing the participation of displaced persons and host communities in the city's economic and social life, the project seeks to reduce inequalities between these groups and improve their living conditions.

The project is financed by the EUTF for Africa, which provides joint, flexible, and quick support to complement political dialogue, development cooperation programmes, humanitarian assistance, and crisis response assistance. This support is always in close cooperation with the beneficiaries.

Municipal governments have become key actors in managing refugees.

Cities Alliance is the global partnership fighting urban poverty and promoting the role of cities. With its Global Programme on Cities and Migration, Cities Alliance has made a long-term commitment to support secondary cities in low-income countries that are managing large inflows of migrants and refugees.

Components of the CRRF

COMPONENT 1: Regional Network and Dialogue

The first component responds to the needs of secondary cities in the Horn of Africa that are currently experiencing a high influx of refugees and involuntary migrants seeking access to social services, housing, livelihoods, and basic support. It establishes a regional network and platform for dialogue among seven secondary cities: Arua and Koboko in Uganda, Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya, Assosa and Jigjiga in Ethiopia, and Gabiley and Borama in Somalia.

The network and dialogue are supporting secondary cities in strengthening their voices and bringing national and international attention to their needs. The cities also have the opportunity to advocate at global debates such as the Global Refugee Forum, which increases their international presence, improves their technical knowledge and capacities, and helps them play their fundamental role in successfully implementing global agendas.



The Action includes refugee and host community representatives in the dialogue, allowing them to discuss their needs, challenges, and potential solutions with the appropriate municipal, national and regional actors and engage in local planning activities. Peer learning with neighbouring cities facing similar challenges is informing cities on solutions for improving living conditions and opportunities for both refugees and host populations, reducing the risk of conflict, and providing access to basic services for all vulnerable city residents.

Cities Alliance is implementing the regional network and dialogue component. Five peer-learning events, hosted by partner cities and facilitated by Cities Alliance, are being organised to include displaced and vulnerable host communities in urban policy discussion. The events feature a discussion of cities' needs and a technical training session to meet the identified needs.

This report documents the fifth peer-learning exchange in Koboko, Uganda following previous exchanges in Arua, Uganda (March 2021), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (November 2021), Kampala, Uganda (March 2022) and Lodwar, Kenya (January 2023).⁶

COMPONENT 2: Technical Assistance to Koboko Municipality

This component responds to the current need to provide direct support to municipalities hosting a significant number of refugees. It directly supports the Koboko Municipal Council (KMC) to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery. The KMC is implementing this component with technical advice from ACAV.

According to a 2018 study initiated by the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), self-settled refugees make up about 26 per cent of Koboko's estimated population.⁷ The study also underscores that insufficient

local budget allocation is impacting the municipality's ability to deliver adequate public services.

The initiative is strengthening local structures instead of creating parallel support systems. On a broader level, it is directly involving urban authorities to strengthen the inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the economic and social life in urban settings across the region. It is also improving livelihoods and greater access to quality basic services for refugees and host populations in select urban settings.

COMPONENT 3: Promoting Inclusive Urban Development in Assosa, Ethiopia

Implemented by the IRC, the third component is supporting Assosa Municipality to strengthen public, private, and civil society service delivery capacities, resources, and infrastructure for host communities and displaced populations in its urban and peri-urban settings.

One of the least developed urban areas in Ethiopia,⁸ Assosa is a central crossroads for migrants within Ethiopia or along the northern migration route. Its population has almost tripled in the past 12 years, straining access to basic services.

Assosa hosts five refugee camps, and international interventions mainly target refugees and some small surrounding host communities – leaving room for potential conflicts over already scarce resources.

This component's activities are providing greater access to quality basic services, including water and sanitation, health, waste collection, and protection for displaced and host populations in Assosa. Better access to services will enhance social cohesion and community dialogue and help promote socio-economic development. The component also strengthens the inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the city's economic and social life.

⁶ All of the reports are available on the Cities Alliance website at <https://www.citiesalliance.org/inclusive-urban-development-and-mobility-regional-network-and-dialogue>.

⁷ VNG. 2018. *Survey Highlights on Self-Settled Refugees in Koboko Municipal Council Empowering Refugee Hosting Districts in Uganda: Making the Nexus Work*. Available at: <https://www.vng-international.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/NEXUS-Summary-Self-settled-refugees-Koboko-MC-nov-2018.pdf>.

⁸ EUTF Action Fiche for the implementation of the Horn of Africa Window T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/bt05-eutf-hoa-reg-67_-_crf_urban_development_and_mobility_incl_rider.pdf.



Achievements of the Action

Koboko, Uganda

Since the Koboko workshop was the last in a series of five learning events organised through the Action, several sessions focused on the initial achievements, which have been considerable. An EU InfoPoint

conference was live streamed presenting the results to a global audience, and participants reflected on the outcomes at the international and local levels as well as their own personal experiences.

InfoPoint: Urban Displacement Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: What is the Role of Secondary Cities?



The EU's International Partnerships InfoPoint organised a live-streamed presentation to share the results of the Action. It was moderated by Samuel Mabala, Cities Alliance's Country Urban Advisor for Uganda.



The panel featured remarks from the international perspective (EU, UNHCR, and Cities Alliance) and the local perspective (Koboko Municipality, SSURA, and the Koboko host community). On an international level, the Action is helping improve the implementation of global agendas locally, highlighting the role of secondary cities in managing migration, and providing a model for other cities to replicate. At the city level, the Action has created concrete improvements in the lives of refugees, fostered inclusive participation, and provided a means for leveraging additional funding.



"One of the refugee students who benefited from the skills development programme learned poultry, then started his own business and funded his schooling. Most inspiring, he was able to buy a piece of land. His life has totally changed. This project has impacted the lives of individuals in ways that you cannot imagine."



- Samuel Mabala, Cities Alliance Urban Adviser for Uganda

The InfoPoint can be viewed at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/events/infopoint-conference-urban-displacement-trends-sub-saharan-africa-what-role-secondary-cities-2023-06-07_en

The International Perspective

In welcome remarks at the InfoPoint, **Jorge Pereira Pinon**, Head of Sector for International Partnerships for regional and multi-country programming in Sub-Saharan Africa at the EU, noted that the EU wanted an approach that combined migration with urban development as the basis for the Action.

The EU considers the Action to be a success for three reasons:

1. It has improved the way the EU and international community actors are following the recommendations of the Global Refugee Forum and implementing the localisation agenda in the region.
2. It has allowed for an adjustment to a new reality in terms of displacement, namely the role secondary cities play in managing migration and the challenges they face with limited means.

3. It has provided a more comprehensive understanding of migration-related issues by implementing a wide range of activities to improve social cohesion and protection of vulnerable populations, as well as promoting political life.

"We need to think on how to expand and build on what has been done up to now in Uganda and Ethiopia. We at the EU are already working on a future programme that will continue what the Action did but also expand it to other countries: DRC, Somalia, South Sudan," Pinon said.

Katie Ogwang, Senior Protection Officer at the UNHCR Regional Bureau for East, Horn, and Great Lakes Regions of Africa, noted that the drivers of migration in the region have changed over 20 years, from mostly conflict to include climate change, economic hardship, and growing populations.

UNHCR's Claire Roberts Lamont mentioned the upcoming Global Refugee Forum and expressed a strong desire to include a delegation of cities to highlight the important work secondary cities are doing to implement the Global Compact for Refugees.

“We want to highlight the important work going on in Arua and Koboko. Arua, for the representation of refugees on its municipal councils, and Koboko for the broad commitment to ensure refugees can access local services,” Lamont noted.

Laura Lima, Head of Global Programmes at Cities Alliance, shared three key lessons Cities Alliance has learned from its programming on migration:

1. Recognise that Refugees and IDPs are not a burden, but part of the solution. The most successful projects bring together IDPs, refugees, and the local government for dialogue. The projects in the Horn of Africa have shown that including refugees in planning strengthens the social fabric.
2. Work at the most local level with existing and informal structures. Whether host community or IDP, there are daily challenges that are part of the shared local experience. Learn how to respond to visible, tangible, local goals. West Africa saving groups show that once refugees are mobilised around a tangible goal, they will come to the table.
3. Be realistic about a city's capacity and resources, and what organisations can provide. This is why sharing knowledge between cities is so important. Cities share realities that go beyond the political into the cultural.

“We have a time imperative to act before it is too late. This is an issue that goes beyond borders, beyond continents,” Lima said.

The Local Perspective

The Mayor of Koboko, Sanya Wilson said in his presentation at the InfoPoint that Koboko's ability to receive direct funding from the EU was transformational and allowed the city to accomplish in two years what otherwise would have taken 40.

He noted that Koboko began the journey by procuring data. As mayor, he saw there was pressure on services and kept asking why. The city realised they had urban

refugees in their communities, but they did not know how many. Koboko engaged VNG International to conduct a comprehensive survey on refugees and IDPs in the city, which showed the need for interventions in education, health, and livelihood. Koboko took the data and developed proposals that it presented to NGOs and embassies. As a result, Koboko Municipality became the first city in Uganda to receive direct funding from a donor.

Mayor Wilson said the key to Koboko's success was that the city had discretion over the funding. This allowed Koboko to do everything locally – prioritise, plan, and build capacity, which brought a sense of ownership, inclusiveness, and sustainability.

“It was not dictated to us,” Mayor Wilson said of how to implement the funding. “I think that is the model that has enabled us to own this project, for us to say we need to do it in the right way.”

Koboko involved everyone in the process of prioritising, so everyone knew what the city wanted and what people needed. “Because of everybody's involvement, 94 per cent of the community in Koboko is aware of the projects we're doing. It's the most supervised project we've had in Koboko Municipality,” he noted.

As a result of the EU Action, Koboko constructed 10 modern schools, fully funded with toilets. The new facilities have brought a change in attitude among students, who feel like they need to attend school. A modern lab is exposing students to the sciences and providing specialised education.

The city built a modern health centre with EU funding, improving access to health care for refugees and host community. Koboko has leveraged this investment to obtain additional funding from the government of Uganda to further expand the centre. Mayor Wilson remarked that the long-term plan is to establish a school of nursing.

To promote livelihoods, the city built a market and provided opportunities for business and skill development. Funding for skilling has been included in Koboko's Five-Year Development Plan.



“I strongly recommend this model of funding to other local governments, with an angle of technical support. I recommend a model where the local governments will be able to work with community-based organisations and refugees. It is really all about inclusiveness. It is very simple and can be replicated anywhere.”

- Sanya Wilson, Mayor of Koboko.

Malish Bonjira Asu, Executive Director of SSURA in Koboko and himself a refugee, said that the new trauma healing centre established through the Action has played a major role in promoting peaceful coexistence among refugees and host community.

“We sit together to share experiences. Counseling is greatly needed after stressful situations. The trauma centre has strengthened the relationship between refugees and hosts, because it is from there we get to the host community, and it has brought us together,” Asu said at the InfoPoint.

He noted that the Action has empowered refugee women, enabling them to gain financial literacy and start businesses, so they can take care of their families and pay school fees.

“There is evidence of sustainable integration, and this is all the result of this project and good leadership by the municipality and the community for welcoming them,” Asu said.

Stella Wawa, the Dean of Students of Muni University and a representative for the host community, said that initially the community regarded refugees as competitors because the burden on resources was so great. However, the host community benefited from all the EU interventions, especially livelihood training, which helped change that view.

“We are able to appreciate cultural diversity. Given an opportunity, we are very willing to continue supporting because we have seen the benefits,” she said.

By the Numbers: Key Outcomes of the Action in Koboko



Services

- 94% of the population consider access to KMC services to be inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- 89% of the population felt KMC services are responsive.
- 53.2% of the population reported increased access to KMC services, up from 44%.



Education

- The pupil-to-classroom ratio declined from 128:1 to 114:1 (Uganda’s national standard is 55:1).
- The pupil-to-latrine ratio declined from 138 to 128.
- The school dropout rate declined from 8.1% to 5.8%
- Teacher attendance increased from 89% to 96.2%.



Health care

- Outpatient department attendance improved from 36% to 73%.
- Antenatal care (ANC) attendance increased from 4,543 to 8,931.
- Facility-based births increased from 270 to 333 per month.



Livelihoods

- 75% of the targeted 800 beneficiaries have increased income and livelihood opportunities.
- 47% of the trained youth have successfully joined the labour market.

The Participant Perspective

Caroline Kihato of Oxford University presented the results of participant surveys on the most important outcomes of the Action. She opened the discussion by saying one of the most important achievements of the Action is mainstreaming migration into secondary city development. It has brought a range of actors and partners together for projects to address issues secondary cities are facing and catapulted migration and secondary cities into the local, regional, and global agendas – a real feat.

Participants identified five important outcomes of the Action:

- **Learning by seeing.** The value of learning from people who are facing similar issues and seeing the projects in action was very important. This required dedication and commitment to seeing places that participants had not seen before.



“I went to Ethiopia. I didn’t know about planning beyond boundaries. Now I do. And I also have pride that I was in Addis, and I am proud that I have done this.”

– Dr Sanya K.F. Wilson, Mayor of Koboko

- **Building a policy community.** The Action has built a policy community at the local, municipal, and regional levels around how to address migration-related challenges and potential solutions. A community can talk to policy issues around migration in a way that individual cities or organisations often cannot, such as access to national policymakers and forums shaping international agendas.



“This is a chance to engage as equals and talk. I would not have had the chance to sit at the same table as the minister.”

– Maimunah Melisa, host community representative, Kenya

- **Mutual inspiration.** Holding the dialogues in the network cities, the places that are being discussed, inspired participants in a way they would not have been if they were sitting at a conference table in a capital city.



“We meet. We see each other. There is inspiration across the network.”

– Meseret Teferi, IRC Senior Grants Manager, Ethiopia



“We go and we learn, and then our learning cascades to a team.”

– Bongo Patrick Namisi, ACAV, Uganda



“More transformative than any textbook.”

– Tsigereda Tafesse, Cities Alliance

- **Leveraging.** Being part of something like this Action, with trusted institutions in the field, has had a ripple effect on how partners have been able to use the platform to access other support and resources. It has given participants the confidence and the voice to act, because they have done it before.



“These programmes can attract dollars. These are grants, these are not loans. That money comes in and it stays and circulates. It creates jobs.”

– Victor Lekaram, Director Urban Areas Management, Turkana

“

“The network has built bridges. It has facilitated refugee and host community into national policy making.”



- Peter Akono, Minister of Lands, Physical Planning, and Urban Areas Management, Turkana County

- **Institutionalisation (partial).** The process has built ownership amongst the partners and the different actors in the city, and it is a good beginning.

“

“The project belongs to the municipalities, not the international organisations.”



- Meseret Teferi, IRC Senior Grants Manager, Ethiopia

“

“You need to see this process as a relay race. I can start it, but the fourth person is the one who will finish. You need someone strong at the start, but you need to make sure there is also someone strong at the end.”

- Abdulkarim Abdurehim Hojele, Mayor of Assosa

Refugees As Contributors to the Local Economy

The Action has also highlighted the contributions that refugees are making to the local economies in West Nile. Moses Akuma Odims, Executive Secretary of WENDA, moderated a panel to discuss the issue and how local governments can tap into the opportunities they bring. The panel which included Cornelius Jobile, Deputy Town Clerk for Arua; Ejibua Sam Anguzu, Resident Programme Manager for VNG International; and Asara Specioza, Programmes Development Manager for SSURA.

The three panelists all confirmed that refugees have brought economic opportunity to their cities, whether through remittances, skills, and creating demand for products and services.

Cornelius Jobile, Town Clerk for Arua, noted that remittances from migrants have contributed significantly to the city's economy. Put to productive use, remittances can transform the local economy with investment in areas such as agriculture, real estate, trade, and savings. Migrants in Arua have also created strong demand for basic services, such as housing.

“When we look at migrants and refugees in our cities, let us look at them from a positive perspective. The contribution they are making in producing more goods and services can spark economic growth,” he said.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu of VNG International said that from a local government perspective, the refugee settlements in West Nile are transforming these areas into urban economic zones with infrastructure, schools,



health care, and services. People are starting to move to these locations because of these opportunities.

“We have asked communities to share their cultural diversity, and you can see there is a lot of cross-learning between refugees and host community. This adds value to the standards of living, the way people co-exist, the inclusiveness of society. This is socially, culturally, and politically healthy in any society. There are a lot of benefits that come with refugees.” – Ejibua Sam Anguzu, VNG International

Asara Specioza of SSURA remarked that there are many ways refugees are contributing to the local economy. They bring needed skills, pay taxes, and create businesses that employ both refugees and host community.

They are increasing the scale of agriculture with large-scale farming, especially vegetables, that supplies the market. Refugees have opened schools, pharmacies, health facilities, and hotels.

“If you look at refugees in a positive way, then I think the nation can grow. It will not only be the nationals contributing to the National Development Plans, but the refugees and migrants and change the economy,” she said.

The challenge for local governments is how to tap into these opportunities. All three panelists agreed that local governments are struggling to do so.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu suggested that one issue is the deeply rooted view that refugees are a group of vulnerable people who need the basics – emergency housing, health care, and food.

“When you talk about somebody being a refugee, nobody thinks about the potential of the individual,” he said. “Refugees who escaped conflict are much more economically empowered than the basics.”

Moreover, local governments should do more to prepare for the demand created by refugees and find ways for them to practice their skills. Many refugees have skills they are not using in fields such as digital education, health care, and technology. For example, some refugees are fully qualified teachers who are not able to work, while local teachers are overwhelmed, sometimes having as many as 400 students in a class. Many refugees are excellent farmers and they have invested in production and challenged the host communities to do the same.

Ejibua Sam Anguzu stressed that refugees are now stakeholders in the community, and it is important to bring them to the table and listen to them. He noted that refugee organisations are represented in some local governments, which is a positive development.

Cornelius Jobile pointed out that many local governments in West Nile are constrained by heavy centralisation and existing policy and regulatory frameworks.

“We need to revisit the policy and regulatory framework for the reception and management of refugees,” he said. “The policy may not recognise them, but for the urban local governments, they are here.”

He suggested that local governments might be given leeway to enact local legislation that does not contradict the national policy framework.

He also called for refugee advisors in the government structure to obtain their voice in planning and development, and more reliable data on refugees so local governments can deliver services.

“We need to take deliberate efforts to integrate refugees and migrants into all aspects of life.” – Cornelius Jobile

City Exhibition on Integration

Partner cities shared photos of some of their best integration practices, creating a mini city exhibition on integration that was displayed at the Koboko event.









Koboko, Uganda

Next Steps for the Cities Network

Prof. Loren Landau continued the discussion from the last workshop in Lodwar about institutionalising the network. His presentation was accompanied by a technical paper he co-authored with Kihato on “Sustaining Success: Toward a Network of the Future.”

The ultimate goal, he noted, is for the network to become a sustainable model for municipalities addressing migration and displacement.

“It is about trying to build these systems into what exists to make it natural, make it part of the norms so that it is not just you that is involved, but every municipality that is addressing migration and displacement has someone to look up to, can see this is the norm, and has the tools so they know what to do to address this,” he said.

For that to happen, it is important to get the institutional framework, logistics, and mechanisms

for funding right. The Action has shown that if cities have the data, they can attract additional funding on their own. It is important to develop concrete strategies for how to do that, and to determine projects and models the network should target for investment in the future.

The network should be built in a way that the network municipalities can become vanguards for norm-setting and incentivizing. This can start happening online by documenting activities, recording testimonials, plans, and essentially building a curriculum. An online platform is also a way to increase visibility for the network, build credibility, and highlight the good work that is being done.

One question is how to expand the network without diluting its energy. One possibility is to establish guidelines in terms of resources and policy change needed for potential members to ensure that all members are working towards sustainable communities that are equitable, inclusive, and fair.

He encouraged participating cities to work collectively to tell their stories and reach out to communities that are not ready to embrace migration and tell them: This is how you can make this work, and we are here to help. We have tools and people to help you take the first step and institutionalize it. He cited the case of Lodwar in Kenya which decided to embrace refugee presence and has new clinics, schools, and stores. That is a powerful message.

A final point to think about is how to turn the network into something that is locally owned. It needs a steering committee of participating cities to work with Cities Alliance and other organisations to manage the network and set an agenda. It is important to have someone - Cities Alliance in the short term, perhaps one of the participating cities in the long term - who can do some of the logistics, bring participants together, build online platforms, do the narrative storytelling, and build mechanisms to project the lessons from the local level to the global level.





Concluding Reflections

As the final learning event of the Action, the Koboko workshop was an opportunity for the cities and their partners to reflect on the Action, its achievements, and their experiences.

Reflections from the Cities

Mohamed Ahmed Warsame, Mayor of Borama, said the Action has changed his city's mindset, by learning about what other cities are doing to provide social services for refugees and the importance of efficient planning.

Mayor of Gabiley Mohamed Omar Abdi praised the Action for opening his city's eyes to planning and that they have a new direction. It helped local authorities begin to consider refugees, learn about their situation, and how to improve facilities. Another key lesson was that leadership is important for sustainability.

Mayor of Arua Wadri Sam Nyakua noted that the Action helped local authorities see what effective leadership can achieve and enhance that area. It made it easier to learn what other cities are doing to solve similar problems, and site visits helped his team visualise how it can be implemented in Arua. The Action also improved inclusion and social cohesion by making it easier to bring everyone into the process.

Mayor of Koboko Sanya Wilson welcomed the Action for giving Koboko the opportunity to translate the ideas the city had on paper into reality. He stressed the importance of sustainability and strong leadership, especially when advocating for an inclusive approach. "If you want to succeed, have an inclusive approach where everybody matters," Mayor Wilson said.

Koboko is serving as an inspiration for other cities and towns in Uganda, and its future is bright. Mayor Wilson said that the municipality has built the capacity to move forward on its own. Thanks to data, it knows what its problems are and is equipped to write proposals, look for funding, and provide value for money.

Brief perspectives from ACAV on the EUTF Regional network and dialogue

The EU funded pilot action in Koboko Municipality is a good example of how secondary cities hosting refugees can be helped to address the challenges of forced displacement and refugees, wider urbanization, provision of basic social services and promotion of peaceful co-existence among refugees/migrants and host communities.

The 5th regional event held in Koboko provided an opportunity for secondary cities/towns hosting refugees in the Horn of Africa to practically learn from each other, share experiences and best practices on how to translate ideas into actions locally, nationally and regionally in an era of rapid urbanization and mobility to benefit refugees and host communities.

Further still, the regional events provided an important platform to showcase and amplify the impressive results, lessons learnt and the impact of what the EU direct funding to Koboko Municipality with technical assistance from ACAV has done to improve urban planning, provision of basic social services and economic opportunities that mutually benefit refugees and host communities.

Koboko Municipality's case and the regional network are good models worth replicating and sustaining in the future towards building inclusive, peaceful and resilient cities that inspire and change lives of refugees and host communities.

Scaling up successful local and regional actions that are interlinked will light up more candles of hope and usher in opportunities for a better future for refugees and host communities in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Prepared and submitted by Bongo Patrick Namisi, Head of Programs/Project Manager, ACAV.

Reflections from Partners

Jerome Byukusenge of UCLG Africa welcomed the Action for creating an enabling environment for considering migration as a tool for local development. He emphasised three takeaways. First, local authorities must integrate migration into development dynamics and planning. Second, partnership is key; the Koboko Municipal Council has been a good example of effective, transparent leadership that developed partnerships with communities, community-based organisations, and refugees. It is important to replicate the best practices seen in Koboko. Third, there is a need to increase funding for border and intermediary cities which desperately need resources.

Solomon Osakan, Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda, noted that while national governments are fighting poverty, it is necessary to embrace communities to be actively involved. Refugees cannot be pushed away; if people need support, governments must find a way to support them.

Anyama Williams, Chairman of WENDA, said that the peer learning experience has demonstrated that hosting refugees and migrants presents both challenges and opportunities. It is also clear that leadership and governance play a critical role in creating the environment for integration and inclusion of refugees and migrants, which hinges on communities' focus on mutual interests and peaceful aspirations.

Angelo Di Giorgi, Programme Officer for the EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window, highlighted three aspects of the Action that he found especially praiseworthy: the importance of having a platform to discuss displacement and rapid urbanisation among peers, the multi-stakeholder approach that engaged local governments with refugees and communities, and a new way of understanding urban expansion that is planned, sustainable, and participatory.

Brigitte Hoermann, Senior Migration Specialist at Cities Alliance, said the Action has shown what trust in local organisations can achieve for vulnerable beneficiaries. “We can see that this achievement is based on a very special constellation, with a truly inspiring mayor leading the Koboko Municipality, a trusted and very capable technical advisor as ACAV, and an EU Delegation which recognised the opportunity to bring about change in how international development should be done at the local level,” she noted.

Bongo Patrick, Head of Programmes at ACAV, lauded the Action as a good example of how secondary cities can address forced displacement,

refugees, wider urbanisation, provision of basic services, and peaceful coexistence among communities. “Koboko Municipality’s case and the regional network are good models worth replicating and sustaining in the future towards building inclusive, peaceful and resilient cities that inspire and change lives of refugees and host communities,” he said. “Scaling up successful local and regional actions that are interlinked will light up more candles of hope and usher in opportunities for a better future for refugees and host communities in the Horn of Africa and beyond.”

Charles Obila, Coordinator, IGAD support platform, The regional network has played a significant role in localizing both the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees by promoting innovative solutions and protection of the affected population. It has also facilitated political representation and access to justice for migrants and refugees and enhanced social cohesion between migrants, refugees and host communities. Learning events with the network have also facilitated peer review and exchange of innovative solutions/practices.



Koboko, Uganda



Site Visits

Koboko, Uganda

The learning event featured site visits so that participants could experience the activities in Koboko firsthand and hear directly from beneficiaries. They visited primary schools (Apa, Birijaku, Gbukutu Islamic Orphanage, Nyangilia, and Teremunga); the Nyangilia Secondary School;

St. Charles Lwanga College; the Jabara Agricultural Vocational Institute; new health centres (Lasanga Health Centre III and Koboko Mission Health Centre III); Koboko Hospital's new mental health unit; the Isoko satellite market; and the new abattoir at Lomutu Cell.























Annex 1: Survey

Koboko, Uganda

Survey

Did the event meet your expectations?

1: Not at all | 2: To a small degree | 3: Normal

4: To some degree | 5: To a high degree

What specific topics would interest you most in future exchanges?

Will you be able to use the learning for your city level policy, planning or services?

1: Not at all | 2: To a small degree | 3: Normal

4: To some degree | 5: To a high degree

To what degree did this training (and the previous one) increased your capacity to address urban displacements?

Reflecting on the previous events, how do you think the regional city network is useful for your city/country?

Could you please mention the number of policy documents that integrated or will integrate approaches aimed to increase the safety, well-being, social economic inclusion and equality of displaced communities and host communities as a result of the project.

Are you actively using the previous sessions knowledge and expert papers? How?

Did the event meet your expectations?

“ Yes, the first term was in there I had no method to integrate refugees and host communities but now I get what I expected and learned from this dialogue. Thanks for CA and EU and other cities

- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

“ Yes, I have participated in two peer meetings and I can understand the need of these events for experience sharing and learning by seeing

- IRC, Meseret

Will you be able to use the learning for your city level policy, planning or services?

“ In Jigjiga, we need to be part of a project on the second round, get grantee and projects, for that I have the ability to use planning and services like participation of community and municipal

- Jigjiga City Administration Hashim

“ After attending the last events in my city, I would be able to prepare such policies such as waste management policy, urban expansion plan and also slum upgrading policy that approved by local councils

- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

“ The Koboko model is very much better in terms of capacity to the local gov in completing projects efficiently and effectively. In my country Ethiopia, the partners were implementing on behalf of the gov. Thus for the next time, I will take the lessons from Koboko and see how the city administration and CBOs can take the responsibility

- Mayor Assosa

“ After I have visited what Koboko municipality done, my mind set changed and want to re organise my approach for service delivery

- Borama Mayor





To what degree did this training (and the previous one) increased your capacity to address urban displacements?

“Of course, I got a lot of information such as reviewed the CRRF and integration policy in addition National Displaced policy in Somaliland made me localized and adding in the new 5 years plan 2023-2027

- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

“The training is highly important as I learn to create clear vision and capacity to the development of cities. After we return back to the city of Assosa we sill start to think out how we can start integrating the social system into urban displacement effects

- Mayor Assosa

“This training exposed my understanding on the important role played by local governments in supplementing gov efforts, that maybe limited to finance. This has opened my mind in thinking outside the box, without the box and given me confidence that humanity can address its challenges

“With advocacy and several engagement with players in the government, we can influence policy change to be inclusive and adapt what can work for everyone. This network has thought me that

- Host Community Rep, Melissa

Reflecting on the previous events, how do you think the regional city network is useful for your city/country?

“Very helpful, the learning and the network will help the cities of Ethiopia to learn from each other. Capacitate the local gov and interchange for the community members living and residing in the city host community, refugees and IBPs- Gabiley Municipality Hibbo

- IRC, Meseret









Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums

Hosted by
 **UNOPS**

Cities Alliance
UN House, Boulevard du Regent 37
1000 Brussels, Belgium

 www.citiesalliance.org
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