
**ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN CONFLICT MANAGERMENTS AMONG THE
REFUGEES IN UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF NYUMANZI REFUGEE SETTLEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

The refugee crisis has become one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of refugees in the world reached 25.4 million and that of asylum seekers reached 3.4 million in 2017. The study assessed the civil society organizations and conflict management among the refugees in Uganda and it focused on establishing the major causes of conflicts among the refugees, the contribution of civil society organization in resolving conflicts among the refugees and evaluating the relationship between civil society organizations and the welfare of the refugees as the objectives. The study was conducted from Nymanzi refugee settlement in Adjumani district within a period of two months and it assessed the contribution of civil society organizations on conflict management among the refugees for the last three years. Across sectional survey design was employed which enabled the respondents to provide the necessary data. The study complied of 60 respondents who was the selected refugees in the camp and simple random sampling was used in obtaining the sample. Results indicated that Civil society organizations ensured provision of employment to refugees, meaningful family life and livelihoods which all often improve the welfare of refugees. This was based on the majority of the respondents 57.7% who generally agreed with the statement and 26.9% who strongly agreed. However, 9.6% disagreed, 3.8% were not sure and finally 1.9% strongly disagreed. The results revealed that Civil society organizations helped the refugees to acquire meaningful family life and livelihoods this was based on majority of respondents 53.8% who agreed with the statement. 26.9% also supported by strongly agreeing, 9.6% disagreed, 5.8% strongly

disagreed and finally 3.8% were not sure. It was recommended that refugee settlements should be equipped with security to avoid internal and external fights especially those on borders.

Key words: civil society organizations and conflict managements

Background of the study

The refugee crisis has become one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of refugees in the world reached 25.4 million in 2017 and the number of asylum seekers 3.4 million. Globally, 28.8 million people are refugees or asylum seekers. Uganda is the third largest host country for refugees after Turkey and Pakistan, with refugees from South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Statistics show that there are currently 1,293,582 persons biometrically registered as refugees residing in Uganda. However, with additional refugees expected to arrive from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Burundi, there are likely to be 1.73 million refugees in Uganda by the end of 2020. Civil society organizations that support work in areas that cross several, and in some cases all, of UNDP's Democratic Governance focus areas are profiled in this section (Isaac et al., 2023). Many of these organizations are engaged in promoting policies and practices that support democracy. Their activities include providing electronic support to strengthen the civil society sector, promoting citizens' rights and engaging people in democratic processes, enhancing women's participation in politics, and supporting political dialogue and development in states in transition and managing refugee conflicts. .

Uganda, which borders Sudan and the DRC on its northern and northwestern borders, has a long history of forced migration in both directions. Uganda hosted large numbers of Sudanese and then Zairian refugees in the 1960s, while many Ugandans fled West Nile to these countries in the late 1970s. Uganda has again hosted Sudanese

since the late 1980s and the number of Congolese refugees has increased since the 1990s (Lwanyaga, 2022). Almost all Ugandans living in the northern border region were either refugees themselves or hosted refugees at some point in their lives.

The West Nile region has only recently emerged from a tumultuous and complex period in its history. The Arua region has only experienced peace since 2002, while the Moyo region has experienced a lesser degree of insurgency, but has been effectively cut off economically from the rest of the country by the UNRF I and II insurgencies as well as the LRA insurgency in neighboring northern Uganda districts (Niyonzima, 2023). Adjumani District has experienced severe insecurity during the ongoing conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (GoU). However, the highly uncertain conditions in other parts of the north are fortunately no longer present in West Nile. East of the Nile in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Apac, Katakwi, Soroti and Lira districts, up to 1.6 million are internally displaced as a result of the conflict, most of whom are trapped in "protected camp-like villages". Nymanzi refugee settlement, located approximately 200 km from Kampala, is one of the oldest settlements in the country, having already existed in 1952. Currently, there are 119,587 refugees from the DRC, Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and others. Although many refugees have been living in the area for several years, recent conflicts in surrounding countries are increasing the number of arrivals per day. Limited research on conflict has been conducted among refugees in Uganda (Shamim et al., 2023). However, available evidence shows that 67.4% of refugees in northern Uganda had symptoms of conflict. The situation in northern Uganda and particularly in the Nymanzi refugee settlements is unclear (Amir, 2020)

Problem statement

Although few are outright proponents of refugee camps, many regretfully conclude that they may be the only viable response to a wide range of refugee situations. 8 Freedom of movement is a prerequisite for enjoying a number of other rights. Its

absence undermines the economic and social rights of refugees and the livelihoods of refugees in the camps are thus severely limited compared to their peasant hosts, leading to conflicts between settler camps (Ninsiima et al., 2023).

In practice, it is evident that a significant number of refugees in Uganda evade the settlement framework by not registering their presence as refugees, or after doing so, leave the settlements illegally. The status of such "self-settled" refugees in Uganda is uncertain. UNHCR and other civil society organizations involved in ensuring the welfare of refugees in their settlement camps do not recognize or recognize or support them as refugees. As "foreigners" rather than refugees, they have an uncertain and ambiguous status, enjoying neither the rights of Ugandan citizens (unless they are able to obtain identity documents and "prove" themselves as nationals), nor the protection and limited material support of refugees in settlements. Nevertheless, they fully participate in all activities except political ones and contribute significantly to the economy of the areas where they live. In this context, a study was conducted to assess the role of civil society organizations in managing refugee conflicts.

Research objectives

- 1. To assess the causes of conflicts among the refugees in Nyumanzi refugee camp*
- 2. To establish the strategies developed by civil society organizations in managing conflicts among the refugees in Nyumanzi refugee camp*
- 3. To evaluate the relationship between civil society organizations and the welfare of refugees in Nyumanzi refugee settlement*

Research questions

- 1. What are the causes of conflicts among the refugees in Nyumanzi refugee settlement?*
- 2. What are the strategies developed by civil society organizations in resolving conflicts in Nyumanzi refugee settlement?*

3. *What is the relationship between civil society organizations and the welfare of refugees in Nyumanzi refugee settlement?*

Methodology

Research design

The study being descriptive and quantitative in nature and the researcher employed across sectional survey design which enabled the respondents to provide the necessary data on civil society organizations and conflict management among the refugees in Uganda. Quantitative approach was used because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a non-homogeneous entity and use of structured data that was collected using questionnaires into predetermined response categories that are easy to summarize, compare, and generalize. (Adam, j. & Kamuzora, F. 2008)

Study population

Study population in is the specific population about which information is desired (Amin 2005). The target population for this study complied 60 respondents who were the refugees and other stakeholders in the camp

Sampling Design

This section focuses on sample size and its determination together with the sampling techniques

Sample Size and Determination

A sample as a representative fragment of a population whose results can be generalized to the entire population (Krejcie & Morgan 1970). A sample size of 52 respondents is targeted for the study. The sample size was derived using a table for determining sample size by Krejcie & Morgan 1970.

Sampling Techniques and sampling methods

The researcher used simple random sampling, where a sample was selected from the population without bias that is to say, all respondents had an equal chance of being included in the sample size and purposive sampling were the individuals believed to be with the relevant information were selected to be included in the study sample.

Data collection methods

Questionnaire survey

The researcher used a structured questionnaire survey to obtain data to answer the research questions and objectives. A questionnaire survey is a collection of items to which a respondent is expected to react usually in writing while giving responses to the questions in the questionnaire (Amin 2005). The researcher used this method because it was effective while collecting data from a big sample within the shortest period possible at a lesser cost.

Research Instruments

The researcher used a questionnaire and interview guide as the research instruments while collecting data during the study.

Questionnaire

The researcher used structured self-administered questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. The self-administered questionnaires contain questions on the variables being examined. With this instrument, information required can be easily described in writing and data collected over a very short period of time. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions. Besides the questionnaire also helped in gathering information that is adequate and accurate.

Data Analysis

After the collected data from the field being compiled, sorted, and coded to have the required quality, accuracy and completeness. The researcher used SPSS for analysis to find the role of civil society organization on conflict management among the refugees (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Findings on causes of conflicts among the refugees in Nyumanzi Refugee settlement camp

On assessing the respondents' awareness on about the conflicts that exist among the refugees, majority of the respondents were aware that there are several conflicts

that exist among the refugees in Nyumanzi refugees' settlement camp as reflected in the figure below.

Figure 1 Pie-chart showing findings on the awareness about the conflicts among refugees

Source, Researcher's construct 2020

Results in the pie-chart above indicate that majority of the respondents 94% had awareness about the conflicts that exist among the refugees and only 4% lacked awareness about the subject.

Respondents who had awareness about the existing conflicts among the refugees were asked to briefly identify some of the conflicts that exist among the refugees in the camp and it was found that racism and nepotism are rampant among the refugees. However, there are other conflicts which were revealed and these included the interpersonal conflicts most especially among those who have some small businesses in the camp and tribalism have also taken a greater position in destructing peace among the refugees.

Figure 2 Graph showing factors for increasing conflicts

Source, Researcher's construct 2020

Figure 2 results show that tribalism and political factors are the major factors for increasing conflicts among the refugees in their settlement camps. Under these factors, it was discovered that the political influence on allocating land for cultivation to the refugees which is based on some terms and conditions leads to increase in conflicts over land. With tribalism, majority of respondents forwarded that due to the level of illiteracy among the refugees, majority of the refugees lack civilization and still rigid of not changing their living conducts and tend to promote tribalism which led to increase in conflicts among the refugees.

Strategies employed by civil society organizations in managing conflicts among the refugees in settlement

Table 1 showing different strategies employed by civil society organizations in managing conflicts among the refugees in settlement

	<i>Statement</i>	<i>SA</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>NS</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>SD</i>	
		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Efforts to integrate services to refugees into district structures to ensure effective service delivery</i>	18	34.6%	23	44.2%	3	5.8%	6	11.5%	2	3.8%
<i>B</i>	<i>UNHCR DAR strategy considers the enjoyment of refugee rights a pre-requisite if developmental approaches to refugee assistance are to be successful</i>	14	26.9%	30	57.7%	2	3.8%	5	9.6%	1	1.9%
<i>C</i>	<i>care and maintenance programs have been</i>	17	32.7%	27	51.9%	2	3.8%	4	7.7%	2	3.8%

	<i>established to improve the conditions of life for refugees</i>										
<i>D</i>	<i>The civil society organizations ensure participation of refugees in the distribution of the few available resources</i>	13	25.0%	27	51.9%	3	5.8%	6	11.5%	3	5.8%

Source, Researcher's construct 2020

From table 1 showed that majority of the respondents agreed that Efforts to integrate services to refugees into district structures to ensure effective service delivery. These were supported by 34.6% who strongly agreed. However, some of the respondents disagreed with the statement and the rest were not sure.

UNHCR DAR strategy considers the enjoyment of refugee rights pre-requisite if developmental approaches to refugee assistance and this was based on the majority of the respondents 57.7% who agreed. 26.9% strongly agreed and 3.8% were not sure whereas 9.6% disagreed and 1.9% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Results in table 4.1 also indicated that care and maintenance programs have been established to improve the conditions of life for refugees. This was based on the majority of the respondents 51.9% who agreed with the statement and 32.7% who supported by strongly agreeing to the statement. However, 7.7% and 3.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively whereas finally 3.8% were not sure about the subject.

Results indicate that majority of the respondents 51.9% generally agreed and 25% strongly agreed that the civil society organizations ensure participation of refugees

in the distribution of the few available resources. However, some of the 11.5% disagreed, 5.8% strongly disagreed and finally 5.8% were not sure of the statement.

Relationship between civil society organizations and the welfare of refugees in Nyumanzi refugee camp

Table 2 Showing findings on the relationship between civil society organization and welfare of refugees

	Statement	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Civil society organizations provide access to education to the refugees in the camp	9	17.3%	28	53.8%	4	7.7%	7	13.5%	4	7.7%
B	Civil society organizations ensure provision of employment, meaningful family life and livelihoods	14	26.9%	30	57.7%	2	3.8%	5	9.6%	1	1.9%
C	Civil society organizations have helped the refugees to acquire meaningful family life and livelihoods	14	26.9%	28	53.8%	2	3.8%	5	9.6%	3	5.8%
D	Civil society organizations ensure refugees enjoy the	16	30.8%	23	44.2%	2	3.8%	7	13.5%	4	7.7%

	rights of Ugandan citizens										
E	Civil society organizations help refugees with business interests to get involved in trade to ensure that they can a living	13	25.0%	27	51.9%	3	5.8%	6	11.5%	3	5.8%

Source, Researcher's construct 2020

Results in table 2 show that majority of the respondents 53.8% generally agreed that Civil society organizations provide access to education to the refugees in the camp which improves on the welfare of the refugees in settlement camps in terms of promoting literacy and standard of livings. This was also supported by 17.3% who strongly agreed with the statement. However, 13.5% disagreed, 7.7% strongly disagreed and finally 7.7% were not sure.

Results indicated that Civil society organizations ensures provision of employment to refugees, meaningful family life and livelihoods which all often improve the welfare of refugees. This was based on the majority of the respondents 57.7% who generally agreed with the statement and 26.9% who strongly agreed. However, 9.6% disagreed, 3.8% were not sure and finally 1.9% strongly disagreed. Table 2 results revealed that Civil society organizations have helped the refugees to acquire meaningful family life and livelihoods this was based on majority of respondents 53.8% who agreed with the statement. 26.9% also supported by strongly agreeing, 9.6% disagreed, 5.8% strongly disagreed and finally 3.8% were not sure.

Findings showed that Civil society organizations ensure refugees enjoy the rights of Ugandan citizens aimed at improving their standards of living and their welfare based on the majority of the respondents 44.2% who generally agreed with the

statement followed by 30.8% who also supported by strongly agreeing. However, 13.5% disagreed, 7.7% strongly disagreed but 3.8% were not sure. Civil society organizations help refugees with business interests to get involved in trade to ensure that they can earn a living so as to improve their welfare. On this matter, 51.9% generally agreed, 25% strongly agreed, 11.5% disagreed and 5.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. However, 5.8% were not sure with the statement.

Conclusion of the study

Basing on the findings, it was concluded that the conditions for self-reliance do not exist in their settlement camps, many refugees conflict because of food insecurity in their settlement camps, reduction in the quantity and quality of social services available in the settlements, family increase without additional resources leading to theft in the camp, the manipulation of ethnic and regional identities by elites is a common factor across refugee camps conflicts and an increasing population and a funding shortfall also leads to conflicts among the refugees in Nyumanzi settlement camp

Recommendations of the study

It was recommended that refugee settlements should be equipped with security to avoid internal and external fights especially those on borders.

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