

Tailored Evidence and Learning Service (TELS) for the Uganda Refugee Response ToR

1. Background: The Learning Hub and thematic focus

The Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability, and Research Network ([U-Learn](#)) is a 3-year UKAID funded consortium. We believe the refugee response is most impactful when it maximises the use of quality evidence, and deeply integrates refugee voices and preferences.

We act as a public good – supporting a wide range of refugee response actors to continually improve their programming by making use of high-quality learning, evidence and insights.

We specialise in Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Research, and Learning. We deliver a range of assessments, convene events, trainings, resource curation, and technical assistance to support actors across the response.

One of the components of U-Learn is the [Learning Hub](#) (LH). In support of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and National Plan of Action for the Uganda refugee response, the LH is conceptualized as **a public good to support cross-sectoral refugee response level learning** - specifically the increased use of evidence and insights - to help ensure that learning feeds into organizational decisions.

The LH's overall objective is to contribute to a strengthened refugee response through an increase in cross-sectoral response-wide learning, and uptake of that learning, in Uganda and beyond. This is done through documentation of good practices, curating existing resources, development of more accessible resources based on existing ones, convening events for exchange of lessons and good practices, research to fill evidence gaps and finally mapping of non-traditional stakeholder to allow learning from and with private sector, local actors and academia.

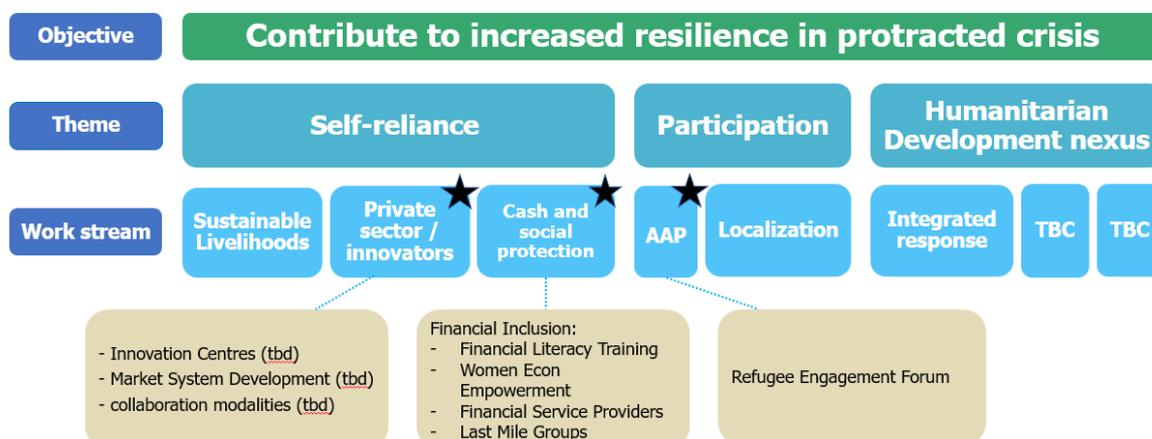
2. Learning Agenda (LA)

Overall, the LH focusses on areas that contribute to increased resilience in protracted crisis. In the second half of 2020, the LH embarked on a consultation process, bringing together refugee response actors to understand the priority cross-sectoral learning needs and opportunities in the Uganda refugee response.¹

As a result of this, the thematic scope of the LH (the 'Learning Agenda') was developed. As outlined below, three specific themes were identified: 'self-reliance', 'participation' and 'humanitarian-development nexus'. Under each theme there are work streams (note that the nexus theme needs to be further explored to define its work streams).

¹ The consultation process started with a desk review and included bilateral and group consultation events; it included existing refugee response coordination fora, as well as non-traditional refugee response actors, including private sector actors, innovators, national and local response actors and academics.

U-Learn Learning Agenda



★ *Priorities for project year 2 (April 2021 – March 2022)*

Three work streams were selected as priorities for the April 2021 – March 2022 period: 'private sector/innovators', 'cash and social protection', and 'AAP'. The prioritisation of those three work streams does however not formally exclude work on Learning Agenda work streams.

A number of topics and activities are planned under this years' three priority work streams:

- Under the '**Cash and social protection**' work stream, a learning series on financial inclusion is under way, in collaboration with the Cash Working Group ([dedicated ToR is available](#)).
- Under the '**AAP**' work stream, work is ongoing on supporting the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) in collaboration with the REF Task Force (the REF Good Practice Study [Report](#) and [brief](#) are available)
- For the '**private sector and innovators**' work stream, the selection of the final learning topic and approach will be determined in the second half of the year.

The rest of this ToR outlines U-Learn's approach to support learning across the priority learning work streams.

3. Objectives

U-Learn is scaling up its support to cross-sectoral learning and the use of evidence in the form of a **demand-driven Tailored Evidence and Learning Service (TELS)**.

The service adds value to the overall Uganda refugee response by facilitating evidence-based decision making and the incorporation of best practices and lessons from the Uganda refugee response into policy and practice. Refugee response actors are able to request learning support from the service.

The support on offer includes curating resources, documenting lessons/case studies, developing high quality summaries of evidence and convening actors through learning events.

TELS increases uptake of good practices and lessons from the Uganda refugee response by

- Learning from existing Ugandan experience and resources (**lateral learning**).
- Identification and translation of global best practices to the Ugandan context (**learning in**), and
- Dissemination of Ugandan best practices to a global audience for learning at the global level or in different refugee contexts (**learning out**).

All Uganda refugee response actors can request support from TELS; this includes the traditional refugee response actors, such as Government actors, INGOs, UN agencies and national NGOs, as well as non-traditional response actors, such as private sector actors, innovators, local actors (such as Faith-based organisations and Refugee Led Organisations) and academics.

TELS will run from the end of August 2021.²

4. Available services

The services offered by the Tailored Evidence and Learning Service (TELS) are:

1. **Resource curation:** Bringing together and selecting the most relevant existing knowledge and evidence. Learning reviews are secondary desk reviews of relevant global and Ugandan resources.
Deliverables can include: annotated bibliographies, analytical summaries, etc.
2. **Documentation & research:** Capturing recent experiences from the Ugandan context or documenting new experiences (innovations) that have not yet been described. Systematic documentation of experiences of key actors.
Deliverables can include: Good practice studies, case studies, discussion papers based on key informant interviews, ad hoc research etc.
3. **Synthesis & Summaries:** Making existing evidence and knowledge more accessible and synthesised. Developing high quality summaries of evidence and knowledge to support policy and programme work.
Deliverables can include: Short briefs, fact sheets, visuals, communication style products such as blogs or articles etc.
4. **Convene:** Bringing actors together in a face-to-face or on-line event to facilitate peer-learning. Learning events are often based on resource curation and documentation, but can also be smaller stand-alone convenor events. The LH convene approach allows for maximum engagement through the use of interactive approaches such as polls, brake-out groups, scenario's or role play etc.
Deliverables can include: round-tables, learning consultation, learning discussions, dissemination events, after work, etc.

Most often, LH activities involve a combination of the above described services in order to produce a comprehensive learning process that leads to specific recommendations and lessons

² Current funding runs until December 2022.

tailored to the Ugandan context. All services will fall within the LA thematic scope as outlined above.

All deliverables will focus on sharing good practices and recommendations for and with the Ugandan refugee response actors.

5. Guiding criteria

Refugee response actors can request services from TELS using the on-line [application form on the U-Learn website](#) (more detail on the process is provided in the next section).

In line with TELS' objective of an **increased use of evidence and good practices in Uganda's refugee response**, the service evaluates requests using the following guiding criteria:

1. The request is cross-sectoral in nature.
2. The request is in line with the LA and in line with the priority areas (requests for support on non-prioritised LA themes can be granted if capacity is available, but is of secondary priority).
3. The requester can demonstrate the benefits to the wider refugee response and the appetite for learning on this topic, e.g. it is relevant and useful beyond the immediate needs of the requester.
4. The request responds to a clear identified evidence/learning need and/or serves a clear objective, for instance, feed into an ongoing or planned decision-making process or inform specific policy or practice.

U-Learn is committed to collaborating with a diverse range of refugee response stakeholders, this includes both traditional refugee response actors, such as Government actors, INGOs, UN agencies and national NGOs, as well as non-traditional response actors, such as private sector actors, innovators, local actors (such as Faith-based organisations and Refugee Led Organisations) and academics. Requesting organisations that are underrepresented in the requests will be at an advantage.

We strive to have a mix of actors, thematic focusses and types of services.

The LH is intended to deliver public goods for the Uganda refugee response and all deliverables will be published at ulearn-uganda.org/ and via other channels.

In addition, to the guiding criteria, the requester will agree to the Terms of Use of the service, which include commitment:

- To facilitate review and sign-off processes (in case of co-branding)
- To agree to sharing of the learning publicly and support dissemination efforts
- To provide feedback in the form of a short survey and follow-up interview

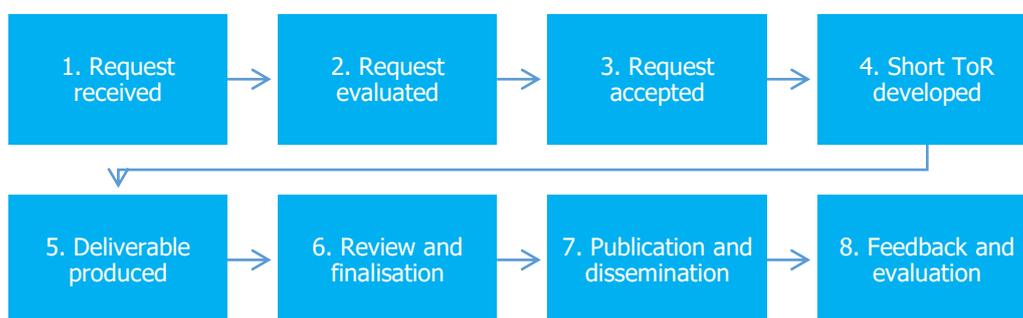
All the requests will be examined against the above-mentioned criteria as well as available resources of the team. Services are subject to availability of resources. In case of limited funding preventing the team to respond to requests that meet all criteria, requesters can be offered a cost-recovery approach or agree to jointly fundraise with U-Learn to meet the funding gap.

Additionally, in exceptional cases, if a refugee response actor’s request does not meet the guiding criteria, but the refugee response actor would like to make use of TELS services, the request can be considered under a cost recovery agreement.

6. TELS process

An overall process for the TELS is set out below. The approach and process will be adapted as time evolves to incorporate lessons and best practices. In addition, short ToRs will be developed for each piece of work.

It is the LH’s deliberate choice to keep the administrative burden to a minimum throughout the process in order to keep turnaround time as short as possible.



Step 1. The TELS process is started when a *request is received* through the [on-line form on the U-Learn website](#). Requests received by e-mail or verbally will be redirected to the website to streamline the application process and for MEAL purposes. The on-line request form will include evidence/learning gap, type of support requested, relevance to LA and refugee response, how the requester is planning to use the results/product, deadline etc., confirmation the requester can meet the review/feedback requirements. The request form will be kept as concise as possible to keep administration at a minimum.

The LH receives the request and will reach out to the requester to acknowledge receipt and for potential clarifications (response within one working week). If there is need for further discussion to *clarify* the request, a call will be set-up to assure that the request is correctly understood.

Step 2 & 3. Once the request is well understood and all the details are received, the *request will be evaluated and accepted or rejected*. If the service is at maximum capacity, the request might be put on hold temporarily and/or reassessed under a possibility for a cost-recovery agreement. In this case, a clear timeframe will be provided.

Step 4. For selected requests, a short *ToR will be drafted* based on the request submitted by the requesting organisation; it will stipulate timeframe, approach, deliverable/output, outcome, indication of dissemination approach and scale, etc. will be developed by the LH and reviewed and agreed upon by the requester. This ToR will include the above mentioned Terms of Use of the service (the ToR will be drafted within one working week of selection of request).

Step 5. An internal resource will be matched to carry out the assignment (one week). The *deliverable(s)* will then be *produced* in line with the specifications and timeframe set out in

the ToR, this will include an internal quality check. In case of a convene event, the annotated agenda, event ToR, and event materials (such as reading/discussion materials) will be prepared.

Step 6. The deliverable(s) will then be sent to the requester for *review*. After integration of comments, the final draft of the deliverable will be sent to the requester to confirm it meets requester's needs and confirm use of requester's logo on the final product. In case the deliverable requires review and confirmation from multiple parties (for instance additional government actors or UN agencies), the requester will support the review and confirmation process. In case of a wide dissemination (this is defined at the ToR stage) a dissemination plan will be drafted (with input from the requester) simultaneously with the review process.

Step 7. Once sign-off is obtained, the final product will be *published* on the U-Learn website (ulearn-uganda.org) and the *dissemination* plan will be put in motion.

In case of events, the event recording or audio or edited parts of it might be made available on the U-Learn website. Dissemination usually includes publication on U-Learn social media and sending the final product to interested parties (bilaterally and through relevant networks and coordination fora) as a minimum. But in some cases, a wide dissemination might be chosen, this will include a concerted dissemination effort with partners including conveners/learning events, a dedicated newsletter, integration in relevant external resource centres, and might even include the development of secondary outputs and communication products such as blogs and articles.

Step 8. The final step is *feedback and evaluation*, as part of U-Learn's efforts to continuously improve the quality of its work. The requester will be asked to fill in a short on-line questionnaire and a short follow-up interview (the total time required for both will be under 1h). Questions will include review of the process used, and look at the quality and usefulness of the final product.

It is estimated that work on the assignment can start as soon as 3 weeks after receiving the request. The time needed to complete the assignment and review process after work has started will depend on the complexity of the assignment and the type of deliverable. The LH endeavours to complete all assignments, e.g. produce a final deliverable, within 3 months of starting work on the assignment, this does not include dissemination.

7. Contact

For more information, please contact U-Learn by mail info@ulearn-uganda.org.

A summarised [TELS flyer](#) is available.