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Labour Market Assessments covering Refugee Hosting Districts in Uganda

Desk Review for the Uganda refugee response



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Executive Summary

The following desk review highlights key information from 25 documents about labour markets in the 13 refugee-hosting districts of Uganda. The findings are presented in relation to three main themes: 1) labour supply; 2) labour demand; and 3) training to match the available skills with the demand.

The findings show that the labour force participation is generally lower among refugees than nationals in host communities, lower among women than men, and lower in the northern districts than the western districts. There is not a shortage of labour supply, though the majority of both refugees and nationals are self-employed in low-skilled or informal activities. There is a lack of demand for labour due to the lack of a diverse private sector. The majority of businesses are sole proprietorships or micro-sized enterprises with less than two employees and no plans for growth. Vocational training is often supply-oriented rather than demand-oriented. There is training available in traditional trades (e.g., hairdressing, tailoring, carpentry), which can lead to market saturation. Although agriculture is the main livelihood in all districts, there is limited technical training on agricultural techniques that would increase agricultural productivity and profitability.

The studies provide a number of recommendations, such as investing in fast-tracked education and training that is driven by demand and has low entry requirements; provide training in a flexible format and with childcare services to increase uptake by women, girls, and refugees; and to provide complementary training in business planning, financial management and entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

The Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group (LRSWG) is finalising its Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Strategy RRP 2022-2025. With support from [U-Learn](#), a [learning and research agenda](#) was developed to focus and prioritise learning and research work in this period. One of the priorities will be to make existing evidence available and accessible to actors in Uganda, and to facilitate uptake thereof.

As part of this, the LRSWG is conducting 2 desk reviews, one [on value chain assessments in refugee-hosting districts](#), and one on labour market assessments in refugee-hosting districts, both to support actors working in the livelihoods space to get an overview of the resources that were produced (published as well as unpublished) during the last 5 years, and to provide a quick analysis of the content of those assessments.¹

Numerous studies have been carried out to assess the current labour market, as well as the opportunities and constraints for employment in refugee settlements and refugee-hosting districts. It aims to summarize the findings of these assessments and make them available to refugee response actors to support decision making, but has not assessed the quality of the

¹ LRSWG and U-Learn. 2022. Value Chain Assessments in Refugee Hosting Districts in Uganda. Desk Review for the Uganda refugee response. <https://ulearn-uganda.org/value-chain-assessments-in-refugee-hosting-districts-in-uganda-a-desk-review/>

individual assessments that are part of it. The analysis in this desk review is not the view of the LRSWG, but a collation of the evidence that is available.

As part of this desk review, 25 documents were reviewed that contain information related to labour markets and LMAs in refugee-hosting districts in Uganda produced within the last five years (2018-2022). The desk review provides an overview of the main findings of these assessments, followed by an annotated bibliography of the included documents. This desk review was written with the support of a consultant, Suzanne Belliveau, U-Learn staff, and with technical review and validation by the LRSWG (including selected key livelihoods actors that operate in the Uganda refugee response).

1.1 Country Context

Uganda is Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, hosting more than 1.5 million refugees. The majority of the refugees come from South Sudan (60%) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (29%), with a smaller percent coming from Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Eritrea.² In 2021, there was a mass influx of refugees from DRC into Uganda, putting additional pressure on an already strained system.³ The refugees are hosted in 13 refugee settlements across 13 refugee-hosting districts in the north and west of the country, in addition to urban refugees in the capital Kampala.⁴

Uganda also has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in Africa. Nearly three-quarters of the 45 million Ugandans are below the age of 30, and half the population is less than 15 years old. The number of labour market entrants is increasing rapidly with an estimated one million young people entering the job market each year.⁵ The labour force growth is outpacing job growth and contributing to a mismatch between labour supply and demand.⁶

Uganda's Refugee Act of 2006 provides a legislative framework relating to refugees in the country. It gives refugees the right to work, move around the country, and live in the community. It also allocates plots of land for refugees to cultivate within the refugee settlements. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) launched in 2017 emphasizes building refugees' self-reliance, and supporting refugee-hosting districts to provide integrated social services and market access.⁷ Despite the favourable policy environment, the percent of refugees actively employed remains low.⁸

² International Labour Organization (ILO). 2022. Occupations and skills assessment for youth in selected refugee settlements of Isingiro, Arua, and Madi Okollo districts in Uganda

³ H. Athumani. 2022. Uganda 'Overwhelmed' with new DRC Refugee Influx. VOA News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/uganda-overwhelmed-with-new-drc-refugee-influx-/6587209.html#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20about,M23%20rebels%20and%20DRC%20troops.>

⁴ UNHCR. 2022. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ug> . Accessed on Aug 23, 2022.

⁵ ILO. 2022.

⁶ A. Garcia and B. Kiwanuka. 2019. Employment and Labour Market Analysis Uganda. GIZ

⁷ A. Betts, I. Chaara, N. Omata, and O. Sterck. 2021. Refugee Economies in Uganda: What difference does the self-reliance model make? Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

⁸ T. Beltramo, J. Fix, and I. Sarr. 2021. Uganda Knowledge Brief: Using Socioeconomic Data to Promote Employment Solutions for Refugees in Uganda. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

1.2 Background on Labour Market Assessments

Development and humanitarian interventions are increasingly adopting strategies to improve target groups' access to employment or income generating activities. Organizations are conducting labour market assessments (LMA) to better respond to market needs and be more demand driven. The following are key concepts to understand LMAs:

There is no single type of LMA. In broad terms it examines the supply of labour, the demand for it, and/or the matching of supply with demand. It may take a broad view looking at key indicators (e.g., labour force participation, unemployment, wages); it may explore one or more selected component (supply, demand, matching); or it may

examine a specific dimension (e.g., sectors, skills gaps, working conditions, target groups, hiring practices) to identify barriers and opportunities.⁹ Humanitarian organizations have further adapted LMAs to meet the needs of humanitarian interventions by:

- using the individual/household livelihoods as the entry point for assessment
- analysing household livelihood strategies
- looking at skills gaps in a specific geographic area affected by a crisis
- identifying short-term opportunities in a recovery phase
- comparing labour markets pre- and post- crisis or between refugee and host communities.¹⁰

The existing literature on labour markets in refugee settings is diverse and each takes a different approach. For the purposes of this desk review, the information will be summarized in three main parts: **labour supply** (characteristics of the labour force including current livelihood activities), **labour demand** (current demand for skills, growth sectors, and hiring practices), and **training** (the training available or needed to address the skills gap). It will also summarize the main challenges and recommendations from the literature and highlight any gaps.

Key concepts

Labour refers to “the work, effort or activities people engage in to meet basic needs, earn an income, and purchase assets, and includes both formal and informal work.”

A market system is a network of producers, suppliers, processors, traders, buyers, labourers, and consumers involved in producing, exchanging, and consuming a particular item or service.

The labour market is understood to be the intersection of those willing and able to work (labour supply) and those looking for workers (demand for labour).

A labour market assessment is a study or analysis to understand the market dynamics, employers' needs, constraints, and the potential to expand labour opportunities.

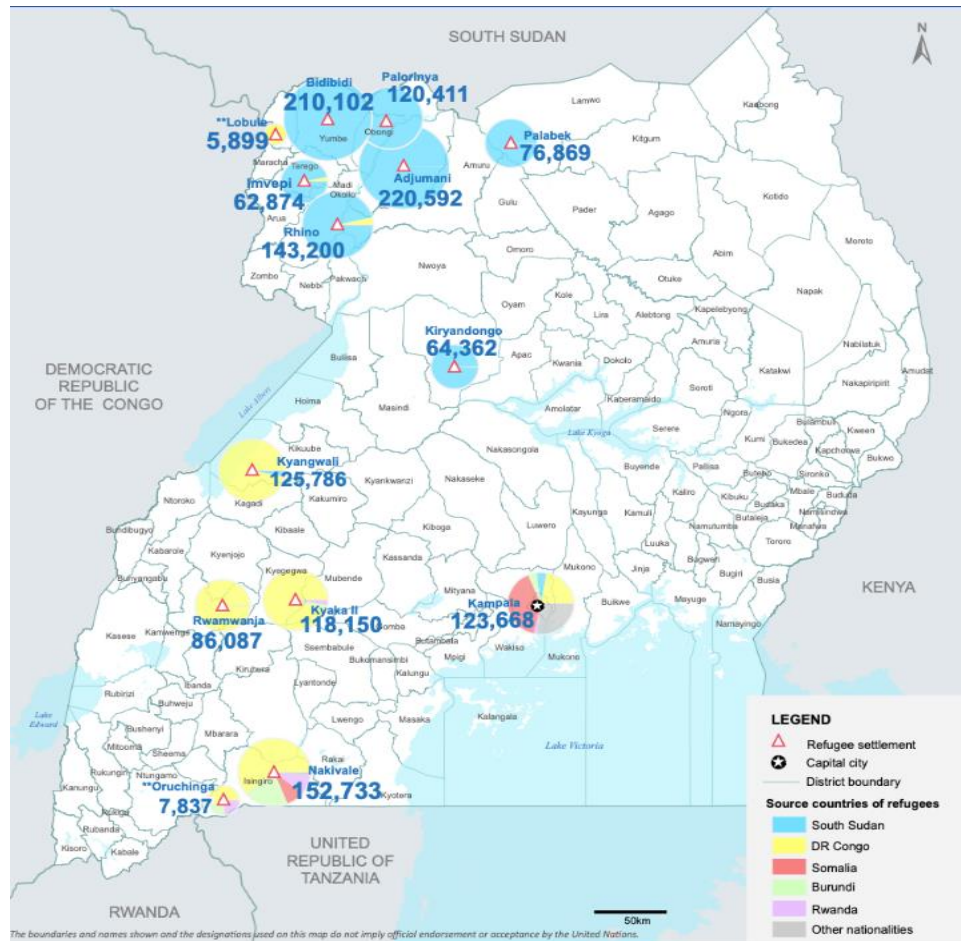
⁹ K.Hempel, et.al. 2017.

¹⁰ S. Truelove. 2016.

1.3 Geographic scope

Refugees are hosted in 13 settlements in the country (Adjumani, Bidibidi, Imvepi, Kiryandongo, Kyaka II, Kyangwali, Lobule, Nakivale, Oruchinga, Palabek, Palorinya, Rhino Camp and Rwamwanja). Nearly 1 million refugees are located in settlements in the 8 northern districts in the West Nile region near the border with South Sudan. Over 400,000 refugees are in the 5 districts in the western region near DRC and Rwanda, and 107,000 are in the capital Kampala (see Refugee Statistics Map).

Refugee Statistics Map, Uganda



UNHCR. September 2022. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96182>

Twenty-five documents were reviewed that contain information related to labour markets and LMAs in refugee-hosting districts in Uganda produced within the last five years (2018-2022). Ten of these documents focus on the northern region, six on the western region, and nine cover refugee-hosting districts in both the northern and southwestern regions, and/or Kampala. Where relevant, the desk review will highlight differences between the northern and western regions.

2. Findings from Labour Market Assessments in Uganda

2.1 Labour Supply

Key indicators

The LMAs typically include data on key indicators about the labour market to set the stage and highlight distinctions between refugees and host communities, between genders, or geographic regions.

Labour Force Terminology according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

Working age population: The population aged 14-64 years.

Work: There are five forms of work: 1) Own-use production work (mainly subsistence agriculture); 2) Employment; 3) Unpaid trainee work; 4) Volunteer work; 5) Other work.

Employment: There are five forms of employment: 1) Paid employment; 2) Employers; 3) Own account workers; 4) Contributing family workers; 5) Other.

Self-employment comprises the three categories *own account workers*, *employers* and *contributing family workers*.

Subsistence Agriculture: A form of agriculture in which most of the crops grown or livestock kept are used to sustain the farmer or the household where the farmer is staying, with none or little left for sale. The Labour market survey analyses this information separately from employment.

Informal employment is defined as:

- Employees whose employers do not contribute to social security or who do not benefit from paid annual or sick leave.
- Employers and own account workers employed in a place of work that is not registered by Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) as a business or registered by the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) for income tax and/or Value Added Tax (VAT).
- Members of producers' cooperatives employed in cooperatives that are not registered.

The main indicators examined are:

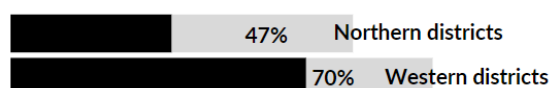
- **Labour force participation rate:** The share of the working-age population employed (including self-employment) or seeking employment.
- **Employment rate:** The share of the working-age population in employment or self-employment (excludes subsistence agriculture).
- **Unemployment rate:** The share of the labour force seeking and available for employment.

At a national level, the working age population in 2018 was over just 20 million (~51% of the total population), with the largest portion (73%) residing in rural areas.¹¹ The share of that working age population who are employed or seeking employment (labour force participation) is 62% (73% of males, 53% of females). Another 36% of the working age population is engaged in subsistence agriculture (25% of males, 46% of females).¹²

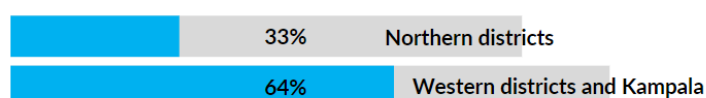
The labour force participation rate is lower among refugees than nationals. Refugees have a participation rate of 42%, compared to 69% in host communities.¹³

Labour force participation and employment rates among refugees (see footnote 13 for reference)

Employment rates



Labour force participation



The labour force participation and employment rates are lowest in the northern districts. Labour force participation is lowest among refugees in the northern districts (33%). In the western districts and in Kampala, labour force participation rates are similar (64%). Employment rates are also lower in the north (47%) than the west (70%).

Women have lower labour force participation rates than men in all regions. There is a gender gap in labour force participation in both host communities and refugee populations, with females consistently participating less than males. In the northern and western regions, the gap is higher among refugee populations (by 8-13 percentage points) than host communities (6-7 percentage points). Surprisingly, the gender gap is highest in Kampala among the host community (26 percentage points).¹⁴

Labour market participation by region and gender (see footnote 13 for reference)

	Refugee		Host Community	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
North (West Nile)	37	29	72	66
West	70	57	74	67
Kampala	70	57	79	53

Refugees have lower employment and higher unemployment rates than nationals in host communities. Only 29% of refugees are actively employed compared to 64% of nationals in host communities. Refugees who are seeking employment are less likely to find it. The unemployment rate for refugees (31%) is higher than host communities (7%).¹⁵

Refugee youth face the greatest barriers to employment. Youth face more barriers to employment than older people overall. However, the unemployment rate for refugee youth (44%) is much higher than Ugandan youth (14%). There is a higher unemployment rate among young refugee

¹¹ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

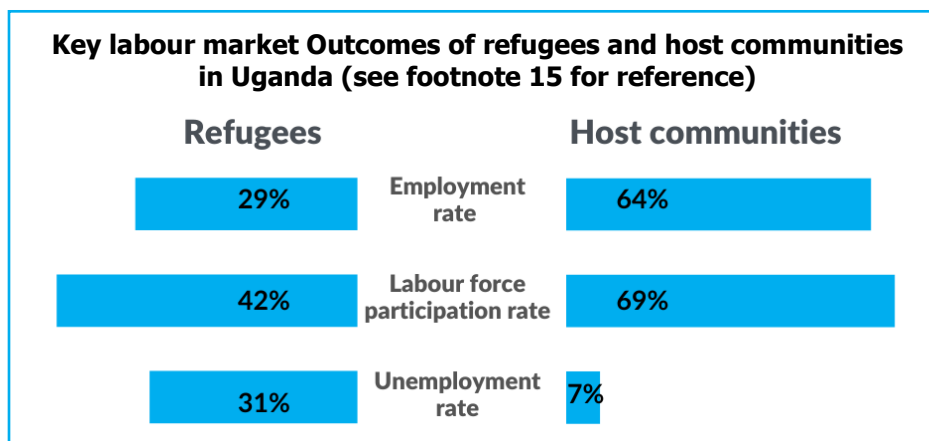
¹² Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). 2019. Labour Force Survey 2018/19 – Main Report. Kampala, Uganda.

¹³ T. Beltramo, J. Fix, and I. Sarr. 2021. Uganda Knowledge Brief: Using Socioeconomic Data to Promote Employment Solutions for Refugees in Uganda. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

¹⁴ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

¹⁵ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

males (50%) than young refugee females (41%).¹⁶ The youth unemployment rate is also higher in the north (59%) than the west (30%).



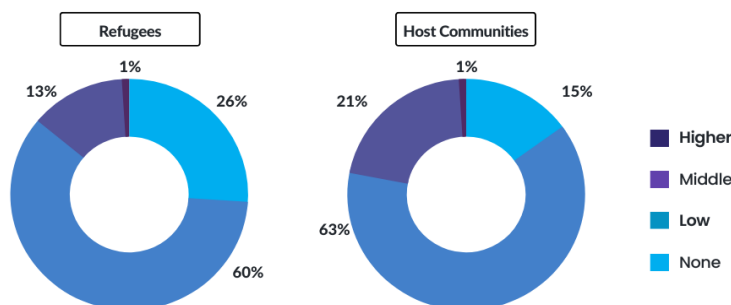
The population outside the labour force is largely youth and women. There is a large portion of the population who are neither employed nor looking for work. In the northern districts, 48% of youth are neither in employment nor in education.¹⁷ Many of these are women who are doing unpaid housework. Overall, more women refugees (48%) identify themselves as housewives than women in host communities (31%).¹⁸

Education

Refugees have less formal education than nationals in host communities.

There is a similar level of primary education among refugees (47%) and nationals in host communities (45%) overall. However, the **completion rates for secondary school are lower among refugees (11%) than in host communities (24%).**¹⁹ Further, very few refugees (between 0-6.6%) have tertiary education.^{20 21}

Percent of Heads of Households in Lamwo reported highest level of education reached (see footnote 15 for reference)



¹⁶ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021. (<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/88388>)

¹⁷ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

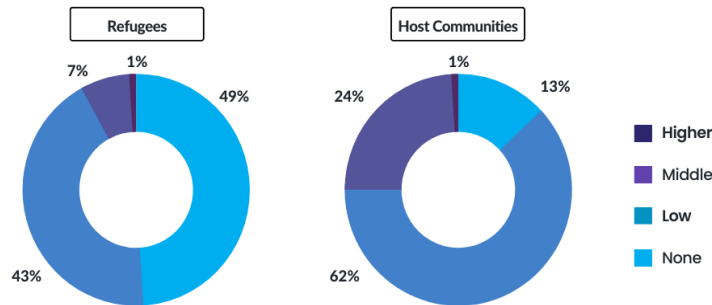
¹⁸ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021. Consumer and Market Study in Southwest and West Nile Refugee-Hosting Areas in Uganda. International Finance Corporation (IFC).

¹⁹ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

²⁰ REACH. 2021. Markets & Livelihoods Assessment: Lamwo and Isingiro districts. USAID.

²¹ P. Munduga, D. Bukenya, A. Mukasa, N. 2019. Mutaremwa. Enhancing Employability of Youth, Women, and Girls in West Nile Refugee Settings using Inclusive Vocational Education and Training. Africa Non-Profit Chore (ANCHOR).

Percent of Heads of Households in Isingiro reported highest level of education reached (see footnote 18 for reference)



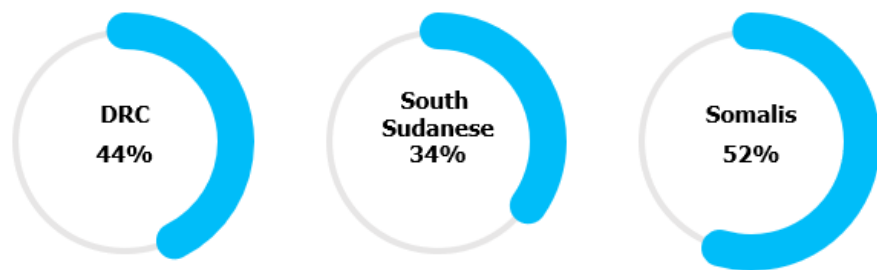
Refugees in western districts have lower levels of education. The difference in educational attainment between refugees and host communities is higher in western districts than northern districts. Far more refugees had no formal education (49%) compared to the host community (13%).²² The difference may be due to lower level of education attained in the home country as well as education being disrupted due to

displacement. In general, women had lower educational attainment than men; more refugee women (33%) had no formal schooling compared to men (11%).²³

The level of education differs between nationalities and ethnicities of refugees.

Percent of refugees without any schooling per country of origin (see footnote 18 for reference)

Somalis were found to have significantly fewer years of formal education than Congolese. The percent of refugees without any schooling is 44% of DRC refugees, 34% of South Sudanese, and 52% of Somalis.²⁴



Refugees earn less than host communities. Refugees with a primary education earn 33% less than host communities with the same education. The pay gap increases at the secondary school level, with refugees earning 50% less than hosts with the same degree, which may discourage the completion of secondary school. There is also evidence that refugees are taking jobs that they are overqualified for to avoid unemployment.²⁵

Employment and livelihoods

Self-employment in low-skilled or informal activities is high for both nationals and refugees. The self-employment rate is 76% for working nationals and 72% of working refugees. The self-employment rate is higher among refugee youth (up to 80%). In Kampala, the self-employment rates are lower than the average, but is higher among host nationals (45%) than refugees (25%).²⁶ The inability to find paid employment is one driver to self-employment, particularly for youth.

²² REACH. 2021.

²³ IFC. 2022.

²⁴ IFC. 2022.

²⁵ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

²⁶ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

*Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for both refugee and host communities in refugee-hosting districts. Agriculture is reported as the main economic activity for 79-95% of households in western Uganda and 70-84% of households in northern Uganda.*²⁷²⁸ This includes subsistence farming, small-scale farming, commercial agriculture, and casual labour in agriculture. Other workers are self-employed in non-agricultural activities, run small businesses in trades and services, or to a lesser extent are engaged in formal employment (see table below).

Main livelihoods in refugee-hosting districts in Northern and Western Uganda

	Northern Uganda	Southwestern Uganda
Agriculture (crops)	All regions: Cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, beans, groundnuts Sorghum, millet, simsim, mangoes, avocado, matooke. Tobacco, coffee (cash crops) Rice, soya beans, oranges.	Irish potatoes, eggplant, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, soy, peas Bananas (Isingiro) Matooke (in host community) Casual labour (agricultural)
Agriculture (livestock, other)	All regions: Goats, pigs, poultry Cattle, Zebu cattle Sheep Fishing, fish farms Apiculture and honey production	Cows (host communities) Fishing and fish farming (Isingiro) Rabbits (Rwamwanja)
Non-agricultural and informal	All regions: Petty trade, hawking, vendors; metal fabrication and woodwork; carpentry, hairdressing. Commodity trade <i>Boda boda</i> transport business Market vending Tailoring Bricklaying Housekeeping Stone and sand mining (Yumbe)	Small retail kiosks (e.g., shoes, groceries, mattresses, sugar, soap, cooking oil, salt) Restaurants Airtime kiosks Blacksmithing, welding Sand mining, brick making, tin mining (Isingiro)
Formal	Translation Driving Farming and forestry advisors	Retail trade Agriculture Hotel and Restaurants Manufacturing and processing

*In northern Uganda, fewer refugees rely on agriculture as a livelihood. A smaller proportion of refugee households (38%-55%) rely on agriculture as the main source of livelihood compared to households in host communities (84%-91%).*²⁹ **This was partly because the small plot of land allotted to them was insufficient to produce crops at a scale that could sustain the household.** In western Uganda, a similar proportion of households in refugee settlements (79%) and host communities (83%) report agriculture as the primary source of livelihood.³⁰

²⁷ Feed the Future. 2022. Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity: Nakivale Settlement Market Systems Assessment Report.

²⁸ REACH. 2021.

²⁹ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

³⁰ REACH. 2021.

*In the northern districts, the main agricultural activity is in the crop sector (e.g., cassava, maize, beans) and the cash crop of tobacco.*³¹ A smaller percent of households are engaged in livestock farming and fishing. Those not engaged in agriculture have salaried employment or non-agricultural activities such as petty trade, market vending, and transport. In Yumbe, there was also sand mining and quarrying. The main employment activities of refugees in northern settlements are housekeeping, farmers, business professionals, farm labourers, forestry advisors, and teaching professional.³²

In the western districts, the main agricultural livelihood activity is farming horticultural crops on their own land. To a lesser extent there is also cash crops, animal husbandry and fishing.³³ More host community households than refugee households were involved in livestock rearing (in Isingiro most were cattle keepers).³⁴ The most common form of employment is casual labour in the agriculture sector. For refugees, the third common activity is in the informal sector, operating a small business.³⁵ This includes small retail kiosks, hair salons, restaurants, and artisanal activities such as carpentry, blacksmithing and welding.³⁶ A large portion of households (64%), however, rely on humanitarian assistance to help meet needs.³⁷

Main sources of livelihoods



³¹ Lakwo. A. 2018. Secondary Labour Market Study in Northern Uganda: Final Report. Enabel.

³² A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

³³ REACH. 2021.

³⁴ Feed the Future. 2022. Nakivale.

³⁵ AVSI Foundation. 2017. Labor Market Assessment. USAID

³⁶ P. Nabusi Walekhwa. 2020. Labor Market Assessment for Youth in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement and Hosting Communities in Kamwenge District, Wester Uganda: Draft Report. Save the Children International.

³⁷ REACH. 2021.

Livelihood strategies in Nakivale

A [study](#) was undertaken by the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford to explore whether Uganda's self-reliance model makes a difference on refugees' welfare. Through quantitative and qualitative research, it examined outcomes for refugees in the Nakivale settlement, in host communities and in the capital, Kampala, and compared it to outcomes of refugees in the Kakuma camp, host communities and capital city of Kenya. The study yielded many findings, including the following two on livelihood strategies.

Some refugees adopt a "split-family strategy." In some refugee families, certain family members (usually women and younger children) remain in the settlement to access aid and free accommodation while another member lives in Kampala to work or run a business. This strategy is prevalent among Somali refugees. This strategy is possible because of Ugandan policies that allow refugees' freedom of movement in the country.

Livelihood strategies varied between nationalities. The study compared strategies of refugees of different countries of origin within the Nakivale settlement. Although all nationalities have access to a small plot of land, the Congolese refugees are more likely to be engaged in subsistence agriculture. The Somali refugees more often refrain from agriculture and engage in commerce (running their own business). More Congolese refugees (46%) found paid employment compared to Somalis (23%). However, Somalis are more likely to hire refugees of the same nationality. In Kampala, 100% of Somali refugee employment is by co-nationals. In the Nakivale settlement, 88% of Somali employment and 51% of Congolese employment is by co-nationals.

2.2 Labour Demand

Business environment

Definition of micro, small, and medium enterprises (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2018)

- **Micro enterprises:** Fewer than 5 employees and total assets below 10 million UGX.
- **Small enterprises:** Between 5 and 49 employees and total assets between 10 million and 100 million UGX.
- **Medium enterprise:** Between 50 and 100 employees and total assets between 100 million and 360 million UGX.

*The private sector is dominated by sole proprietorships and micro-sized enterprises. Between 75-83% of businesses in the refugee-hosting districts are sole proprietorships, reflecting the high level of self-employment. **Most of these businesses are small-scale retail traders or service providers that have been in operation for an average of 3.5 years.***³⁸ The

³⁸ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

Types of businesses

Sole trader or sole proprietorship: An individual engaged in business on their own account and has unlimited liability for the business debts.

Partnership: The relationship that exists among persons numbering between 2 and 20 who carry on a business together with the aim of making profits.

Company: A local company is one which is incorporated and registered in Uganda or a company whose major shareholding is held by Ugandans and the majority of its business is conducted in Uganda.

businesses operate with low levels of organization, low capital, low levels of technology and often on temporary premises.³⁹

Most of the businesses are informal and unregistered. Sixty-two percent of all businesses are not registered with the Ugandan administration and operate without registration certificates or trading licenses. Registration rates are similar for Ugandan businesses (35% registered) and refugee businesses (42% registered).⁴⁰

The majority of the businesses have no or few employees. Half of the

businesses have no employees because they operate at a small scale. One quarter of the businesses has only one employee, often in a role such as shop attendant or part-time casual labourer⁴¹. Less than a quarter of registered businesses in the northern districts employ more than four people. The small scale of the businesses means that paid employment opportunities are limited.⁴²

Refugee and host community members operate similar businesses. Most of the businesses (42-50%) run by refugees and host nationals in both regions provide a service (e.g., barbers, motorbike taxis, restaurants, and tailors). The second most common business (35-42%) is a store or trader. The stores are mostly *duukas* (small shops selling multiple products), food stalls, and drug stores, or larger stores selling groceries or hardware.⁴³ In the northern districts, there are also a few hundred other enterprises in construction, hospitality and services, manufacturing, and agro-processing.⁴⁴

Business vs. enterprise

Business: Any activity or enterprise entered into for profit.

Enterprise: any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity, and any union or group of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity.

Difference: An enterprise is a broader term. It does not have to be a legal entity. Unlike a business, its purpose is not always to earn a profit.

While an enterprise can be a business, not all businesses are enterprises.

³⁹ Lakwo. A. 2018.

⁴⁰ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴¹ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴² A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁴³ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴⁴ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

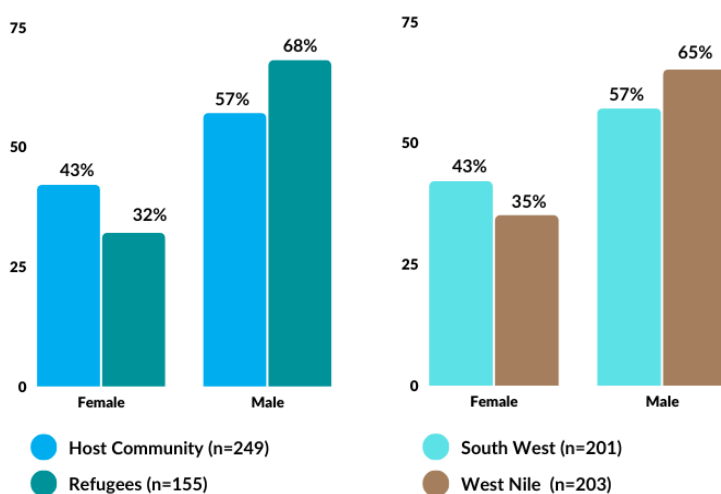
Refugees employ Ugandans and refugees of the same ethnicity. The majority of refugee-owned businesses with employees employ Ugandans (72%), followed by refugees of the same ethnicity (34%) and refugees of different ethnicity (16%). Only one-third of Ugandan businesses with employees employ refugees.⁴⁵

The businesses cater primarily to a local market. The businesses generally have a local market with most of the consumers (75%) coming from within the sub-county, indicating that they are not connected to regional or national markets.⁴⁶ Further, many of the food items sold in *duukas* match the profile of items consumed in local households.⁴⁷

Most businesses were male owned. In both refugee communities (68%) and host communities (57%) businesses were male owned. There was a higher prevalence of female-owned businesses in host communities (43%) than among refugees (32%), and more in the west (43%) than the north (35%).⁴⁸

However, when asked their preference of livelihoods, more refugee women wanted to pursue a business enterprise than livestock or agriculture because it is less physically demanding and is not seasonal work.⁴⁹

Gender of business owners surveyed as part of study done by IFC, 2022 (see annotated agenda).



Marketable skills and trades

Agriculture is a major employment sector for youth, women and girls. Agriculture is a large employer in the northern and western districts and is a priority for the districts. However, since it is largely practiced by elderly, smallholder farmers for subsistence, it is an uninspiring pathway for youth.⁵⁰ There is a need to improve farming techniques, access new markets, and increase the profitability of farming to make it attractive. Within this sector, the marketable trades are crop farming (horticulture, cereal farming, cassava, simsim (sesame) and groundnuts) and livestock farming (beekeeping, piggery, poultry, goat), followed by tree nurseries and agricultural mechanization.

A large number of jobs are found in trades and services. Trade and services provide the largest number of available jobs.⁵¹ Trades and services are also favoured for the self-employed because

⁴⁵ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴⁶ P. Nabusi Walekhwa. 2020.

⁴⁷ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴⁸ Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021.

⁴⁹ AVSI Foundation. 2017.

⁵⁰ P. Nabusi Walekhwa. 2020.

⁵¹ MAMZA Consulting. 2022. Labour Market Scan (LMS) to Identify Priority Training Needs in Northern Uganda and Kiryandongo - EUTF Implementation Districts. Enabel.

they have low entry requirements, low capital requirements, and a short gestation period to begin making profit.⁵² Common trades are hairdressing, tailoring, catering, motor vehicle mechanic, motorcycle repair and catering.

Demand for skills in construction and tourism and hospitality is growing. These are seen as promising sectors but are constrained by poor infrastructure and limited local investments.⁵³ However, construction activities were increasing in districts where there is increasing urbanization, such as Arua, Adjumani, and Kamwenge.⁵⁴ There is demand for carpentry, bricklaying, painting, welding, blacksmith and metal fabrication. In districts where there is a presence of the presence of international organizations, such as Arua, there is a dynamic hospitality sector (lodging and restaurants).⁵⁵ There are formal job opportunities as translators, drivers, and hotel managers, but few refugee youths are accessing these.⁵⁶

There is demand for advanced skills. There is a demand for trades that require a higher level of skill than what is found in the local labour force or provided through entry level vocational training. This includes, for example, advanced tailoring of bridal wear or suits, or the repair of specific brands of motorcycles that are often brought to mechanics out of town for repair.⁵⁷

There are many marketable trades in growing or non-traditional sectors. There is growing demand for skills in manufacturing and green economy, such as tree nursery management, biogas system construction, solar technician, fabrication of agro-processing equipment, recycling, and energy stove making.⁵⁸ Non-traditional trades in demand include soap making, blacksmith, bicycle repair, brick and vent making, quarrying/aggregate chipping, and sand mining, electronic and phone repair, briquetting, shoemaking, stone facing and concrete products like pavers.

Complementary and soft skills are in high demand: Employers identify various job-related skills that are considered as important as vocational training. These include basic literacy skills, effective communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, and financial management skills.

⁵² MAMZA Consulting. 2022..

⁵³ MAMZA Consulting. 2022.

⁵⁴ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁵⁵ Garcia, A. and B. Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁵⁶ ILO. 2022

⁵⁷ MAMZA Consulting. 2022.

⁵⁸ MAMZA Consulting. 2022.

Labour Market Scan in the West Nile

A Labor Market Scan was carried out to explore the skills mismatch between training provision and decent work employment for youth (including women and girls) and refugees in Northern Uganda in the districts of Adjumani, Arua, Madi Okolo, Terego, Kiryandongo, and Yumbe. The report details the current livelihoods in each of these districts, the training offered at local institutes, and the jobs available in the businesses that were interviewed.

The majority of the population in the 6 districts is dedicated to agriculture (70-80%). However, the largest number of jobs available were in trades and services (40%), followed by construction (29%), tourism and hospitality (17%) and agriculture (14%). The type of jobs available at the time of the study were:

Trades and services: Advanced tailors, bead makers, leather tanners, shoe makers, waiters/waitress, caterers/cooks, marketer, solar installer, video editor, motorcycle repair.

Construction: Masons, plumbers, welders, machine fitters, building inspectors, glass fitters, tilers, terrazzo, painters, electrical installation.

Tourism and hospitality: Translators, hotel managers, bakery, tour guides, waiters/waitress, caterers/cooks.

Agriculture: Apiary technicians, animal breeders, horticulturists, forest technician, farm manager, agricultural marketers, orchardist, fish cage worker.

For more information, review **MAMZA Consulting. 2022. Labour Market Scan (LMS) to Identify Priority Training Needs in Northern Uganda and Kiryandongo - EUTF Implementation Districts. Enabel.**

Growth opportunities

There are several areas where there is potential for growth and an increase in marketable trades. Most of the opportunities identified are from LMAs carried out in the northern districts but may be relevant for both regions (see table below for opportunities by district).

- a) **Local sourcing:** Products that have a high demand locally but that are currently sourced from outside of the region⁵⁹, namely eggs (from Kampala), tomatoes (from Luwero), honey (from Congo), and maize flour (for Nakivale settlement).⁶⁰ There is also growing local demand for goats, fruits and juice, grain processing, and oil seed growing and processing.
- b) **Oil sector:** Satisfying demand from the oil sector and the oil drilling camps, such as pigs, fruits, eggs, fresh vegetables, and rice.

⁵⁹ Mubarak, B. and W. Nkamuhebwa. 2014. ZOA Uganda.

⁶⁰ Feed the Future. 2022. Nakivale.

- c) **Agro-forestry:** There is growing demand for grafted seedlings for plantations and timber for biomass energy. The refugee crisis has also increased demand for fuelwood and poles for construction.⁶¹ There is potential growth in tree nurseries.
- d) **Commercial agriculture and value addition:** There's growing commercial demand for cassava for consumption nationally and internationally, and millet for beverages, cosmetics, and other products.⁶² There are opportunities for medium-sized companies in the agriculture value chain to convert agriculture into a commercial enterprise and create employment at various levels. There are opportunities for value addition in maize, honey, cassava, sweet potatoes maize, simsim, soya beans, groundnut, beans, and in fruits like oranges, lemon and mangoes if quality standards can be met.^{63,64}
- e) **Export potential:** Products for export to neighbouring markets that are currently not produced in West Nile: cabbage, beans, tomatoes, onions, cornmeal, pineapples, watermelons, and matooke. Manufactured products with export potential are soap, cement, iron bars, cooking oil, plastics, steel products, t-shirts, and other clothing.⁶⁵
- f) **Fashion:** The West Nile is the hub of traditional fabric and high quality kitenge (African prints) from the DRC. This has created an opportunity for tailoring and fashion design.⁶⁶
- g) **Solar energy:** The solar lighting market is fairly well developed in most refugee-hosting districts. There are solar lighting products distributed locally and there is potential for growth. The main challenges to overcome are poor quality products, lack of after-sales service, and weak supply chain.⁶⁷
- h) **Agro-processing:** It is considered a potential source of employment for refugee-hosting districts, particularly the West Nile region. With an increase in commercial production of various fruit products – mangoes, pineapple, and passion fruits – there is great potential for fruit processing.⁶⁸ However, it is currently constrained by the inability of farmers to produce and maintain production levels to supply agro-processors.
- i) **Tourism and hospitality:** Several districts have tourism potential due to the natural and cultural resources (e.g., Arua, Yumbe, Isingiro), but further investment is needed to develop infrastructure (tourist sites, circuits, and roads) and to increase the quantity and quality of accommodations. There is potential to train tourist guides, chefs and bartenders, hotel managers, and craft makers (beads, knitting and weaving, shoe making). There is opportunity to support the development of enterprises in tourism and support industries, such as entertainment (theatre, dance, and music), gift/souvenir production, hotel and catering, travel operators, guides, and thematic tourism (e.g., bird watching, eco-tourism, agro-tourism).⁶⁹

⁶¹ Grosrenaud, E., C. Akais Okia, A. Adam-Bradford, and L. Trenchard. 2021. Agroforestry: Challenges and Opportunities in Rhino and Imvepi Refugee Settlements of Arua District, Northern Uganda. *Sustainability*, v. 13, p. 2134.

⁶² UN-Habitat. 2021.

⁶³ Feed the Future. 2022. Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity: Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement Market Systems Assessment Report.

⁶⁴ MAMZA 2022.

⁶⁵ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁶⁶ ILO. 2022

⁶⁷ International Finance Corporation (IFC). 2022. Creating Markets in Uganda: Growth through private sector and trade. World Bank Group.

⁶⁸ IFC. 2022.

⁶⁹ Garcia, A. and B. Kiwanuka. 2019.

Potential growth sectors identified by district

District	Growth sector
Arua	Tourism investments Agro-tourism, eco-tourism Blacksmith, molding Solar system installation Value-addition chain for main crops (cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, simsim, soya beans, fruits) Agro-forestry/tree nursery
Adjumani	Wild mangoes Agro processing Poultry (layers and broilers) Oil seed growing
Yumbe	Tourism development Honey production Mango processing
Lamwo (Palabek)	Maize Flour
Terego Madi Okollo Obongi Moyo	Market from oil drilling camps for items like pig, fruit, eggs, vegetables, rice Grafted seedlings Fruit and juice Beef Grain processing, oil seed
Kamwenge (Rwamwanja)	Maize and rice production market systems (producers, traders, commodity brokers, millers, animal feed blenders, local brewers)
Isingiro	Maize flour Tourism

Hiring

Most of the companies are small (self-employment and microenterprises) and do not grow. Hence few of the businesses are hiring new employees.⁷⁰ When they do hire, the majority of business enterprises find new employees through relatives or friends, rather than through advertisements.⁷¹

A large proportion of refugee employment is created by refugees of the same nationality. In the west, all the Somali refugee employment and a third of Congolese refugee employment is by co-nationals. Somalis are more likely to be employed by other refugees, whereas Congolese are likely to be employed by non-governmental organizations (NGO) or host nationals.⁷²

⁷⁰ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁷¹ P. Nabusi Walekhwa. 2020.

⁷² RCS

The employers that did require formal applications for jobs found that *youth did not know how to write a CV or make an attractive job application*. This made them less competitive. However, they often focussed more on the interview than write-ups to determine the fit for the job offer.⁷³

*Refugees face discrimination during the hiring process.*⁷⁴ Refugees are persistently disadvantaged in the labour market compared to Ugandans. Ugandan nationals prioritize the employment of nationals over refugees.⁷⁵ Reasons for this gap include social stigma of refugees⁷⁶ and that Ugandan employers lack information about refugees' legal status and their right to work under Ugandan law.⁷⁷ Other reasons are the limited recognition of foreign qualifications, limited proficiency in local languages, or labour market inactivity due to displacement. Further, refugees often do not have the documents requested by firms when applying for jobs, such as the introductory letter produced by the local authority.⁷⁸

Most employers consider basic literacy and other job-related skills as very important. Employers valued complementary skills such as effective communication, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, and financial management skills. They also highly valued a good character and honesty among potential employees.⁷⁹ The labour market is increasingly valuing innovative and creative thinking and the ability to adapt quickly.⁸⁰

2.3 Training

There are numerous Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutes in the northern West Nile and in the south. These include government-owned institutions, private sector institutions, and institutes supported by NGOs. These TVET institutes offer a range formal and/or non-formal courses. Formal courses take a minimum of 12 months and are examined by the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB).⁸¹ Non-formal courses range from three to six months.

⁷³ ILO. 2022

⁷⁴ Loiacono, F. and M. Silva Vargas. 2019. Improving access to labour markets for refugees: Evidence from Uganda (Ref C-43445-UGA-1). International Growth Centre.

⁷⁵ ILO 27

⁷⁶ ILO 21

⁷⁷ T. Beltramo, et.al. 2021.

⁷⁸ Loiacono and Silva Vargas. 2019.

⁷⁹ P. Nabusi Walekhwa. 2020.

⁸⁰ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁸¹ ILO. 2022

Courses offered by TVET institutes in Northern and Western Uganda

The [occupation and skills assessment](#) by the International Labour Organization examined the courses offered by 18 TVET institutions in northern Arua and Madi Okollo districts and 2 institutions in western Isingiro district. The institutions offered 5-11 courses. The common occupations offered by three or more institutions were:

- Bricklayer
- Carpenter and joiner
- Domestic electrician
- Farmer/agriculture
- Livestock/poultry/piggery
- Welding and Metal fabrication
- Motorcycle mechanic
- Driver
- Hairdresser
- Motor vehicle mechanic
- Plumber
- Tailor and garment cutter
- Caterer
- Domestic knitter
- Domestic weaver

Courses offered by only one or two institutions were business administration, entrepreneurship, computer application skills, electrical and solar installation, phone technician garment and fashion design, baker, nutrition, rabbit rearing, and eco bricklaying.

A labour market assessment by P. Nabusiu for Save the Children International examined the courses offered in two local TVET institutions in western Kamwenge District: the Avemaria Technical School and the Rwamwanja Skills Training Centre (supported by Finnish Church Aid). The institutions both offer courses in agriculture and welding, but otherwise have a different offer. The technical school attempts to offer courses that are in demand in the market, but the tuition is a barrier for many students. The Rwamwaja Skills Training Centre offers courses to both refugees and host community youth for free but there is a limit on how many students it can admit. The Centre also offers non-formal courses that do not require a prior educational qualification.

Avemaria Technical School

- Building and construction
- Motor vehicle mechanics
- Electrical installation
- Carpentry and joinery
- Welding and metal fabrication
- Driving
- Agriculture
- Fashion and design
- Nursery teaching
- Secretarial studies

Rwamwanja Skills Training Centre

- Tailoring and garment design
- Leather sandal making
- Motorcycle mechanics
- Black smith/ Welding,
- Hair dressing and cosmetology
- Agriculture
- Apiary
- Bakery
- Soap making
- Hotel and catering
- Entrepreneurship
- English language

Enrolment in vocational training remains low in the northern West Nile districts. There is a negative perception of technical and vocational training among the population, being considered a lower-level educational path.⁸² The stigma is coupled with a lack of equipment and sub-standard quality to meet market needs.⁸³ The courses that had the highest enrolment were traditional trades such as computing, tailoring, auto-mechanics, and hairdressing.

Less than half of the TVET institutions are registered. Of 30 TVET institutions studied, only 13 subscribe to and are registered at the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT).⁸⁴ Those that do not subscribe cannot have their graduates assessed and certified by the DIT. This creates a barrier for youth, as certification provides opportunities for formal employment and advancing to other training levels. A higher percent of female graduates is uncertified compared to their male counterparts.⁸⁵

Vocational training is supply oriented. The training offer is based on the availability of trainers and workshops, and/or directive from the Ministry of Education. Students' uptake of courses is based on their interest, which is often influenced by the businesses they see in their communities. This leads to students choosing training in already saturated markets. The TVET institutions do not provide career guidance to help youth choose occupations that are relevant, in demand, and that have low cost for starting a business.⁸⁶

*There is a mismatch between the vocational training offer and demand.*⁸⁷ Many training institutes offer courses in a selection of traditional occupations (e.g., bricklayer, carpenter, hairdresser, tailor, mechanic).⁸⁸ However, many graduates do not find immediate work and end up pursuing employment in occupations unrelated to their training. There are various skills and trades that are in demand by employers or students, but that are not offered at TVET institutes, such as cereal farmer, horticulture farming, bio gas construction and solar system installation.⁸⁹ Table 3 highlights the training needs identified based on skills in demand.

The TVET facilities are located far from target groups. The location of facilities is a barrier for women, girls, and married refugees. Many facilities are located outside of the settlements. Married refugees cannot attend boarding training programs. Women and girl cannot attend training programs outside a reasonable walking distance because they must attend to domestic chores or look after siblings.⁹⁰

Fewer women take up vocational training than men. This is due to the lack of courses of interest for females, the need to find a balance with domestic duties, or a lack of relevant services, specifically childcare. Less than a quarter of TVET institutions run a functioning crèche facility that takes care of children while mothers attend training sessions.⁹¹

⁸² N. Giordano, F., Ercolano, and M. Makhool. 2021. Skills and labour market transitions for refugees and host communities. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency.

⁸³ Garcia, A. and B. Kiwanuka. 2019

⁸⁴ ILO. 2022.

⁸⁵ ILO. 2022

⁸⁶ ILO. 2022

⁸⁷ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

⁸⁸ ILO. 2022

⁸⁹ MAMZA consulting. 2022.

⁹⁰ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

⁹¹ ILO. 2022

Many of the students take courses with the intent to start their own business, rather than searching for employment. Most are looking to start a business that bring in money almost immediately, have low entry barriers, low capital requirements and a short gestation period.⁹² However, they do not receive training in entrepreneurship or business development. As such, their business decisions were not based on analysis of operations or sizing up opportunities. There is an assessment and training package (ATP) in entrepreneurship that already exists, but few institutions were using it because it is new and has few master trainers.⁹³

Technical training is not complemented with important job-related skills. Many formal TVET institutes did not offer soft skills or job-related training. Priorities for skills training are financial literacy (including where and when to borrow, how to use credit responsibly), life skills, problem solving, conflict management, and communication. Other skills identified are functional literacy in the local language, computer skills, and other languages.

There is limited access to technical training on agricultural techniques that would allow refugees and host community farmers to improve productivity.⁹⁴ Training institutes offer some courses in agriculture, but they are insufficient. In the west, households wanted to receive training in agricultural methods in cultivating all kinds of crops and on taking care of the livestock to prevent disease.⁹⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for digital literacy skills. The pandemic highlighted the need to be “online” for work, learning and marketing. Digital literacy was identified as an important training need.⁹⁶

Training needs by sector

Sector	Training need
Agriculture	Horticulture, Apiary promotion, Goat rearing, Pig rearing, Rabbit rearing, Cereal farmer, Cassava and maize processing, Animal feed mixer
Trade and service	Soap maker, Barber, Solar technician, Motorcycle mechanics
Construction	Concrete products making (pavers, blocks, ventilators), Finishes (Tile fitting, terrazzo, stone works), Painter, Brick making, Brick/block laying, Bio gas construction
Tourism and hospitality	Baking and catering, Housekeeping international standards, International dishes, Leather and shoe making
Other	Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Financial literacy, Leadership, Team building Customer service, Communication, Digital literacy/computer skills

⁹² MAMZA Consulting. 2022.

⁹³ ILO. 2022

⁹⁴ ILO. 2022

⁹⁵ REACH. 2021

⁹⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2021. Policy Road Map: Recommendations to re-stimulate labour markets in Isingiro and Arua districts of Uganda, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Challenges and Recommendations

3.1 Main challenges

The studies and reports highlighted several challenges in the labour market in refugee-hosting districts.

There is not a lack of labour supply (quality and quantity), but rather a lack of demand. There is a small number of companies with five or more employees and so there is little demand for qualified personnel.⁹⁷ Entrepreneurs of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) lack business planning skills and access to affordable credit to grow the business and create jobs.⁹⁸

There is potential employment growth in the agro-processing sector, but it would require a large and predictable supply of raw material. The current productivity of smallholder farmers is insufficient to supply a growing agro-processing sector. There is a need to invest first in improving primary production. However, private sector investment in agro-related enterprises is weak, limiting opportunities for smallholder farmers to grow.

Graduates' skills do not match market demand. Since the vocational training offer is supply oriented, it is not informed by market demand. There tends to be a greater training offer in traditional trades with saturated markets and little guidance on selecting trades that are in demand.

The format of formal skilling interventions is inappropriate for refugee settings. Low literacy and numeracy skills limit the ability of youth, women, and girls to access formal education and training programs. Additional barriers are the distance to the institute, tuition or training fees, availability of childcare, and the duration of programs.⁹⁹

The quality of training is varied. Many vocational training institutes are considered ill-equipped to effectively deliver agro skills training that would make a difference in the sector. The apprenticeship programs are limited due to a lack of master crafts persons with well-established agro enterprises that could lead an apprenticeship program.¹⁰⁰

There are a high number of graduates relative to the availability of opportunities. Without jobs available, the graduates change occupations and are not working in the trade related to their training.¹⁰¹ Many start their own business, but graduates of non-formal/short course do not always receive a start-up kit.¹⁰² Other graduates that fail to obtain employment immediately sell their start-up kits to meet daily needs.

The lack of formality and organization limit access to opportunities. There are growing opportunities for refugees in construction. However, they do not win contracts due to the lack of organizational capacity, the informality, and inability to come together on a joint bid.

Location of employment opportunities is a barrier. The refugees who are willing to work agricultural labour lack the transportation to access employment that is often found long distances

⁹⁷ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

⁹⁸ ILO. 2022

⁹⁹ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

¹⁰⁰ B. Mubarak and W. Nkamuhewa. 2014.

¹⁰¹ ILO. 2022

¹⁰² MAMZA Consulting. 2022.

from home.¹⁰³ Graduates had difficulties working outside of the settlement because they had to separate from families or rent houses in town. The high cost of living in towns and family separation caused many graduates to search for work in the settlement.¹⁰⁴

3.2 Recommendations

The LMAs provided the following recommendations to improve the labour force participation in refugee-hosting districts.

1. **Focus on enterprise and skills development in sectors with growth potential and the capacity to readily generate employment.**¹⁰⁵ Engage the private sector in skills development, curriculum development, and job fairs to contribute to skills matching.
2. **Invest in fast-tracked education and skilling that is driven by market demands or community needs.**¹⁰⁶ Undertake surveys of skills demand and supply in the districts and in the wider national economy.¹⁰⁷ Extend the TVET institutes training offer to include new skill areas that are in demand (including digital literacy).¹⁰⁸
3. **Provide career guidance.** Provide guidance to students to choose training courses that have demand. Through multi-media tools, attract target groups towards marketable opportunities and/or invest in raising awareness about emerging opportunities to generate demand (e.g., green economy).¹⁰⁹
4. **Deepen skills of refugees in activities in which they are already participating.**¹¹⁰ Provide opportunities for more advanced training.
5. **Develop skills that yield products that have market outside of the settlement.**¹¹¹ Support training and business development of products with a demand in the district, country, or neighbouring countries.
6. **Provide basic business training, financial planning, and entrepreneurship training.** Complement vocational training with business skills so that graduates can run successful, growth-oriented businesses. Train additional instructors on the existing entrepreneurship ATP to offer it at more training institutes.¹¹²
7. **Develop and offer training on soft skills and job-related skills.** Offer training in numeracy, digital literacy, financial literacy, income and expense registration, marketing and merchandising, hygiene and food handling. Offer soft skills in problem solving, conflict management, leadership, team building, and customer service.

¹⁰³ REACH. 2021.

¹⁰⁴ ILO. 2022

¹⁰⁵ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

¹⁰⁶ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

¹⁰⁷ Market systems dev assess 2018

¹⁰⁸ N. Giordano, et. al. 2021.

¹⁰⁹ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

¹¹⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2022b. Rapid Market Assessment of Five Value Chains in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Host Community Isingiro District

¹¹¹ ILO. 2022b

¹¹² ILO. 2022

8. **Offer training in a format that is accessible to youth, women, and girls in refugee settings.** Design programs to be flexible in time and location (e.g., mobile or makeshift classrooms, training hubs), be shorter in duration, and have low entry requirements. Provide on-site childcare services.¹¹³
9. **Promote practical skills training that require only basic numeracy and literacy skills.** Encourage trades such as nursery bed works and bakery that require basic skills and shorter training durations that provide a fast track to employment with minimal disruption to ongoing livelihood and household commitments.¹¹⁴
10. **Encourage TVET institutes to subscribe to the DIT.** Existing TVET institutes, including those operated by NGOs, should subscribe to the DIT so that all graduates can be assessed and certified in their trade.¹¹⁵ Link informal and traditional apprenticeships to the same system of recognition and certification.¹¹⁶
11. **Raise awareness among Ugandan business owners about labour rights.** Work with MSMEs, sector trade unions, labour centers and business associations to disseminate information on worker rights and to improve understanding on refugee's legal right to work.¹¹⁷
12. **Concentrate on improving production and employment in primary agriculture.** Raise the productivity and profitability of smallholder food crop farming to make agriculture more attractive and increase opportunities for youth. A strong primary agriculture sector is needed to supply the agro-processing sector and facilitate job growth.¹¹⁸
13. **Offer financial stimulus for MSMEs.** Develop an approach to improve access to low or interest-free loans, blended finance options, and tax incentives and holidays that could stimulate new and existing businesses. Support the development of informal lending groups such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and Savings and Credit Co-Operatives (SACCO).¹¹⁹

¹¹³ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

¹¹⁴ P. Munduga, et.al. 2019

¹¹⁵ ILO. 2022

¹¹⁶ N. Giordano, et. al. 2021.

¹¹⁷ ILO. 2022

¹¹⁸ B. Mubarak and W. Nkamuhebwa. 2014.

¹¹⁹ ILO. 2021

3.3 Gaps

Each of the studies contribute valuable information on the labour market situation in refugee-hosting districts in Uganda. However, there were also a number of gaps identified.

Fewer studies examine the demand side of the labour market.¹²⁰ There is a greater focus on the labour supply side, particularly on current livelihood practices.

There are few labour market assessments in the western districts, particularly studies that explore the match between the private sector demand for skills and the vocational training programs offered. The studies that do explore the match between demand and supply are concentrated in the northern West Nile districts.

There is limited secondary information on the demand side of the employment market situation in the refugee yet demand for labour is a critical factor affecting the young graduates' transition from training to employment. The absence of MSMEs that demand skilled workers limits the ability to conduct an evidence-based skills demand assessment.¹²¹

There are few studies that examine the labour market situation of refugees in the capital, Kampala. There is opportunity to explore the situation of urban refugees and refugees that take a split-family approach.

There is a gap in the quantification of the labour supply and the skills that are available among refugees. The data on skills, vocational training, and certification among refugees is not organized or consolidated.

Few studies explore potential markets that are trending nationally and globally, and the readiness of the labour supply to take advantage of these markets. There is potential to explore further the opportunities in the green economy and digital economy.

Each of the assessments takes a different approach and focuses on different aspects of the labour market or on different districts/settlements. There is a gap in a comprehensive study that takes the same approach in each of the refugee-hosting districts to have a comparative view.

Based on the desk review, it is recommended that the sector harmonize an approach and tools for labour market assessments in refugee contexts, with the technical support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and to carry out an assessment in each of the refugee-hosting districts, including Kampala.

¹²⁰ ILO. 2022b

¹²¹ A. Garcia and Kiwanuka. 2019.

Definitions from:

HG.org Legal Resources. Guide to Establishing and Doing Business in Uganda. <https://www.hg.org/legal-articles/guide-to-establishing-and-doing-business-in-uganda-28691>. Accessed August 21.

Uganda Registration Services Bureau. <https://ursb.go.ug/business-registration>. Accessed August 21.

GigHustlers. Business vs. Enterprise: There is a Difference. <https://qighustlers.com/business-vs-enterprise/>. Accessed August 21.

4. Acronyms

ATP	Assessment and training package
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
LMA	Labour market assessments
LMS	Labour market scan
LRSWG	Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SACCO	Savings and Credit Co-Operatives
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UBTEB	Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board
UGX	Uganda Shilling
URA	the Uganda Revenue Authority
URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
U-LEARN	Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability, and Research Network
VAT	Value Added Tax
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations

5. Annotated Bibliography

AVSI Foundation. 2017. Labor Market Assessment. USAID

Link: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TRWF.pdf

The report summarizes the results of a labor market assessment to understand current challenges and opportunities faced by Ugandan and refugee communities. It found that most Ugandan and refugee households are engaged in agriculture, and casual labour. Livelihood activities pursued by Ugandans and refugees are similar, but refugees are paid less, were less able to obtain loans, and more interested in engaging in business than agriculture. If they could pursue something else, most Ugandan and refugee households would pursue a business, agricultural or livestock, but more refugees would engage in business pursuits.

Beltramo, T., J. Fix, and I. Sarr. 2021. Uganda Knowledge Brief: Using Socioeconomic Data to Promote Employment Solutions for Refugees in Uganda. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/88388>

The knowledge brief analyses labor force participation, employment and unemployment rates in refugee and host communities in 13 districts. There are high levels of unemployment and informal self-employment in both refugee and host communities, with higher rates among refugees and refugee women. Refugees are more overqualified for employment and paid less than national counterparts. Youth face greater barriers than older refugees. Unemployment is higher in youth that have higher education - secondary and tertiary.

Betts, A., I. Chaara, N. Omata, and O. Sterck. 2019. Refugee Economies in Uganda: What difference does the self-reliance model make? Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford (Oxford: RSC).

Link: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/refugee-economies-in-uganda-what-difference-does-the-self-reliance-model-make>

The report assesses the outcomes of the self-reliance model in Uganda and Kenya. The policies in Uganda give refugees greater mobility and has resulted in higher incomes than in Kenya, and the possibility to work in the capital while family members stay in the settlement. Employment is generally based in agriculture on the plot of land allocated, or small informal businesses, which are more sustainable sources of employment than NGO incentive work in Kenya. However, employment levels are lower than in Kenya.

Feed the Future. 2022. Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity: Nakivale Settlement Market Systems Assessment Report.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/93258>

This report summarizes the assessment to understand the system in the settlement areas to inform a refugee engagement strategy, identify constraints and opportunities, and develop recommendations. Refugees grow mostly beans, maize, sorghum, groundnuts. There is high

matooke production in the district in host communities, which has contributed to land scarcity. There is an enormous market for maize flour, which is mostly brought from outside the settlement. There is a big food processor to supply flour in the refugee settlement.

Feed the Future. 2022. Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity: Palabek Refugee Settlement Market Systems Assessment Report.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/93257>

This report summarizes the assessment to understand the system in the settlement areas to inform a refugee engagement strategy, identify constraints and opportunities, and develop recommendations. Refugees grow mostly horticultural crops, maize, rice beans, and groundnuts. Most are consumed within the settlement and the excess is sold to host communities on market days. Refugees have access to small piece of land. Refugees provide labor and are hired by commercial farmers inside and outside of the settlement. There is a huge market for maize flour in the settlements.

Feed the Future. 2022. Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity: Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement Market Systems Assessment Report.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/93259>

This report summarizes the assessment to understand the system in the settlement areas to inform a refugee engagement strategy, identify constraints and opportunities, and develop recommendations. The Persons of Concern (POC) grow beans, maize, sorghum, and groundnuts and rear animals such as cattle, goats, rabbits, sheep and poultry. Groundnut and Irish potato are emerging, as well as apiculture, goat, and poultry. There are a few small-scale good processors to add value to pineapples, milk, and rice. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of a competitive market for their produce. Most is sold within the settlement and the host community.

Feed the Future. 2022. Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/94980>

The presentation summarizes findings from the market systems assessment in Nakivale, Rwamwanja and Palabek Settlements. There is low private sector engagement in agricultural value chains in the settlement. The majority of refugees are involved in agriculture - maize, beans, and various value chain. There is existence of value addition for maize, honey and milk but difficulty in meeting quality standards. Constrains are small land sizes, few opportunities for hiring, and a lack of competitive market for their produce.

Galgani, R. and P. Lenkova. 2021. Consumer and Market Study in Southwest and West Nile Refugee-Hosting Areas in Uganda. International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Link:

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sub-saharan+africa/resources/consumer+and+market+study+in+southwest+and+west_nile_refugee_hosting_areas_in_uganda

The report summarizes the Consumer and Market study to explore the economic activities, employment trends, and consumer preferences among refugee and host communities in the southwest and West Nile regions. The findings show refugees have low levels of education, high youth unemployment, low demand for services they have skills for, the host community members are more likely to be employed than refugees, agricultural work is the most common occupation, and most businesses are retail or service providers.

Garcia, A. and B. Kiwanuka. 2019. Employment and Labour Market Analysis Uganda. GIZ (German International Development Agency).

Link: Unpublished

This report summarizes the findings from an employment and labour market assessment in the West Nile. It examined the supply, demand, and matching of skills. The main conclusion is that underemployment and unemployment is not due to lack of qualified labour force, but the lack of demand that should be generated through the creation of small, medium, and large companies that required skilled labour. Low quality of education and vocational-technical education fails to contribute to innovation and diversification of economic activities. The training offer is concentrated in saturated markets.

Giordano, Nicola, F., Ercolano, and M. Makhool. 2021. Skills and labour market transitions for refugees and host communities. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93862>

The study review TVET systems and programmes implemented by national ministries, private sector actors, development agencies, and non-governmental organizations across five countries (Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda). It compares the situation prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Uganda, it is recommended to expand the capacity and resources of vocational and technical training institutes to meet the high demand from refugee communities, extend the TVET providers' reach into new skill areas and adapt to changing market requirements, and to link informal and traditional apprenticeship practices to the same system of recognition, validation and certification of competencies.

Grosrenaud, E., C. Akais Okia, A. Adam-Bradford, and L. Trenchard. 2021. Agroforestry: Challenges and Opportunities in Rhino and Imvepi Refugee Settlements of Arua District, Northern Uganda. Sustainability, v. 13, p. 2134.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13042134>

This study explores the implementation of agroforestry schemes in refugee settlements in the Arua district of Uganda. Using semi-structured interviews with the beneficiaries of the International Centre for Research on Agroforestry (ICRAF) agroforestry projects in Imvepi and Rhino camps, the study identifies key benefits for participants and the environment. These include improved livelihoods and nutrition. However, there are challenges to overcome before agroforestry can be made more widely available in refugee camps. Key barriers include insufficient land, limited water availability and lack of local knowledge, which limits productivity.

Hempel, K., S. Pantelic, M. Peromingo, and M. Drewes. 2017. Compendium of Tools for Labour Market Assessment. GIZ

Link: <https://www.vettoolbox.eu/en/resources/compendium-tools-labour-market-assessment>

Labour market assessments (LMA) are key for policymaking and programming. A LMA is a type of analysis to better understand the functioning of the labour market as a whole. There are different approaches to LMAs and there is no single type of labour market assessment. This compendium supports the process of commissioning and conducting LMAs, provides different tools, and shows the trade-offs between different types of assessment. It provides guidance on conducting LMAs depending on the purpose. Three types are: understanding the general functioning by looking at employment indicators, understanding the main components (supply, demand, and matching) and the analysis of barriers, or examining dimensions of interest, such as target groups or skills needs.

Hindson, D. 2018. Market Systems Development for Refugee and Host Livelihoods in Arua and Yumbe Districts, Uganda. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64507>

The report summarizes the Market Systems Development (MSD) for refugee and host livelihoods in Arua and Yumbe districts. The crops produced are cassava, simsim, sorghum, maize, beans, groundnuts, and vegetables. In Rhino cows, goats, pigs and chickens are raised. In Bidibidi, only goats and chickens are kept. The crops with the highest growth potential were cassava, simsim (sesame) and groundnuts. There are 6 government and 9 private TVET institutions offering technical and management courses. Demand outstrips supply for vocational training in these centres. It is recommended to undertake comprehensive surveys of skills demand and supply in districts and in the wider national economy.

International Finance Corporation (IFC). 2022. Creating Markets in Uganda: Growth through private sector and trade. World Bank Group.

Link:

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/publications_ext_content/ifc_external_publication_site/publications_listing_page/cpsd-uganda

This Country Private Sector Diagnostic investigates the potential for private sector investment to meet development challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has a competitive advantage in agribusiness due to the favourable climate, ample water sources and low labour costs. The reforms in the power sector have led to results in the energy value chain, but further reforms are needed to ensure supply meets demand. There is also potential in construction to meet urban housing demand. The influx of refugees presents opportunities for investors. The two main areas are in the domestic market for fruit products and juices, and in solar energy in refugee-hosting districts.

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2020. Paving the way for better jobs and improving livelihoods for refugees and host communities in Arua, Uganda: An Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) for Refugees and Host Communities

Link: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---ddg_p/documents/publication/wcms_746266.pdf

The report summarizes the assessment to identify local sectors and value chains with potential for growth, profitability and employment for refugee and host communities in Arua, determining value chains that could be developed to include both refugee and host into the labour market. The value chains with greatest potential are cassava, sesame, and cattle. Possible interventions are to build enterprise groups, address the lack of financial education and entrepreneurial skills, supporting business-led extension services, enhancing market information, and enhancing product processing capabilities.

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2021. Policy Road Map: Recommendations to re-stimulate labour markets in Isingiro and Arua districts of Uganda, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/88867>

The report summarizes findings from a rapid assessment to assess the impact of COVID-19 on labour markets, livelihood gaps, and the socio-economic circumstances of refugees, households and business. It recommends investing to strengthen agriculture sector recovery, engage telecommunications companies to reduce the digital divide, offer financial stimulus for small and medium-sized enterprises, promote a broader understanding of labour rights, and create education and skills building opportunities.

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2022. Occupations and skills assessment for youth in selected refugee settlements of Isingiro, Arua, and Madi Okollo districts in Uganda.

Link: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---ddg_p/documents/publication/wcms_844306.pdf

The report summarizes the assessment of occupations and skills gaps for youth in selected refugee settlements in Isingiro and Arua districts. Many trained youths did not find employment because of the high number of graduates relative to opportunities. The most marketable youth occupations are tailors, fashion designers, hairdressers, bricklayers, soap producers, cereal farmers. However, these occupations are untapped because of unemployment, underemployment, and the lack of skills required by employers. TVET and training centres should have the compulsory integration of entrepreneurship as a critical skill. Suggested interventions are to engage telecommunications companies to reduce the digital divide, promote an understanding of refugee labour rights among employers, and offer financial stimulus for small and medium-sized enterprises.

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2022. Rapid Market Assessment of Five Value Chains in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Host Community Isingiro District

Link: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/94950>

The presentation summarizes the rapid market assessment of five value chains in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Host Community in Isingiro District. Job opportunities for refugees

involve both self and hired employment. Many interventions for job creation focus on supply side rather than demand. It is important to sharpen skills of refugees with consideration to activities in which they are already participating. It is better to set up large scale opportunities, such as agro-processing, in the host community. Partnership with technical institutions for skilling is important in the development of value chains.

Lakwo, A. 2018. Secondary Labour Market Study in Northern Uganda: Final Report. Enabel.

Link: Unpublished

The report summarizes the findings from an analysis of livelihood and labour market scan reports to identify priority training needs of youth, women and girls in refugee settlements and host communities. The main employment opportunities and marketable trades are in agriculture, and then trade and service industry. Technical and Vocational training institutes should upgrade course offerings to match diversity in traditional and non-traditional skills in marketable trades. It is recommended to also provided training in complementary skills (entrepreneurship, financial literacy, life skills).

Loiacono, F. and M. Silva Vargas. 2019. Improving access to labour markets for refugees: Evidence from Uganda (Ref C-43445-UGA-1). International Growth Centre.

Link: <https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/LoiaconoSilvaVargas-Final-Report5.pdf>

This report summarizes evidence on the difficulties refugees face to access local labor markets in Uganda, including discrimination, incomplete information around legal status of refugees, and low trust towards locals. Refugees do not have the documents requested by firms when applying for jobs, such as the introductory letter produced by the local authority. While refugees have freedom of movement in the country, many choose to live in the settlement following authorities or family decisions and their networks are located in the settlement. However, many youths would be happy to leave if they had a job or connection in an urban area.

MAMZA Consulting. 2022. Labour Market Scan (LMS) to Identify Priority Training Needs in Northern Uganda and Kiryandongo - EUTF Implementation Districts. Enabel.

Link: Unpublished

This report summarizes the results of the labour market scan to address the skills mismatch between training and employment for youth in 6 districts (Arua, Terego, Madi Okollo, Adjumani, Yumbe and Kiryandongo). Agriculture is the main livelihood activity for the majority of households, and a major employment sector. Trade and service is second priority, followed by construction and tourism and hospitality. There are Assessment Training Packages that exist in various marketable skills, but most are in Trades and Services. Some vocational trades are oversupplied, and there are opportunities to develop training in other marketable trades. There are also many courses that are in high demand, but are not offered, such as bio gas construction and solar system installation.

Mubarak, B. and W. Nkamuhebwa. 2014. Short course/Labour Market Survey, Business Planning and Course Development with BTVET institutes under the ZOA Uganda program in West Nile. ZOA Uganda.

Link: Unpublished

The report summarizes the findings of the market study on agri-related courses offered and the demand for labour in agri-business. The labour supply exceeds demand. The agro private sector is in infancy stage and unable to guarantee employment in short term. There are opportunities in agro-processing in the mid-term, but training should focus first on improving primary production and developing Master-craft persons in agro-enterprises who can support apprenticeship occupational development. The priority courses based on market demand are piggery, horticulture, poultry, apiculture, goat rearing, and forest technician. The vocational training institutes are ill equipped to deliver agro skills training, and the fees are a barrier for youth to access training.

Munduga, P., D. Bukenya, A. Mukasa, N. 2019. Mutaremwa. Enhancing Employability of Youth, Women, and Girls in West Nile Refugee Settings using Inclusive Vocational Education and Training. Africa Non-Profit Chore (ANCHOR).

Link: <https://www.anchor-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VET-Skills-Gaps-Study-West-Nile.pdf>

The report summarizes the study to identify employable practical skills gaps among youth, women and girls. The study finds that there are low skills and numeracy rates among the refugee youth and a mismatch between desired training and market demand. The most marketable skills were carpentry, masonry, bricklaying, baking, pastry, with potential for nursery bed works, climate-smart agriculture, liquid soap. Training institutes are distant and there is a need for flexible training and fast-tracking.

Nabusi Walekhwa, P. 2020. Labor Market Assessment for Youth in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement and Hosting Communities in Kamwenge District, Western Uganda: Draft Report. Save the Children International.

Link: Unpublished

The report summarizes the labour market assessment to assess how young people displaced by conflict can be supported to gain skills, competencies, and employment. The informal sector is a significant source of employment and self-employment opportunities. Most business are micro-enterprises with few employees and so job creation is limited. Businesses generally find employees through relatives, friends, or referrals. There are vocational training institutes providing technical education in common trades, and some non-formal courses. Agriculture is the major employer with potential for growth. However, youth are not interested in it as it is not seen as attractive or profitable. Recommendations are to support access to credit for existing enterprises, facilitate regularization of informal sector, provide training that does not have academic qualification requirements, and support profitable agricultural enterprises such as horticulture and poultry farming.

REACH. 2021. Markets & Livelihoods Assessment: Lamwo and Isingiro districts. USAID.

Link: Unpublished

The report provides a summary of the assessment of livelihoods and markets in Lamwo (northern Uganda) and Isingiro (southern Uganda) districts. It highlights current livelihood activities, challenges, perceived employment opportunities, and barriers to employment in each district. Agriculture is the main livelihood in both refugee and host communities, followed by small business activities. Most households had at least one member currently seeking work. Lack of credit, inadequate skills and few work opportunities were the most common challenges to finding a job. The lack of access to land among refugees is a barrier to increasing income or commercialization of agriculture.

Truelove., S. 2016. Labour Market Analysis in Humanitarian Contexts: A Practitioner's Guide. Save the Children UK.

Link: <https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/labour-market-analysis-in-humanitarian-contexts-a-practitioners-guide/>

This guide helps humanitarians conduct Labour market analyses to inform the delivery of livelihood programs. It shows how to tailor resources to assess livelihoods and labour market opportunities in complex humanitarian situations. It gives tips for data collection and considering factors such as child labour and gender.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2019. Labour Force Survey 2018/19 – Main Report. Kampala, Uganda.

Link: https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/05_20212018-19_ALFS_Report_FINAL.pdf

The Annual Labour Force Survey (ALFS) 2018/19 is a national survey covering the whole country. The survey provides national statistics on demographics, labour force participation, employment, and the population outside the labour force. The Annual Labour Force Survey (ALFS) 2018/19 estimated the total population of Uganda at about 40 million people of which the working age population (14-64 years) was about half (51 %). The two sectors that offered the highest employment opportunities in 2018/19 included Services (42%) and Agriculture, forestry, and fishing (41 %).

UN-Habitat. 2021. Economic Development Assessment in West Nile, Uganda.

Link: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/09/economic_development_assessment_in_west_nile_region_uganda.pdf

This report summarizes the socio-economic analysis and economic development analysis in the West Nile Region based on a household survey, participatory business survey, and socio-economic survey of livelihood means. Findings highlight that few households are formally employed (3%). The majority depend on aid (50%) or are involved in agriculture (11%) or involved in business (12%). The majority of business owners are Sudanese (73%), and most businesses were

established within 1-3 years (65%). Business opportunities for growing the region's service sector are in agro-processing, biomass energy, and commercial agriculture.



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