



SNAPSHOT OF THE USER GUIDE FOR THE UGANDA SELF-RELIANCE INDEX (UG-SRI) FOR REFUGEES AND HOST-COMMUNITIES

NOVEMBER 2025 (V1 OF THE UG-SRI USER GUIDE)



Background

The promotion of self-reliance is at the heart of the commitments by the Government of Uganda and humanitarian, and development partners for the refugee response. Self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance (UNHCR, 2005).

Globally and in Uganda, gaps were noted in terms of minimum standard indicators, measurement tools, methods, lack of systematic data, capacity, and funding. Recent conceptualizations of self-reliance also extend beyond the unidimensional focus on economic stability at the individual level.

Under the leadership of the Government of Uganda, a national Self-Reliance Measurement Framework was developed including a Uganda Self-Reliance Index (UG-SRI). This standardized, government-led measurement tool with minimum standards will be rolled out and adopted in Uganda's refugee response. It will contribute to building the evidence base on self-reliance in Uganda and allow measuring changes and results of self-reliance and resilience interventions.

Contents of the UG-SRI

The Self-Reliance Index (SRI)¹ was initially developed by the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) and has since been adapted by humanitarian and development partners. The UG-SRI is tailored to the unique context and needs in the Uganda Refugee Response.

Seven domains of basic needs have been selected in the UG-SRI: (1) economic capacity; (2) food security and nutrition, (3) shelter; (4) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); (5) health; (6) education; and (7) social cohesion.

Each domain is measured using indicators. A domain-specific self-reliance index can be obtained from the scores of a households on the indicators related specifically to this domain (economic self-reliance, self-reliance in WASH, etc).

For the overall self-reliance score of an individual household, the scores of indicators collected within each domain are computed.

The domains are weighted according to the rank of each domain as determined by the Self-reliance reference group (see development process for detailed composition).

¹ <https://www.refugeeselfreliance.org/sri>

Why a User Guide?

The purpose of this guide is to provide instruction for administering the Self-Reliance Index, including interviewer guidance, domain definitions, and scoring procedures, to ensure consistent and high-quality implementation across contexts.

Contents of the Guide

- Purpose and overview of the self-reliance framework and of the UG-SRI
- Development process of the UG-SRI
- Key information on intended use of the UG-SRI
- Detailed scoring guidance for all the indicators in the 7 domains and the domain weights.

Using the criteria, a household is categorized as:

- Low self-reliant if its overall score is less than 40.
- Medium self-reliant if its overall score is 40-70.
- High self-reliant if its score is 71-100.

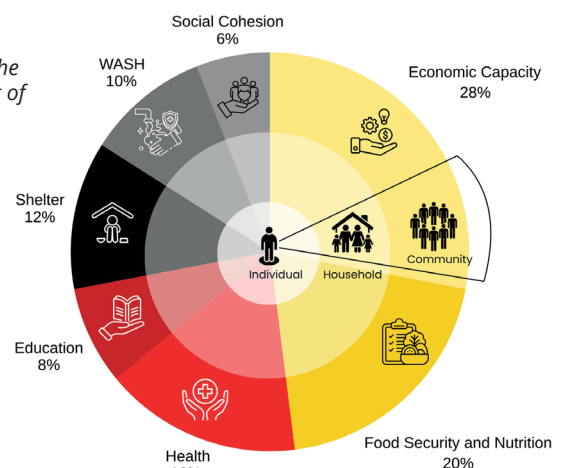
The scores should be presented disaggregated by sex of head of household, length of stay (refugees only), households with a member living with a disability, age of head of household, and household size.

To measure the self-reliance index, data on a total of 18 indicators needs to be collected. Those constitute the minimum standards. Partners are encouraged to assess both refugee and host-community households across all UG-SRI domains, regardless of their specific sectoral focus.

The UG-SRI is primarily designed for use among refugee and host-community populations. However, its application can be extended to the broader Ugandan population, as well as other displaced groups.



Fig. 1: Representation of the multidimensional concept of Self-Reliance



Essential Needs and weight of domain in the index		Purpose and content of the UG-SRI in each domain
28%	Economic Capacity	To determine the Household capacity to meet essential needs. This domain measures a household's financial stability, employment status, debt load and savings behavior and ability to meet the Minimum Expenditure Basket. (4 indicators)WW
20%	Food Security and Nutrition	To determine whether the household is eating sufficiently, and to understand the strategies adopted to meet the food needs. This domain is measured using the food consumption score and consumption-based coping strategy index. (2 indicators)
16%	Health	To determine whether the household is able to access the health care when needed. This domain is measured using ability to access health care. (1 indicator)
12%	Shelter	To determine the adequacy of a household's housing facility using indicators related to crowding and ability to pay rent. (2 indicators)
10%	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	To determine whether the household has access to clean water and sanitation (toilet and handwashing) (3 indicators)
8%	Education	To determine whether the household has access to education for school age going children and what the highest level of education attained is in the household. (2 indicators)
6%	Social Cohesion	To determine the household possesses the social and relational capital necessary to plan and access support networks and safety nets in case of shocks. It uses indicators related to belonging to groups, savings, networks.

Use of the UG-SRI

Following its launch in 2025, the UG-SRI is available for use by any partner promoting self-reliance and resilience among refugees and host communities. It is recommended that partners collected data at least twice annually. Implementation will begin with comprehensive training for partners, including NGOs, UN agencies, government ministries, departments and agencies, and private sector actors. These trainings will target programme and project managers, field officers, and MEAL specialists.

Outside of project-specific data collection by partners, the Government of Uganda will annually and response-wide collect the data for the Index focusing on refugee and host-community households that are relatively stable in their geographic location. The index may also be integrated into annual assessments like the Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA).



Photo: WFP Uganda

Development of the UG-SRI and learning plans

The Self-Reliance Measurement Framework for refugees and host communities was developed through a structured, consultative, and inclusive process. The process was led by the self-reliance reference group, chaired by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) and the CRRF Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)¹ in 2023-2024.

Following a comprehensive desk review of existing self-reliance measurement frameworks, proposed indicators were validated through stakeholder consultations. They were refined with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) to align with Uganda's statistical systems. The selection of indicators also accounted for varying

monitoring and reporting capacities among organizations.

In line with the finalized indicators, a household questionnaire was developed to collect comprehensive data on self-reliance and it was rolled out across the response for the first time during the December 2024 data collection exercise for the baseline study.

To promote continuous learning and knowledge sharing, annual lessons learned, review workshops, and peer-to-peer exchanges will be organised. The evidence generated through the UG-SRI will be used to inform policy and programmatic decisions. It will also be used by the Self-reliance Reference Group to review the index every two years and if necessary update it.

¹ Members included government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), UN agencies, development partners, and humanitarian organizations such as: OPM (CRRF Secretariat and Department of Refugees), MoGLSD, MAAIF, NPA, MTIC, UBOS, MoES (UVTAB), WFP, UNHCR, ILO, UNICEF, World Bank, AVSI Foundation, Trickle-Up, BRAC, World Vision, DRC, FRC, IRC, Village Enterprise, Mercy Corps, IPA, FAO, ZOA, JICA, Uthabiti USAID Activity, and RIL/U-LEARN.

