



Finn Church Aid - (FCA)

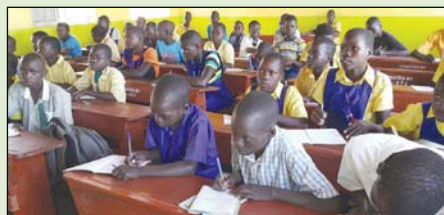
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Finn Church Aid - ECHO partnership in Uganda

Finn Church Aid (FCA) is one of Finland's largest non-governmental organizations working on development issues and also a major provider of disaster relief. Since 2014, FCA has had a fully functional and registered office in Kampala and by 2016, field offices in Adjumani, Arua, Yumbe and Rwamwanja refugee settlement.

In late 2016, FCA initiated an emergency operation in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement with the current population of 272,206 South Sudanese refugees. Out of the total population of the settlement, 58% are school-going age children of which many have never had a chance to access formal education. At the same time, the chronic underfunding of the South Sudanese refugee response in Uganda is hindering the education sector emergency response at large. However, FCA believes that Inclusive Quality Education is critical for children affected by conflicts and disasters as it provides



Students taking notes in FCA constructed classrooms

of assistive devices and conducting a special needs education assessment within the settlement



FCA constructed permanent classroom blocks in Tuajiji Primary School, Bidibidi refugee settlement

physical, psychological and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives. Particularly, in the case of South Sudanese refugees, the children and youth have experienced a violent conflict which has grave implications to their mental, physical and social well-being. To respond to this situation, FCA applied for funding from ECHO to implement an Education in Emergencies response in Bidibidi settlement, Yumbe district.

To address the most pressing education and child protection needs in the settlement, one of the main components of the FCA ECHO-supported action is to increase the access to quality and inclusive education through the construction of 28 safe and inclusive learning spaces and gender-segregated, inclusive WASH facilities for primary school-aged children. To facilitate equal and inclusive access to education, the action will also support Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) that provides second chance opportunities to 1,500 out of school children. In addition, FCA, using its niche in inclusive education, will support the capacity of the district education authorities and other relevant stakeholders to effectively integrate inclusive education through training of education personnel in the identification and documentation of learning disabilities, provision

The project will also incorporate good practices tested in other refugee settlements in Uganda, particularly through coordination with a volunteer network of specialized teacher professionals "Teachers without Borders". This collaboration will facilitate FCA, in coordination with the district education authorities, to provide capacity –building to 200 government and refugee teachers to provide support to the children affected by the conflict across the border. A specialized training material, developed by the members of the Teachers in Crisis Contexts Working Group (of which FCA is a member), will be utilized to build the core competencies of teachers in crisis contexts, including child protection, well-being and inclusion and teacher's role and well-being.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen individual coping mechanisms and resilience of the South Sudanese refugee children, the capacity of the schools to provide school-based psychosocial support to learners will be strengthened through the provision of services, such as counseling, peer support, recreational and structured play, home visits and remedial classes. Through teachers that will be trained to offer Psychological First Aid, schools will also be supported to establish linkages with existing referral pathways in the settlement to broaden the scope of protection and psychosocial services available for children. To further strengthen the protection of children while at school, the action will also promote the integration of the 'safe school concept' in 7 target schools as a way of improving safety and building protective environments as well as minimizing risks to learners, while at the same time building strong and sustainable school-community partnerships.

All in all, FCA believes that Inclusive Quality Education is critical for children affected by conflicts and disasters as it provides physical, psychological and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives. It is important that as many children as possible access quality education also in the context of displacement in order for the children to start their rehabilitation process towards bright futures.