

# Refugees benefit from emergency fund

By Prossy Nandudu

**T**he prolonged drought that hit the country last year did not only affect Ugandans, but it also affected the refugees.

They faced a severe water shortage for both domestic use and their animals.

The most affected were those in the refugee settlement areas in the district of Adjumani at Mungula I refugee camp. This influx of refugees from South Sudan shot up in July last year with the renewal of hostilities between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and former vice-president Riek Machar.

To support these refugees, a humanitarian agency used to ferry water from River Nile and supply it to the camps. "Because we are many, sometimes we miss out or get little, according to the 21-year-old Garang who stays with his family in the camp. He helps his mother to collect water from the truck that takes water to the camp.

Their plight captured the First Deputy Prime Minister, Moses Ali's eye, who called on humanitarian agencies to consider water and sanitation as a priority for refugees and host communities.

"We are surrounded by river Nile from Pakwach through Paraa. It turns out, we have water in the Nile and the only remedy is to carry water to the camp because every camp is about 12 miles from the river," said Ali.

## Relief through EU?

His call was answered by the European Union recently who launched the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF), under the Support Programme for Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda (SPRS-NU), in Adjumani district.

The €10m fund also seeks to address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in the Horn of Africa.

The programme is designed to promote equal economic opportunities, security and development. While launching the fund at Mungula I refugee settlement in Adjumani in February, the head of co-operation at the EU delegation to Uganda, Michelle Labeeu, said the fund will support all aspects of stability, contribute to better migration management as well as addressing all root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular immigration in the Horn of Africa.



Women and child refugees from South Sudan find it hard to get clean safe water. The EU has set up a €10m fund to cater for water problems among other challenges

"The fund will promote equal opportunities, security and development therefore dignified co-existence of refugees and host communities in the three

districts," said Labeeu. Apart from the three districts of Adjumani, Kiryandongo and Arua, EU has added another €10m for Yumbe, said to be hosting the biggest number of refugees coming mainly from DR Congo and some from South Sudan.

At the same event, the minister of relief, disaster preparedness and refugees, Hilary Onok, said a special meeting with the host districts will be held to discuss how best to implement the fund so that its put to the right use. "We shall have clear guidelines, looking out for priorities so that we can address the most pressing challenges in the settlements and these will be followed by the implementer," said Onok.

He said Uganda will not turn away refugees coming into the country as they continue to press upon South Sudan government to find a lasting solution finding peace in the country for their people.

Onok added that Uganda has over one million refugees and more than 85% of the refugees currently arriving in Uganda are women and children under the age of 18 who lack access to proper shelter food and health facilities.

Officiating as the guest of honor at the event, Ali said the EU project will complement the existing interventions that are being undertaken to responds to the Sudanese refugee operations.

"It is anticipated that this project will align its implementation modalities based on the objective of the settlement transformation Agenda (STA) like ensuring that land is managed in a way that is efficient and sustainable, governance and

rule of law, peaceful co-existence and environment protection," he said.

Reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said more than 1.5 million South Sudanese refugees have fled to neighbouring countries in the region, half of these in Uganda.

The funds will support refugee settlements and host communities in the West Nile districts of Adjumani, Arua and Kiryandongo. The project is being implemented through three implementing partners.

**EU HAS ADDED ANOTHER €10M FOR YUMBE DISTRICT, WHICH HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF REFUGEES**

## Clean safe water

These include the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) which is working on the water and sanitation component.

Under this component, water and sanitation activities will be implemented in partnership with Ministry of Water and Environment.

The programme aims at creating a permanent setting, calling for long-term sustainable operation and maintenance arrangements. Cross-cutting activities will

focus on causes of migration and community trainings on climate change and adaption. The intervention will benefit an estimated 300,000 people, including refugees and host communities.

At the end of the three years, five piped water supply systems should be in place, three new water systems, while some two will be rehabilitated and expanded.

ADA will also improve on the environmental sanitation by constructing a faecal sludge treatment plant and implementing water source protection measures.

The Belgian Development Agency (BTC) is addressing skills development and entrepreneurship training. This aims at supporting the skilling Uganda programme through relevant skills development for refugee settlements and host communities.

## Vocational training

This will enhance 'livelihood and labor market relevant' skills for youth, women and girls of the refugees and host communities through short and medium term vocational training and entrepreneurship support.

The interventions will benefit 2,000 youth, women and girls of the refugees and their host communities with focus on specific needs.

They will be working in three phases. First, they will focus on increased access to relevant, qualitative skills development for refugees and host communities with specific focus to youth, women and girls.

Secondly, increase absorption of youth, women, and girls in existing skills development training programmes through provision of scholarships, entrepreneurial skills coaching and start-up kits.

## Conflict management

The third phase will promote tailor-made, innovative and gender sensitive skills development responding to identified skill gaps for green economy, refugee settlements', livelihood and market development and refugee settlements service delivery.

The NGO Consortium, led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and consisting of the Save the Children, ZOA and CEFORD are implementing livelihoods, conflict management, educational and knowledge components. They will have to improve livelihoods through better food and nutrition security in the settlement and the host communities and a stronger business environment for the communities.

They will improve intercommunity dialogue at local level and also set up conflict resolution mechanisms in the settlements with the host community.



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Cheshire Services Uganda  
P. O. Box 70012 Clock Tower, Kampala  
Tel: +256 0392 002140/1/2  
[csu@csuganda.org](mailto:csu@csuganda.org) , [www.csuganda.org](http://www.csuganda.org)