

Refugee perception data in Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The refugees surveyed tend to feel respected and welcomed in Uganda, and they trust aid and health providers to have their best interest at heart.
- Most of the refugees we spoke to say they are informed about the humanitarian assistance available, feel safe when accessing it, and feel it goes to those who need it most.
- However, over half of the respondents report that assistance does not meet their most important needs. Those in Kiryandongo and Kyaka II are most negative on this point.
- The respondents are also less positive about aid providers taking their opinions into account – with the exception of Bidi Bidi, Palorinya, and Rhino Camp, where a majority felt they had been consulted.
- While most people are aware of how to provide feedback on the humanitarian assistance they receive, female-headed households are less positive on this point.
- A majority of the refugees we spoke to say they have access to livelihood opportunities, although this is largely restricted to agricultural income-generating activities.
- Despite the findings being more positive in 2020 compared to previous years, the change of methodology for data collection likely played a role in the overall improvement rather than the change in the refugees’ perceptions. More details in the section Challenges and Limitations section at the end of the document.

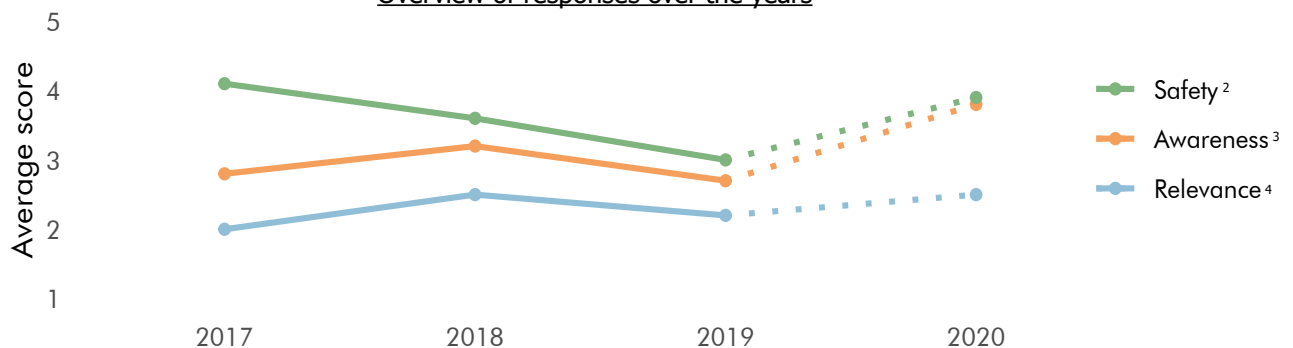
BACKGROUND

Uganda remains the third-largest refugee hosting country in the world, as over one million people have sought refuge there over the past two and a half years. According to UNHCR, the total number of refugees in Uganda is currently 1,431,477. South Sudanese make up the largest share of this refugee population at 62 percent (882,622), followed by Congolese refugees at 29 percent (418,994), and people from Burundi at 3 percent (48,839).¹

OVERVIEW

This bulletin presents an overview of the findings from U-Learn’s telephone survey with primarily South Sudanese, Congolese, and Rwandan refugees in Uganda. To better understand how refugees perceive the aid provided, only people who reported having received humanitarian assistance in the past year were included in the survey.

Overview of responses over the years



¹ Other includes Burundian, Eritrean, Kenyan, and Somali refugees.

² The actual question asked was “Do you feel safe in your place of residence?” in 2017 and 2018, and “Do you feel safe when accessing humanitarian assistance” in 2019 and 2020.

³ The actual question asked was “Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you as a refugee in Uganda?” in 2017, “Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?” in 2018, “Do you feel informed about the kind of aid/services available to you?” in 2019, and “Do you feel informed about the kinds of aid and services available to your community?” in 2020.

⁴ The actual question asked was “Are your most important needs met by the services you receive?” in 2017, “Does the aid you receive currently cover your most important needs?” in 2018, “Does the aid/services you receive cover your most important needs?” in 2019 and “Does the aid you receive currently meet your most important needs?” in 2020.

Supported by:



METHODOLOGY

The survey questions were based on Ground Truth Solutions' previous refugee perception studies, which took place in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and which were informed by the five pillars of the Office of the Prime Minister's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).⁴

However, the methodology this year is different. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the interviews were conducted via telephone contrary to face to face data collection in the previous years. While the surveys from 2017-2019 used a probability sampling approach, this year's data collection used lists of respondents from previous needs assessments, that agreed to participate in future surveys and provided their phone numbers. Besides excluding people without phones, such approach could be more prone to self-selection bias. In some contexts, no phone numbers were available and snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, had to be used.

In addition, this year the questions were part of a much longer survey. This may have led respondents to satisfice – that is, they may have been unwilling or unable to expend the cognitive effort required to respond to the questions, resulting in less thoughtful or careful responses.²

This means that the comparisons with previous years' results and the substantial improvements in some of the scores should be taken with a grain of salt. At this point, it is impossible to say whether these changes are due to the different survey methodology (different survey mode, non-probability sampling, longer survey tool) or to a real change in people's perceptions.

Nevertheless, the data from this round will provide a basis for future comparisons using the same method and can also inform further qualitative consultations with refugees. For more information, see the methodology section at the end of this report.

The 13 settlements and the nationalities sampled account for more than 90% of the total refugee population. The settlements included are Adjumani, Bidi Bidi, Imvepi, Kiryandongo, Kyaka II, Kyangwali, Lobule, Nakivale, Oruchinga, Palabek, Palorinya, Rhino Camp, and Rwamwanja.

The total sample for this survey is 1,011, with 55% of respondents from South Sudan (559), 35% from the Democratic Republic of Congo (351), 6% from Rwanda (56), and the remaining 4% from Burundi, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia. The findings are indicative rather than statistically representative.

This project was made possible by the support of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and took place under the U-Learn (Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability, and Research Network) Consortium.

Relationships

Do aid actors treat you with respect?



The refugees surveyed overwhelmingly (70%) feel respected by aid providers, up from 44% in 2019. However, respondents in Kyangwali and Oruchinga are less positive: around one-quarter said they feel aid providers do not treat them with respect.

Do you think aid agencies/actors act in your best interest?



A majority (58%) of the refugees we spoke to say they trust aid actors to act in their best interest. Kyangwali is the only settlement where the majority of participants do not feel their interests are being protected.

Do you think health providers act in your best interest?

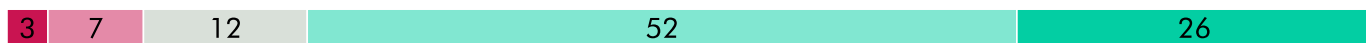


Similarly, people tend to trust health providers to act in their best interest, with 55% saying they mostly or completely feel this way. Again, participants in Kyangwali feel least confident that health actors are putting refugee interests first: over one-third (36%) answered this question negatively.

⁴ Holbrook, Allyson L., Melanie C. Green, and Jon A. Krosnick. "Telephone versus Face-to-Face Interviewing of National Probability Samples with Long Questionnaires: Comparisons of Respondent Satisficing and Social Desirability Response Bias." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2003): 79-125. Accessed 15 October 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3521667>.

Do you feel welcomed by the host community?

mean: 3.9, n=1010



Results in %

Refugees largely (78%) feel welcomed by the Uganda host community, up from 54% last year. Participants from Kyangwali and Rwamwanja are the most positive about their relationships with the host community.

Female-headed household

mean: 3.7, n=272



Male-headed household

mean: 4.0, n=520



Results in %

Female-headed households are slightly less positive about this relationship than male-headed households. Conflicts over firewood and land, and experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual harassment are the most common reasons they give for not feeling welcomed by members of the host community.

Aid/assistance

Do you feel informed about the kinds of aid and services available to your community?⁵

mean: 3.8, n=1009



Results in %

A majority (73%) of respondents say they are well informed about the assistance available to their community. This compares to 26% of refugees who said they were aware of available assistance in 2019. South Sudanese refugees report lower levels of awareness compared to Congolese and Rwandan refugees. Participants from Kyangwali, Lobule, Nakivale, and Rwamwanja report being particularly well informed about available assistance in their settlements.

Do you feel safe when accessing humanitarian assistance?

mean: 3.9, n=1010



Results in %

When accessing humanitarian assistance, 77% of the refugees surveyed say they feel mostly or completely safe, up from 61% in 2019. Respondents in Rwamwanja are the most positive: 94% say they feel safe.

Do you think aid goes to those who need it most?

mean: 3.5, n=1007



Results in %

Over half of the people we spoke to (58%) feel aid goes to those who need it most, up from 33% last year. Respondents who feel aid does not go to those most in need say that orphans, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children are left out.

Does the aid you receive currently meet your most important needs?

mean: 2.5, n=1011



Results in %

1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

More than half of respondents (58%) say the assistance they currently receive does not meet their most important needs. Those in Kiryandongo, Kyangwali and Imvepi are the most negative on this point, and those in Bidi Bidi and Palabek are the most positive. The majority of responses were also negative last year, when 68% of respondents answered the same question negatively.

⁵ In 2019, the question was phrased: "Do you feel informed about the kind of aid/services available to you?"

Do you sell aid items to meet your needs in cash?

n=1011



Results in %

Just over one-third (37%) of respondents report selling assistance to buy other necessities, and a majority report doing so in Bidi Bidi, Imvepi, and Rhino Camp. People typically say they sell the food assistance they receive to buy different food items, kitchen supplies, hygiene products and soap, or to pay transport fees and grain-grinding costs. This is out of step with the findings from last year, when 64% of respondents reported selling aid items to meet their needs in cash.

Feedback

Do you feel aid agencies/actors take your community's opinions into account when providing support to your community?

mean: 3.1, n=1006



Results in %

1 Not at all 2 Not really 3 Neutral 4 Mostly yes 5 Yes completely

Less than half (44%) of the respondents feel their opinions are taken into account by aid agencies when providing support to their communities. Bidi Bidi, Palorinya, and Rhino Camp are the exceptions, where a majority of people say aid providers consult them and take their feedback into account. However, last year's findings showed that a majority of respondents (70%) did not feel their opinions were taken into account.

Do you know how to file suggestions or complaints about the aid/services you receive?

n=993



Results in %

Most of the people we spoke to (64%) know how to provide feedback on the humanitarian assistance they receive, compared to 56% last year. South Sudanese refugees note lower levels of awareness, however, with 58% saying they know how to file suggestions or complaints. Awareness on this point is particularly high in Rwamwanja, Oruchinga, Kyaka II and Nakivale.

Female-headed household

n=264



Male-headed household

n=516



Results in %

While the people we spoke to generally feel able to provide feedback, female-headed households are less aware of the feedback channels than male-headed households.

No difficulty

n=718



Some difficulty

n=275



● No ● Yes

Results in %

Refugees who have difficulties seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, communicating, or with self-care are less likely to know how to provide feedback than those who do not.

Do you feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid agencies/actors?

mean: 3.3, n=1000



While most participants (60%) say they feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid actors, this varies across settlements. Refugees from Lobule are the most positive about their ability to report staff misconduct. This contrasts with last year's findings, when only 39% of respondents felt that people in their community were able to report misconduct.

Livelihood

Do you have access to livelihood opportunities?

n=970



The majority (79%) of the refugees we spoke to report having access to livelihood opportunities, with those in Oruchinga, Palorinya, and Rwamwanja responding most positively on this point. Congolese refugees report lower levels of livelihood opportunities compared to South Sudanese and Rwandan refugees. Last year, 74% of respondents said they did not have access to livelihood opportunities in Uganda.

Congolese (DRC)

n=344



Rwandan

n=54



South Sudanese

n=531



● No ● Yes

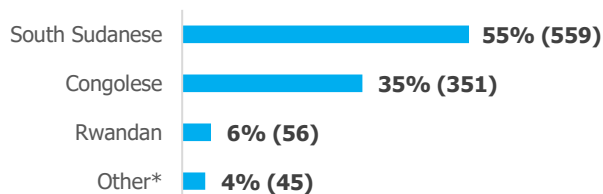
Results in %

Of those who say they have opportunities to work in Uganda, 58% say they only have access to agricultural jobs, 25% only to non-agricultural jobs, and 17% to both agricultural and non-agricultural jobs.

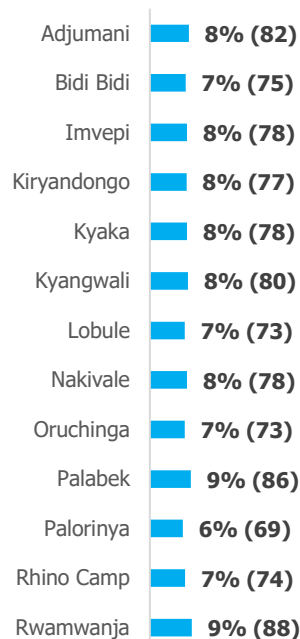
DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics below represent the 1,011 refugees who took part in the survey, all of whom had received humanitarian assistance in the last 12 months, are above the age of 18, and consented to taking part in the survey.

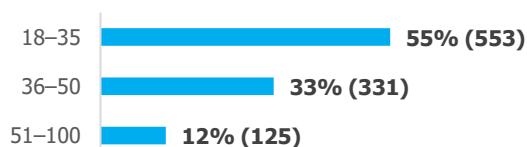
Nationality



Location



Age

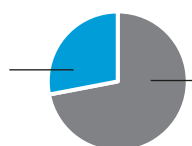


Gender



Disability status

28% have difficulties seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, communicating, or with self-care (280)



72% without a disability (731)

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

To design the sample strategy for this round of the perception survey, U-Learn used the most recent figures for refugee populations reported in the UNHCR refugee portal. The locations selected included all the refugee settlements, with the exception of Kampala. The sampling strategy selected was stratified randomised sampling, with settlement as strata, to ensure representativeness at the settlement level.

Due to the restrictions related to the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda, face-to-face data collection was replaced with remote data collection.

The pool of respondents was identified using the respondent contact lists from past assessments. Respondents were randomly selected from these lists in order to approximate a random sample design as much as possible. However, conducting interviews remotely meant that potential respondents who do not have access to a phone or did not previously consent to leave a contact number were excluded from the sample. In addition, due to the low response rate⁶ (an average of 35% across settlements) and the need to complement the pool of respondents using snowball sampling in some of the settlements (Lobule, Palorinya, Kiryandongo, Palabek and Oruchinga), the results can be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically representative of the refugee population.

SAMPLING SIZE

The actual sample size achieved was 1,011 participants from 13 refugee settlements across Uganda. The sample size in each settlement was calculated by setting a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 10%, assuming probability sampling. However, since in some contexts only non-probability sampling could be used (due to the limitations explained in the previous section), the margins of error and confidence levels can only be considered indicative, and cannot be applied for the settlements where a non-probability sampling approach was used.

* Other includes Burundian, Eritrean, Kenyan, and Somali refugees.

⁶The proportion of successful interviews out of the number of attempted calls.

Settlement	Total refugee population ⁷ (individual)	Margin of error (+/-%)	Statistical confidence level (%)	Required sample	Actual sample size
Adjumani	214,470	10%	90%	68	82
Bidi Bidi	232,718	10%	90%	68	75
Imvepi	66,439	10%	90%	68	78
Kiryandongo	67,712	10%	90%	68	77
Kyaka II	123,858	10%	90%	68	78
Kyangwali	123,031	10%	90%	68	80
Lobule	5,530	10%	90%	67	73
Nakivale	132,811	10%	90%	68	78
Oruchinga	7,912	10%	90%	68	73
Palabek	53,806	10%	90%	68	86
Palorinya	122,811	10%	90%	68	69
Rhino	120,482	10%	90%	68	74
Rwamwanja	72,663	10%	90%	68	88
Total				883	1,011

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey questions were developed to help understand refugees' perceptions of the aid they receive, their relationship with humanitarian workers and the host community, and their future prospects. For the purpose of comparing this data with previous rounds, the questions in this round are phrased similarly to those in the previous three years wherever possible. We consulted local actors and organisations in Uganda for feedback and input during the survey question design phase. Draft questions were also presented to UNHCR, the Assessment Technical Working Group (ATWG), the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), and the Office of the Prime Minister. The team tested all the questions and translations with refugees before rolling out the survey.

QUESTION FORMULATION

The majority of the survey questions use a Likert scale (i.e., 1 – not at all, 2 – not really, 3 – somewhat, 4 – mostly yes, and 5 – completely yes) or binary (i.e., yes or no) questions. In addition, we asked multiple-choice and open-ended follow-up questions to probe the reasons behind certain responses. Respondents were also given the option of not answering.

PARTICIPANTS

A participant is any consenting adult aged 18 years or older who was willing to answer the questions in the questionnaire. We screened participants by asking whether they have received humanitarian assistance in the last 12 months. No questions were asked of those who have not received humanitarian assistance within this timeframe.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from 11–28 September 2020 by IMPACT-trained enumerators. The enumerators had previously been trained on electronic data collection devices, including KoBo, on which this questionnaire was programmed. Prior to commencing data collection, IMPACT staff trained enumerators on the survey tool and on the electronic data collection device (Kobo Collect) on which the survey was programmed. The enumerators were also trained on best practice for interviews and specific procedures for collecting data via phone (i.e., reacting to different scenarios, including an inactive phone line, no answer, a busy respondent, refusal to respond, poor network connection, or a language barrier, as well as tracking the outcomes of calls). Prior to data collection, all the enumerators were briefed on the organisational Code of Conduct and on the Safeguarding policy. IMPACT also supervised enumerators and checked that the data collected adhered to quality standards. A quality check was run at the end of data collection every day, and enumerators were debriefed every morning.

DATA DISAGGREGATION

Data was disaggregated according to the affected person's status, age, gender, and settlement, as well as their status within their household. To identify groups of persons with disabilities within the sample, respondents were asked a condensed series of questions based on proposed questions developed by the Washington Group.

⁷ From the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal (August 2020).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Summary statistics are reported as the percentage of responses in each of the Likert categories or to binary yes/no questions. Average values are obtained for each question. Sub-group comparisons are made according to demographic markers of interest (e.g., refugee status, age, gender) but are only mentioned if the difference in the answers between sub-groups is larger than 10%. Graphic representations of Likert scale and binary questions are visualised using green for favourable opinions and red for unfavourable opinions. Neutral responses are shown in grey.

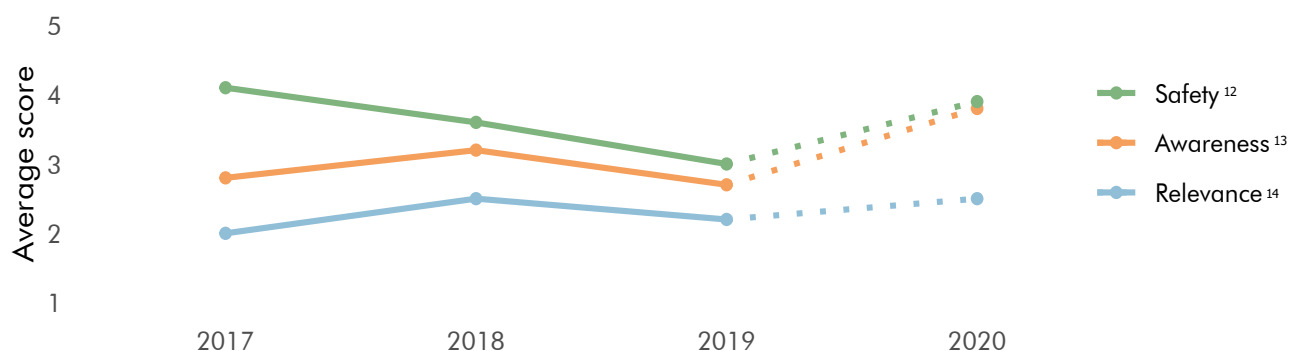
LANGUAGE OF THE SURVEY

The enumerator team was hired from among the refugee population in Kampala and included speakers of the main refugee languages so that interviews could be conducted in languages familiar to the respondents: Arabic, Dinka, Luo, and Barri for the South Sudanese refugees, and Swahili for the Congolese and Rwandese refugees.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Positivity bias: compared to previous years, the 2020 findings are significantly more positive, as illustrated by the visualisation below. This may be down to several factors, such as social desirability bias⁸, coverage error⁹ and non-coverage,¹⁰ and the mode effects¹¹ of using a telephone interview method, as well as using a non-probability sampling approach. Essentially, people may be more likely to give answers they perceive as socially acceptable over the phone, certain segments of the target population are not included when surveys are conducted via phone, and the mode of data collection generally has an effect on responses.

Overview of responses over the years



⁸ Social desirability bias refers to a tendency to report an answer in a way which one deems to be more socially acceptable than their "true" answer would be. Lavrakas, Paul J. Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods. Vol. 2 (SAGE, 2008), p. 825.

⁹ Coverage error refers to a difference between the respondents included in the sampling frame and those in the target population but not in the frame. Lavrakas, Paul J. Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods. Vol. 1 (SAGE, 2008), pp. 477–478.

¹⁰ Non-coverage refers to sampling units being omitted or missing from the sampling frame. Lavrakas, Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods, vol. 2, p. 160.

¹¹ Mode effects refers to any influence on survey responses that is due to the mode of data collection. Lavrakas, Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods, vol. 1, pp. 477–478.

¹² The actual question asked was "Do you feel safe in your place of residence?" in 2017 and 2018, and "Do you feel safe when accessing humanitarian assistance" in 2019 and 2020.

¹³ The actual question asked was "Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you as a refugee in Uganda?" in 2017, "Do you feel informed about the kind of aid available to you?" in 2018, "Do you feel informed about the kind of aid/services available to you?" in 2019, and "Do you feel informed about the kinds of aid and services available to your community?" in 2020.

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