

Water Supply and Sanitation for Refugee Settlements and Host Communities (WatSSUP)

Initiating measures to ensure water and sanitation in selected refugee settlements and host communities in Northern Uganda

The Context

Currently hosting more than 1.4 million refugees (with the majority coming from South Sudan, and over 80% being women and children under the age of 18), Uganda is one of the pilot countries to implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

Uganda has already made great strides in the implementation of the CRRF through the development of integrated refugee response plans. The **Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP)** was developed in 2019 and focuses amongst other objectives on providing sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services to refugees and host communities alike.

The refugee crisis response by humanitarian actors follows a “maintain and protect” system, with an exclusive focus on refugee settlements. This has created equity issues in relation to water supply and sanitation between refugee settlements and host communities, as refugee settlements are predominantly supported with piped water supply systems, whereby host communities are predominantly served by water point systems. Moving forward, the successful implementation of the WESRRP requires a transition from the humanitarian approach in the refugee settlements to sustainable, long-term Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) provisions through national service providers. In Uganda, the transition from humanitarian-led water supply to government-owned utilities has been termed the **Utility Model**.



Project name	Water Supply and Sanitation for Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing agencies	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and GFA Consulting Group
Programme region	Uganda, with a focus on Arua and Yumbe Districts, West Nile Region
Duration	October 2018 – December 2022
Volume	€ 12 Mio.

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which is a key part of the Global Compact on Refugees, envisions a more comprehensive response to forced displacement – in which humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peacebuilding are closely coordinated, and greater responsibility sharing and inclusion of a variety of stakeholders, including refugees themselves, is facilitated. The CRRF aims to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugees’ self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and foster conditions that enable refugees to voluntarily return to their countries of origin in safety and dignity.



Photo left: A student washing her hands with a WASHaLOT

Photo right: Yumbe hand pump mechanic during a WASHaLOT welding training

Our Approach

This programme is operating on the nexus of humanitarian and development work and focuses on both refugee and host communities. Our overall goal is to ensure sustainable water and sanitation services in selected refugee settlements and host communities.

Key implementing partner of this programme is the **Ministry of Water & Environment (MWE)**. Furthermore, the programme cooperates closely with the **Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the District Local Governments of Arua (incl. Madi-Okollo & Terego) and Yumbe**. Cooperation with key humanitarian actors like **UNHCR and other Development Partners** are an essential aspect of the programme's implementation. To ensure that national agencies can step in to take over from the humanitarian organisations, capacity development combined with technical and financial support, is at the core of this programme:

National level: On the national level the programme supports the Refugee Sub-Group of the MWE that coordinates the implementation for the WESRRP.

Regional level: At the regional level, the decentralised agencies of the MWE are strengthened, especially the **Northern Umbrella of Water and Sanitation (NU-WS)**, which has been identified as one of the utilities to take over the management of the water supply systems in the refugee settlements in West Nile.

District level: At district level, the refugee-hosting districts and respective sub-counties are supported technically and financially to improve overall service delivery in relation to water and sanitation for both refugees and host communities.

Local level: At local level, Hand Pump Mechanics Associations in both Arua and Yumbe are strengthened and supported in skill development and re-skilling to adjust their services to the needs of the Utility Model. Lastly, measures to directly improve hygiene conditions and sanitation in refugee settlements and host communities are implemented with local actors.

In line with Germany's commitment to international burden and responsibility sharing under the **UN Global Compact on Refugees**, easing the burden on hosting countries and supporting the implementation of the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)** are a key priority in Germany's development policy and its Special Initiative "Tackling the root causes of displacement – (re-)integrating refugees". The **WatSSUP Programme** is part of the **BMZ Special Initiative on Forced Displacement**.



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Results

This programme aims to achieve the following by the end of 2022:

- **On national level** the coordination capacity of the MWE in the context of the Water and Environment Refugee Response Plan is strengthened through the provision of technical and financial support to the Secretariat of the Refugee Sub-Group.
- **On regional level** the capacities of the decentralised structures of the MWE (NU-WS and UN-WMZ) are strengthened to enable them to fulfil their mandate for water management in refugee hosting areas. This includes the development and implementation of a new data management system as well as the selection and upgrade of 20 water supply systems.
- **On district level** the service provision for water and sanitation is strengthened by supporting the District Water Officers to improve their service deliveries, as well as enhancing the collection and flow of integrated data from the sub-county level upwards. Furthermore, the Arua Technical Institute and the local Association of Hand Pump Mechanics are being supported to adapt to new water supply systems (e.g. operation and maintenance of solar water pumping systems).
- **On local level (Bidibidi, Imvepi, and Rhino settlements and their host communities)** WASH services are being improved by utilising the potential of local actors. This includes a **Cash for Work** component to construct 5,000 latrines, produce and market low-cost sanitary pads, and conduct water source protection for vulnerable groups in refugee and host communities. This is expected to benefit at least 45,000 people.
- **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, the support to hygiene improvement has been strengthened and health facilities in refugee settlements and refugee hosting districts are supported in setting up durable group handwashing facilities (WASHaLOTS).

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