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**From Settlement to Self-Settled:
The Dynamics of Movement between Kyangwali Refugee Settlement
and Hoima Town**

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ABSTRACT:

In recent years, the urbanisation of refugee populations has emerged as a significant trend in the sphere of global displacement. Yet, despite their increasing numbers, relatively little is known about the world's self-settled refugees and their movements towards urban centres. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to begin closing this knowledge gap by critically analysing the movement of refugees between Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and the town of Hoima in Western Uganda. Based on qualitative data, this study exposes the dynamics of mobility between the settlement and the town through identifying the types of movement that occur, existing barriers to mobility, reasons why refugees go to Hoima, and the demographics of the town's self-settled refugee population. This study also portrays the unconventional nature of the connections and travel between Kyangwali and Hoima, where many refugees do not fit the "urban" or "camp" label, choosing instead to maintain a lifestyle between the settlement and the town. However, this reality is not yet reflected in the policies and practices of UNHCR and the Ugandan government in Kyangwali, as they actively discourage movement between the settlement and Hoima and often refuse to recognise the population of self-settled refugees residing in town.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS:

AAH	Action Africa Help
CIYOTA	COBURWAS International Youth Organisation to Transform Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
UGS	Ugandan Schillings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Context

As the number of displaced persons around the world continues to grow, more and more refugees are choosing to self-settle in urban areas rather than reside in government designated camps and settlements. With more refugees now living in cities than camps (Guterres 2010), the debate regarding whether or not refugees should be allowed to voluntarily choose city life over encampment has heightened. This urbanisation of refugee populations has also begun changing the way displacement is conceptualised, creating new dimensions of asylum as urban areas become increasingly accepted as appropriate refugee spaces and the importance of mobility for refugees is being realised. Yet, despite their growing numbers, relatively little is known about self-settled refugees and their movement toward urban areas.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to critically analyse refugee movement between Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and the town of Hoima, the settlement's nearest urban centre, in Western Uganda. Based on research obtained during an eight-week placement in Western Uganda with Think Humanity, this study helps fill the knowledge gaps on self-settled refugees, refugee movement and the presence of self-settled refugees in towns rather than large cities: all areas that have previously been neglected in displacement literature. This will be accomplished through examining the dynamics of mobility between Kyangwali and Hoima, including why refugees choose to leave the settlement in favour of town, barriers they face while attempting to do so, and the challenges they face once in town. It should be noted that while refugees do travel

to Hoima for more immediate, provisional purposes, this study focuses primarily on refugees with long-term purposes for moving to Hoima.

1.3 Outline

This study is divided into seven chapters. The remaining segment of this chapter contains a literature review discussing the theoretical underpinnings and relevant debates regarding refugee urbanisation within displacement literature. It also contains a section on data collection, summarising the research design and implementation used for this study. Chapter two provides an introduction to Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and the town of Hoima, in addition to a characterisation of the movements between the two, focusing on types of movement, who is able to travel and the demographics of Hoima's self-settled refugees. Chapter three examines the barriers refugees face while trying to move between the settlement and town, including the costs of travel, the settlement's permit system, and a lack of reliable transport. Chapter four then identifies and outlines the push factors causing refugees to move to Hoima, as well as the pull factors often causing them to return. Chapter five examines the resistance shown by both the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) towards the urbanisation of refugees from Kyangwali Settlement. Chapter six is a conclusion discussing the research analysis, as well as establishing the importance of mobility and the need to reconsider "refugee spaces". The remaining chapter contains a research journal completed during the eight-week placed in Western Uganda, which serves as an in-depth record of the placement describing work activities, observations and challenges.

1.4 Literature Review:

Introduction

Prior to exploring the dynamics of mobility between Kyangwali and Hoima, this section examines the relevant literature and academic debates surrounding the issues of refugee encampment and urbanisation. First, this segment explores the debate on policies of encampment. The rapid urbanisation of refugee populations will then be discussed, including a look at the challenges refugees face in urban environments and the difficulties an urban setting presents for aid organisations. Finally, Uganda's own urban refugee policies will be examined and the idea of local integration as a potential alternative solution to encampment will be discussed.

1.4.1 The Debate on Encampment:

One of the most prominent debates regarding asylum surrounds the use of camps and settlements as a means of housing refugee populations. Disagreeing over both the practicalities and ethics of keeping refugees isolated from society, many find the use of camps and settlements to be restrictive, unsustainable and unsafe (Black 1998; Smith 2004; van Damme 1995). One of the main arguments against encampment, or what Smith refers to as refugee "warehousing" (2004), is the limitations it places on refugees, particularly their inability to enter and exit these designated spaces. Some authors claim encampment is an infringement on the rights of refugees kept within them (Bernstein & Okello 2007; Milner & Loescher 2011). According to Milner & Loescher, keeping refugees contained in one designated area specifically infringes on their right to movement (2011), which is guaranteed by international refugee law (see UNHCR 1951). This

is particularly important as mobility gives refugees the opportunity to improve their own living conditions (Long & Crisp 2010).

Another argument against encampment is the reliance on external aid often characterising these spaces (Smith 2004; van Damme 1995). Relying on aid to establish and sustain these structures means refugee's livelihoods are often entirely dependent on the aid community, with little opportunity for them to become self-sustaining. This, in turn, creates an unstable state of reliance on donors and international aid organisations as funding for refugee crises, particularly the protracted cases, is decreasing (Crisp 2002). On top of creating an unsustainable cycle of dependency, authors also argue that this system then fails to utilise the potential and skills of refugees (Smith 2004).

The literature also suggests camps often lack proper protection for their inhabitants (Black 1998; Hovil 2007; Smith 2004). Over the years, researchers have brought to light many instances of violence occurring within camps, including raids by the Lord's Resistance Army on camps in Northern Uganda, prompting doubt over whether or not housing refugees in designated areas fulfils protection requirements. Some would even go as far as to suggest camps not only fail to keep refugees safe from outside violence, but also create violence within their borders. These claims are due primarily to the prevalence of sexual and gender based violence and other insecurities that have been documented in situations of encampment (2004).

However, it is important to note there is also an opposing narrative within the literature stating the use of designated areas for refugee housing is just another necessary reality of displacement crises (Crisp & Jacobsen 1998). According to Crisp, the concept of refugees being allowed to settle wherever they wish, rather than being confined to specific areas, is not "politically feasible" for many host countries (2010a: 15). Kibreab furthers this argument by

pointing out that many host countries are economically and institutionally unable to absorb thousands of refugees, making it necessary to designate settlements or camps to keep refugees separated from the national population (1989). Furthermore, this logic also calls into question the ability for international organisations to effectively provide quick response aid and emergency assistance outside of a camp context. Due to the challenge of identifying refugees and the logistical complications of distributing aid in urban environments (Crisp 2010b), a camp setting is generally seen as more conducive to the efficient disbursement of aid.

Settlements: A More Sustainable Option?

One alternative to encampment, offered by international aid organisations and host countries to promote sustainability and self-reliance for refugees, was the creation of refugee settlements rather than camps. Due to mass displacement in the 1960s, “settlements” were created across Africa that, unlike camps, provide refugees with land, seeds and other necessities for farming and cultivation (Clark & Stein 1985; Marfleet 2007). However, though the need for more sustainable asylum conditions is becoming more and more important as situations of displacement are becoming increasingly protracted (see Crisp 2002; Milner & Loescher 2011), the difference between camps and settlements is often just semantics (Harrell-Bond 2002; Schmidt 1998).

According to author Lucy Hovil the words “camp” and “settlement” can be used interchangeably because they are: “...essentially the same: they represent the maintenance of refugees within confined spaces” (2007: 600). To author Harrell- Bond the distinction is effectively a “myth” (2002: 5) and to others the creation of settlements has “... meant little more than making small plots of land available for the refugees to use, within the geographical

confines of the settlement” (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil 2004: 29). Others claim their placement in marginalised areas with no access to local markets, inadequate resources and infertile soil nullifies a settlement’s purpose to promote self-sustainability (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil 2004; Kaiser 2006; Meyer 2006). More importantly, like camps, the use of settlements continues to keep refugees separate from society (Polzer 2008) and undermine refugee’s rights to freedom of movement (Hovil 2007). Overall, these settlements, while supposedly more sustainable, often turn out to be just as “constraining and ‘overcrowded’ as camps” (Black 1998: 4), which in turn undermines any potential they had to help refugees become self-sufficient (Hovil 2007; Meyer 2006; Werker 2007).

1.4.2 The Growing Trend of Urbanisation

Perhaps because of the restrictions of encampment, within the last five years refugee urbanisation has emerged as a key trend within displacement literature. Prior to this newfound interest, the topic had been relatively neglected. Recently a number of studies have been conducted to examine the prevalence of urban refugees, their relationships with local populations, their livelihood opportunities, and their access to social services and protection (See Buscher 2011; Coudrey & Herson 2010; Crisp 2010b; Landau & Duponchel 2011; Pavanello et al. 2010; Zetter & Deiken 2011). It is now believed there are more refugees living in cities than in camps (Guterres 2010), with approximately half of the world’s 10.5 million refugees now residing in towns or cities while only a third remain in camps (UNHCR 2009). However, the number of refugees present in urban areas is often underestimated because many remain unregistered and their presence often goes unreported (Jacobsen 2006; Milner & Loescher 2011). In addition to their growing numbers, the demographics of urban refugee populations are

reshaping to include increasing numbers of women, children and the elderly, rather than just young males (UNHCR 2009).

The existing literature gives numerous reasons why refugees would choose to move out of camps, or forego them altogether, in favour of a more urban environment. Some studies cite a desire for increased livelihood opportunities and the security cities offer in the form of anonymity (Pavanello et al. 2010). Other studies claim refugees with urban backgrounds may be unable to cope with life in rural areas and to create a livelihood out of cultivation (Jacobsen 2004; Kibreab 2007; Marfleet 2007). However, due to the relatively recent nature of this trend, more research is needed to understand these mass movements and the specific motivations behind them (Obi & Crisp 2001).

It is also important to note most of the studies on self-settled refugees have focused primarily on big cities including Kampala, Nairobi, Cairo and Johannesburg (See Jacobsen et al. 2014; Jaji 2009; Krause-Vilnar 2011; Krause-Vilnar & Chaffi 2011). This has left a significant gap in the research by failing to examine self-settled refugee populations in smaller cities and towns, which are often closer to camps and settlements.

Challenges Faced by Urban Refugees

Of the research conducted, one heavy narrative regarding self-settled refugees is the extreme difficulties they face upon reaching their urban destinations. One of the primary challenges documented is a lack of livelihood opportunities, often resulting in refugees having to pursue self-employment or work in the informal sector (Campbell 2005; De Vries 2006; Jacobsen 2004). Even when refugees are able to find a job, due to their ambiguous legal status, they still face the potential of unregulated exploitation by their employers (De Vries 2006;

Macchiavello 2004). Overall, this lack of access to livelihood opportunities often means urban refugees have a very difficult time becoming self-sufficient (Milner & Loescher 2011).

Another challenge for urban refugees is the issue of security. Many urban refugees live in fear of harassment, exploitation or arbitrary arrest by local police forces (Milner & Loescher 2011; Pavanello et al. 2010). Part of this security issue is linked to the level of xenophobia on the part of local populations, which often dictates how refugees are treated. This discrimination can take many forms and has serious consequences on the social and economic aspects of life for an urban refugee. However, it should be noted that the prevalence and degree of refugee discrimination varies from country to country (Jacobsen 2004). As noted by Malkki during her study on Hutu refugees in Tanzania, not all locals are alike and oftentimes discrimination by the local population occurs according to “particular temperaments, particular situations in the labour market, and particular social contexts” (1995: 159).

Finally, urban refugees often have a difficult time establishing and accessing their rights, particularly to movement, residency and employment. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states: “Each contracting state shall accord to refugees lawfully in its territory the right to choose their place of residence and to move within its territory...” (173). However, in practice these rights are often not realised due to the unstable refugee status of self-settled refugees choosing to live outside of designated refugee areas (Dryden-Peterson 2006; Hovil 2007).

The Trouble with Aid

While the presence of international aid organisations within urban centres could help mitigate these challenges, one of the largest debates surrounding refugee urbanisation is whether

or not self-settled refugees should be provided with aid, and if they should, how to deliver it. This debate is precipitated by two assumptions on the part of host governments and international organisations. The first is refugees capable of moving to urban centres and self-settling there are able to make it on their own without help from the international community (Jacobsen 2004). The second is that aid is easier to distribute within camps rather than in an urban context, where refugees are dispersed among the national population and efforts tend to be more time consuming and costly (Kuhlman 2002; UNHCR 2012). Due to these assumptions, refugees who choose to move to urban centres often have to forego access to all forms of aid including food, and education, in addition to potential opportunities for resettlement (Jacobsen 2006: 277).

Yet despite the difficulties it has presented in the past, there is a push to extend aid to self-settled refugee populations, regardless of the difficulties presented by an urban context (Zetter & Deiken 2011). After receiving ample external criticism (see Human Rights Watch 2002; Jacobsen & Landau 2005) and poor internal evaluations (see Obi & Crisp 2000; Obi & Crisp 2001; Sperl 2001), UNHCR is in the process of moving away from its traditional approach of discouraging refugees from settling in urban areas in favour of keeping refugees in camp settings (Crisp et al. 2012; UNCHR 2012). UNHCR has notably updated its policies to reflect a newfound belief that urban areas are “legitimate” spaces for refugees to seek protection, as their rights to protection are not contingent on location (Edwards 2010; UNHCR 2009). Although their revised urban policies are still viewed as being biased towards encampment (Edwards 2010), this new approach does represent a first step towards creating a working urban refugee aid policy and legitimising the presence of self-settled refugees in urban centres.

1.4.5 The Potential for Integration

With policies of encampment continuing to draw criticism and urban refugee populations on the rise, there is a growing body of literature promoting the use of local integration as a preferable temporary solution for the displaced (Campbell 2005; Dryden-Peterson 2006; Hovil 2007; Jacobsen 2004; Kuhlman 2002). Although local integration has often been viewed as a “second best” solution behind repatriation (Kuhlman 2002: 37), in cases of protracted displacement it is becoming seen as an increasingly positive option for providing refugees with a better state of asylum than encampment. While host governments seem hesitant to integrate refugees into urban centres, many academics maintain refugee populations can have a positive role in aiding local economies (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil 2004; Fábos & Kibreab 2007; Hovil 2007; Jacobsen 2004; Jacobsen 2006; Kuhlman 2002; Macchiavello 2004; Smith 2004). Research shows urban refugees have the ability to benefit their cities by “rejuvenating communities, expanding markets, importing new skills, [and] creating translational linkages” (2006: 283). This is exemplified by studies completed in Kampala and Nairobi showing how refugees often defy their stereotype as a “burden” by accessing livelihood opportunities and making positive contributions to their local economies (Campbell 2005; Macchiavello 2004).

Yet, regardless of the positive role they may play, many host states continue to prefer keeping refugees in designated areas away from urban contexts (Kibreab 2007; Marfleet 2007). In fact, most African countries do not formally allow refugees to self-settle in urban areas (Kibreab 2007: 29). One of the main reasons host countries hesitate to allow local integration is fear a large population of refugees will settle indefinitely within their borders (Kibreab 2007; Smith 2004). Another concern of host governments is without designated areas for refugees to help attract aid from the international community, international assistance will no longer be

provided, leaving the host country to bear the brunt of the costs (Kibreab 2007). Additionally, many host governments have security concerns should they allow refugee populations to integrate with the national population (Black 1998; Crisp 2010a). Finally, governments also tend to see local integration as a permanent solution rather than a temporary one and fear refugees will fail to repatriate if they become integrated into their host society (Hovil 2007; Kibreab 1989).

1.4.6 Uganda's Urban Refugee Policy

In terms of general refugee policies, Uganda is often lauded as “progressive” and a “model for Africa” (Akello 2009). In fact, Uganda recently updated its refugee policies by passing the Refugee Act of 2006, which offers greater rights and freedoms to asylum seekers within its borders. While this new act does not prohibit refugees from moving to urban areas, it requires refugees who wish to move out of the settlements to apply for permission from the Refugee Commissioner (Refugee Act 2006: 36). However, it does not state what happens if a refugee moves out of a settlement without being granted permission, which leaves the status of many self-settled refugees ambiguous (Kaiser 2006). Furthermore, this act subjects refugee's freedom of movement, often seen as a “prerequisite” for the enjoyment of many other rights (Kaiser 2006: 604), to potential restrictions by the Refugee Commissioner (Refugee Law Project N.D.; Sharpe & Namusobya 2012). Article 30 establishes the Commissioner's ability to deny refugees right to movement outside of the settlement on the grounds of “national security, public order, public health, public morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others” (Government of Uganda 2006: 26). Finally, the act does not address Uganda's policy that only offers humanitarian aid in settlements (Sharpe & Namusobya 2012). This policy, which declares

all aid and protection services be administered almost exclusively within settlements (Bernstein & Okello 2007; Dryden-Peterson 2006), discourages refugees from moving to urban centres by withholding aid from self-settled refugees (Bernstein & Okello 2007; Verdirame & Harrell-Bond 2005).

Kampala's Urban Refugees

Regardless of these ambiguous policies and potential restrictions, many refugees in Uganda are choosing to self-settle in urban areas rather than be subjected to the “hardships and restrictions” associated with life inside of the settlements (Hovil 2007). However, the only urban refugees officially recognised by the Ugandan government and the international aid community are those registered in Kampala as a part of UNHCR’s urban caseload. In order to become part of this caseload, refugees must receive a referral from a settlement to move to the city for purposes such as medical care, increased protection or in anticipation of resettlement (Bernstein & Okello 2007). Furthermore, refugees are only admitted to this caseload and allowed to remain in Kampala if they can prove to the OPM that they are self-sufficient by providing proof of both a job and residency (ibid.). These restrictions inadvertently give incentive to many refugees residing in Kampala to remain off of the official caseload, which excludes them from any form of international assistance. Studies on Kampala’s urban refugee population also show that their self-sufficiency is seriously deterred by a lack of employment opportunity, the confusion of employers over the legality of hiring refugees, xenophobia on the part of the local population and the language barrier (Dryden-Peterson 2006; Omata 2012).

Conclusion

Overall, this section presented an overview of the asylum literature regarding encampment and urbanisation, highlighting key academic debates including the effects of encampment, the reality of urban refugee populations, the provision of aid in urban contexts, and the potential of local integration. This section also provided the context and legal framework regarding Ugandan refugee policy to support the following research analysis concerning refugee movement between Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and the town of Hoima in Western Uganda.

1.5 Methodology

This section contains an examination of the research design used to carry out data collection for this study during an eight-week work-based placement in Western Uganda. This portion of the chapter includes a discussion of which methods were used and why they were chosen, as well as a look at the limitations of the research design and how it may have affected the data gathered.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data collected for this dissertation was compiled during an eight-week work-based placement with Think Humanity in Western Uganda from April to June of 2014. Think Humanity is a non-profit organisation working to improve the access and standards of healthcare, education, socio-economic development, and water and sanitation for the inhabitants of Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. It should be noted that this study is different than the final report completed for Think Humanity, which focuses more on identifying present conditions for refugees in Kyangwali and Hoima and how Think Humanity can use targeted initiatives to

improve them. The data collection methods employed for this study were all qualitative and included semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews and observation.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary method of data collection utilised was semi-structured interviews. This qualitative, semi-structured approach was chosen because it allows for vital interview topics to be covered yet maintains the freedom to ask follow up questions and fully explore and capture individual experiences and perspectives. Therefore, while each interview began with a general set of topics to covered, there was considerable variance in the length and range of subjects covered in each interview depending on the participant's knowledge and openness.

Overall, 36 participants were interviewed, including 17 females and 19 males ranging in age from 15 to 65. Participants for these interviews were initially targeted using snowball sampling with Think Humanity acting as an entry point. However, to randomise the sample population and balance out any potential bias, some of the interviewees in Kyangwali were identified simply by walking around the camp. In Hoima, a gatekeeper was used to access the refugee population, as they live in various parts of town and are not easily identifiable. Of the thirty-six participants chosen, approximately half were living in Hoima and half in Kyangwali, yet all were registered as refugees in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. The setting for each interview was varied, but most were held at the participant's homes or offices depending on their preference and availability. A translator was used for approximately half of the interviews. All participants gave verbal consent prior to being interviewed.

Key Actor Interviews:

Key actor interviews were also conducted in order to round out the information provided by the target population and to gain a more in-depth perspective on certain topics, including Ugandan refugee policy in practice and the infrastructure of the settlement. Key actors included leaders within the local community, UNHCR representatives and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) staff members. Each key actor was chosen based on his or her area of expertise and knowledge, however interview topics varied depending on the specific knowledge of the key informant. Interviews were generally conducted at the participant's office.

Observation:

The final data collection method used was observation. Observation proved to be critically important in the context of a refugee settlement, as it allowed for a greater understanding of the processes and politics at work there. This was particularly significant in such a government-controlled environment where the policies and opinions conveyed do not always match up with what was occurring on the ground. In particular, observation was important for understanding how Uganda's refugee policies played out in a real-life context.

Limitations:

It is important to note there were limitations to this data collection process that could have affected the information gathered. First, although the ratio of males to females was relatively even, there was a heavier population of male interviewees among the refugee participants in Hoima. This was partially due to using Think Humanity as an entry point, as their staff members were primarily males ages 21 to 26. Furthermore, the male refugee population in

Hoima is more visible and significantly easier to access than the female population. However, this could have skewed the data collected towards a male perspective. Another limitation was the language barrier. Even with the presence of a translator there were certain interview topics that proved extremely difficult to convey, including socio-economic development and the prevalence of discrimination. While translators were used and questions were often reframed, this proved to be a difficulty throughout the eight weeks of data collection and often seemed to impact individual's understanding and response to certain questions. Finally, key informants were difficult to access due to busy schedules and poor technology. Therefore, interviews were not conducted with all of the key informants desired to participate in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: FROM KYANGWALI TO HOIMA

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and the town of Hoima, as well as offering a characterisation of movement between the two. In particular, this section examines the types of movement occurring between the settlement and the town, including the prominence of reverse movement and who is able to travel between the settlement and the town.

2.1 Kyangwali Refugee Settlement

Originally established for refugees fleeing the Rwandan conflict in the 1960s (Werker 2007: 463), Kyangwali Refugee Settlement is located in Hoima District in western Uganda. Approximately six hours from the capital city of Kampala, the settlement is built on 91 square kilometres of land, which is divided into individual agricultural plots for the refugees to cultivate (ibid.). Jointly run by UNHCR and Uganda's OPM, as of 31 March 2014, the settlement is home to approximately 38,897 refugees (see Appendix A), with the overwhelming majority from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The rest of the settlement is made up of refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Somalia, however these nationalities make up less than eight percent of the settlement's entire population. While the camp's distribution of males and females remains relatively even, the population is heavily skewed towards children and adolescents age 0 to 17, who make up roughly 75 percent of the settlement's inhabitants.

2.2 Hoima Town

Located approximately 80 kilometres from Kyangwali (Werker 2007: 463), the town of Hoima acts as the settlements nearest urban centre. Although oil was recently discovered in the region, making it a more desirable destination for many, Hoima remains a relatively small town. According to the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics the population of Hoima grew from 27,934 in 2002 to an estimated 40,600 in 2011 (2011: 114). Regardless of its relatively small size, Hoima possesses many amenities not found in the settlement including a regional hospital, privately run clinics, banks, universities, technical schools and many businesses. It should be noted that while the town of Hoima lies in the Hoima District, for the purposes of this study “Hoima” refers to the town unless otherwise specified.

2.3 Hoima’s Self-Settled Refugees

The self-settled refugee population in Hoima comes almost entirely from Kyangwali Refugee Settlement. This refugee population is primarily made up of students from the ages of 15 to 25 who attend secondary schools and universities located in town. The number of students in Hoima has greatly increased over the past five years due to the help of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), namely Think Humanity and COBURWAS International Youth Organisation to Transform Africa (CIYOTA), opening hostels and offering scholarships to students from Kyangwali to make education in Hoima more accessible. Due to an initiative to promote female education by these organisations, Think Humanity in particular, the majority of these students are female. In addition to the student population, there is also a significant number of young males in their twenties who have jobs in town or run their own businesses. While some of these men are married with one or two young children, the majority of the self-settled refugees in Hoima are young and unmarried. This is, in part, because the cost of sending someone to live

in Hoima is high, meaning many families are only able to send one member. There is also a visible deficiency of adult or elderly refugees in Hoima. In general, it seems these two populations stay within the settlement where international aid is available and living costs are much lower because they have too many dependants or are too vulnerable to navigate the challenges of life in town.

2.4 Types of Movement

Despite the fact that there is a two hours drive between them, there is continuous movement between the settlement and the town. Although many studies assert the majority of self-settled refugees come straight from conflict zones rather than from camps or settlements (Jacobsen 2004; Macchiavello 2004), in the case of Hoima the reverse is true. Due to this movement, Hoima is home to a significant number of self-settled refugees from Kyangwali Settlement, although the exact number is unknown. While many refugees travel to Hoima with immediate objectives, including banking and trade, there are many who leave the settlement and travel to Hoima with the intent of establishing themselves in town. It is important to note this study focuses primarily on the refugees with long-term purposes for travelling to Hoima who would be considered “self-settled” in town. While there is no single definition of a “self-settled” refugee, for the purpose of this research a refugee will be identified as “self-settled” if they live in an urban area on a permanent basis.

2.4.1 Reverse Movement

In addition to refugees moving from the settlement to Hoima, there is also an unexpected amount of reverse movement from Hoima back to the settlement. While this movement does include Ugandan nationals entering the settlement to sell goods, particularly during Kyangwali’s

market days, it mainly consists of refugees returning back to Kyangwali. For some, this return journey is nothing more than a visit to family and friends, but for many, it represents a more permanent move back to life in the settlement. This heavy volume of movement to town and eventually back to the settlement suggests the self-settled refugees from Kyangwali often live in a space between the settlement and town. For those staying in town returning to the settlement is always an option, and for many it becomes a reality at some point when life in town becomes too difficult or when they are needed back in the settlement. Noted by Kaiser, this trend allows refugees to be “moving in and out of settlements as their needs change” or to “live outside settlements but maintain strong and important connections with people or institutions in settlements or vice versa” (2006: 608). For some this means living primarily in town while maintaining very strong connections with the settlement and constantly moving between the two. For others, whether they are staying in town or the settlement simply depends on their current circumstances. Many expressed the option of moving is always a possibility if their situation were to change. This reality can be seen in the response of a male refugee living in Hoima who, when asked if he would consider moving back to Kyangwali, responded:

Yeah Kyangwali is like our base. We always move to schools, we always move to look for jobs but when we really feel like we are tired or we have failed as refugees we always move back to the village or in Kyangwali. You move back to organise yourself again.

This quote shows the thought behind this reverse movement and how, for many self-settled refugees, Kyangwali remains a fallback option depending on their needs and ability to cope with life in Hoima.

With strong ties to the settlement and frequent reverse movement, many of the self-settled refugees in Hoima lead lives somewhere between the camp and town. This “in between” lifestyle not only defies the common distinction made between “urban” and “camp” refugees, it

also further complicates the idea of “self-settled” refugees, as many of them move frequently between town and the settlement. This fluid lifestyle can be attributed to the necessity of maintaining strong ties with the settlement. This remains a necessity for many of Hoima’s self-settled refugees because Uganda only allows refugees to access international aid such as food, health care or documentation within settlements (Bernstein & Okello 2007). Refugees registered in Kyangwali are also required to re-register every two years in order to maintain their refugee status within Uganda. Additionally, many self-settled refugees retain a strong connection to Kyangwali because most of their family and friends remain inside of the settlement and they continue to consider Kyangwali to be their “home”. This became apparent during interviews when most of the self-settled refugees linguistically identified themselves as being “from” or “living in” Kyangwali, whether or not they were residing in Hoima.

2.5 The Class Structure of Mobility

It is important to note movement between Kyangwali and Hoima is dictated by cost, which creates a distinct class structure to refugee mobility. Due to the expense of travelling to, and living in, Hoima only those with a steady, substantial income are able to travel outside of the settlement. This also tends to favour refugees who have stayed in the settlement for long periods of time as they have had more time to establish their livelihoods and save money.

However, in certain cases these costs are mitigated by help from a local NGO or by having friends in Hoima. There are organisations in town that own and run hostels for students, offering them housing and often scholarships to make education in Hoima more accessible to those without the means to pay themselves. Students also reported receiving scholarships from organisations such as UNHCR and the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID) to study outside of the settlement. Furthermore, refugees are more likely to make the trip if they have connections in Hoima who are willing to help them. In this way, some of the self-settled refugees in Hoima act as a support network, which allows for more refugees to move to town whether or not they personally have the means to survive there.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that, unlike previous characterisations of urban refugees, those living in Hoima seem to live between town and settlement, blurring the line between “urban” and “camp” refugees. Furthermore, it shows movement between the settlement and town is very much coloured by class hierarchy due to the prohibitive costs of getting to town. However, while movement between Kyangwali and Hoima is a prevalent part of life for those residing in the settlement, there are also significant barriers to mobility, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: BARRIERS TO MOVEMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to appraise the barriers to movement Kyangwali refugees face when trying to gain access to Hoima. This section identifies the cost of movement, the settlement's permit system, and a lack of reliable transport as the primary impediments.

3.1 Cost

As previously mentioned, one significant barrier for refugees moving between Hoima and Kyangwali is the cost of transport. At 15,000 Uganda Shillings (UGS) each way, the fee is extremely prohibitive for the majority of refugees registered in Kyangwali. Out of the 36 refugees interviewed, ten reported never having been to Hoima or even outside of the settlement after reporting to Kyangwali due to the cost of transport. This expense also makes it difficult for refugees staying in Hoima to get back to Kyangwali. For one student the cost of returning to Kyangwali meant he was unable to return to see his family during holiday breaks. When asked if he returned regularly, one student explained that while he often thinks of returning to Kyangwali, the cost is too high and all the money he has must go towards his school fees. Another refugee in Hoima stated: "It is expensive because now going to Kyangwali it is 15,000 and coming back [is] 15,000. That is 30,000. And of which I can't get. I don't have it actually, I am very honest."

3.2 The Permit System

Yet, even for the refugees with the means to obtain transport to leave Kyangwali, movements are monitored by a system of permits requiring refugees to obtain written permission from the OPM prior to leaving the settlement. To enforce this policy there is a gate to the entrance of the settlement, which is monitored by policemen tasked to check the documentation

of those leaving and those entering. In order to obtain a permit, a refugee has to meet with a member of the OPM's staff, explain the reason for their travels and convince the staff member it is worthy of written permission to exit the settlement. One important aspect of these permits is that they are time sensitive and can only be granted for a period of up to three months. Therefore, the staff member responsible for issuing the permit determines how many days a refugee should be allotted based on the reason they gave for travelling. According to a representative of UNHCR, if a refugee intends to be gone for more than three months they are required to return to the settlement prior to the permits expiration so the permit can be renewed.

This system of permits represents perhaps the greatest barrier to movement for the refugees of Kyangwali Settlement, because it makes the process of movement extremely costly in terms of time and effort, which is particularly cumbersome for refugees with a time sensitive reason to travel. When asked if it is difficult to attain a permit one refugee answered:

Yeah at times...it is difficult and if you have like a quick plan for your life you see that...you may complete a week going for a permit day after day, day after day. So...you decide maybe to give up on those things.

Furthermore, many refugees made it clear the cost of obtaining a permit often outweighed its benefits. One refugee voiced this opinion by saying:

...We would get permits thinking that we could have help, but there is not any help you can get... it is really very, very hard for you to access help whether you have a permit or not. The help which is there is so, so limited and there are so many strings attached to it so that makes people ask 'Why do I need a permit. I have a refugee identity card so why do I need a permit?'

Because there are seemingly few benefits to having a permit, in order to move between the camp and town more easily, many refugees devised strategies to circumvent the system altogether. For many, particularly the student population, this means relying on their refugee identity card to get them in and out of the camp. For others, rhetoric helps them convince the

guards to let them in and out. According to one participant at the gate: "... They try to check you [at the gate] but once you show the ID and you express yourself very well they just leave you however much you may not be having the permit from the Camp Commandant". Another man stated he could get in and out by lying to the guards and telling them he had just come from the surrounding villages. For some, recognition is key. When asked how he moved between Hoima and Kyangwali without a permit, one man stated: "They know me... they know I have grown in this camp, I have been working for refugees... so I don't know why they would question me to where I am going or where I am from". Another refugee without a permit or identification card depended on his friends for transport in and out of the camp so they could then identify him as a registered refugee from Kyangwali and help him bypass the guards at the gate. One woman, after being denied a permit by the OPM, relied solely on the use of bribes to get herself in and out of the camp. Upon reaching the gate she simply hands the guards 1,000 UGS rather than a travel permit and they allow her to enter or exit without question.

3.3 Lack of Transportation

Another barrier to movement between Kyangwali and Hoima is a lack of reliable transportation. Due to the remote location, there are very few taxis running between Hoima and Kyangwali and, in addition to being expensive, they are also unreliable. According to one refugee, getting to Kyangwali "is not easy, because... I don't have transport. So it is... You find it is a problem." As shown by this quote, transport is not easy to come by, as the options are extremely limited in such a remote area. Therefore, even if a refugee wanted to move between the town and the settlement, if transport is not available it becomes impossible. Furthermore, the poor condition of the roads between Kyangwali and Hoima can make accessing transport even more difficult. While many refugees reported that the roads have been improved since they

arrived, part of the journey involves unpaved, dirt roads that become near impossible to navigate during the rainy season. The erosion occurring when it rains leaves the road uneven, making drivers hesitant to make the journey due to long travel times and the possibility of getting stuck along the way.

Conclusion

Overall, the time, effort and inconsistency these barriers represent can make movement between Kyangwali and Hoima too costly and difficult for refugees to pursue. For many, overcoming these barriers is too challenging to warrant movement outside of the settlement; however, for some the difficulties are far outweighed by the opportunities available to those in town.

CHAPTER FOUR: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Introduction

Given the barriers to movement examined in chapter three, this section will identify some of the incentives, or pull factors, that entice refugees to overcome these barriers in order to self-settle in Hoima. Once these have been established, this section will then examine the challenges of life in town for self-settled refugees often causing them to return to life in the settlement.

4.1 Push Factors

Previous studies on refugee urbanisation assert that refugees move to urban centres for many reasons. One often cited reason is refugees do so because they come from an urban background and can thus provide a more sustainable livelihood in a context familiar to them (Jacobsen 2004; Kibreab 2007). Another reason is a lack of security, causing refugees to seek anonymity and safety in a town or city (Crisp et al 2012; Pavanello et al. 2010). Yet Kyangwali is considered safe by many of its inhabitants and most of the self-settled refugees in Hoima have spent the majority of their lives in the settlement and cannot claim an urban background. Instead, these refugees cited increased access to socio-economic opportunity and social services as the primary reasons for moving to Hoima.

4.1.1 Education

As previously stated, the majority of self-settled refugees in Hoima originally moved to town for educational purposes. Many refugees attributed this migration of students to the limited access and poor quality of education within the settlement. According to population data from March 2014, Kyangwali holds 20,011 children between the ages of five and 18 that are eligible for school (see Appendix A). Regardless of this extraordinarily high number of children and

adolescents, the settlement boasts only five primary schools and one secondary school, which only offers classes up to senior four. Due to this lack of facilities, each school within the settlement is overcrowded. The Deputy Head Teacher of a local Primary School reported that with 2,271 students attending the institution, the average class ranges in size from 150 to 200 students, with only two teachers to instruct and supervise. These large numbers also put strain on the available scholastic resources including desks, textbooks and classrooms, which most schools do without.

Therefore, the families in Kyangwali who can afford the school fees often send their children to school in Hoima. Some students are also able to go with the help of NGOs that provide scholarships and housing to students in Hoima. Refugees studying in town stated in addition to a higher quality of teaching, attending school in Hoima also offers them more opportunities to study. This is in part because they are no longer responsible for helping farm their family plots and also because students have increased access to electricity, which allows them to study at night. Hoima also has secondary schools offering advanced level studies, as well as universities and technical colleges, which offer academic opportunities that cannot be found in the camp. When asked about the differences between schools in Kyangwali and in Hoima, one student stated:

The education in town and the one in the village they are somehow different. The one in town is high and the teaching would be high... this side when you are at school you come from school your mother will send you to the garden, you go and dig... There is no time to revise. That's usually why they normally send their children in town whereby they come from school and get time to read their books."

Therefore, many parents try to send their children to school in Hoima so they can access better education and focus more intently on their studies.

4.1.2 Employment Opportunities

Refugees also move to Hoima to access a greater variety of employment opportunities. Within the settlement accessing employment other than cultivation is extremely difficult, as there are few jobs to be had and the ones that are available tend to favour nationals. When asked what he wanted to do upon finishing school, one refugee stated: "Nothing, just when you reach within Kyangwali to get work it is a problem". When asked why refugees are unable to find jobs, another refugee responded:

Sometimes it is because we are refugees. Because when they tell you to... maybe to apply, when you apply with a citizen. Then they can't consider you, except the one for the citizen is the one, which is going to pass through... It is like a competition. And their favouritism is within.

This was evident in the clinics, schools and NGO offices in Kyangwali where refugee staff members are few, and are generally only accepted on a volunteer basis. Furthermore, refugees who are able to obtain employment at these institutions receive much lower pay than national employees. One refugee, who taught at a local primary school, stated: "Actually the nationals could get more money than us, almost triple the refugees". Due to this lack of employment opportunities, many refugees choose to move to town to look for jobs.

Although it is not easy to find a job in Hoima, many refugees use their connections to access employment opportunities with NGOs operating in the settlement that have headquarters in town. Refugees also cited finding employment opportunities in manual labour and the service industry. According to one refugee: "Getting these casual jobs, it is very easy so long as you have power". When asked what jobs are open for refugees in Hoima, another participant mentioned bartending and cutting grass, but stated for refugees office jobs are often unattainable. Others create their own businesses offering goods like produce, automotive repair and cattle.

However, refugees who own and run businesses in Hoima are few because not many have the capital required to start a business.

4.1.3 Healthcare

Another precipitating factor for refugee movement to town is the provision and quality of healthcare. Within Kyangwali there are only four clinics for all 38,897 inhabitants, which greatly affects the quality and access to healthcare within the settlement (see Appendix A). In addition to being overcrowded, these clinics lack operating rooms and important equipment, including ultrasound machines, which greatly limits their ability to treat patients. Therefore, many refugees travel to Hoima to be treated at the referral hospital. When asked about the healthcare available in Hoima one refugee responded: "It is quite different from Kyangwali of course. Although the line is so big... at least you will be able to meet a doctor or a physician, which is quite different". For some access to good healthcare is only a temporary need, however for others it can require spending months in town or even moving there permanently. Such was the case for one mother, who was forced to move to Hoima due to a chronically ill child who needed to be close to the hospital for regular appointments and potential emergencies.

4.1.4 Motivations

Although refugee movement to Hoima is often attributable to the socio-economic opportunities available in town, it is important to note the actual motivations behind wanting to access these opportunities vary a great deal. For some participants, moving to Hoima is motivated by ambition. This ambition encompasses goals such as opening a business, obtaining a university degree or working for a non-profit organisation. For example, one refugee's aspiration to graduate from secondary school and then university led him to Hoima, where he now owns

and runs three successful businesses. Yet for others, the choice to move to town is motivated by vulnerability. Such was the case for the woman whose youngest child was in need of constant medical care and required unfettered access to Hoima Regional Referral Hospital. Another man moved to town because of a disability from a bicycle accident, which left him unable to cultivate land or provide for his family while within the settlement. Another refugee was forced to leave the settlement and travel to Hoima after being accused by the Camp Commandant of residing in Uganda illegally. Consequently, although Hoima's main attraction is the increased socio-economic opportunities it offers to its inhabitants, each self-settled refugee maintains a very unique reason for wanting to access these opportunities.

4.2 Pull Factors

Although the promise of socio-economic opportunity and access to better social services brings refugees to Hoima, once they experience the difficulties of life for a self-settled refugee in town, many return back to Kyangwali. Whether by choice or because they have to, these return movements create the in-between lifestyle characterising movement between Kyangwali and Hoima. Some of the most prominent obstacles refugees face while living in town include the high cost of living, lack of aid and protection, the prevalence of discrimination and familial separation.

4.2.1 Cost of Living

One of the most challenging parts of life for self-settled refugees in Hoima is the cost of living in town relative to the cost of living in the settlement. Many refugees found the transition from the settlement, where housing, the means to obtain food and healthcare are provided for, to town, where everything requires money, extremely difficult. According to one refugee:

Life in Hoima it is not easy, because when I am in Hoima I need where to sleep, where to eat...all that. Everything needs me to buy. And nowhere I am digging that I can raise money... But when I am [in Kyangwali] I can go in the garden. I try to dig. I get my own money. I harvest. I use that harvest. I eat on it without paying money. Where I sleep it is for free. But when I go there everything needs money and when I am not working...

Other refugees also attested to difficulties paying for food, water, school fees, accommodation, transport and medicine. Five of the students interviewed for this study were forced to drop out of school and return to Kyangwali because they were unable to continue paying school fees. When asked if he would wish to stay in Hoima or return to Kyangwali one refugee responded:

Of course I would wish to stay in Hoima. Because if I am to be there it's easier for me even to look for what to do. But because of other problems I cannot fail to stay there. Yeah, because of financial problem.

Furthermore, it is important to note there is potential for these living expenses to increase, as oil was recently discovered near Hoima, which could attract more inhabitants and drive up the cost of living. One refugee expressed concern that this oil discovery would keep “making it tough” for refugees to meet the expenses of life in town.

4.2.2 Lack of International Aid

While the cost of living in town could be mitigated for self-settled refugees by the presence of international aid, as previously mentioned Uganda mandates aid only be administered within settlements (Bernstein & Okello 2007). For many refugees, the help of the international community is necessary for survival and not being able to access it in town makes life there unmanageable. Without organisations like UNHCR and their implementing partner Action Africa Help (AAH) to help provide free education, healthcare and housing many refugees are unable to access these necessities and end up returning to Kyangwali Settlement. One woman

even chose to travel back to Kyangwali each month to receive the food aid provided to her for her and her four children, because without it she would be unable to live in town.

4.2.3 Lack of Protection

Some refugees also reported feeling unsafe in Hoima without the presence or protection of UNHCR. One participant even stated the police target refugees for unsolved crimes. Although the OPM has an office there where refugees can go if they have a problem, many stated that they did not think this would help or that they would not go there if they were to have a problem. One refugee, when asked about his safety in Hoima, responded: “No, I do not feel safe in Hoima. I don’t feel safe because I almost pay for my security every time I leave. Because the Ugandans I live with feel maybe I am developing more there than they are... I went to the OPM Refugee Desk Office but he didn’t help me... He never cared”.

4.2.4 Discrimination

Another difficulty of life in Hoima is the heightened discrimination refugees face in town. While the majority of refugees reported a positive relationship with Ugandan nationals, many of them continued to cite instances of discrimination and stated they were not treated the same as nationals. While often petty, this discrimination could sometimes make accessing jobs, identifying places to live, receiving medical care and attending school difficult. When asked about finding jobs in town, one refugee said it is: “Difficult, difficult. Because there are some policies which follows the advert of a job saying this person should be a full Ugandan, so you can't come to apply when you are a refugee". One participant stated you could only find a job “so long as you don’t use that word refugee”. The prevalence of this discrimination in Hoima is

also heightened for some by the language barrier. One woman was unable to find a job to support herself and her four children because she was unable to speak English or any other local Ugandan language. Many students in Hoima also reported language as a difficulty of life in Hoima, as teachers would only teach in English or occasionally Runyoro, the local Ugandan dialect. One student even reported being dismissed by a teacher when she complained she could not understand the teacher's translation into the local language. Another refugee stated that he learned the language in order to be unidentifiable as a refugee "Like now, nobody can easily identify me because I learned their language so... So that I can't be identified I use their language".

The prevalence of discrimination in Hoima is only likely to increase as the Ugandan Government is in the process of implementing a new National Identification Card Project. Described by one national news sources as "a stop gap measure to ensure a Ugandan citizen gets what is rightfully theirs" (Ssegawa 2014), when implemented this program will require citizen to show proof of identity prior to accessing public services including healthcare, education and employment (Rwanyekiro 2014). While many refugees are now able to access social services as Ugandans because no identification is required, with this new program in place they will be required to use their refugee identity card, which will expose them as refugees and further marginalise them as a population. One self-settled refugee expressed fear at the possibility that the ID program could further exclude refugees from opportunities to access resources like job opportunities and medication and said: "Sincerely for me... when I think about that I feel like I am not in the right place and the right country because I am so scared after this program of national IDs because I think we are going to be so much ignored".

4.2.5 Family in the Settlement

Finally, refugees often return from Hoima to the settlement because many of them have families there. This was particularly important for students, whose stay in Hoima was not permanent and who often cited wanting to return to Kyangwali to be reunited with their families. One student reported dropping out of school in Hoima and returning to the settlement because his wife was there and it became too difficult to live apart. Another female student expressed wanting to move back to Kyangwali once she finished school because her grandmother was there and needed her help. Another student had to return to Kyangwali after her mother passed away, due to the loss of school fees and a need to look after her young brothers. One refugee stated: "I like to stay in Kyangwali because in Kyangwali... I am with my family. But by now I am missing them so much. I am not stable". Therefore, the pull of family often causes self-settled refugees to return to the camp, whether or not they would prefer to remain in town.

Conclusion

This examination of push and pull factors provides a backdrop for the continuous, and often cyclical, movement between Kyangwali and Hoima by showing why refugees choose to move to town, and also highlighting why they often choose to move back. While many of the difficulties self-settled refugees face in Hoima could be mitigated by the presence of aid and protection in Hoima, UNHCR and the OPM remain resistant to the urbanisation of refugees from Kyangwali.

CHAPTER FIVE: OFFICIAL RESISTANCE TO URBANISATION

Introduction

While Uganda has shown lenience towards refugee self-settlement, both UNHCR and the OPM in Kyangwali and Hoima demonstrated active resistance to allowing refugees to live outside of the settlement, making it more difficult for refugees to move to Hoima. This chapter will highlight this resistance through an examination of UNHCR and OPM's refusal to recognise the self-settled refugee population in Hoima and also their attempts to use the permit system to discourage movement outside of the settlement.

5.1 Unofficial Tolerance for Self-Settlement

Although the official status of self-settled refugees in Uganda remains ambiguous under the Refugee Act of 2006 (Kaiser 2006), in practice Uganda is known to be liberal where self-settled refugees are concerned (Werker 2007). Despite the fact that acts of discrimination do occur, overall the Ugandans in Hoima demonstrated tolerance towards the refugees living in town. In fact, many of the refugees in Hoima maintain strong relationships with the nationals, whether as acquaintances, friends or even spouses. When asked how refugees in Hoima are received, one refugee stated: "Of course in Hoima they don't treat us bad. Of course because we have lived there for long time and we are used to those people". Another refugee added to this perception by saying: "I think they have that heart of having refugees in their country. They welcomed us since the President has love for refugees. So they have that love for us". This tolerance was even voiced by a representative of UNHCR who, when asked if self-settlement is allowed for refugees in Uganda, answered: "I think Uganda is one country that is very liberal when it comes to refugee affairs. They allow it".

5.2 Official Opposition to Self-Settlement

Regardless of ambiguous government policies and a demonstrated tolerance by the nationals, in practice both the OPM and UNHCR in both Kyangwali and Hoima demonstrated a resistance to refugee urbanisation. This resistance was expressed through refusing to acknowledge the population of self-settled refugees in Hoima and by using the system of permits to limit refugee movements outside of Kyangwali.

5.2.1 Refusal to Acknowledge Self-Settled Refugees in Hoima

To begin with, UNHCR and OPM officials in Kyangwali and Hoima vehemently refused to acknowledge the presence of any self-settled refugees living in Hoima. According to an Assistant Protection Office for UNHCR Kyangwali, there simply are no refugees living in Hoima. When asked about the refugees living in town, this UNCHR staff member stated: “They just go to Hoima. They go when they have things to do in Hoima. They just go and do what they are supposed to do and then they get back”. This opinion was furthered by Kyangwali Settlement’s Chief of Police, who affirmed the refugee’s right to leave by the settlement by saying “... you cannot just keep people in one place... he has a right to move and then he comes back”; however, when asked whether or not refugees live outside of the camp he said no, adding: “They [refugees] are not allowed”.

According to a representative of Refugee Law Project, a legal consultancy and advocacy group from Makerere University in Kampala, this refusal to acknowledge self-settled refugees outside of Kampala is a misconception that is “an issue of ignorance on the part of service providers”. However, according to the Head Protection Officer in Kyangwali, this response is not one of ignorance, as officials are aware that refugees choose to self-settle in Hoima, whether or

not they choose to support it. When asked whether or not UNCHR helps urban refugees in Hoima she responded: “No we really do not have a caseload in Hoima, but we know that they go. Yeah, on an individual basis they go and settle. But when it comes to services, all services, are in the settlement”. When pressed about how many refugees reside in Hoima rather than the settlement she responded:

That I am unable to say. I can't, because I do not know all of them. Yes, but they are there. Others go for business, others for education purposes. Yeah. I know that many are there for education, for those who can afford they have taken their children in boarding schools in Hoima and there are families who have settled there seeing their children access better schools.

Based on this Protection Officer's responses, it seems there is an unofficial awareness that some refugees choose to leave the settlement for various reasons, and yet both UNHCR and OPM choose not to officially acknowledge these movements. This denial seems to stem from a desire to keep refugees in the settlement and to discourage others from leaving.

5.2.2 Discouraging Movement

In addition to denying the presence of self-settled refugees in Hoima, UNHCR and the OPM also utilise the system of permits to restrict refugee movements. While refugees in Uganda are guaranteed freedom of movement and the permit system is reportedly only meant to offer refugees protection while outside of the settlement, many refugees reported being denied them. One refugee stated: “Sometimes... they don't allow us to go”. When asked if he was given a reason, he responded: “because we are refugees”. One mother was denied a permit to take her child to the hospital in Hoima on the grounds that there are health services available within the camp, making a trip to Hoima unnecessary. Another refugee reported not being granted a permit

to attend secondary school in Hoima, but being given one once he had received a UNHCR scholarship to attend nursing school outside of the settlement.

During an interview with the Camp Commandant, he stated his office only grants permits to refugees with a “big reason” for leaving the settlement. Furthermore, he estimated that on average he issues approximately five travel permits per week. While there are four other members of staff able to issue permits, it was estimated by the Protection Officer that, in total, their entire office gives out only 20 to 30 permits a week. With 38,897 refugees residing in Kyangwali (see Appendix A) this is an extremely insignificant number. Furthermore, the OPM’s Protection Officer in Kyangwali admitted to refusing permits because some refugees requested permits for reasons he deemed “not developmental”, and followed this up by stating: “some people just want to move around”. Based on these quotes and examples it seems apparent the OPM in Kyangwali utilises the permit system as a tool to keep refugees inside the settlement and away from town.

5.3 The Reasoning Behind the Restrictions

Not only does keeping refugees in Kyangwali make coordination easier for UNHCR and the OPM, but according to UNHCR and OPM representatives it avoids refugees “getting problems” outside of the settlement. In the words of a UNHCR representative in Hoima: “Normally we don’t allow them to come here [to Hoima]...they are not allowed to move anyhow, otherwise they will get problems. So those permit restricts”. Although somewhat unclear what these “problems” involve, according to the Camp Commandant and representatives of UNHCR they seems to be an issue of liability. Many of the staff members from both organisations expressed that their responsibility for the refugees drives their desire for refugees

to remain within the settlement and avoid creating these problems. This seems to stem from general concern, but also from experience. When asked about restricting movement, multiple sources cited a recent disaster involving a capsized boat that was taking refugees back to the DRC. According to news sources there were around 250 to 300 refugees on the boat attempting to repatriate and over 250 were killed in the accident, including children (BBC 2014; Croome 2014). In general, these informants made it clear providing refugees with protection and aid is much easier inside the settlement where there may be less of a chance for problematic incidents to occur, and where it would certainly be easier for UNHCR and the OPM to handle them.

Conclusion

Overall, the resistance to self-settlement demonstrated by UNHCR and OPM representatives makes the plight of Kyangwali refugees trying to self-settle in town much more difficult. Not only does this paternalistic stance make movement outside of the settlement more challenging, it also deters self-settled refugees in Hoima from making themselves known or trying to access help.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 A New Look at Self-Settled Refugees

The importance of this study regarding refugee movement between Kyangwali Settlement and the town of Hoima is that it helps to fill the knowledge gap concerning self-settled refugees, as well as providing a new picture of refugee mobility and urbanisation. Although there are many studies on self-settled refugees in large capital cities, this study highlights the prevalence of refugee populations residing in small towns, which are oftentimes nearer to camps and settlements and can be easier for refugees to access. This study also offers a new look at refugees that have migrated to an urban centre straight from a camp environment rather than coming from a conflict zone. Not only does this highlight that refugees are voluntarily moving out of spaces of encampment to access more urban centres, but it also addresses why they are choosing to do so and what opportunities they are attempting to access in town. Finally, this study provides a new characterisation of refugees as neither “urban” nor “camp” by showing how the refugees of Kyangwali Settlement often “live” somewhere between the camp and town. This in-between lifestyle allows the self-settled refugees in Hoima to maintain strong ties to the camp, and also acts as a type of survival mechanism, allowing the refugees to move between the two environments as they see fit.

6.2 The Importance of Mobility

This study also demonstrates the importance of mobility for refugees. In the case of Kyangwali, in order to access the opportunities in Hoima and yet maintain their ties to the settlement, they must be able to move freely between the two. To them Hoima represents an opportunity for further education, employment, better healthcare and access to amenities such as banks and shops. More importantly, for some refugees access to Hoima is a lifeline. Whether

they have pressing healthcare needs or require access to employment because they are unable to farm, Hoima presents opportunities that cannot be found in the camp. Thus being able to travel to, or self-settle in, Hoima gives refugees opportunities to better their living conditions and pursue self-sustainability they cannot find in the camp. Movement to Hoima allows refugees to fill the gaps and inadequacies of the settlement's aid provision. Therefore, rather than discouraging movement to Hoima, perhaps it is time for UNHCR and the OPM to acknowledge the reality of this movement, as it allows refugees to improve their own conditions of asylum.

6.3 Removal of Barriers to Mobility

In order to recognise and support this mobility there are simple ways for the government of Uganda and UNCHR to allow greater movement between the settlement and town. While these inadequacies of the settlement's infrastructure, such as lack of employment and poor quality of education, could be costly and difficult for UNHCR and the OPM to address, simply allowing refugees to move to Hoima in order to access these opportunities themselves would not. Therefore, the government of Uganda should consider removing some of the straightforward barriers to mobility. This could include disposing of the permit system, which seems an unnecessary hindrance to mobility and is inconsistent in its enforcement. These efforts could also include subsidising transport between the settlement and town, which would also allow more refugees access to town and help address the class structure of mobility for the refugees of Kyangwali.

6.4 Rethinking “Refugee Spaces”

In addition to rethinking the boundaries of restricted mobility, this study also suggests that

it may be time for the conceptualisation of “refugee spaces” to be re-examined. This look at movement between Kyangwali and Hoima portrays a population of refugees that do not occupy a prescribed space, but who choose to live their lives between two: the camp and the city. This example reflects a gap between this definitive conceptualisation of refugee-inhabited spaces and the more complex reality of where and how they choose to move. Therefore, it may be time to rethink these clear-cut “spaces” in favour of exploring the realities of how refugees choose to move, and where they decide to live.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH JOURNAL

7.1 April 25th - May 2nd

Since arriving in Uganda just two weeks ago, my understanding of development in general and displacement in particular has been challenged, re-evaluated and changed. One of the questions I have begun continually asking myself is what is the end goal of development? At what point does a country like Uganda or a space like Kyangwali Refugee Settlement transition out of the third world and into the first? And in order for that to happen, what changes must be made and how must society evolve to become officially “developed”?

More importantly, where does one begin? As a government, organisation or simply an individual hoping to stimulate growth and change, which issues beg immediate attention? How do you complete a developmental “triage” to begin determining which changes are fundamental and which ones are secondary? These are just some of the questions that have become increasingly prevalent while experiencing the realities of Kyangwali Refugee Settlement for the first time where food is scarce, jobs are non-existent, healthcare and education are not prioritised, and general infrastructure is lacking. In a place like Kyangwali, what developmental or humanitarian efforts are going to catalyse sustainable, structural change rather than just offering temporary solutions?

On first impression, Kyangwali Refugee Settlement does not present itself as worthy of any pressing humanitarian or development interventions. The plots of land marking its territory are uniform, peaceful and provide a seemingly sustainable source of food and income for those residing within its borders. Kyangwali defies the stereotypical image of a “refugee camp” that has been ingrained by media reports and is characterised by UNHCR tents, emergency medical

personnel and long lines of refugees waiting to receive food aid. It has quickly become apparent that, at least in the minds of the international community, the emergency here is over.

While a surprising number of international organisations are represented in the settlement, humanitarian and development interventions, with the exception of food distributions, are seemingly few. Yet, as I ask questions and begin piecing together a socio-economic snapshot of the camp, it is becoming increasingly evident that life here is not as stable as it may seem. According to the refugees who cultivate the land, it is becoming infertile and the plots produce barely enough to feed the families who work them. They also report a surprising lack of socio-economic opportunity in the forms of education, healthcare and employment. Among the refugees hope for a durable solution seems to be limited to the ever-looming possibility of resettlement or repatriation.

7.2 May 2nd - May 9th

While I have not yet undertaken formal interviews, the past two weeks have been spent observing and collecting information regarding the settlement's infrastructure, demographics and socio-economic status. I have also started looking in to the links between the settlement and Hoima, focusing on why refugees choose to leave and the ability they have to move freely between the two. My initial impression is that Uganda's liberal refugee policies are complicated here by the presence of a Camp Commandant who is overly intent on regulating the movement of the refugees in and out of the camp. As a consequence, not many refugees are able to live in Hoima unless they are students, who can easily obtain permits. I have also been informed the cost of living in Hoima is too high for most refugee families, as jobs are few and increasingly hard to come by, particularly for refugees.

One of the greatest challenges I have experienced since arriving has been overcoming the language barrier. Even with competent translators and a rather large population of proficient English speakers, the process of framing questions is often frustrated by a lack of understanding. This is particularly difficult when discussing complex topics including socio-economic development and the prevalence of discrimination. By utilising a translator I am also unable to frame my own questions, as they are re-communicated and then reframed multiple times in order for interviewees to comprehend the meaning of the question.

On the other hand, I have been pleasantly surprised by how candid and open the local population is to answering questions. It amazes me how at ease they are while discussing sensitive topics including whether or not they have obtained a permit to leave the camp, and details of their flight to Uganda from their country of origin. Another unexpected surprise has been the unlimited access to government and NGO personnel I have received. Within the past two weeks I have had the opportunity to interview the Camp Commandant twice and have also been granted permission to assist with food distributions conducted by Samaritan's Purse in different locations around the settlement.

7.3 May 9th - May 16th

Over the past week I commenced the process of conducting semi-structured interviews with refugees in both Kyangwali and Hoima. Truth be told, conducting interviews has proven more challenging than I had anticipated. As previously mentioned, the most difficult challenge continues to be the language barrier. Even with the help of a translator certain questions are extremely difficult to convey and often require repetition and reframing before they can be properly understood.

Another difficulty has been learning how to handle shy participants who tend to limit their answers to single word answers. This has been particularly prevalent with student participants, who are much younger and tend to be less vocal regarding their thoughts and opinions. I have attempted to overcome this challenge by reframing my questions in a way that avoids “yes” or “no” responses and to also be conscious of asking follow up questions when more detail or explanation is needed.

In general, the process of interviewing has required much flexibility due to the varying contexts in which interviews have taken place. Rather than having interviewees in a quiet, empty room with a table for a notebook and recording device, most of my interviews have taken place outside of people’s homes on wooden benches, oftentimes surrounded by children or other interested listeners. While such an atmosphere is not always conducive to in-depth conversation, I am learning to press on and take opportunities when they are presented rather than waiting for an ideal context that may never present itself.

7.4 May 16th – May 23rd

As I continue to conduct interviews and gather information, I am finding that the main reason refugees self-settle in Hoima is to access better socio-economic opportunities and social services, particularly education and healthcare. While my initial assumption was that refugees travelled to Hoima to look for jobs or open businesses, due to a lack of opportunity and the extremely high cost of living, this is not the case. I am also discovering free housing and the ability to access free food through cultivation seems to force many of the refugees to return to Kyangwali Settlement, whether or not they would prefer to remain in Hoima.

One of the biggest concerns of refugees staying in Hoima seems to be discrimination from the local population. Many of the refugee students I spoke with stated they felt “segregated” from the nationals at their respective schools, and their teachers often refuse to give them the same amount of help or to translate lessons when they have trouble understanding English or the local language. Those seeking healthcare also attest to being overlooked at the hospital once they produce their refugee identity cards. One refugee even stated he had a job opportunity rescinded once the employer realised he was a refugee.

It seems as if the presence of international aid for the self-settled refugees in Hoima would greatly improve their quality of living; however, as far as UNHCR and government officials are concerned there is no refugee population living in Hoima. UNHCR’s Assistant Protection Officer recently informed me that refugees simply travel back and forth to attend school or visit the hospital in Hoima, but do not stay there. During an interview Kyangwali’s Chief of Police also told me there are, in fact, no refugees living outside of the settlement.

In regards to their mobility, I have been told on multiple occasions the refugees are allowed freedom of movement as long as they obtain a permit from the OPM. According to UNHCR, issuing permits is just a way for the government to ensure protection for refugees leaving the settlement and does not limit their ability to travel. Based on these conversations, it seems there is a wide communication gap between the refugee population and UNHCR and government staff, as they are completely unaware that many refugees have left the settlement to self-settle in Hoima.

In addition to continuing my interviews, I also had the privilege of helping Think Humanity organise and carry out a bed nets distribution this week for a group of new refugees. While the distribution was a success and all 1800 nets were given out, the presence of the Camp

Commandant quickly politicised what was intended to be a simple health initiative. In an effort to maintain a good relationship with the camp leadership, the Camp Commandant was asked to officially “open” the distribution by giving out the first net. However, the Commandant took the opportunity to use this platform to openly discourage the new refugees from pursuing repatriation. Not only did the Commandant cut short Think Humanity’s opportunity to provide health education, his speech also seemed to damage the trust and credibility that the organisation has worked so hard to build up within the community.

7.5 May 23rd – May 29th

As the end of my time in Uganda rapidly approaches, I have spent the last week primarily collecting key actor interviews in order to fill in any gaps in my research. I have also been visiting schools and clinics within Kyangwali and completing a survey for Think Humanity’s mosquito net initiative. While completing these tasks a few heavy narratives have emerged.

First of all, there is a heavy prevalence of gender discrimination. This narrative seems to stem from cultural norms and manifests itself as a severe lack of opportunity for the women of Kyangwali. During a visit to Kyangwali’s only Secondary School, which boasts a 3:1 ratio of boys to girls, I was informed this low rate of female enrolment is mainly due to early marriage, early pregnancy and a lack of funding. Furthermore, I have noticed in many social situations women seem to fade into the background while men orchestrate the interaction and direct questions exclusively to one another.

Another heavy narrative that has arisen from recent research is the issue of jealousy within Kyangwali, which particularly affects the safety of Hoima refugees returning to the settlement, because they are perceived as well off. According to many settlement residents, this

jealousy manifests in people poisoning one another. While the term is sometimes used to describe the effects of witchcraft, I have been assured in Kyangwali it refers to the actual act of administering poison into food or drink, although the actual substance used is unknown. As a result, many refugees returning to Kyangwali avoid spending long periods of time in the camp and are very careful of what they ingest while there. Others avoid returning to Kyangwali altogether. While the poison can sometimes be treated, many of the refugees stated that they had lost friends, siblings and significant others due to its effects.

7.6 May 29th – June 5th

During my stay in Kyangwali it has become apparent that the role of the Office of the Prime Minister in orchestrating refugee affairs not only limits UNHCR's ability to protect refugees within Kyangwali, but it also deeply politicises displacement for refugees in Uganda. This week I had the opportunity to interview a Congolese man and his family who had been physically removed from Kyangwali Settlement by the police at the request of the Camp Commandant, who claimed the man was Rwandan and only posing as a Congolese and was therefore living illegally within Uganda's borders. According to the man, a friend of the Commandant's owed him money and he was trying to forego repaying the debt so he had him arrested. Regardless of the reasons behind his treatment, this man's home was ransacked, and he admitted to suffering physical abuse at the hands of the police, in addition to verbal abuse and harassment by the Commandant. This incident portrays the unchecked power the OPM is allowed to exercise within the settlement and how little agency the refugees have because of it.

This power dynamic appeared again when I escorted a refugee, who had been wrongly imprisoned and denied verification by the Camp Commandant in 2013, to the OPM's office to

correct the situation. Due to the Commandant's actions, this boy and his family have been living without documentation for over a year and are no longer eligible for the resettlement program, although they fulfil all of the entry requirements. This boy has attempted to remedy the situation, and was told by the Commandant if he brought his paperwork back to the office he would be re-registered. However, upon arrival with all of his documentation the boy was told he could not be registered again until next year.

While it is rumoured that the Camp Commandant is being replaced due to incidents like these, both of these examples illustrated the uncontested power held by the OPM's office within the camp and how it complicates the work of UNHCR. Many of the refugees I have spoken with also state UNHCR and OPM are often inaccessible to refugees who need help and appointments with their offices are rarely granted. Additionally, I have witnessed first-hand how the refugees are treated with very little respect by both agencies and many of their implementing partners.

7.7 June 5th - June 13th

As my two-month work based placement is slowly coming to an end, I have been spending the majority of my time trying to tie up loose ends and track down key individuals for last minute interviews. This has included interviews with representatives from UNHCR in Hoima and also from Refugee Law Project. Unfortunately, I was unable to procure an interview with UNHCR Kampala due to International Refugee Day on June 20th, which they are in the process of coordinating. Trying to procure interviews with key actors has proven increasingly difficult, as they are generally busy and difficult to get a hold of.

Overall, the past seven weeks has taught me quite a bit about the practice of development, as well as what it means to conduct "good" research. One of the most important

takeaways for me has been that research is not always straightforward, and much of the time it can actually be messy. Oftentimes data collection does not happen when or where you would like and many times the most unlikely sources turn out to be the most helpful. Furthermore, gaining access to your target population is not always easy and may require patience, persistence and outside help.

In addition to the difficulties of data collection, another challenge I have experienced is the complexity of constructing an accurate picture of what is really going on in a developmental context. The situation in Kyangwali is both highly fluid and deeply bureaucratic, which makes it extremely difficult for me to gain an accurate picture of what is going on the ground. For my particular research it was extremely important to understand the actual framework of the settlement, including its infrastructure and policies, yet with so many different actors involved and so much change occurring on a daily basis it was often hard to figure out exactly what was going on. It became a common occurrence to receive varied information from different interviewees on what should have been straightforward topics such as how many schools were present in the camp, how the government's permit scheme was implemented and what rights were guaranteed to refugees under Ugandan law.

7.8 June 13th - June 20th

As I prepare to leave Kyangwali Refugee Settlement after eight weeks of research, I feel as if I have obtained a healthy appreciation for the gap that often exists between development on paper and in practice. I am realising it is precisely this gap that makes research and observation so vital to the process of development. I am now responsible for writing recommendations for Think Humanity's programs in Kyangwali, most of which revolve around the creation of

livelihood opportunities, and I realise my recommendations would have been much different had I not spent two months on the ground getting to witness firsthand the conditions and realities of the settlement, and that my initial ideas would not have been successful because I was not familiar with the broader context of Kyangwali Settlement.

It is these lessons learned and all of the information I have obtained over the past eight weeks that has made this experience so valuable. While I am planning on writing a specific report for Think Humanity, I also get the opportunity to share my thoughts, experiences and recommendations firsthand with the founders of the organisation, as they are arriving in Uganda to track the progress of Think Humanity's initiatives. Needless to say, it is a rare opportunity to be able to explain my research outcomes and their implications to those with the power to put them to practical use.

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APPENDIX A: KYANGWALI SETTLEMENT POPULATION DATA

**POPULATION ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY AND DEMOGRAPHY AS OF
31ST MARCH 2014**

AGE GROUP	0-4YRS		5-11 YRS		12-17YRS		18-59YRS		60 & ABOVE		SUB-TOTAL		TOT	%
	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM		
NATIONALITY	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	MAL	FEM	TOT	%
CONGOLESE	4250	4380	4932	4707	4646	4367	3658	4260	304	349	17790	18063	35853	92.2
S.SUDANESE	263	212	319	308	281	317	446	531	22	35	1331	1403	2734	7
SUDANESE	01	03	03	04	07	01	01	04	00	00	12	12	24	0.06
RWANDESE	22	30	22	34	26	22	53	38	02	01	125	125	250	0.64
RURUNDIANS	03	01	02	02	02	01	04	03	01	00	12	07	19	0.05
KENYANS	02	00	02	02	00	01	03	01	00	00	07	03	10	0.03
SOMALIS	00	00	00	01	00	02	02	02	00	00	02	05	07	0.02
TOTAL	4541	4626	5280	5058	4962	4711	4167	4839	329	385	19279	19618	38897	100

Thank you,

**SIKUKU ROBERT
REGISTRATION OFFICER.**

*Provided by the Office of the Prime Minister