

IMPACT REPORT



Stories and Statistics from the CARE Learning Tour to Uganda, August 10-16, 2019

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OVERVIEW:

U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Chris Coons (D-DE) traveled with CARE to see how U.S. investments and partnerships are supporting economic opportunities and improving social conditions for refugees, women and children in Uganda. In addition to CARE's president and CEO Michelle Nunn, the delegation also included staffers from the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; a former major general of the U.S. Marine Corps; and representatives from Humanity United, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the media.

The delegation's journey took place in Uganda, a central-east African landlocked country of immense geopolitical importance. Often referred to as the most welcoming country in the world to refugees, Uganda has taken in more than 1.2 million refugees from six different countries in the region – mostly women and children – who come to the country in search of safety from regional conflict, political violence, and famine. However, despite its generous refugee policies, Uganda continues to struggle with weak development indicators and a contracting economy with high rates of youth unemployment – a major concern for the stability of the country given nearly 49 percent of the population is presently under the age of 15. Approximately, one in five Ugandans remain trapped in chronic poverty and a third of all children under five are too short for their age – a symptom of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition.

On this four-day trip, the delegation explored the important role international investments play in maintaining stability in Uganda through support for a refugee response model focused on providing comprehensive services, community integration for refugees and investments in agriculture and sustainable development for host communities.

→ DAY 1

SETTING THE SCENE – WHY UGANDA?

The delegation began their first day in country with an introductory briefing with local technical experts. The group heard from representatives from CARE, Catholic Relief Services and UNHCR on the gender, agriculture and refugee context in Uganda.

That afternoon, the group had lunch with representatives of the U.S. Mission, including the U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Deborah Ruth Malac. The delegation discussed U.S. priorities and investments in supporting Uganda's robust refugee response program while also empowering the host community through programs such as Feed the Future.

After lunch, the delegation proceeded to their first site visit to the Refuge and Hope International center to learn about urban refugee response. The first day of the tour ended with a reception at the U.S. Ambassador's residence.

Below are some of the program highlights from the day:

Refuge and Hope International

LOCATION: Kampala, Uganda

BACKGROUND: Refuge and Hope International (RHI) is a faith-based NGO that works to empower refugees and displaced people by providing education and professional, spiritual and personal development programs designed to help them recover from effects of war, realize self-sufficiency and become catalysts of change in their communities. RHI works with refugees and non-refugees from 15 different countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, South Korea, Yemen, Nigeria and Tanzania. RHI focuses on three main activities that summarize its work in Uganda: education, life skills development and psychosocial support. RHI seeks to have a holistic impact in the life of the client/student so that they can thrive in Uganda, whether they eventually go back to their home countries or are resettled in a third country. By involving the students in discussions, cultural events and teaching general knowledge classes to break the barriers of tribalism and religious divide, RHI advocates for cultural diversity and inclusivity. Lastly, social workers and teachers carry out home visits several times during the semester to understand the real situation of the students and get them or their family members necessary help. **continued on next page ▶**

IMPACT: As of 2019, RHI is serving almost 1,100 refugees and non-refugees in Kampala, more than 50 percent of whom are women. Language is often a barrier to refugees successfully integrating into Uganda. To overcome this challenge, RHI taught English as a second language to more than 530 refugees from January to July 2019 alone, with around 75 percent of their students graduating to another level of English at the end of each semester. Additionally, during the first half of 2019, more than 110 students graduated one of RHI's many vocational training classes, including hair dressing, tailoring, business development and computer skills. RHI understands that holistic healing is necessary for refugees to rebuild their lives in Uganda. During the first half of 2019, a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder screening was conducted. The 479 students who participated in the screening received interventions in form of group and individual therapy sessions. The counseling team overall had six referral cases, two couple's counseling sessions, 48 individual counseling sessions, 23 family sessions, 36 members in group therapy, 11 abrupt counseling sessions and four telephone counseling sessions in the first half of the year. Lastly, during the first half of 2019, five vulnerable young women went through and graduated from a leadership program and 21 women received training in savings and entrepreneurship.

DONOR: Cooperate Baptist Fellowship

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Refuge and Hope International

A Story from the field



Leticia is a 23-year-old refugee living in Kampala from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She joined RHI in January 2019 with the intention and desire to learn English and improve her chances of employment. Back in the Congo, Leticia was training to become a nurse; however, she could not find employment in Kampala to continue training because her English communication skills are limited. As the firstborn in a family of nine, Leticia's family is relying on her for financial support to supplement what her mother earns from selling silverfish, which alone is not enough to meet their basic needs. Leticia has found a safe haven at RHI where she can forget about the stress at home, hone her English skills and learn a wide array of additional vocational skills, including hair braiding.



Senator Chris Van Hollen thanks Ambassador Deborah Ruth Malac on behalf of the Learning Tours delegation for her and the U.S. Mission's leadership in Uganda, particularly around efforts to promote peacebuilding and stability in the region through a robust refugee response model.

→ DAY 2

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

On their second day in country, the delegation traveled nearly 300 miles to Uganda's northern district of Yumbe. While there, they explored the role that global investments play in providing comprehensive and integrated services to refugee populations in the Bidi Bidi settlement, Uganda's largest refugee settlement and the second largest globally.

Below are some of the program highlights from the day:

Women, Adolescents and Youth (WAY) Empowerment Project

LOCATION: Nationwide

BACKGROUND: The UNFPA-funded Women, Adolescent and Youth Empowerment Project (WAY) program is aimed at empowering women and young people to demand recognition of their health rights to foster gender sensitive environments and to access socioeconomic asset-building opportunities. The project aims to enhance women's and young people's access and utilization of quality health and gender-based violence (GBV) services.

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Four in five girls in Uganda are married before their 18th birthday and one in ten is married before the age of 15. According to UNICEF, Uganda has the 16th highest prevalence rate of child marriage in the world and the tenth highest absolute number of child brides globally – 787,000. These trends persist or are higher among refugee households, 80 percent of which are headed by women. CARE, in partnership with UNFPA, is working to break the cycle of early marriage and adolescent pregnancy among refugee populations through the creation of safe spaces for women and youth to talk about the importance of keeping girls in school, preventing early marriage and encouraging child spacing for mothers who wish to safely time and space their pregnancies.

BACKGROUND CONTINUED: Major activities of the WAY program include: strengthening and/or creating young people's clubs in primary, secondary schools, in host communities and in refugee settlements; supporting and/or creating safe spaces for women and youth in the refugee settlements; creating women mentorship programs to support refugee and host women and girls; and helping GBV survivors to access timely GBV response services.

IMPACT: The WAY program operates in five refugee hosting districts in Uganda, serving 120,000 direct and 370,000 indirect beneficiaries, 70 percent of whom are women. The program is a five-year project ending in 2022. CARE is implementing WAY program in the eight districts (five refugee hosting districts and three non-refugee hosting districts). During the past few months of project implementation, CARE has trained 863 primary and secondary school teachers on SRHR and GBV and 704 community health activists across the 8 districts, reaching nearly 20,000 people through community mobilization activities. The program has helped mentor 10,140 women and girls, has helped establish 106 Male Action Groups and trained 1,590 role model men. The men's role model training is a means to engage them in the refugee settlements and host communities around gender and women's health rights, helping to reach over 25,050 people through community outreach initiatives. In addition, nearly 100 survivors of GBV have been supported to access psychosocial and support services through the program.

DONOR: UNFPA

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: CARE



The delegation sees a community drama performed by LEAP program participants focused on peacebuilding and conflict resolution between South Sudanese refugees and the Ugandan host community. This drama is performed by the English for Adults (EFA) Peace Club committee to both refugee and host community populations to promote greater inclusivity and intercultural and interethnic dialogue and prevent and mitigate land-related conflict.

Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) Program

LOCATION: West Nile region, Southwest Uganda and Northern Uganda

BACKGROUND: The Women's leadership, empowerment, access and protection (LEAP) program in the South Sudanese refugee response is one of UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives. Women and girls affected by the refugee response must have access to the required assets, skills, social services and partnerships that are fundamental to promoting positive coping mechanisms and afford them increased opportunities to develop their resilience and achieve long-term recovery. The LEAP program therefore focuses on the following priorities: 1. Providing psychosocial counselling and legal support for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention, in a safe space that is accessible to the most vulnerable communities; 2. Promoting peaceful coexistence through community-based peace-building activities, utilizing traditional and community based conflict resolution mechanisms with both refugees and host communities; 3. Supporting women with second chance education such as literacy and numeracy skills; 4. Training women in business skills and providing opportunities for finance and business startup; 5. Promoting women's leadership and decision-making within refugee settlements; and 6. Strengthening evidence-based approaches to responding to the needs of women and girl refugees.

IMPACT: Since starting in 2016, LEAP has directly benefited 230,000 women and girls throughout West Nile, South West and Northern Uganda. Furthermore, since 2014, UN Women has directly supported over 130,000 South Sudanese refugees and host communities with different forms of protection, education, livelihoods, leadership and peacebuilding activities. As a result of this integrated support, the assisted populations have now transitioned to focus more on their socioeconomic well-being through the provision of increased livelihood opportunities. Additionally, the LEAP program has established a monthly Women's Forum at settlement and district level where refugee women's rights advocates are empowered to voice their needs in humanitarian crisis and beyond, strengthened the capacity of the humanitarian actors in gender in humanitarian action and conducted multi-sectoral gender assessments of the overall South Sudanese refugee response that is used for advocacy and awareness-raising among partners.

DONOR: UN Women

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Refugee Law Project

→ DAY 3

FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN HOST COMMUNITIES

On the third day of the trip, the delegation explored how U.S. investments are not only supporting the food security of refugee populations but are also supporting the agriculture sector and livelihoods of the surrounding Ugandan host communities. The day began in the smallest refugee settlement in Uganda, Lobule, which serves primarily Congolese refugees. The delegation wound up the day's activities in Arua visiting local Uganda farmers benefitting from USAID's Feed the Future program. Below are some of the program highlights from the day:

Cash-Based Transfers Program

LOCATION: Refugee settlements throughout Uganda

BACKGROUND: The World Food Programme (WFP) provides financial and food assistance to meet the food and nutrition needs of more than one million refugees living in Uganda as well as host communities affected by recurring climate shocks. Upon arrival, refugees receive high-energy biscuits at the border and hot meals in transit centers. They are then registered to receive currency or food as they settle down and are allocated land. WFP works with partners to promote early transition from food assistance to self-reliance. In 2018, WFP introduced biometric verification of all refugees receiving its food or currency to ensure that the right people receive the assistance they need. **continued on next page ▶**



Pictured here are agricultural producers from the Ugandan host community who have witnessed increased sales and revenues as a result of having the WFP cash-based transfer point for refugees set up so close to the local marketplace. This in turn promotes social cohesion between the predominantly Congolese refugee populations and nearby host communities, helps diversify the diets of refugees who now have improved access to a greater variety of fresh produce, and also helps economically empower host communities who are benefitting from increased household incomes as a result.

IMPACT: In June 2019, WFP supported 1.36 million people in Uganda. WFP's operations mainly focused on refugee support, with 1.1 million refugees receiving food and nutrition assistance. Since 2015, WFP general food assistance in Lobule refugee settlement has been conducted entirely through cash-based transfers, a substantial investment of some 165 million UGX per month. This not only provides refugees with agency and choice in purchasing their own food, but also stimulates the local economy by creating a ready market for local farmers, spurring more interaction between refugees and their hosts. The Koboko district government has observed a multiplier effect from these cash transfers. As of June 2019, there were 5,317 biometrically verified refugees in Lobule settlement – the lowest of any refugee hosting district in Uganda – all of whom receive 31,000 Ugandan shillings a month per family member.

DONOR: World Food Programme

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Alliance Forum for Development

Feed the Future Youth Leadership for Agriculture Project

LOCATION: Nationwide

BACKGROUND: In Uganda, youth unemployment is growing. Each year, 400,000 youth enter the labor market and compete for only 80,000 formal jobs. Seventy five percent of the workforce and 55 percent of youth in Uganda are engaged in the agriculture sector. Uganda is addressing youth unemployment, in part, by creating more opportunities for rural youth to become involved in the sector. The Feed the Future Uganda Youth Leadership for Agriculture activity is connecting youth to these opportunities. The activity's goal is to increase economic opportunities for approximately 350,000 Ugandan youth between the ages of 10 and 35. Supporting their endeavors in agriculture-related fields, the activity is dedicated to increasing their incomes and building their entrepreneurship, leadership and workforce-readiness skills. The activity also collaborates with the private sector, workforce institutions, national organizations and Ugandan leaders to change perceptions of youth.

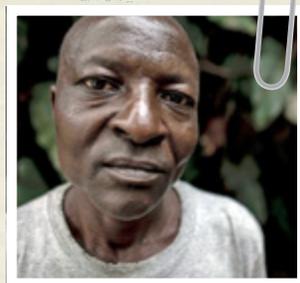
IMPACT: This project aims to increase the incomes of youth working in agricultural value chains and improve the development of skills (e.g., entrepreneurship, employability, leadership, and life skills) through formal and non-formal education and training organizations. To that end, the activity will increase economic opportunities in agriculture-related fields for approximately 350,000 youth from the ages of 10 to 35 years.

DONOR: Feed the Future – U.S. Agency for International Development

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Chemonics International

A Story from the field

Jovan is a coffee farmer living in Logiri town of northeastern Uganda. As a member of the AHCA, Jovan works as a lead farmer, helping to train other farmers on best farming practices and on how to adopt more climate-smart agriculture. Through the training, producers are equipped to increase their yields, improve the quality of their coffee beans and ultimately increase their income potential. Since the program began, Jovan saw his revenue increase fourfold, from 61,000 to 250,000 UGX in just two years. Although this Feed the Future program officially ended in 2018, Jovan continues to train farmers and improve his own agricultural practices using the guidance he received through the program. He estimates that the revenue from his coffee crops will exceed 500,000 UGX next year. As a result of the program, Jovan describes how he also now more closely collaborates with his wife to jointly make household decisions, particularly on how to use and spend household resources. Jovan and his wife decided to use their profits from 2019 to cover school fees and supplies for their children.



Alur Highlands Coffee Association Project

LOCATION: West Nile region, Uganda

BACKGROUND: From 2013-2018, USAID in partnership with CARANA and Ecom Agroindustrial Corporation Ltd. – a global commodity trader, supported investments in the Alur Highlands Coffee Alliance (AHCA). AHCA aimed to leverage the common interests and resources among partners to build a sustainable and competitive Ugandan coffee industry and help provide international clients with improved access to desirable high-quality Arabica coffee. The AHCA project targeted 16,000 farmers in northwestern Uganda to improve incomes and livelihoods through a four-pronged approach: (1) farmer training in agronomic practices; (2) establishment of a traceability system; (3) smallholder access to finance; and (4) beans production via inter-cropping for improved food security.

IMPACT: Through this sustainable commercial relationship, the project doubled the incomes of the 16,000 linked farmers, increased their coffee yields by 30 to 40 percent, improved access to new credit and financial services for 8,000 farmers and facilitated the certification of 30 percent of the linked farmers. Although the project formally closed in 2018, the impact of the training farmers received continues to increase their agricultural yields and income.

FORMER DONOR: Feed the Future – U.S. Agency for International Development

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Alur Highlands Coffee Alliance (AHCA)

On their last full day in-country, the delegation gathered for a closing dinner discussion to reflect on the trip and discuss opportunities for continued engagement around the issues explored in Uganda. During the dinner, the delegation discussed the important leadership role the U.S. plays in promoting stability and development globally and the role a country like Uganda can play in modeling successful refugee response.

TAKING ACTION BACK HOME

Before returning home, the delegation met with the Prime Minister of Uganda Ruhakana Rugunda where they discussed how the U.S. has partnered with the Ugandan government and what additional support is needed from the international community to meet the needs of Ugandans and refugees. The group also discussed the priorities, challenges, and successes of the Ugandan government in addressing youth unemployment and diversifying Uganda's economy, along with food and nutrition security and social cohesion for refugees and host communities.

From site visits focused on urban and rural refugee response to stability-building and empowerment, the delegation learned how international investments are supporting development in both refugee and host communities and maintaining peace in a county located in the middle of a volatile conflict region that has taken in the 5th largest refugee population in the world. Throughout the trip, the delegation explored how U.S. investments in humanitarian assistance, food and nutrition security and women's empowerment are having a sustainable impact to meet urgent humanitarian and protection needs and build a brighter future for Ugandans and the region. This trip also looked beyond immediate service provision in Uganda; the delegates also examined the drivers of displacement and explored how support for a rights-based comprehensive refugee response – inclusive of durable solutions and support to countries of origin – can promote resilience and social cohesion throughout the region.



→ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CARE advocates for the U.S. government to integrate gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment throughout its foreign assistance programs. But to truly be effective, these investments need to be leveraged by support from the international community, including the United States. The international affairs budget is the U.S. government's primary funding source for international programs for emergency response and long-term development. Although the International Affairs Budget is roughly one percent of the overall U.S. budget, it is routinely targeted in budget cuts. Proposals to dramatically cut the international affairs budget raise serious concerns about the future of American leadership and how we will achieve the benefits of addressing poverty. CARE advocates for a FY 2020 international affairs budget of at least \$56.4 billion, which is in alignment with the House's FY20 levels.

Uganda continues to grapple with hunger and malnutrition, with nearly a third of its children under five suffering from stunting, a dangerous statistic for a country with so many young people. If the issue of hunger is to be solved in the long-term, policies must focus on enabling vulnerable

populations to achieve independence. CARE advocates for transparent food and nutrition programs that empower small-scale farmers and women to increase their resilience, gain access to nutritious food and sustainably produce food now and in the future. Continuing and strengthening programs, such as Feed the Future, to better address the needs of women and communities is critical to reducing hunger and poverty. Smart programming must focus on empowering the vulnerable who often bear the brunt of food production while facing hunger. Effective programming must take a community-led approach, improve nutrition – especially for women and children – and build communities' ability to adapt to shocks and stresses such as drought, extreme temperatures and flooding. Building this capacity is a critical step to achieving the goal of zero hunger.

For Uganda, the number one economic activity for women is agriculture, with 77 percent of women participating in agricultural activities. However, the majority of these women do not own or control the land. They have limited access to finance and farmer or extension services. Studies indicate that 65 percent of female farmers lack decision-making

power over the proceeds from their agricultural labor. They therefore cannot buy inputs, re-invest in the land or determine how much is spent on food. Often, cash crops such as coffee and cotton are male dominated, while women are relegated subsistence crops and supportive labor on commodities crops. The issues of women's economic empowerment are felt across all sectors, but this trip will allow for exploration of these challenges in agriculture, which is Uganda's largest economic sector.

CARE also strongly supports the Safe from the Start Act, which codifies and enhances the State Department and USAID's Safe from the Start initiative, which provides training and support to address gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian settings and opens greater opportunities for local organizations to play a role in protecting and empowering survivors. This bill also gives critical momentum to the U.S. government's work to advance prevention and response to GBV globally by making it a priority to address this issue in crisis contexts. Additionally, CARE supports efforts to holistically address global fragility and instability, including the Global Fragility Act.

Photos: All Images: Ilan Godfrey/CARE

We are deeply grateful to the many people who generously gave of their time to make this visit to Uganda a success. CARE specifically thanks the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Humanity United for their generous financial support of the Learning Tours.

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