

RESULTS SUMMARY

Integrated Emergency & Solutions Intervention in Uganda

Author: Danish Refugee Council (2024)

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PROJECT	<p><b>Title:</b> Integrated Emergency &amp; Solutions Intervention on the Regional Axis of the South Sudan Crisis and Displacement</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Uganda Law Society (ULS); Youth Empowerment to Act (YETA)</p> <p><b>Country:</b> Uganda</p> <p><b>Period:</b> January 2024 – ongoing</p>
CHANGE	<p>DRC jointly designed and implemented a multi-layer protection strategy with the Uganda Law Society (ULS) and the refugee-led organization, Youth Empowerment to Act (YETA). The partnerships improved refugees’ access to protection services and strengthened their trust in the formal justice system. It also elevated YETA’s role in the coordination of protection services. Notably, YETA has assumed responsibilities typically reserved for national and international actors, a decisive shift towards more localized leadership in the work towards durable solutions.</p>
CONTEXT	<p>Uganda hosts one of Africa’s largest refugee populations, with over 1.8 million people, including many from South Sudan. Despite Uganda’s progressive refugee policy, prolonged displacement has strained public services and host communities in regions like West Nile, Southwestern and Northern Uganda. DRC has increasingly emphasized collaboration with local entities, as sustainable change necessitates local leadership. Refugee communities grapple with interconnected challenges like limited livelihood opportunities, protection risks, and strained community relations that demand holistic approaches. Through partnerships with local organizations, community groups, and government bodies, DRC aims to enhance responsiveness, bolster local capacity, and ensure enduring impact beyond project cycles.</p>
CONTRIBUTION	<p>ULS and YETA played leading roles in implementing the strategy’s protection support to refugees, while DRC provided technical support, resources and capacity strengthening. This approach improved the technical and operational capacity of the two organizations to deliver quality protection services to refugees, and they also received greater acknowledgement by local leaders, community structures, and refugees as pivotal legal and protection entities. The combination of ULS’ technical legal service delivery and YETA’s culturally appropriate community engagement increased community members’ trust in the justice system. Due to YETA’s high status in refugee communities and the increased organizational capacity, it also received recognition by international and national organizations. YETA has since participated in international protection coordination meetings and been appointed by UNHCR to lead and coordinate with other refugee-led organizations, enabling them to spearhead localized protection initiatives aligned with key priorities of People of Concern.</p>
IMAGES	<div><div><p>Mobile Court Proceedings in Imvepi, 2024. Credit: Amanya Melody Queen – DRC.</p></div><div><p>Performance during integrated GBV awareness in Imvepi, 2024. Credit: Asitaku Benard – YETA.</p></div></div>

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

DRC and ULS facilitated legal aid services, including civil documentation, for refugee students needing statutory declarations to sit through national exams. Mobile court sessions were organized within settlements, bringing judicial services closer to communities, expediting case resolution, and building trust in formal justice systems. Alongside YETA, DRC also co-developed a community-led gender-based violence (GBV) awareness campaign using music, dance, and drama at the Women and Girls' Centers in the Imvepi settlement. This culturally resonant approach educated communities on GBV, legal rights, and access to support services. By combining legal aid with grassroots sensitization, the project empowered survivors to seek justice and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms.

### LESSONS

DRC's partnerships with funded actors like YETA and the ULS highlight the value of informal, under-resourced community-based actors. These groups bring deep local knowledge, trusted relationships, and agility in responding to protection needs. A key lesson is that meaningful inclusion does not always require funding. Strategic non-financial support—such as technical training, joint planning, visibility in coordination platforms, and clear referral pathways—can significantly boost their impact. Expanding collaboration with such actors enables DRC to support community-driven and contextually grounded protection solutions.

### EVIDENCE

Through co-design and targeted support from DRC, ULS and YETA assumed leading roles in delivering legal and protection services to refugees. ULS contributed with its technical expertise in legal service provision, while YETA leveraged its legitimacy as a refugee-led organization to engage communities in culturally appropriate and trusted ways. This complementary partnership resulted in improved service delivery and increased community confidence in the justice system. The recognition of YETA's role at the local level – evident in its growing reputation among community leaders and refugee populations – resulted in a broader visibility and credibility. The organization was invited to international protection coordination meetings and appointed by UNHCR to lead and coordinate other refugee-led organizations.

### DOMAINS

*Development strategy priorities:*

*Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability*

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*Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights*

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*Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights*

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*Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights*

X

*Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability*

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*Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work*

X