

THEFT IN THE CAMPS HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO THE FACT THAT REFUGEES HAVE NO SOURCE OF INCOME

# Refugees call for vocational skilling

By Lawrence Mulondo

Consolata Nyirandola, 70, a refugee, who arrived at Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Kyegegwa district in April this year, fled the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with her daughter and granddaughter due to war.

She says they moved on foot for a week, to get to Nyakabande sub-county in Kisoro district, western Uganda, where they were rescued by the Government and officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials, who later settled them at Kyaka II Refugee Settlement.

Nyirandola and other refugees are seeking livelihood programmes and vocational skills to be extended to them.

Roderick Mapenzi, 24, another Congolese refugee in Kyaka II, arrived at the camp with his child and wife, also April this year.

He says he was operating a barber shop back home in Lubare. As he fled, lost his tools of trade.

## WHAT REFUGEES SAY ABOUT JOB SCARCITY



**Consolata Nyirandola**

The little money I had is used up. Back home, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I was a market vendor. I currently have no work in the camp, making it difficult to provide for my family.



**Jackson Itangaza**

I arrived at the camp in April, from Bwisha county in DR Congo. I fled with my nephew because of the war. I lost contact with my family as they went other directions. We could not carry any utilities as we did not want to be slowed



**Sifa Safari**

I was four months pregnant when I ran away from home in Bunya, to seek refuge here. I left my husband home because he refused to come with me. I do not know whether he is still alive, since I lost all the contacts on the way to the camp.

Mapenzi says: "Though we get food and construction materials from UNHCR, I need to work to support my family with daily life necessities, such as clothes and a good diet."

He adds that if he is given more training in operating a salon business and capital, he can work to support his family. Jerome Kamari, who lives at Rukinga cell, Tababiniga



ADRA officials distributing the donations to refugees at the Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Kyegegwa district recently. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

Zone in Kyaka II refugee settlement, says: "Authorities have for long been promising to introduce the programmes. However, they have not been implemented yet," he said.

Kamari adds that the refugees have no source of income, which leads to thefts.

Kamari further said language barrier between the refugees and the host communities makes it difficult for academically qualified refugees to get jobs.

He also appealed to authorities to employ refugees to build hospitals and schools, at construction sites.

Kabweza and Mpara sub-counties in Kyaka county.

The camp was started by the Government last year, with the support UNHCR to receive new arrivals from the DRC.

Since December 1 last year, over 40,000 refugees have settled in the camp, with 80% being women and children, according to UNHCR.

Thousands of Congolese refugees, especially in the eastern part of DRC, were forced to vacate their homes, after a war broke out between M23 and the DRC military forces.

towels and other necessities.

She explained that UNHCR supports the refugees with water, food, health education, and shelter, among others, adding that there are still many areas, such as water accessibility, where the refugees need a hand extended to them.

Fatumah concurred with the refugees on the need for livelihood programmes and vocational trainings, arguing that they need to work so that they do not always wait for donations.

"When vocational institutions are put in place and capital is provided, the refugees can acquire skills and money to start work," Fatumah said. She added that there were organisations which had already come on board, to help refugees start work, such as 'Give Directly' which gave a number of refugees \$600 (about sh2.3m).

## UNHCR speaks out

Eltom Fatumah, the UNHCR field officer in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, said when new refugees arrive, they usually lack shoes, clothes, sanitary

## About the camp

Kyaka II Refugee Settlement is located in Kyegegwa district. The camp sits on about 81sq. km of land in Kyegegwa,

## ADRA SUPPORTS REFUGEES



Benon Matovu Babumba, the ADRA-Uganda manager in charge of emergency programmes, said the donation was the second part of the initial response project. "We came up with the project basing on the appeal that was made by UNHCR for partners to help in closing the clothing gap amid new arrivals in the camp," Babumba said adding that the agency spent about \$1,500 (about sh5.7m) to execute the project.

## Donating relief

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Uganda mobilised members of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, who donated second-hand clothes, bags, shoes, mattresses, sanitary towels, sugar, soap, salt and others to refugees in Kyaka II. Amid security from the Uganda Police Force, the donation was last week delivered to the refugees in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement playground in Rukinga cell.

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