

GLOBAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Advocating for Refugee and Human Rights Worldwide



VOICES RISING: REFUGEE-LED SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE 2023

Empowering Communities, Fostering Collaboration &
Changing Narratives

Narrative Report

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GLOBAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Global Rights Defenders (GRD) is a Canadian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that advocates for refugee and human rights worldwide. Through research, policy analysis and advocacy, and community engagement, GRDs mission is to support marginalized, displaced and vulnerable populations to achieve self-reliance through targeted policy advocacy which is informed by evidence-based research. GRD's work is founded on international human rights and humanitarian laws, and respect for the dignity of every human being.

Through the activities of our board, volunteers, and committees, our organization focuses on three key areas:

- Migration governance
- Self-reliance and community engagement
- Institutional Capacity Building

The development of this report was led by Rai Friedman, Rapporteur of the *Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023*.

CONFERENCE SUPPORTED BY:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 28, 2023 Kakuma Refugee Camp hosted the first Refugee-led Conference to address challenges faced by refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. The conference objective was to determine innovative solutions for communities with experience of forced displacement and for host community members in Turkana through meaningful discussion with entities within the humanitarian and international development sector. The theme of the conference was to empower communities, foster collaboration and change narratives associated with refugees and Refugee-led Organizations (RLO).

There were 65 participating organizations in the conference, 9 were donor organizations and 28 participant organizations within panel discussions. The remaining organizations were guests and audience participants. Altogether there were 102 individuals who participated in the conference. Representatives from RLOs/CBOs, I/NGOs, government, media, research institutions, private sector, financial institutions and host community members participated.

There were four panel discussions:

Panel 1 – Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization

Panel 2 – Partnership, Networking & Collaboration

Panel 3 – Legal Registration & Documentation

Panel 4 – Skills & Enterprise Development

i. Highlights of the panel discussions:

Panel 1 – Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization

- Obtaining ID & Documentation has been a challenge for RLOs
- ID & Documentation is required for RLOs to partner with I/NGOs
- RLOs do not have equal access to capital
- Technology increases efficiencies

Panel 2 – Partnership, Networking & Collaboration

- Partners should understand the needs of the communities/RLOs they are trying to collaborate with
- There are issues with designing of programs for RLO unique needs
- Administrative support is essential for RLO operations
- Partner organizations should include a transition plan for the conclusion of a program
- Collaboration between INGOs and RLOs is essential to achieve the SDGs

Panel 3 – Legal Registration & Documentation

- ID & Documentation are essential to build partnerships and operate

- ID & Document synchronization at the National Registrar Bureau is essential for socio-economic integration

Panel 4 – Skills & Enterprise Development

- For RLOs/CBOs to grow into larger organizations they must be visible and heard from all entities which interact with them – government, partner, financial, among others
- Increased programming for women and girls is essential for economic sustainability
- Partner organizations should conduct market analyses before designing or implementing their programs to understand barriers and gaps
- Partner organizations should distribute certificates to acknowledge capacities learned through their programs

ii. Highlights of the panel recommendations:

Panel 1 – Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization

- The GoK, DRS and UNHCR should provide further support to displaced persons to obtain ID & Documentation
- The GoK should grant refugees the Class M work permit
- The GoK, DRS, and UNHCR should enable RLOs to apply for and obtain grants/funding directly
- Partner organizations should invest in upfront costs of technology

Panel 2 – Partnership, Networking & Collaboration

- Partners should research community needs and engage with RLOs as stakeholders during all phases of the project cycle
- Partners should tailor organizations to the unique needs of the RLO
- RCK, UNHCR and DRS should provide administrative support to RLOs to assist in the organizations internal development
- Partners should include a transition plan for the conclusion of a project
- Partners and RLOs should engage in a learning exchange or mentorship program

Panel 3 – Legal Registration & Documentation

- DRS, RCK and UNHCR should support RLO registration processes to reduce barriers and enable self-reliance
- DRS should ensure refugee documentation is synchronized at the National Registrar Bureau

Panel 4 – Skills & Enterprise Development

- UNHCR, DRS, and the GoK should include refugees as stakeholders in all activities related to them

- Partner organizations should increase programs for women and girls to achieve SDGs
- Partner organizations should encourage labor market analysis before designing programs
- Partner organizations should provide certificates of skills and capacities learned to participants

ABBREVIATION

ARN – Africa Refugee Network

CBO – Community Based Organization

CRRF – Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

DRA – Dadaab Response Association

DRS – Department of Refugee Services

GCR – Global Compact for Refugees

GISEDIP – Garissa Integrated Socio-economic Development Programme

GIZ - The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH

GoK – Government of Kenya

GRD – Global Rights Defenders

GRF – Global Refugee Forum

HIAS - Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

ILO – International Labor Organization

INGO – International Non-Government Organization

INVER – Initiative for Nurturing Vulnerable & Empowerment for Resilience (Currently Humanity Hands)

KI4BLI – Kalobeyei Initiative 4 Better Life

KISEDEP – Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme

KRA – Kenya Revenue Authority

NGO – Non-Government Organization

NRC – Norwegian Refugee Council

R-SEAT – Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table

RAI – Resilience Action International

RCK – Refugee Consortium of Kenya

RELON – K – Refugee-led Organization Network of Kenya

RLO – Refugee-led Organization

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SIR – Solidarity Initiative for Refugees

TCDM - Turkana Christian Development Mission

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VDPA – Voice for Disabled Person Association

WUSC – World University Service of Canada

1.0 BACKGROUND

On September 28, 2023 Kakuma Refugee Camp hosted the first Refugee-led Conference to address challenges faced by refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. The conference objective was to determine innovative solutions for communities with experience of forced displacement and for host community members in Turkana through meaningful discussion with entities within the humanitarian and international development sector. The theme of the conference was to empower communities, foster collaboration and change narratives associated with refugees and Refugee-led Organizations (RLO).

1.1 RATIONALE

This conference is in alignment with tenets written in the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and presented at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), such as to foster meaningful engagement with persons forced to flee and to determine innovative solutions within complex local contexts, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Moreover, engaging with Community Based Organizations (CBO) is part of UNHCRs Community-based Protection Approach, and the Age, Gender and Diversity policy, through which UNHCR committed to positioning those with lived experience of forced displacement as key stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) aims to¹:

1. Ease pressure on host countries
2. Enhance refugee self-reliance
3. Expand access to third-country solutions and
4. Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Although the Government of Kenya did not adopt a formal CRRF structure or process, it committed to tenets within it including “undertake self-reliance and inclusion measures for refugees in Kenya”². The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED DP) is a domesticated version of the CRRF in Kakuma and Kalobeyei which seeks to enhance the capacity of RLOs and CBOs to support local socio-economic development. The ‘Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023’ is pursuant of Component 8 of the KISED DP titled ‘Private Sector & Entrepreneurship’ which outlines “a range of activities to support the development of the private sector and encourage entrepreneurship” in Kakuma and Kalobeyei³.

Lastly, this conference supports Kenya’s commitment to achieve the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 ‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’ and SDG 10 ‘Reduced Inequalities’ are exemplified through this conference

¹ Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. <https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework>

² UNHCR (2018) Applying Comprehensive Responses (CRRF) in Africa. <https://www.unhcr.org/5a8fcfff4.pdf>

³ Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (2023-2027), p.22

sharing the intention to increase opportunities for socio-economic inclusion for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

1.2 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the conference are to emphasize the importance of RLOs in addressing the challenges within Kakuma and Kalobeyei; opportunities for partner organizations or government entities to support RLOs in achieving their objectives; and to facilitate meaningful conversations with representatives from RLOs, I/NGOs, government entities and other relevant stakeholders to determine sustainable solutions for displaced populations within Kenya.

1.3 PARTICIPATION

There were 65 participating organizations in the conference, out of which 9 were donor organizations and 28 participant organizations within panel discussions. The remaining organizations were guests and audience participants. Altogether there were 102 individuals who participated in the conference. The organizations chosen to attend and participate were drawn from a cross-section of institutions as it related to meaningful engagement of refugees and Refugee-led Organizations in Kenya. This included:

- Representatives and leaders from refugee-led organizations
- Local and international organizations within and outside Kakuma
- Government officials
- The media
- RLO Umbrella organization (e.g. RELON-Kenya)
- Research Institutions
- Private Sector
- Financial Institutions
- Host Community led organizations

A full list of attendees can be found in the appendix of this document.

1.4 STRUCTURE

The conference began with a prayer from Pastor Louis Birusha and led into opening remarks from Sammy Koech, Acting Camp Manager from the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) of Kakuma and Kalobeyei; Gideon Loitlaem, Senior Trade Officer from the Turkana County Government; Nicolas Kaburaburyo, Head of Sub-Office from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Geoffrey Ochola, National Programme Coordinator from the International Labor Organization (ILO); and Edith Ingutia, Livelihood Officer from UNHCR Kakuma provided her opening remarks, introduced the organizing committee and provided an overview of the conference agenda.

The conference centred around four panel discussions comprised of diverse experts to provide a multiangle background regarding the themes selected by the organizing committee. This included INGO representatives, National representatives, RLO and Community-based Organizations (CBO) representatives from Kakuma and Kalobeyei, Nairobi and Dadaab, as well as government representatives. Each panel comprised of 5-7 panelists with 1 moderator and endured and lasted for a maximum of 90 minutes. After each panel event, there were Question and Answer (Q&A) portions from the audience.

The four panel discussions were:

Panel 1 – Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization

Panel 2 – Partnership, Networking & Collaboration

Panel 3 – Legal Registration & Documentation

Panel 4 – Skills & Enterprise Development

2.0 WELCOME ADDRESS

Sammy Koech, Acting Camp Manager from DRS of Kakuma and Kalobeyei

Sammy Koech, Acting Camp Manager, from DRS of Kakuma and Kalobeyei welcomed the audience to the event, and thanked the organizing committee for the opportunity to engage in meaningful and collaborative discussion. Mr. Koech began discussing the Government of Kenya's (GoK) policies, laws and frameworks, including the Shirika plan, which outline socio-economic inclusion for displaced populations in Kenya. He acknowledged that the *Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023* is aligned with the key pillars within the Shirika Plan, and is pursuant of providing the residents of Kakuma, both hosts and displaced persons, essential services.

Gideon Loitalem, Senior Trade Officer, County Government of Turkana & Chairman-KISED P Thematic Working Group

Gideon Loitalem, the Turkana County Government representative at the conference, recognized the head of the UNHCR sub-office in Kenya, The Kenya National Chambers of Commerce, all government representatives, all partners, and all RLOs and CBOs in attendance. Mr. Loitalem highlighted the importance of the conference which provided the invited guests the opportunity to exchange knowledge among the different disciplines, partners, private sector and government institutions.

Mr. Loitalem acknowledged the mandate of the County Department of Trade, Enterprise, Development and Cooperative to provide a conducive environment for business within Turkana. He highlighted the importance of income generating strategies for refugees and host community members, as livelihood opportunities are scarce. And lastly, he discussed the bureaucratic constrains on refugee businesses and acknowledged that Kenyan law allowed refugees to register

their enterprise as limited companies or single businesses, highlighting the difficulty refugees faced in obtaining the necessary documentation to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours.

To address the challenges and constraints faced by refugees and host community members, Turkana launched the Huduma-Biashara Centre which aims to improve the business environment in Turkana West Sub-County by bringing essential business and civil registration-related services under one roof. The centre will empower host and refugee communities to become self-reliant, encourage entrepreneurship and entice new business opportunities.

Nicholas Kaburoburyo, Head of Sub-Office UNHCR

Nicholas Kaburoburyo extended a warm welcome to all extended guests and acknowledged the significance of the conference as an historic event. *The Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023* signifies the important testament of resilience, determination and the unwavering spirit of displaced communities, which celebrated the achievements of refugees and embraced a more hopeful future. Mr. Kaburoburyo discussed the significance of the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in establishing a foundation for meaningful engagement with those forced to flee, and the international recognition to engage refugees in local communities.

The GoK has made significant strides to include refugees in socio-economic activities, such as the establishment of the Kalobeyi Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED), the New Refugees Act of 2021, The Community Group Registration Act 2022, the Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (GISED), and the Shirika plan (formerly the Marshal Plan).

Mr. Kaburoburyo emphasized the significance of the conference and the importance of its outcomes: a call to action for to mobilize stakeholders to advocate for refugee access to socioeconomic inclusion and to ensure collaboration, the promotion of direct funding and overall empower displaced populations.

Geoffrey Ochola, National Programme Coordinator, ILO

Geoffrey Ochola provided his opening remarks virtually, thanked ILO-Kenya, the organizing committee and all RLOs for coming together and establishing the event. Mr. Ochola emphasized the importance of the conference, and its role in addressing key concerns for refugees such as the design and mobilization of resources, capacity gaps, and inconsistencies with refugee registration. He recognized the need to support displaced populations at the national level, and that the advocacy efforts from this conference should be continued. He reminded the audience of the importance of working together to effectuate meaningful change, and of the ILOs ethos which is to advocate for decent work and social justice. Finally, he emphasized that the ILO and other entities are responsible for adhering to the recommendations procured from this conference and should be pursued.

Edith Ingutia, Livelihood Officer, UNHCR Kakuma

Edith Ingutia thanked Pascal Zigashane, Amin Bolis, Deline Ramiro and Bahana Hydrogene for their efforts in organizing and supporting the conference. She emphasized the role of partner organizations in enabling socioeconomic development for refugees and host community members. She invited Adhira Kara, East Africa Regional Lead of Refugees Seeking a Seat at the Table (R-SEAT) and Jean Marie Ishimwe, Executive Director of Youth Voices Community (YVC) to provide their introductions. Lastly, Ms. Ingutia provided an overview and the agenda of the conference.

2.1 PRESENTATIONS

Ahead of the panel discussions the organizing committee debuted the video *‘Exploring the Work of Refugee-led Organizations in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement’*. The video explored the work of ten RLOs across Kakuma and Kalobeyei through their different interventions in response to their community needs.

3.0 PANEL 1 – PROMOTING CAPACITY SHARING & RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

3.1 Objective

To Facilitate meaningful conversations between RLOs, CBOs, humanitarian agencies, NGOs and donors around the importance of capacity sharing, best approaches, and enabling increased opportunities for resource mobilization for RLOs.

Organization	Mission	Panelist	Title
Cohere	Works towards unleashing the potential of refugees to determine their own futures on their own terms.	Kasi Bisimwa	Project Assistant
Don Bosco	Promotes dialogues between Salesians of Don Bosco and European Institutions. Its work focuses on the human and intellectual formation of young people.	Judy Wamalwa	Project Officer
RAI	Provides education, livelihood training, and life skills to refugees in Kakuma, Kenya and Kigomo, Tanzania.	Wycliffe Basara	Managing Director
WUSC	Achieve a better world for youth through inclusion, equity and sustainability with a specific focus on women and refugees.	Koko Buroko	Project Officer
RCK	Advocate for the just and fair policies on the protection of African refugees.	Mitchel Ambasu	Field Coordinator
R-SEAT	Enhance the effectiveness of global refugee responses.	Adhira Kara	East Africa Regional Lead

Moderated by: Deline Ramiro, Operations and Partnerships Lead, Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR)

3.2 Discussion

1. Define Capacity Sharing	
Discussion	
<p>Capacity sharing can be understood as an individual or organization which possess some form of knowledge, skill or enterprise to enable the achievement of a determined goal or metric. It may introduce or build upon pre-existing skills and values to ensure an individual or organization can complete assigned tasks. Lastly, capacity sharing identifies issues relevant to RLOs and provides them the necessary skillset to achieve their long-term vision.</p>	

2. Discuss the effective strategies to build the capacity of RLOs and to embrace leadership roles within Kakuma

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>It is a challenge for RLOs to obtain the proper ID & Documentation from the national government. It is crucial for RLOs to partner with I/NGOs to continue providing services to the community, sustain their programming and achieve their goals. Without proper ID & Documentation, RLOs may not be considered viable entities by partner organizations. RLOs require further support from the government and UNHCR to continuously participate in meaningful opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GoK and UNHCR should enable ease in accessing ID & Documentation for RLO and RLO leaders. • The GoK should enable refugees to obtain the Class M work permit. This would reduce barriers in gaining meaningful employment and provide the opportunity to contribute to Kenya’s economic outputs.
<p>It is a challenge to design numerous yet specific programs for RLOs. Currently many partner organizations approach capacity building programmes as a “one size fits all model” rather than tailoring programs to the specific needs of the RLO. Moreover, programs are implemented quickly, exist in short durations, and use standardized assessment systems to monitor progress. This universal approach to designing, implementing and monitoring programs is detrimental to the success of the programs as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INGOs should tailor capacity building programs for the specific needs of each RLO, understanding that each organization has varied capabilities and requires different resources. • INGOs should ensure the assessment systems being used are tailored to the capacity building program to effectuate program vitality.

they are not effectively addressing the unique needs within the target community.

3. The role of technology and digital tools to enhance the capacity of RLOs and the role of INGOs and donors to facilitate access to be used within refugee camps

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Technology offers significant short term and long-term benefits for all programming. It builds capacities, increases efficiencies, and enables individuals to create digital content. For instance, with additional technologies, RLOs are able to record audio or video, and create digital for social media posts or otherwise, which promotes their brands, accomplishments, and could attract future partners. It will also assist in digitizing administrative files.</p> <p>By including technology in the project scope, it enables beneficiaries to become proficient in certain aspects of the programming, which would reduce the need for trainers from future partner organizations. It would also enable the continuity of skills so that once a program has concluded, the RLO can continue working on its project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INGOs should invest in upfront costs of technology, especially if their proposed programs span more than one year. This would increase efficiencies and fulfill their commitment to assisting refugees to achieve self-reliance. • INGOs should ensure that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All programmes clearly demonstrate and convey the intended goal or outcome for the RLO to achieve by the program end. 2. A transition plan to enable an RLO to continue to serve its community once a program has concluded.

4.0 PANEL 2 – PARTNERSHIP, NETWORKING & COLLABORATION

4.1 Objective

To highlight the importance of partnership, networking and collaboration with RLOs. Partnerships provide avenues for equitable resource sharing for RLO initiatives. Partners are vital for RLO interventions as they can strengthen and support RLO programming.

Organization	Mission	Panelist	Title
<p>RELON - Kenya</p>	<p>Provide a platform for RLOs in Kenya to link them partners/stakeholders as well as opportunities, ideas and funding.</p>	<p>Jean Paul</p>	<p>Programs Coordinator</p>

Humanity Hands (formerly INVER)	Support refugees to achieve self-reliance through education, digital literacy, sexual & reproductive health education & art Advocate for the just and fair policies on the protection of African refugees.	Almarat Arnu	Operations Manager
VDPA	Be the voice of disabled people and assist them to achieve full participation and equal status in society.	Julius Mwandja	Director
TCDM	Enhance capacity of faith actors in Turkana County.	Mishel Akeno	Administrator
Girl Power Initiative	A feminist institution which empowers children and young females to become catalysts for change and achieve gender equality.	Sudi Omar	Executive Director
WUSC	Achieve a better world for youth through inclusion, equity and sustainability with a specific focus on women and refugees.	Koko Buroko	Project Officer
RCK	Advocate for the just and fair policies on the protection of African refugees.	Mitchel Ambasu	Field Coordinator
Don Bosco	Promotes dialogues between Salesians of Don Bosco and European Institutions. Its work focuses on the human and intellectual formation of young people.	Judy Wamalwa	Project Officer

Moderated by: Amin Bolis, Founder & Executive Director, Humanity Hands (formerly INVER)

4.2 Discussion

1. Best practices/strategies to enhance partnership and collaboration between RLOs and INGOs

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Partner organizations are essential to build capacities, expand programming and increase community support for RLOs.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for RLOs, especially from UNHCR, enables additional community initiatives.</p> <p>It is important for partner organizations to understand the needs of the target community before they design or implement a project, and before they partner with an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner organizations should understand the needs of the RLO and the community before partnering with them. RLO leaders should be regarded as stakeholders throughout the project cycle to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. RLOs should partner with organizations which compliment their skillset to address gaps in programming. This will ensure the partner organization and RLO can create larger impact.

RLO. Partner organizations should encourage the unique perspective of the RLO when implementing programs since the RLO has an inherent understanding of local issues.

When designing a project, it is important for partner organizations to engage in research/evidence-based activities so that the program can be designed specifically for the community it is serving.

- Partner organizations should regard RLOs as equals, not solely as beneficiaries or as competition.



- The GoK and UNHCR should enable RLOs to apply for the same grants as their INGO partners. Grant opportunities should be shared amongst RLOs, and various partners to increase chances of receiving funding, and participating in more diverse projects.



Legal support is necessary for RLOs to operate.

Organizations such as DRS, UNHCR, and RCK are the primary organizations constructing and implementing policies, laws and frameworks which govern refugees. Refugees and RLOs are key stakeholders and should have the ability to provide their input. While there have been strides in establishing and implementing laws, policies and frameworks which govern refugees in Kenya including the KISED, the New Refugees Act 2021, The Community Groups Registration Act 2022, the GISED and the announcement of the Shirika Plan, further improvements are required.

- DRS, UNHCR, and RCK should consult refugees and RLO leaders during the design phase for policies, laws and frameworks which affect them.

2. Challenges for partner organizations to collaborate with RLOs and methods for improvement



Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Partner organizations and RLOs may have different understanding of an RLOs capacities or interests. This includes the number of individuals who are part of the RLO, individuals who are eligible to be part of or want to join the RLO, determining if the RLO is legally registered, and other relevant criteria.</p> <p>The biggest barrier to successful partnership amongst RLOs is the lack of access to registration/RLO certification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the outset of the program, partner organizations and RLOs should have a mutual understanding of the RLOs capabilities, operations, members, and interests. • RCK should assist RLOs in becoming legally recognized by the government, which would build capacity, increase resource mobilization.
<p>Transparency, trust and empowerment are essential for RLOs to work with partner organizations and for effective programming in the communities they serve. Empowerment must extend beyond RLO programming, and ensure it is positively contributing to the community to increase the chances of sustainability.</p> <p>Rather than continuously design new projects, RLOs and CBOs should be aware of other, similar organizations providing similar services and consider partnering with those organizations to have greater impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant organizations should ensure transparency during the design and implementation phase of the project cycle, to establish and maintain trust. • When designing and implementing a project, all relevant organizations should consider the outcomes and methods to empower all individuals which reside in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. • RLOs and CBOs should initiate joint partnerships and avoid viewing the other as competition to increase impact.

3. Ways for RLOs to leverage existing partnerships to improve their interventions	
Discussion	Recommendation
<p>The capacities that RLOs have should be recognized and built upon. Partner organizations should be aware the RLOs strengths, capacities, relevant issues, and capacity gaps within the RLO before collaborating with them. Partner organizations should therefore understand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner organizations should understand all aspects of the RLO they are working with. • Partner organizations should develop advocacy strategies around the issues relevant to their partner RLO.

where they could supplement an RLO’s ability to have the greatest impact.

4. Recommendations to RLOs or INGOs to improve their partnership approaches and increase success of their interventions

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>RLOs and I/NGOs provide immense value to each other. For instance, RLOs would benefit to learn from I/NGOs in program design, development, implementation and resource mobilization or fundraising tactics. I/NGOs can learn from RLOs regarding community needs and methods to resolve local issues. The collaboration between international partners and RLO/CBO are essential to achieve the 2030 SDGs as well as the localization agenda.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners and RLOs could create a learning exchange program to educate the other on aspects of their industries. • Partner organizations could create a mentorship program for peer-to-peer learning and share best practices with RLOs. • RLOs need to be viewed as equals, not solely as beneficiaries or as competitors for programming. • RLOs should have the ability to apply for direct funding in means of the requirements/grants/application processes and related to enable sustainable programming.

5.0 PANEL 3 – LEGAL REGISTRATION & DOCUMENTATION

5.1 Objective

To discuss the challenges refugees face in obtaining ID & Documentation. This panel also discussed the New Refugees Act of 2021, The Community Groups Registration Act 2022, and the Shirika Plan.

Organization	Mission	Panelist	Title
UNHCR	Safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees.	Eddah Mwihaki Waweru	RSD Associate
DRS	Forge partnerships to empower refugees in Kenya.	Anno Basili	Protection Officer

NRC	Help people who were forced to flee. Protect displaced people and support them as they build a new future.	Julius Lokaale	ICLA Project Coordinator
RCK	Protect and promote the well-being, voice, and dignity of the displaced and host populations in Kenya.	Ivy Shiechelo	Legal Officer
Dadaab Response Association	Lead research initiatives in the Dadaab region.	Robert Ochan	Administration/ Research Manager
KI4BLI	Transform the lives of refugees through education, livelihoods programming, community health and protection.	Akso Kaposho	Operation Manager
RELON-Kenya	Provide a platform for RLOs in Kenya to link them partners/stakeholders as well as opportunities, ideas and funding.	Jean Paul	Programs Coordinator

Moderated by: Pascal Zigashane, Founder & Executive Director, Action pour le Progres

5.2 Discussion

1. Discuss the status of the Community Groups Registration Act	
Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Due to the New Refugees Act of 2021, the Community Groups Registration Act 2022, and the Shirika Plan, the processes for refugees to obtain ID & Documentation are changing. Organizations which support refugees to access ID & Documentation, must work in accordance with the mandates, bureaucracies, policies, laws and frameworks which exist for refugees in Kenya, and cannot overextend promises to ease accessibility or increase the ability to obtain certification. Some of the processes to obtain certification for RLOs include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCK should ensure that refugees have the ability to access certifications for RLOs where possible. • UNHCR should expand its livelihoods program to include more RLOs. • When participating in the verification process, it is important for organizations such as RCK, UNHCR, and DRS to treat every refugee with dignity and respect and to honor that the process to obtain ID &

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Individuals who are applying for certification must be verified as registered refugees ii. Group members within the RLO must also be verified as registered refugees iii. Documents relevant to operate the RLO must be completed. This includes forms, the constitution, <i>inter alia</i>, to establish an RLO iv. DRS must confirm if all the required information is accurate and have been completed. <p>While there are many advantages to having the proper certification as an RLO, the panelists highlighted support from the UNHCR livelihoods program as especially fortuitous to expand livelihood efforts within refugee and host communities.</p>	<p>Documentation as a verification process, and not a vetting process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCK should continue to work with the RLO community to ensure RLOs have the training and support they need to establish their RLOs.
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2. Discuss the disadvantages of the inability to successfully register as a refugee and obtain the necessary documentation, as well as the challenges associated with synchronization

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>Synchronization is essential for refugees to integrate into Kenyan society. Without documentation, an individual can't access important services, such as MPesa, or gain meaningful employment. Barriers in accessing legal documentation results in socioeconomic exclusion, which prohibits refugee self-reliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRS should continue to be accommodating towards the needs and concerns refugees have in obtaining ID and Documentation.
<p>For CBOs/RLOs in particular, synchronization has been a point of contention. RLOs are currently registered as CBOs, though the documents and process required to become an established RLO/CBO differ. Additionally,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRS, UNHCR and RCK should reduce the barriers for RLOs to become established. It is important for RLOs to be registered as RLOs and not as CBOs so they may attract partner organizations and build capacities.

<p>RLOs face stricter verification processes as compared to CBOs. For instance, RLOs must have more than 8 members in total, and 3 members who are officials – all of whom must be successfully registered as refugees. They must also possess their identify cards and Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) pin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ease the process on becoming certified as an RLO, DRS, UNHCR and RCK must adhere to the requirements as outlined in the Community Groups Registration Act 2022.
<p>Previously, refugee IDs had 6 digits. As of 2020, refugee IDs have 8 digits. This was established to assist with the synchronization process, to enable refugees to maintain the same ID number upon renewal or should it require replacement due to unforeseen loss or damage. Previously, upon renewal, refugees were given a different number which caused immense issues and confusion. Since the digitization of the ID & Documentation system for refugees in 2020, it has eased the process for DRS and UNHCR to share information about an individual across departments or units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Registration Bureau should ensure that the synchronization process for refugee Alien ID is accessible across all departments of government and private sector institutions where Alien ID is required. • The DRS should ensure the services for refugees to obtain ID & Documentation are easily accessible by refugees and that the services provided are of high quality.

6.0 PANEL 4 – SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Objective

To discuss the current challenges RLOs face in their programming, and how partner organizations can better ensure sustainability.

Organization	Mission	Panelist	Title
OKAPI Green	Specializes in reliable solar energy and internet connectivity.	Vasco Amisi	CEO
SIR	Provides refugees with tools such as education, mentorship, freelancing, and social business to create a better future for themselves.	Gak Atem	Human Resource Officer
SwissContact	Promote inclusive economic, social and ecological development to make	Alexander Kiptanui	Project Manager

	contributions towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies.		
Inkomoko	Engages youth and refugees to achieve self-reliance through business advisory and access to finance.	Charles Ekai	Field Coordinator
HALGAN	Empower women to achieve success on their own terms.	Anab Mohamed	Director
GLAP Enterprise	Refugee-led Social Enterprise that aims to empower refugees and host communities	Innocent Harvyiamana	CEO
L'AFRIKANA	Empower refugees and host community members.	Gilbert Asukulu	Executive Director

Moderated by: Deline Ramiro, Operations and Partnerships Lead, Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR)

6.2 Discussion

1. Discuss the policy changes or advocacy efforts needed at the national or international level to support refugee-led enterprises and skills development initiatives

Discussion	Recommendation
<p>An increased focus should be on training women and girls, as well as income generating activities. For instance, HALGAN partnered with DRC to train women and girls in Dadaab to start their own business. HALGAN was able to expand its programming to include henna decorations and tailoring and were later funded by UNHCR to build the capacity of tie dye.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner organizations should increase the number of projects to build the capacities of women and girls to ensure economic sustainability. Women perform more household duties as compared to men, which reduce their time in education systems or the labor market. Oftentimes, they are dependent on others as they become adults which prohibit their ability to achieve self-reliance. Women should have the ability to contribute economically to their household and communities. Women and Youth should be provided additional support to enable economic sustainability. Having women and youth as business leaders and entrepreneurs within their communities will also serve as representation for others within the

	<p>community who may feel inspired to participate in similar activities.</p>
<p>For CBOs/RLOs to grow into larger organizations, they must be visible and have the opportunity to voice their concerns. To do so, partner and humanitarian organizations must provide refugees the space to share their perspectives and be willing to listen. Refugee representation is limited across all sectors, thereby their participation should be sought, encouraged, and supported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased discussion or engagement opportunities should be had amongst RLOs/CBOs and partner organizations. Refugee perspectives should be adhered to, considered and incorporated when crafting initiatives such as the Shirika plan or similar initiatives.• Partner and humanitarian organizations should include and consult refugees on all matters which affect them.• Partner organizations should build capacities for refugees to speak publicly, organize conferences, create and share digital media, and other mediums which support their <i>'voices rising'</i>.
<p>There should be a clear understanding of defined roles within RLOs/CBOs, as well as transparency in organizing internal structures within organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner organizations could assist RLOs/CBOs in creating widespread materials in how to structure an organization. This could include the required documents, defined organizational roles, and the role of the RLO during the project cycle. When RLOs/CBOs have gaps within their infrastructure, they are limited in their ability to enact impact. For instance, RLOs/CBOs will not be able to attract donors or funders if potential partner organizations do not believe the RLO or CBO have the capacity to implement programs.

2. Discuss the ways to measure long-term impact and sustainability of the skills development and enterprise programs your organization supports

Recommendation

- Partner organizations should ensure they include strategic goals and a transition plan within their project scope. This will increase the chances of project success and sustainability.
- To measure skills and capacities learned, partner organizations should revisit communities which received training to determine where further improvements or supports could be provided.
- Prior to designing a project, partners should conduct a multi-year labor market analysis or assessment scan to understand the marketable strengths, trends within the community, availability of resources, and gaps to inform programming and partner organizations.
- Partner organizations should understand the market gap to determine which businesses would supplement RLO/CBO economies, and to assist RLOs in collaborating with other RLOs with similar interests and capacities to increase impact.
- Once programming has been concluded, RLOs should be provided the platform to voice their concerns or opinions to inform future programming and strengthen their advocacy capacities.

3. Discuss the policy recommendations or advocacy efforts that your organization uses to improve the conditions and opportunities for refugees related to skills development and enterprise

Recommendation

- Established RLOs should take advantage of opportunities available to them, continue to participate in skills training development, continue to establish their businesses so that they may generate income and achieve financial independence.
- Organizations which have benefitted from training should stay involved and assist less established RLOs in their training endeavours.
- Partner organizations should distribute certificates once training has concluded to demonstrate the skills learned through their programs.
- All organizations should continue to engage with specialists, organizations offering similar programming, and other relevant partners so that RLOs may continue to strengthen capacities and address issues which affect their communities.

- All relevant entities should pursue a concerted effort to restructure an RLOs abilities to attract and retain finances. Resource mobilization is essential for RLO operations and should be increased to ensure self-reliance.
- All relevant entities should consider new avenues to identify and collaborate with RLOs.

Other Recommendations

- When designing and implementing respective programs, partner organizations should include representatives from all beneficiaries such as refugee and host community members, CBO/RLO leaders. They should also identify strengths and skills valued by the beneficiaries at the outset of the program design.
- Programs should be tailored to the needs of refugees and consider the RLOs future aspirations.
- Partners should understand the importance of identifying the needs of beneficiaries, and work closely with the community representatives to identify programs that would respond to the needs of those within the community.
- Partners must foster and maintain relationships with refugee leaders and community members.
- Refugees and refugee leaders should be aware of available skill building or capacity strengthening activities.
- Partner organizations should ensure they are creating businesses which create opportunities for employment. Entrepreneurial activities should be widely regarded as beneficial for the entirety of the community since it leads to job creation and enables economic independence.

7.0 CALL TO ACTION

To ensure the objectives of this conference are fulfilled, the following must take place:

- The Governmental bodies, private institutions and partner organizations should implement all recommendations as outlined in this report.
- A steering committee with RLO leaders, I/NGO representatives, and Government representatives should be established to implement the recommendations as outlined in this report.
- The Governmental bodies, private institutions and partner organizations should increase avenues for resource mobilization for RLOs.

- Partner organizations should facilitate networking opportunities and interactive opportunities for RLOs and potential INGO partners.
- Make this conference an annual occurrence to support refugee initiatives, increase program effectiveness, build and maintain trust among RLOs, partner organizations, and government entities to ensure refugee self-reliance.

8.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the *Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023* was a historic event in Kakuma and should continue as an annual occurrence. The event enabled government representatives, international partners, national partners and grassroots organizations such as RLOs and CBOs to exchange knowledge through meaningful conversation surrounding barriers which affect displaced persons and host community members. It also provided the opportunity to discuss innovative avenues for resource mobilization and methods to increase program effectiveness.

By implementing all recommendations provided in this report, government and partner organizations are demonstrating their commitment to upholding the policies, laws and frameworks which govern refugees in Kenya, as well as international commitments such as tenets established in the GCR, the CRRF and the GRF, as well as the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

APPENDIX

Organizations which participated in the conference:

Donors

1. International Labour Organization (ILO)
2. Global Rights Defenders (GRD)
3. Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)
4. Refugee-led Organization Network of Kenya (RELON-K)
5. World University of Canada (WUSC)
6. Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)
7. United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
8. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

All Participating Organizations

1. Actions Pour Le Progres (AP)
2. Advocacy Initiative for Youth Development
3. Agency for Turkana-Development Initiatives (ATUDIS)
4. Africa Refugee Network (ARN)
5. Cohere
6. Community for Hope Foundation
7. Community Leaders Representatives
8. Dadaab Response Associations (DRA)
9. Danish Church Aid (DCA)
10. Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
11. Department of Refugees Secretariat (DRS)
12. Don Bosco
13. Ebenezer Cross Church
14. Farm Africa
15. Faulu Productions CBO
16. Girl Power Initiative (GPI)
17. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
18. GLAP Enterprise
19. Global Rights Defenders (GRD)
20. Halgan Women Led organization
21. Heritage Handcraft
22. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
23. House of Hope
24. Humanity Hands (formerly INVER)
25. Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
26. Human Shine Dream (HSD)
27. ICONNECTKE
28. Inkomoko

29. International Labor Organization (ILO)
30. Kadar Initiative for Community Empowerment (KICE)
31. Kakuma Chief
32. Kakuma READ
33. Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI)
34. Kalobeyi Initiative for Better Life (KI4BLI)
35. Kidogo
36. Kidogo Early Years
37. L'Afrikana
38. Learning Permaculture for Society Development (LPSD)
39. Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
40. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
41. Okapi Green Limited
42. OPPEI
43. Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)
44. Refugee and Host Resilience Initiative REHORI
45. Refugee-led Organization Network of Kenya (RELON-K)
46. Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT)
47. Resilience Action International (RAI)
48. Scorpion Control Centre
49. She Can Initiative
50. SNV
51. Solidarity Initiative for Refugee (SIR)
52. SwissContact
53. Tawakal
54. Turkana Chamber of Commerce
55. Turkana Christian Development Mission (TCDM)
56. Turkana County Government
57. United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
58. Western University Service of Canada (WUSC)
59. Youths Voices Community (YVC)
60. Vijana Twaweza
61. Voice for Disable People Association (VDPA)
62. Voice Heard
63. VUPAID
64. Youth Education and Development Association (YEDA)
65. Youths Voices Kakuma (YVK)

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

No.	Organization	Donated Amount in KES
1.	ILO Prospect	1,134,650
2.	Global Rights Defenders	218,097
3.	R-SEAT	141,223
5.	RELON-Kenya	98,000
6.	WUSC	95,000
7.	RCK	88,000
8.	UNHCR	Facilitated delegate transportation, Lodwar to Kakuma
9.	HIAS	Facilitated the printing of the banner
Total:		1,774,970

Conference Photos

Photos and videos included in this report are attributed to the RLO Voice Heard of Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Opening Remarks:



Figure 1. Edith Ingutia, UNHCR and Organizing Committee

Panel 1 - Promoting Capacity Sharing & Resource Mobilization



Panel 2 – Partnership, Networking & Collaboration



Panel 3 – Legal Registration & Documentation





Panel 4 – Skill & Enterprise Development



Narrative Report for the Voices Rising: Refugee-led Solutions Conference 2023

Audience



Voice Heard Film Crew



Silga Lodge



Conference Supported by:



THANK YOU

