

# Putting the CRRF into Practice

## General Issues and Specific Considerations in Tanzania and Uganda

3 July 2017

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The following reflections on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) are based on a visit to Tanzania and Uganda from 19 May to 3 June 2017 where several meetings were held with NGOs, government officials, and UNHCR, as well as subsequent discussions in Geneva. It was the first in a series of visits to be carried out to these countries between May and November 2017 by a part-time consultant (Manisha Thomas) engaged by Plan International – to work with, and support, the broader community – to look at the implementation of the CRRF and to contribute to the eventual Global Compact on Refugees.

This paper was shared in draft with a broad range of NGOs in Uganda, Tanzania, and at the global level for their inputs. Many thanks to those who provided comments; hopefully they have been incorporated satisfactorily. This paper is meant as a contribution to highlight areas for further consideration and potential action as the CRRF implementation continues.

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### A. Background to the CRRF and the Global Compact on Refugees

The [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) (“New York Declaration”), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016, includes as an annex the *Comprehensive refugee response framework* (CRRF). The Leaders Summit on Refugees, held on 20 September 2016, saw 47 States make [various commitments to refugees](#).

The CRRF calls upon UNHCR “to engage with States and consult with all relevant stakeholders...with a view to evaluating the detailed practical application” of the CRRF (*CRRF, paragraph 18*). This process is to “be informed by practical experience with the implementation of the framework in a range of specific situations” and should lead to States adopting a Global Compact on Refugees (“Global Compact”) in 2018, based on the CRRF’s practical application.

## B. General Issues to Consider Around the CRRF’s Application

### 1) Putting the CRRF’s Policy Language into Practical Terms

For many NGOs – but also others outside of the NGO community – it is still not entirely clear: 1) what the CRRF actually is; 2) what the implications are of the CRRF on the ground in refugee responses; and 3) what is required to implement the CRRF. There is a need to better communicate a) what the various elements of the CRRF mean in practical terms; b) how they can be implemented; and c) what funding may be required (and how that funding will be sourced). UNHCR’s communications expert focused on the CRRF in the countries may be able to help with that, but it is essential that the discussions around the CRRF move out of Geneva or country capitals and into the areas where refugees are hosted and where humanitarian responses are taking place to be more operationally relevant.

- ▶ **Develop a clear and practical guide to the CRRF to help explain how to put it into practice.** The policy language in the CRRF needs to be translated into more operational terms. While there is a [UNHCR Quick Guide to the NY Declaration](#), it does not provide the operational guidance needed to implement the CRRF in refugee responses.
  - ↳ A general operational guide on the CRRF would be a starting point, which can then be contextualised in each CRRF case study country to make it more concrete and specific. Such an operational guide could be helpfully linked to – and possibly inform – the work plans of the country CRRF Secretariats.

### 2) Engaging Refugees and their Host Communities Early On

To date, the discussions on the CRRF have not only largely been based in capitals, but they have yet to truly involve refugees or their host communities. While it is important first to have clarity on what implementing the CRRF means (and ensuring funding for its implementation), it is important to not wait too long before consulting refugees and the communities that host them to see how best to implement the various aspects of the CRRF. [The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to People in Need](#) calls for “A Participation Revolution” to “include people receiving aid in making decisions that affect their lives” (Commitment 6). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals also made [IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations](#) in 2011 that committed to enabling the participation of affected populations “to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them.” International human rights frameworks also emphasise the importance of inclusion of populations.

- ▶ **A clear engagement strategy with refugees and host communities early on in the CRRF process will be essential to ensure that their needs and views are considered in any implementation plans.**
  - ↳ A coordinated approach needs to be developed in CRRF countries when engaging communities. A particular focus should be placed on ensuring that the views of women and girls – the majority of refugees – are sought and taken into consideration. Including refugee and host community youth will also be key, given they are key stakeholders. The language related to the CRRF needs to be crafted in

a way to make it accessible and understandable to refugees and their host communities so that their views can be incorporated into any implementation.

### 3) Engaging Regional/District/Local Authorities Early On

Equally important is to engage regional, district, and local authorities hosting refugees early on in the implementation of the CRRF. They are among the best placed to understand the refugee response, the host community, and any challenges to be addressed. For the CRRF to be successfully implemented, many of the elements related to the practical application of the CRRF will require their support. For example, including refugees in development plans will need to take place at the national level, but also at the sub-national levels to have an impact. The relationships between national and sub-national authorities need to be carefully navigated to ensure the successful implementation of the CRRF.

Discussions on the CRRF are important at the national level, but moving those discussions quickly to the sub-national level may require extra human and financial resources to support such 'localisation' and local authorities' ownership of the CRRF. Expectations are often placed on sub-national authorities with little recognition of the resource constraints they may face. Getting local ownership in practically implementing the CRRF will also make it more likely to succeed.

- ▶ **Involve sub-national authorities early on in the CRRF implementation process.** These authorities will play a crucial role in helping to put the CRRF elements into practice, particularly when it comes to including refugees in their local/regional development plans and ensuring that development plans include gender issues.

### 4) Humanitarians and Development Actors: Two Different Cultures

Humanitarians and development actors come from quite different backgrounds and have different approaches to engaging communities, planning, working, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and learning. Many NGOs provide both humanitarian and development responses and can help to navigate the differences between these different operating cultures. Finding ways to ensure complementary approaches between humanitarians and development actors will be important to ensure that the approaches can work together and to ensure a smooth transition between each.

- ▶ **Bridging the cultural divide between humanitarians and development actors needs to be carefully considered.** Given the different approaches and time frames in which humanitarian and development actors work, serious efforts will need to be made to find the ways and means for these different actors to work together.
  - ↳ The 'cultural' differences between humanitarian and development actors should not be underestimated, nor should the impact of these differences on moving things forward. Many previous attempts to get humanitarian and development actors to work together have failed: it is essential to learn from those failures.

### 5) Implementing a "Whole of Society" Approach

One of the main premises behind the CRRF is that the response to refugees requires a collective and concerted approach: what is being referred to as a "whole of society" approach. That means bringing in a range of other actors to also respond (which is what the [UN's "New Way of Working"](#) is focused on), but it also should mean involving refugees and their host communities. It will require different ways of operating and thinking to be able to step outside of the usual humanitarian approaches to refugees.

While the cultures of humanitarians and development actors are very different, the same can be said of the cultures of different actors, such as those from traditional donors, the private sector, different levels of government (regional or local authorities or parliamentarians), or non-traditional donors (for example China or South Korea, which are investing heavily in Africa), for example.

The phrase “whole of society” approach sounds logical and desirable. Getting the “whole of society” engaged in responding to refugees, however, will take a significant investment of time. Creating the incentives and finding the necessary arguments and leverage requires careful planning. Experience has shown that it takes considerable engagement to truly get private sector actors to work with – and invest in – responses that may not bring (immediate) profits. Prioritising which actors to engage first could help to make such engagement more manageable. It will be essential to clarify what ‘bringing in new actors’ will mean practically and to look at ways to address concerns that may arise. Considering potential risks of engaging new actors will be important.

- ▶ **A practical strategy for bringing in a broader range of actors will be necessary to employ effectively a “whole of society” approach.**
  - ↳ Innovative thinking and new forms of technology could help to engage others to respond to the needs of refugees and their host communities.
  - ↳ Mapping the key stakeholders in a country and opportunities of how to engage them could be a starting point.
  - ↳ The “whole of society” approach must not result in unwieldy coordination structures.

## 6) Changing Mind-Sets

Related to the above points around humanitarian and development actors and the “whole of society,” **a shift in mind-sets and approaches by those actors that have traditionally been involved in refugee, humanitarian, and development responses is necessary.** Institutional “turf” battles have often resulted in good ideas not being implemented.

**For the CRRF to work, there will need to be a shift in how organisations and institutions approach its implementation.** That shift is, of course, easier said than done. Simply calling for these changes will be insufficient. Previous attempts to change mind-sets have not been given the time, space, or clear incentives for organisations to change their ways of working.

Institutions rely on their profile and funding to be able to carry out their operations. The CRRF – if implemented properly – will mean that many humanitarian organisations could see a reduction in the amount of work that they need to do, as other actors come on board. That will be a fundamental challenge to the usual ways of working, to the bottom line (financially), and potentially to the number or types of staff that are employed. These are all potential existential threats to organisations, which will likely meet with resistance. Finding the right incentives to encourage such changes may be needed, if past mistakes are not to be repeated.

While humanitarians should fundamentally be looking to work themselves out of a job, that has not been the case. The humanitarian enterprise has become well-established over the years. The phasing out of humanitarian programmes in protracted crises is rarely done, except when the money starts to dry up.

That being said, development actors also need to change their mind-sets and look at how they can become more flexible and responsive to the needs of refugee-hosting areas and communities. Development actors should also be looking at working themselves out of jobs, with a view to handing over to government institutions.

**The approaches of donors also need to be shifted.** For years, the divide between the humanitarian and development arms of donors has been noted. While there have been some improvements, there is still a need to ensure more multi-year funding, better coordination and transition between the humanitarian and development funding streams of donors, and less earmarking of funds so that organisations can better allocate resources where they are most needed (as committed to in [The Grand Bargain](#)).

- ▶ **Changes in mind-sets are needed, with institutional flags being put aside, in order to achieve the goals set out in the CRRF.**
  - ↳ The CRRF's implementation should learn from previous attempts and find ways to ensure that the right incentives are put in place and that the time necessary is allowed for organisational culture shifts to take place.
  - ↳ Donors also need to shift their funding and engagement approaches to ensure better responses to refugees and their hosting communities.
- ▶ **The changes in mind-sets must be supported by changes in the systems that support humanitarian and development work.** Changes need to be made on both the humanitarian and development sides of the so-called "nexus" to have concrete results on the lives of those affected by displacement.
  - ↳ While changes need to be made on the humanitarian funding side, development donors also need to adapt to make their funding more flexible and available more quickly during crises to enable more complementary responses.

## 7) Coordination Structures

The CRRF will require coordination between a range of actors, at different levels: humanitarians, development actors, government (national, local, regional, district), international organisations, national organisations, private sector actors, international financial institutions, and academia, just to mention a few.

- ▶ **Given that development actors have very different – and rather disparate – ways of coordinating, there will be a need to find creative means to bring together humanitarian and development actors to implement the various elements of the CRRF.**
  - ↳ Consider how the Refugee Coordination Model – as well as other existing coordination structures – will work with the CRRF coordination structures (e.g. CRRF secretariats). ***There is a delicate balance needed between avoiding the duplication of coordination structures and not compromising humanitarian principles.***
  - ↳ Humanitarians coordinate in emergency responses (to varying degrees of effectiveness), but development actors do not usually have clear coordination bodies that bring them all together (except around different technical areas). There will be a need to find ways to bring humanitarian and development actors together in a coherent way, but without creating excessive coordination mechanisms.

## 8) Longer-term Engagement versus Short-term "Wins"

There has been a push, to date, for short-term, quick impact projects in refugee-hosting areas that bridge the humanitarian-development nexus as part of the CRRF implementation. This approach needs to be carefully considered, as it risks repeating past mistakes. Simply building a school or a health clinic that can be used both by refugees or host communities will not be sustainable if a longer-term development view that incorporates such infrastructure and services are not part of

the plan. It is essential that planning takes place with humanitarian and development actors to see what both can bring, in a sequenced and complementary way.

The length and scale of development projects means that the short CRRF and Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) timeline risks rushing to get ‘quick wins’ that can be reflected, but also risks being at the expense of longer-term, more sustainable gains, which is an ultimate goal of the GCR. Quick wins in the short-term are necessary in order to maintain the momentum around implementing the CRRF, but they must be seen as part of a longer-term effort.

#### ***A Possible Way Forward:***

**While there is a need to provide a focus on the implementation of some quick/short-term projects for the Global Compact for Refugees, it must be balanced with a medium- and longer-term strategy if there are to be genuine changes in the response to refugees and refugee-hosting areas.** There needs to be a focus on developing the planning, engagement, agreed outcomes, and longer-term relationships and financing for projects and programmes that ensure complementarity between humanitarians and development actors, which requires longer-term engagement.

UNHCR in Geneva suggested on 6 June 2017 that the CRRF’s implementation be measured over a five-year period. The challenge with that time frame is that many development plans are already under way and influencing the next plan – and seeing results – will take longer than five years.

**A possible way forward in CRRF countries could be to identify projects/programmes in different refugee-hosting areas that engage a range of actors, particularly development actors/partners and private sector actors in the short-, medium-, and longer-term:**

- 1) **Short-term (the next 1 year):** Given the short timeframe remaining to show good examples before the Global Compact on Refugees and its Programme of Action are drafted, there may be a need to identify already planned or on-going projects that meet some elements of the CRRF. (In Tanzania, for example, the mapping being carried out by UNHCR and the World Bank will hopefully be able to identify such projects.)
  - ↳ Fundamental to being able to get quick wins will be ensuring that adequate funding is available, which can be disbursed in a timely manner.
  - ↳ Encouraging (development) donors to pool resources together may be one way in which to fund collectively identified ‘quick win’ projects in the short-term.
- 2) **Medium-term (the next 2-4 years):** This timeframe would allow the time necessary to demonstrate better planning between humanitarian and development actors, to properly engage with refugees and their host communities, and to bring in different actors to start working on the “whole of society” approach. The NY Declaration had a great deal of momentum behind it, as did the Leaders’ Summit. Working with the full range of States to implement their commitments will require time and clear strategies.
  - ↳ This medium-term timeframe will allow for greater engagement of actors not traditionally involved in refugee response, but there needs to be a clear strategy of how that engagement will happen.
  - ↳ Identifying those who have access to non-traditional actors, identifying good arguments and means of engaging them, and working on shifting the organisational cultures of traditional humanitarian actors will be necessary.
- 3) **Longer-term (the next 5-8 years):** This longer timeframe is necessary to allow for the inclusion of refugees in development plans and to bring in the development actors required to be able to contribute to economic, social, and infrastructure projects, which require longer-term planning, financing, and implementation.

## 9) Donor Commitment to Implementing the CRRF

Donor commitment to global responsibility-sharing will be essential for the CRRF and GCR's success. States hosting large numbers of refugees will be (and already are) looking to see how responsibility-sharing will be put into practice. Both Tanzania's and Uganda's refugee responses are currently severely underfunded and the recent Uganda Solidarity Summit failed to raise the goal of USD 2 billion. Without increased funding to both responses (and others), it will be difficult to implement the various elements of the CRRF.

While funding responses to large-scale influxes of refugees will be an important aspect of the CRRF, responsibility-sharing must also go further, as highlighted in the NY Declaration and CRRF. Increasing available resettlement places, looking for new ways to ensure greater refugee protection, or helping to address the root causes of forced displacement are also essential steps for States to take.

- ▶ Donor investments and financial commitments – in the short-, medium-, and longer-term – are necessary not only for the immediate refugee responses in Tanzania and Uganda, but also to ensure the implementation of the CRRF.
- ▶ Responsibility-sharing is multi-faceted and while donors must ensure adequate financing to respond to refugees, States must also work on finding other ways to ensure greater refugee protection, including by increasing resettlement places, identifying new ways for refugees to access protection, and addressing the root causes of displacement.

## C. Tanzania Specific

### 1) The Need for an Enabling Environment

**Much of the CRRF is predicated on having an environment in which refugees' rights are respected and upheld.** For example, in order to access the labour market, refugees need to be able to move freely. The current refugee policy in Tanzania will be reviewed in 2017 and will need to be prioritised to enable refugees to be more self-reliant, including through accessing labour markets and greater freedom of movement. **The on-going review process of the Refugee Act and Policy will need to ensure space for the inputs of not only civil society, but also refugee-hosting communities and, ideally, refugees themselves.**

### 2) Prioritising Refugee-Hosting Areas for Development Investments

Development partners need to work with the Government of Tanzania to ensure that the areas where refugee camps are located are **prioritised as part of development planning so that investments can be made.**

### 3) Reception and Admission of Refugees

**The revocation of *prima facie* status of Burundians** in January has resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of arrivals of Burundians in Tanzania. Humanitarian organisations have limited access to the border and asylum procedures are not fully clear or being applied. The first section of the CRRF related to Reception and Admission requires significant investment – as will the new Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process introduced recently in Tanzania. Estimates are that the RSD process will take six months for those asylum-seekers who have arrived since January, and will require significant resources. At the same time, there could be arguments for the *prima facie* status to be reissued or other forms of protection based on group determination, if better information were available from Burundi.

#### 4) Possible “Quick Wins”

Some of the “quick wins” that are needed could come from greater development investment in the areas where the naturalised 1972 former Burundian refugees are hosted. A recent mission of Ambassadors as part of the Solutions Alliance National Group in Tanzania has laid the groundwork for further development and investment.

#### 5) Coordination Structures

With the launching of the CRRF Secretariat in Dar-es-Salaam, there are concerns about how the CRRF will be implemented in the refugee-hosting areas. **Clear structures need to be in place, which can engage with refugee responders on a regular basis.** There is also a need for **clear strategies to engage sub-national authorities in the CRRF’s implementation. The CRRF Secretariat in Tanzania is quite large and may require a smaller, more active group to drive the CRRF implementation forward.**

Many of the recommendations made in the [High Commissioner’s Structured Dialogue on UNHCR-IFRC-NGO Partnerships Report \(October 2016\)](#) need still to be discussed and implemented in the refugee response. Any discussions of the Structured Dialogue’s recommendations will need to take into account their relation to the CRRF. Coordination structures in refugee-responding areas must be designed in a way that does not create duplication, while at the same time ensuring that humanitarian space and that the speed with which humanitarian responses can be delivered are not compromised.

### D. Uganda Specific

#### 1) Looking Beyond the Solidarity Summit

The focus in Uganda, understandably, has recently been on the Solidarity Summit. What comes after the Summit will be key for the CRRF’s success in Uganda, particularly given the continued influx of refugees and the impact on host communities.

**There is an opportunity to think beyond the Summit** and for NGOs, in particular, to provide ideas of how the Secretariat and Steering Group should divide their labour, what the terms of reference and focus of each should be, and to quickly consider how to propose NGO participation – both national and international. As in other countries, agreeing on NGO representation collectively among NGOs will be essential so as not to have NGO representation chosen by government actors. NGOs can also present their views and suggestions for the CRRF to other actors, for example, how to incorporate gender concerns or link the CRRF to long-term development goals in practical ways.

#### 2) What will be New with the CRRF in Uganda?

**A risk in Uganda is that on-going strategies such as ReHOPE and the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA) may simply be re-labelled as part of the CRRF.** While there are important gains still to be made with these on-going programmes, the idea of the CRRF is to also change the traditional ways of working. It will be essential to look at how to bring in the new elements in the CRRF and to shift the approaches currently taken to have a greater range of actors engaged in the response to refugees and their host communities. There are discussions taking place on how to position these existing frameworks within the CRRF themes, which is positive, but looking at what can be done differently is also essential.