

Uncertainty. As much as there is provision of education in the refugee settlement, there are already fears about what curriculum they are using.

BY TOBBIAS JOLLY OWINY & CISSY MAKUMBI
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

How South Sudanese refugees are coping with Uganda's curriculum

LAMWO. Joram Deng, 17, is one of the refugees at Palabek Ogiri Settlement Centre in Lamwo District.

Deng was in Senior One in South Sudan by the time war broke out forcing him and his family to flee to Uganda.

He is among several others whose education has been interfered with.

Many South Sudanese fled their homes after the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers launched an offensive on several rebel groups in March this year, forcing thousands to leave their country in fear.

Deng is among the 43,000 South Sudanese refugees settled in the three settlement centres of Palabek Ogiri, Palabek Kal and Palabek Gem, all in Lamwo District.

He now says he is not certain of what next with his education.

As much as there is provision of education in the refugee settlement, there are already fears about what curriculum they are using.

His worries at the moment are how to cope up with Uganda's education curriculum.

No way out

However, the education officer for Lamwo District, Mr Bernabus Langoya, says as much as there are challenges of the curriculum, refugees who are joining education in Uganda have to use the Ugandan curriculum.

"It is only in lower classes that we have been able to have teachers from South Sudan here in Lamwo District who teach in the local language as we transit into the languages here in Uganda," he says.

He adds that they cannot teach them using South Sudanese curriculum since there is no time frame for their being in Uganda.

Mr Langoya adds that there is a total of eight schools in the refugee settlement of which one is a secondary school, one early childhood development centre and six primary schools.

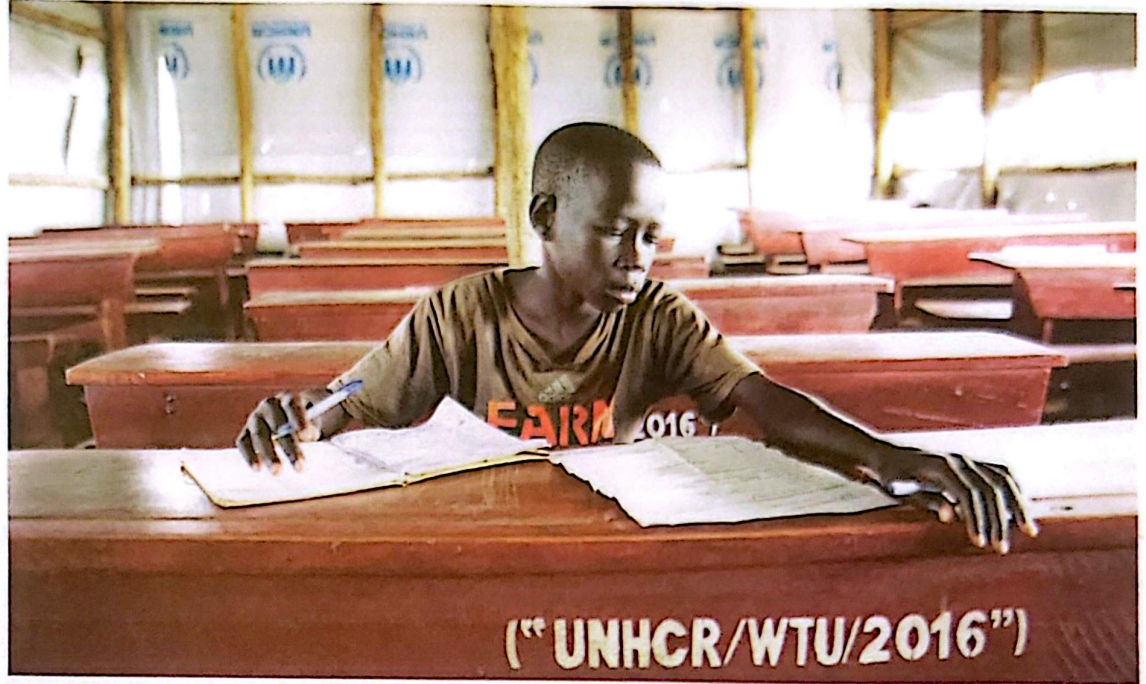
He adds that in the secondary school alone, a total of 100 students have been enrolled and 10,000 already registered in the primary schools across the three refugee settlements.

The numbers

According to Mr David Wangwe, the camp commandant Palabek Ogiri settlement centre, out of the 43,000 refugees at Palabek, 16,000 are children and youth of school-going age.

"We have been overwhelmed by the numbers of those who are meant to access education, yet the organisations in place are also overstretched to look into other areas of education," he says.

Currently, there are limited



Reading. A South Sudanese refugee does his revision at Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe District recently. FILE PHOTO.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A 2016 study by the World Bank titled 'An Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management' showed that Uganda hosts refugees from 13 countries, from among others Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan.

In 2006, Parliament enacted the acclaimed Refugee Act, replacing the Control of Alien Refugees Act of 1960 that erstwhile guided and mainly reinforced government control of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Act, considered the most generous worldwide, illustrates government's unwavering liberal policy towards refugees who seek sanctuary in Uganda until they can: return in safety and dignity to their countries of origin, resettlement in a third country, or integration in the country of displacement.

In 2010, the statutory instrument expanded the rights of the refugees to receive

education, health care, traveling freely within the country and access to plots of land for both settlement and cultivation of food. In other words, refugees enjoy all rights as nationals except voting.

This is in addition to compliance with international statutes such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Refugee Convention of July 1951 and its protocol of January 1967.

Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as someone who has a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion".

The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, adopted in June 1981, Article 12(2) and (3), recognises the right of every individual who risks being persecuted to "leave" their country and to "seek and obtain" asylum in another country.

in the existing schools so that they can accommodate the refugees of the school going age.

According to Dr Tonny Mukasa Lusambu, Ministry of Education commissioner for primary education, the ministry has no plans to revise the national syllabus to suit the learning interests of the South Sudanese refugees who are currently in Uganda at whatever level.

Speaking to *Daily Monitor* in an interview last Friday, Dr Lusambu said: "There is no alternative government can offer for them, at the moment we are not sure for how long they are around since it involves a lot of costs."

He adds that recently, the government translated the nursery school syllabus into Kiswahili to suit refugees currently within the country.

"At least we have done a translation for the nursery school syllabus into Kiswahili and we are happy many of them are already picking up and are interested," Dr Lusambu says.

He says the translation came after complaints of the refugees' inability to work out well with Uganda's syllabus in their local language.

Every day Lamwo District receives on average of 140 refugees from the three border points of Ngomoromo, Waligo and Aweno-Oliwyo, according to available reports.

The South Sudan crisis started

misunderstanding that resulting in a civil war.

A total of 1.5 million South Sudan refugees are already settled in Uganda according to statistics from United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Voices

"It is only in lower classes that we have been able to have teachers from South Sudan here in Lamwo District who teach in the local language as we transit into the languages here in Uganda."

BERNABUS LANGOYA, LAMWO DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER.

"We have been overwhelmed by the numbers of those who are meant to access education, yet the organisations in place are also overstretched to look into other areas of education,"



"There is no alternative government can offer for them, at the moment we are not sure for how long they are around since it involves a lot of costs. At least we have done a translation for the nursery school syllabus into Kiswahili. We are happy many of them are already picking up."

have settled in the allocated plots, he

Commissioner Jonathan Dub...