

# LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING IN RURAL REFUGEE CONTEXTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

PROJECT PAPER

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CaLP</b>	Cash Learning Partnership
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>IC</b>	International Community
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>INGOs</b>	Inter-Governmental Organisations
<b>IPs</b>	Implementing Partners
<b>KIIs</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>OPM</b>	Office of the Prime Minister
<b>RLCRS</b>	Rural Livelihoods Community Readiness Study
<b>SSIs</b>	Semi-Structured interviews
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNHCR</b>	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of a growing number of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in East Africa, traditional approaches to refugee management coordinated by humanitarian actors, as well as more recent developmental approaches such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), still face substantial challenges when it comes to fostering sustainable livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities.

Many refugees face structural barriers to employment in host countries and implementers are increasingly identifying creative ways to build livelihood opportunities for refugee populations. However, the socio, political and economic environment in which many refugee populations are hosted tend to be unique and are not always conducive to typical livelihood interventions. A clear contextual analysis that fully understands whether refugee and supporting host communities are in a position to fully benefit from targeted livelihoods programming, the socio-economic and political nuances that are intertwined with livelihood activities and the extent to which livelihood support can be self-sustained or self-scaled, is needed, but is often overlooked in the push towards identifying value chain and market opportunities to support.

In April 2020, Altai Consulting was contracted by the IKEA Foundation to undertake a Rural Livelihoods Community Readiness Study (RLCRS). The study aimed to support better informed programming and the development of sustainable and scalable approaches to livelihoods in rural refugee contexts, with a focus on the East Africa region. The study has delivered two main outputs:

- i. A conceptual framework and accompanying toolkit to support implementing partners, including UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs, and research actors, to understand the context and potential enablers and inhibitors to sustainable and scalable livelihoods programmes in selected refugee and host communities; and
- ii. Case studies from three selected communities across Ethiopia and Uganda to test the framework and toolkit.

There have already been extensive literature and frameworks produced in this area and the RLCRS looks to crystallise learnings from previous and current research and programming, while adding a practical perspective that will allow implementing agencies with limited resourcing to adopt the proposed approach and effectively utilise the findings in programme design.

This project paper provides a rationale for the structure of the conceptual framework, building on pre-existing literature on livelihood approaches, frameworks and standards within refugee contexts and then introduces the different elements of the study's conceptual framework. It then provides a summary of the selection process for the three communities that were chosen to test the framework in Uganda and Ethiopia and a summary of key findings from across the application of the framework in those communities.

Accompanying the project paper is a practical toolkit that unpacks how to apply the conceptual framework at both the data collection and analysis phase, enabling implementors and others to apply the conceptual framework in their own target refugee and host communities. Three supporting case study papers provide practical examples of the application of the conceptual framework and toolkit in the field, as well as providing valuable insights on the factors effecting livelihoods programming in these locations.

## 2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There are a number of previous livelihoods and market focused frameworks and assessments, as well as minimum standards for service delivery that have been developed by experts in the humanitarian and development sectors (see Figure 1). These frameworks aim to support humanitarian and development actors in conducting analysis and understanding the minimum operational requirements needed to design and implement more effective and contextually responsive livelihoods programmes.

Altai Consulting referred to this extensive literature in its initial design of the conceptual framework, building on different elements to create the structure, and combining market systems approaches with asset-based and community resilience-based assessments (see Figure 1).

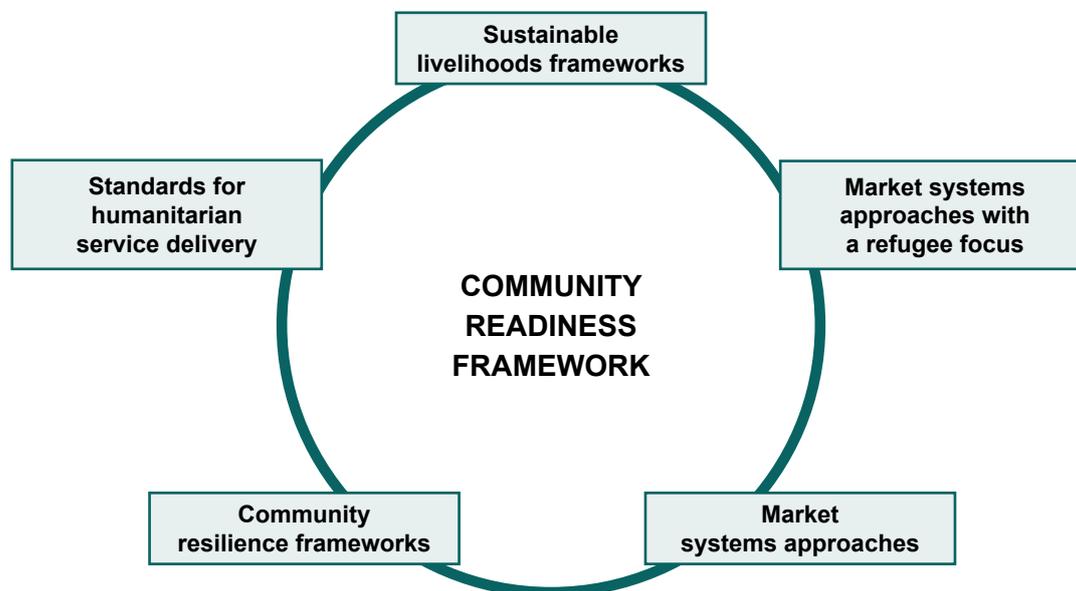


Figure 1: Position of community readiness framework

At its heart, the framework adopts a community-based approach, with its focus on understanding how different micro-level factors determine a community's 'readiness' for livelihoods programming. At the core of Altai's conceptual framework is an assets/capital based focus, which aims to understand what assets are available to refugee and host community populations to sustain an adequate livelihood. In particular, it explores the five main assets found in other sustainable livelihoods frameworks: human, natural, physical, social and financial,<sup>1</sup> as well as the vulnerability contexts and the transforming structures and processes that impact upon the livelihoods of

refugees in either rural or urban areas. It also aims to understand the dynamics that support community resilience, specifically within a refugee context. As such, it includes elements that explore the supporting social dynamics within the community, including the current security status, access to health and education services and the relationship between host and refugee populations. In this sense it borrows elements from community resilience assessment approaches, such as those developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Framework<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> These include the sustainable livelihoods framework adopted by the former UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Official Development Assistance (ODA).

<sup>2</sup> IFRC (2016). Road map to community resilience. Operationalising the framework for community resilience.

Alongside understanding the assets available to host communities and refugee populations and the supporting social dynamics that exist at community level to enable livelihoods generation, the framework also aims to capture the wider policy environment and market systems in which these five assets and community resilience aspects operate.

To guide in the development of these aspects of the framework, the research team turned to literature on the more recent market systems-based approaches. Market systems frameworks typically assess three main components. The first is understanding the market relationship between supply and demand/buyers and sellers. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship indicates how effective or accessible markets are to the poor. Related market resilience frameworks have focused on unpacking these dynamics, aiming to understand market systems behaviour, levels of connectivity and cooperation and power dynamics within the market between buyers and between buyers and sellers.<sup>3</sup> Market systems frameworks also assess the supporting functions surrounding markets, such as services, resources and finally the infrastructure and rules governing markets, such as laws, regulations, standards and social rules along the value chain.

The conceptual framework aimed to incorporate these areas more explicitly by including a specific element on market accessibility, access to supporting economic infrastructure and services and the legal and political frameworks in which both refugees and host communities exist. However, the framework does not aim to provide a detailed market systems assessment and stops at looking at the market systems dynamics of specific livelihoods. Rather, it aims to understand the overall dynamics of the market system within communities. Further, while the framework aims to produce a series of recommendations on the types of livelihoods that could be pursued in selected communities, it does not provide a mechanism for producing in-depth value chain assessments.

This exclusion is intentional, in part because this approach has already been developed by market systems-based assessments targeted at refugee contexts, such as the recent ILO/UNHCR Approach to Inclusive Markets Systems (AIMs)<sup>4</sup> and the CaLP MISMA standards on market analysis in post crisis settings.<sup>5</sup> For example, the ILO/UNHCR AIMs adopts a three-step approach: an assessment of the socio-economic context and a rapid market assessment which aim to identify value chains to deliver a more detailed value chain assessment.

Instead, the RLCRS has a slightly different focus, in that its aim is not to deliver detailed recommendations on specific value chains, but rather to unpack the various socio, economic and political determinants that impact on livelihood generation and livelihoods programmes (including value chain and market systems development) both at the household and community levels as well as the broader enabling environment at the national and regional level. The research team has chosen to focus the framework this way because they believe that addressing these determinants is often overlooked in livelihoods programming, where the focus is often narrowed down to addressing specific livelihoods and value chains at the expense of addressing enabling factors that could unlock a broader market system.

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<sup>3</sup> Market systems resilience. A framework for measurement. DAI for USAID (2018).

<sup>4</sup> The approach to inclusive market systems (AIMS). Developed by ILO/UNHCR.

<sup>5</sup> Minimum standards for Market Analysis (MISMA). Developed by CaLP (updated 2018).

## 2.2 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.2.1 RURAL LIVELIHOODS COMMUNITY READINESS FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for assessing livelihoods is made up of seven thematic branches. These seven branches look at the following thematic areas: *security, political will, physical assets, social dynamics, human capital, connectedness, and market potential* (see Figure 2). These branches have been identified by Altai Consulting as key determinants that influence livelihoods programming.

An accompanying toolkit has been developed as a practical guide for users to be able to apply the thematic branches within the conceptual framework to either a desk-based or field-based data collection exercise (depending on the resources and time available to the user). An analytical approach to interpreting the data collected has also been developed. To learn more about the practical application of the toolkit, please refer to the toolkit guide that accompanies this paper.

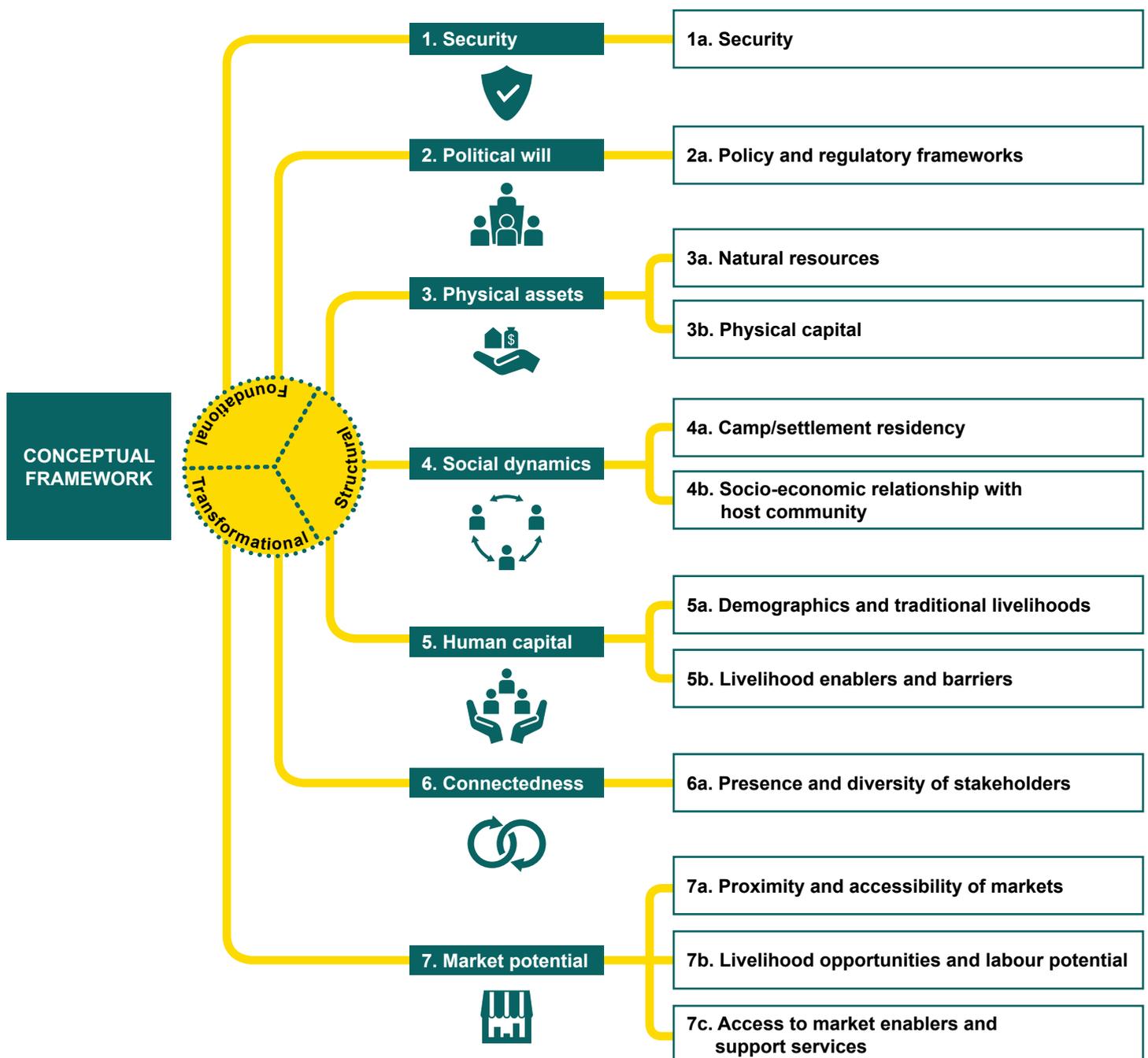


Figure 2: Branch structure

## 2.3 FRAMEWORK BRANCHES

This section unpacks the rationale for the inclusion of the different thematic branches onto the framework. As discussed in the previous section, the inclusion of these thematic areas was guided by the content of previous livelihoods assessments and frameworks in the humanitarian and development sectors. A desk review of livelihood evaluations sought to identify if these aspects were similarly important in understanding the key determinants of successful livelihoods programmes. The framework was also tested in three locations across East Africa to see whether these thematic branches were comprehensive and if any gaps existed in understanding the dimensions of sustainable livelihoods in rural refugee contexts. Examples of case study findings for each of the seven branches are provided in focus boxes below to demonstrate the kind of findings generated from each branch.

It should be noted that the toolkit was developed within the context of East Africa and has been tested in two countries, Ethiopia and Uganda, and only within rural refugee/asylum seeker communities. Therefore, there could be potential biases in applicability to the East African context and to rural refugee/asylum seeker contexts.

The seven branches, while useful to structure findings, should not be seen in isolation. All seven branches interact as part of a bigger picture, rather than as independent factors for livelihoods programming. The linkages between two or several branches can have as much, if not more, of an impact on programming or potential programming. Therefore, the identification of linkages that are contextually unique is vital to the overall output of the framework.

### 2.3.1 SECURITY

#### 1a. Security

Branch one defines the extent to which the security status both within and around the camp/settlement is conducive for sustainable livelihoods programming. This branch examines security from the perspective of both refugees and stakeholders to ensure settlements are accessible. Key themes considered under the security branch are:

i. The proximity and frequency of violent and non-violent conflict in the last five years, including the frequency, nature and cause of conflict within and in proximity to camps/settlements; its impact on local populations; and the likelihood of conflict reoccurring in the future; and

ii. The perceptions of safety and security among camp and host community populations, including perceptions on frequency, nature and severity of local crime, and perceptions of safety among camp/settlement residents, operational staff and host community members.

Evidence from livelihood evaluations completed in the East Africa region indicate that the frequency of violent and non-violent conflict, as well as perceptions of security within and around communities/areas of displacement, impact on the feasibility for refugee and host communities to engage in and build on livelihood opportunities. Insecurity within or proximity to camps/settlements has a detrimental effect on the ability of different actors to physically access the camps, hindering the ability of humanitarian/development actors to implement livelihoods programmes and for private sector actors to engage in market interventions.

Likewise, it can also reduce the movement of camp/settlement residents and host community actors, preventing their ability to get goods and services to market as well as resulting in rapidly changing market contexts and supply chains, which raises the risk profile of doing business, discouraging market actors from investing, and doing business in/around camps and settlements.

Frequent incidents of minor or major crime (i.e., theft, gender-based violence) in the camp/settlement or in the host community can also negatively impact on livelihood development by reducing mobility of refugee and host community populations, who may be unwilling to move far from their residences or at certain times of the day (i.e., at night) and by reducing incentives to invest in livelihood-based assets. The testing of the framework by Altai in Uganda and Ethiopia also

showed that incidents of crime often point towards underlying tensions within communities, particularly between host and refugee populations over access to resources, specifically land (see following Focus Box).

Insecurity can also be attributed to the refugee/asylum seeker population, which can lead to the host government curtailing the rights of refugees to address regional insecurity. An example of this includes the refugee population in Dadaab, Kenya, which, over the years, has seen their freedom increasingly curtailed and ongoing threats of camp closure by the Government of Kenya as a result of alleged linkages between the refugee population in Dadaab and the extremist group Al Shabaab. This can have a knock-on effect on the ability of the refugee/asylum seeker populations to engage legally in livelihood activities due to restrictions on freedom of movement and right to work.



#### **Focus Box: Scarce resources fuel perceptions of insecurity in Lobule, Uganda**

While incidents of crime and cases of communal conflict were moderate in Lobule, Uganda, access to land, firewood, and invasion of grazing livestock onto refugee land were increasing sources of communal tension. Host communities interviewed felt that cases of communal conflict were on the decline and that things had improved in recent years. However, interviews with refugees painted a different picture, with refugees increasingly feeling insecure in their environment and increasingly feeling at risk of increasing persecution from the host community. A driving factor of this rising tension is that when the refugees arrived in the settlement in 2013 the host community agreed to provide land to the refugees for a period of seven years. That lease has since expired, and the host community is increasingly aggrieved that they have received little compensation for the land they handed over to the refugees. While the situation remains stable, recent conflicts in nearby settlements (Imvepi and Palorinya) show how communal conflict over land, natural resources and animals can escalate into violence.

## 2.3.2 POLITICAL WILL

### 2a. Policy and regulatory frameworks

Branch two assesses the existence of policies and regulatory frameworks encompassing refugees/asylum seekers, and their legal or informal application within the host country. Key thematic areas covered in this branch include:

- i. The type of frameworks that support refugees/asylum seekers' right to work, freedom of movement, right to own a business, access to services, land ownership and inclusion in local development plans, among other areas;
- ii. The extent to which these are actively supported and practically applied by both national and local level government entities; and
- iii. The perceived impact on refugee rights and national and local government support for refugees – including formal and informal support.

Existing rules and regulations (both formal and informal) are key determinants in the ability of refugees to access employment opportunities, market systems and land, as well as a plethora of basic services that are key determinants in refugee wellbeing (e.g., education and health).

Policy and regulatory frameworks determine livelihood opportunities for refugee/asylum seeker populations as freedom of movement and the right to work and own a business either enlarge or reduce the amount of livelihood choices available to refugees/asylum seekers. Refugees/asylum seekers living in countries with encampment policies and a lack of freedom of movement are constrained to the immediate camp

environment, while refugees/asylum seekers with freedom of movement and the right to work have opportunities further away from the camp/settlement environment (at least theoretically) and stronger bargaining power with would-be employers.

Policy and regulatory frameworks also determine refugees/asylum seekers' wellbeing in areas such as education and health, depending on their ease of access and the quality of the services accessed. Health and education are important factors for human capital formation and ultimately can contribute to creating more livelihood opportunities through enhanced literacy as well as skills training.

Political will is required at a national and local level to support refugees/asylum seekers' access to livelihood opportunities through aspects such as sensitisation of host communities to the existence of refugees right to work or through the processing of documentation such as work permits, land registration and others. Political will also determines the extent to which refugees/asylum seekers are included in governance processes such as national development plans or local development plans.

Prevailing norms can either prevent the application of formal regulations to support livelihoods or support the application of more effective locally embedded systems. For example, if the adjacent host community does not feel a sense of ownership over the process of refugee hosting, or if an area/district/region/country's governance systems are weak.



#### Focus Box: Application of refugee legal frameworks in Uganda

Uganda is considered one of the first countries to have adopted comprehensive and refugee-friendly policies in East Africa. The government's commitment to CRRF is extensive and provides protection, access to healthcare/education, access to land, right of employment and movement to refugees. Uganda's integrated approach is translated at the local level through the inclusion of refugees in local planning processes. Interviews conducted as part of our research found that local government officials demonstrate a good knowledge of national legislation concerning refugee rights and refugees described being represented in local administration planning processes and able to access health and education services. However, despite these inclusive policies, our research found several contextual factors that mean refugees are unable to fully exercising their rights. In both locations visited this related to their ability to access sufficient land for their livelihood needs and their ability to take full advantage of their right to freedom of movement.

## 2.3.3 PHYSICAL ASSETS



### 3a. Natural resources

### 3b. Physical capital

Branch three explores the extent to which there is sufficient natural and physical capital assets available in the refugee settlement and vicinity to support livelihoods programming. Some of these assets include:

- i. Natural capital, including land accessibility and topography, climatic conditions, and endowment in natural resources (summarised under sub-branch 3a); and
- ii. Physical infrastructure, such as roads, water and energy infrastructure, as well as access to physical resources, such as machinery, training, etc. (summarised under 3b).

Physical assets are structurally important for sustainable livelihoods programming. The presence of sufficient natural and physical assets is needed to provide the raw materials and inputs necessary to sustain and grow livelihood opportunities for refugees/asylum seekers and host communities. Although limited access to natural and physical resources does not always preclude all livelihood activities, it is likely to affect the types of livelihood activities that can be implemented in refugee/asylum seeker contexts. Alternatively, limited physical assets may determine if secondary programming, such as infrastructure development, is needed to support the sustainability and success of a specific livelihood.

While the specific natural and physical assets needed will vary according to the specific livelihood activities in any given area, there are some which are consistent across most livelihood activities in the East Africa region. Most formal camps/settlements are in rural areas, where the main livelihood opportunities available are likely to be either agriculture or livestock-based. As such, availability of natural resources, such as access to land and water, are critical to successful livelihoods generation. Similarly, the prevalence and frequency of natural disasters is important in determining the likely growth of livelihood activities. Other natural resources present additional livelihood opportunities that refugees and host communities can potentially tap into to expand their livelihood portfolio. These could include forestry, minerals, lakes and rivers and others.

Access to physical infrastructure such as electricity, roads and telecommunications all aid refugee populations' ability to generate goods and services, transport them to market, connect with buyers and gather market information. The presence of other physical infrastructure, such as machinery, storage or commercial facilities, that support livelihood activities also indicate that a camp/settlement and host community have the resources available to grow their selected livelihoods.



#### Focus Box: Getting 'plugged in' to physical assets in Rwamwanja, Uganda

In Rwamwanja, investment in economic infrastructure has meant that physical assets such as electricity, piped water supply, telecommunications and small agri-processing facilities for livelihoods exist. However, refugees/asylum seekers face greater challenges than host communities in effectively 'plugging' into these assets.

For example, electricity lines and mainline water pipes are installed up to the settlement. While both refugees and host community members interviewed cannot afford to have these connected to their homes, fewer refugees than host community members interviewed appear to be able to tap into these facilities. Each refugee household is given a small plot of government-owned land (typically 30m-by-30m) for housing and farming needs upon their arrival in the settlement. This small plot of land is mainly used for subsistent farming and is insufficient for agriculture-based livelihoods. As such, many refugees supplement this land by renting additional land from host communities. However, dependency on cash-based assistance to supplement the rent paid to host communities, coupled with the fact that the land they live on is not legally registered, leaves refugee livelihoods very vulnerable to socio and economic shocks and stressors.

## 2.3.4 SOCIAL DYNAMICS

### 4a. Camp/settlement residency

### 4b. Socio-economic relationship with the host community

Refugees/asylum seekers and host communities face numerous economic, political, social and environmental based shocks and stressors. Their vulnerability to these and their ability to respond provides an indication of their readiness to sustainably grow livelihoods.

Therefore, this branch refers to the status of the socio-economic relationship among refugees/asylum seekers and between them and host communities surrounding the camp/settlement. Social dynamics have important implications for the success of livelihoods programming, including social and economic relationships. Both internal camp social dynamics, including level of inward and outward migration, and refugee–host relationships play an integral part of engagement with, and approach to, livelihoods programming.

Key themes covered under branch four include:

- i. The status of transition, duration of residence, levels of inward/outward migration of refugees/asylum seekers in the camp/settlement;
- ii. Socio-economic relationships and conflict resolution mechanisms between refugees and host community;
- iii. Refugees/asylum seekers' level of self-reliance as well as vulnerability to respond to economic, social, political and environmental shocks; and
- iv. Refugee/asylum seekers' perceptions of their permanence in a camp/settlement context.

Camps/settlements with a high turnover of refugees and high levels of out migration are less conducive for interventions that aim to grow sustainable livelihoods and market systems based in or around a camp/settlement. As well as the unsustainability of supporting livelihood activities with a constantly changing target group, refugees whose motivations are to out migrate may be less willing to invest in long-term livelihood activities in the area.

For similar reasons, camps/settlements which are in a humanitarian phase, with few or no stakeholders engaged in activities to build the resilience and self-reliance of refugees/asylum seekers, may not be fully ready for livelihoods programming. This is in part because the focus of stakeholder engagement

is likely to be on delivering humanitarian assistance rather than building market systems. It can sometimes also indicate that camp/settlement residents do not yet have the mechanisms and networks in place to establish livelihood activities in the area.

The level of social and economic integration between refugee/asylum seeker populations and the host community is also a key determinant of whether a camp/settlement is ready for livelihoods programming. Positive socio-economic relationships create the stability as well as the economic and market linkages needed to sustain and grow livelihoods. Evidence of mechanisms in place to effectively mitigate and manage conflict between the two communities provides an indication that future conflict can be addressed and that a positive ecosystem exists for growing livelihood activities.



### **Focus Box: Transient communities and integration in Aw Barre and Shedder, Ethiopia**

In Aw Barre and Shedder camps there are strong socio-cultural ties between host communities and refugee populations with cases of intermarriage and the sharing of the same religious and community centres. However, despite this, our study indicates that refugees are less integrated than would first appear. For example, findings from the research imply that the market dynamics are largely dominated by business-to-community transactions (with host communities as the business and refugees as the consumers) rather than business-to-business transactions between refugee and host communities. This is reinforced by findings which suggest that the host community prefers to hire those within their own familial networks, rather than from the refugee population. This may in part be because refugees are considered 'transient' by the host community. Many of the host community respondents often joked that refugees 'bodies are in Aw Barre and Shedder but their minds are in Europe and America'. This transient nature was also reflected in interviews with refugees who don't see the camp as a long-term solution, with a preference to either return to Somalia or to be resettled in Europe. Not only does this impact on the extent to which refugees are integrated into local communities, but it also has implications for actors wanting to implement livelihoods programmes in the region, as refugees interviewed are distrustful of engaging in out of camp livelihood programmes, fearful that this may affect their settlement status in the future.

## 2.3.5 HUMAN CAPITAL

### 5a. Demographics and traditional livelihoods

### 5b. Livelihood enablers and barriers

There are certain barriers to employment or livelihoods that an individual may face, including health and mental health challenges. These are of particular risk among refugee populations, who may be suffering from severe trauma and often have very limited access to healthcare. These areas that are hypothesised to be the human capital-based factors for determining the feasibility of and opportunity for livelihoods programming are grouped into three research themes (i. Demographic profile; ii. Enablers – literacy, education and vocational skills; iii. Barriers – health status) and two sub-branches under the ‘human capital’ branch:

- i. The demographic profile (age, gender and ethnic profile) of refugees/asylum seekers and the host community;
- ii. Traditional livelihoods that refugee and host community populations are engaged in;
- iii. Enablers that support employment, such as education and skills; and
- iv. Barriers to employment, such as health and mental health.

Human capital can be divided into two main sub-branches. The first is around the demographics of those who make up the refugee and host community population and the types of livelihood activities (human capital) that exist in the refugee and host community context. The other is around the factors that inhibit or enable human capital in these refugee contexts to be productively used.

To be eligible to engage in livelihoods programming, individuals need to be of a suitable age to work. If large amounts of the refugee/asylum seeker population are minors, this reduces the number of potential beneficiaries in various ways. Firstly, minors or individuals under a certain age should not be working or employed. Secondly, there is an increased need for childcare, which may restrict certain potential beneficiaries to engage in livelihood activities that take them away from the home for extended periods of time.

Traditional sources of income or traditional livelihoods of both the refugee/asylum seeker population and the host community impact the type of livelihoods that would be naturally fitting and relevant for programming. Literacy, education and skill sets available in refugee and host community settings impact the type of livelihood activity that is feasible for beneficiaries to engage with, and the support that would be useful for programming to provide.



#### Focus Box: Human capital factors in livelihood development

In Lobule, Uganda, the UNHCR reports that women and children make up 86% of the population: 53% of the population is female and 66% of residents are under 18 years of age. This clearly has implications on the type of livelihood activities that would be most appropriate for the settlement. First, a gender sensitive approach would be critical in understanding the kind of livelihood activities that would be most appropriate. Second, a good proportion of the population would, at this stage, be too young to take part in income-generating activities. However, programmes would need to take a medium to long term view, recognising that in five to ten years 66% of the population will be over 18 and in need of employment. The current available land in Lobule is unlikely to support gainful employment for such a large workforce and so livelihoods programmes would need to think creatively about providing employment opportunities for young people, possibly outside of the settlements.

## 2.3.6 CONNECTEDNESS

### 6a. Presence and diversity of stakeholders

The connectedness branch aims to assess stakeholder presence and coordination through four thematic areas: stakeholder connectivity, the presence of humanitarian actors, the presence of private sector actors and engagement with the host community.

Stakeholder connectivity assesses the level of coordinated support available to refugees/asylum seekers and host communities, to help understand the inter-stakeholder support structure and the risks of gaps and/or duplication of support, including livelihoods support. The principal stakeholders are defined as humanitarian and development agencies, the national and local government, a range of private sector actors and host communities.

The presence of a variety of different stakeholders that are actively engaging with refugee/asylum seeker communities within or near the camps/settlements provides an enabling environment for livelihood development in several ways. Stakeholder engagement within or in close proximity to camps/settlements increases the likelihood of, and presents opportunities for, investment in critical infrastructure (i.e., roads, electricity), service provision (financial or digital services) or technical assistance (skills building, business support) that can stimulate the development of new or existing livelihoods and market opportunities for refugees/asylum seekers. This in turn can create

a catalytic effect, with more stakeholders willing to engage in these areas to build on pre-existing infrastructure/programmes/markets with a view to obtaining a better return on investment compared to more undeveloped areas.

However, evidence indicates that the level of engagement of stakeholders is not sufficient to determine successful livelihoods development – also understanding the existing types and the level of connectivity between different stakeholders in the area can determine what gaps and opportunities exist for future livelihood activities. Poor coordination between multiple actors can lead to weak market linkages, programme fatigue (in the case of development actors) and limited buy-in to support refugee/asylum seekers from local communities.

Further, understanding the variety and type of stakeholders present, and their willingness to engage with the camp/settlement, will indicate if the enabling environment is ready to support the growth of existing livelihood activities or the implementation of new ones. For example, a high number of humanitarian actors, as opposed to development actors, engaged in the camps/settlements indicates that the community is in a humanitarian as opposed to resilience stage of development.



#### Focus Box: Stakeholder engagement in Lobule

Compared to other settlements in the West Nile region, there is comparatively limited sustained stakeholder engagement in Lobule. Interviewees from the field study referred to it as the 'orphaned' or 'forgotten' camp. This is in marked contrast to the broader West Nile region, which has received significant donor and implementing partner support in recent years.

It is unclear why stakeholders do not typically engage with this settlement, but the reasons are probably multiple. The settlement is only made up of around 5,000 refugees, making it one of the smallest settlements not only in Uganda but in the East Africa region. This makes it less appealing for donors with large-scale funding plans. Further, its human development indicators are relatively positive in comparison to other settlements, both in Uganda and nearby in the West Nile region, and donors and implementing partners are likely more willing to invest in locations that have more pressing humanitarian needs.

Nevertheless, refugee populations are very aware of the support they receive from different types of stakeholders and 92% of refugees, interviewed in Lobule as part of the case studies, said they had received support, indicating that despite limited stakeholder engagement there has been fairly extensive reach of the support across the settlement.

## 2.3.7 MARKET POTENTIAL

### 7a. Proximity and accessibility of markets

### 7b. Livelihood opportunities and labour potential

### 7c. Access to market enablers and support services

The market potential branch focuses on three thematic areas:

- Proximity and accessibility of markets considers if refugees/asylum seekers have access to markets to support livelihoods activities and if there are linkages between refugee/asylum seekers and host community markets;
- Livelihood opportunities and labour potential considers if refugees/asylum seekers are currently engaged in work and what opportunities there are to engage in such activities;
- Access to market enablers and support services considers the level to which refugees/asylum seekers are able to access market support, such as cooperative, financial, and business services, mobile and technological services, and market information.

Market potential is defined by a community's proximity, access and linkages to existing or potential markets (for product, labour or service-based livelihoods). Market potential is supported by market enablers including financial services, digital and mobile services, access to business development support, market information and the level of market integration.

Without proximity or access to markets for produce to be sold, livelihoods programmes will not develop sustainable livelihoods or incomes for beneficiaries, nor will there be wider benefit to the livelihood activities. Self-sustaining market linkages cannot be built without initially accessible markets.

Livelihood opportunities and labour potential are necessary to build sustainable employment. If opportunities do not exist or are limited, programmes will not be able to build sustainable opportunities for refugee/asylum seeker livelihoods.

Financial and business support services allow refugees/asylum seekers to build sustainable livelihoods as they provide access to necessary finance, business advice and mobile and digital services to support, start and manage a business.



#### Focus Box: Exploring market potential in Jigjiga

Small markets for livestock, agricultural and small businesses are present within or close to the Aw Barre and Shedder camps, providing livelihood opportunities for both communities. However, access to larger markets in Jigjiga as well as across the border in Somaliland are difficult to access for refugees in the camps. Jigjiga presents a large and diverse market that is growing with urbanisation. It also sits on the Berbera corridor, a rapidly transforming trade route. However, given the distance and limitations in infrastructure, it remains relatively inaccessible for refugees and host communities in Aw Barre and Shedder. This inhibits both groups from accessing a market space with enormous potential and contributes to stunted economic growth at a local level.

# 3. APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The toolkit which accompanies this document presents a more detailed methodological and analytical approach that supports implementers and stakeholders in the sector to practically apply the framework.

To develop the framework the research team verified the applicability of the initial design through both a desk and field based testing phase. In the desk based test, 50 camp/settlements in the East Africa region were put through a light touch desk based review structured around the seven thematic branches. The initial test allowed the team to understand whether the structure and content of the framework was correct and if anything was missing.

The initial test on the 50 camps/settlements also provided sufficient data for the selection of three sites for field based testing. The team wanted to test out the tool in a diversity of contexts to ensure its validity based on the following criteria:

1. Geographic location;
2. Size and demographic make up of refugee population;
3. Prevalence of stakeholders engaged in the camp/settlement;
4. Camp/settlements were evidence indicated that they were in a protracted state and gradually moving from a humanitarian to a resilience phase of programming;
5. Camp/settlements were secure enough to be accessible for the field team;
6. Camps/settlements had unique factors that appeared to present market opportunities such as presence on a major trade route, accessibility to large amounts of physical assets, proximity to borders.

Based on these criteria the team selected three locations for further testing:

1. Aw Barre and Shedder (Fafan Zone – Somali Region) in Ethiopia;
2. Lobule (Koboko – West Nile) in Uganda; and
3. Rwamwanja (Kamwenge – South Western) in Uganda.

This testing produced three detailed case studies that not only demonstrate the level of information that can be gathered using the toolkit, but also provide a source of information on each of the three communities that contribute to the wider documentation available.

## 3.1 COMMON THEMES – CONSIDERING FUTURE LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING ACROSS EAST AFRICA

In addition to providing location specific findings, the case studies, and the process of testing the toolkit, highlighted a number of issues that fit into a wider debate around building sustainable livelihoods within refugee contexts. Analysing the findings across the different camps and settlements uncovered common themes that would be useful to consider in future livelihoods programming across the region, and that are important to adequately understand. It also serves to demonstrate to potential users of the framework

and the toolkit the kinds of key findings that are likely to emerge from applying the framework, particularly within the context of East Africa.

### 3.1.1 LAND

Lack of access to land or sufficient land to generate a livelihood was a common theme across all the settlements making it very difficult for refugees to engage in traditional rural livelihood activities. Government policies on access to land differ between countries, however, even more progressive policies that grant access to land are limited when it comes to refugees' practical access and the amount of land that can be provided.

Where land is available it is not sufficient to foster sustainable livelihoods. There are often limitations in land or land quality for the host community as well as refugees. Therefore, access to land is a continuous source of contention within communities, even when the government does grant access to land.

It is critical for programmers to understand the conflict sensitivities and legal dimensions of land access before engaging with refugee and host community populations in and around camps/settlements in the East Africa region.

### 3.1.2 RURAL TO URBAN LINKAGES

Challenges in engaging with traditional rural livelihood activities, coupled with high rates of educated youth in camps and settlements, suggests the need to consider livelihoods programmes that address building longer-term rural-urban linkages and settlement to support viable livelihood options for refugee youth.

Often refugee camps and settlements have a relatively young population and, as their situation becomes increasingly protracted, the percentage of the population that are able to engage in livelihoods increases. At times, access to education in camps and/or settlements is relatively high. This leads to reasonable numeracy and literacy rates when compared to some host communities. Therefore, in protracted refugee settings, as is often seen in East

Africa, livelihoods programmes are looking to support increasing numbers of educated beneficiaries. This can act as either an opportunity or a risk to programming.

When considered in combination with the major barrier of land access, fluxing populations and limited accessible markets in the local vicinity that are often saturated, the viability of traditional rural livelihoods as the only form of livelihoods in these settings is put into question. One potential approach to counter these challenges would be increased engagement in building rural-to-urban linkages and urban settlement to support viable livelihood options for refugee youth, that are able to cater to the majority rather than a limited minority. This, however, requires a major shift in both thinking and policy.

### 3.1.3 POLICY VERSUS REALITY

Despite progress towards and increasing inclusion of refugee rights in policy in East Africa, notably through CRRF, there is a disconnect between national policy and the reality on the ground. Although the Ethiopian and Ugandan governments have comprehensive refugee policies/laws, the reality at camp and settlement level showed limitations associated with ability for refugees to fully access their rights and see benefit from them.

The gap between policy and its application is reasonably well documented in Ethiopia. Despite progressive policy introduced in 2018 regarding refugees, secondary legislation is needed and local planning for rights to actively be enjoyed by refugees.

Uganda is widely praised for its liberal and progressive policy towards refugees, however, research showed that it is not entirely straightforward. This is not well documented in secondary literature. While in both Lobule and Rwamwanja refugees had access to services, including schools and health, that were similar to that of the host community, the ability to practically benefit from other rights were limited by contextual factors. In Lobule, refugees had access to land, however, this was a 30m-by-30m plot on which to build and use for agriculture. In addition, to move outside of the settlement area, refugees had to apply for permission to leave from the OPM, which would be granted for a maximum of 90 days.

Building adequate understanding and awareness of practical limitations to policies is important in ensuring livelihoods programmes speak to the context in which they work.

### 3.1.4 REFUGEE–HOST COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Despite having good relationships and connections, refugee and host communities in all the settlements visited harbour resentments and perceived injustices over access to aid and resources.

Often, when refugees and host communities share cultural, religious and linguistic links they are considered to be of the same people. This is reflected across literature and highlighted in interviews, conducted as part of the case study. However, the idea that this automatically means entirely favourable refugee–host community relationships tends to oversimplify the nuances in social dynamics.

Despite mutual understanding, both refugee and host communities in refugee hosting areas tend to be impoverished communities, with very little. Typically, in these communities, refugees receive more resources and support than host communities, fuelling resentment on the side of the host community towards the refugee population, who are often required to share their already limited resources with the refugee population, often with limited economic return. This resentment is frequently managed by the fact that

the presence of refugees often brings physical assets such as improved roads and electricity to the area that would have not been installed without their presence.

Fertile land around the camps/settlement is often limited, as is access to resources and infrastructure for both the refugee and host community. Therefore, the additional strain on land, infrastructure and resources naturally causes resentment from the host community. Conversely, refugees who have been displaced and left with almost nothing can also have perceived injustices in comparison to the host community who they see to have more than themselves. This was reported in both Uganda and Ethiopia and related specifically to access to natural resources.

Therefore, simply having similarities and mutual beliefs makes for good refugee–host community relations in comparison to areas where clashing belief systems are hosted. Yet, it is critical to understand the nuances of refugee–host community relationships and potential areas of tension before entering any community with livelihoods programming.

### 3.1.5 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE VERSUS ‘READINESS’

Engagement in camps and settlements, including livelihoods programming, appears to often be driven by strategic and political priorities rather than a community’s readiness to engage in livelihood focused initiatives. This is likely driven by a number of factors, including humanitarian need, number of people that have been displaced, the reason for displacement (i.e., displacement caused by certain conflicts has a higher international profile than others) as well as the priorities of governments and donors.

Implementing agencies were engaged in all the camps and settlements visited and the extent of support varied considerably across the locations. Reasoning for discrepancies was not entirely clear. However, of the three locations, Lobule, which was perhaps in the

best position to adopt a livelihoods centred approach, enjoyed the least support, including very limited livelihood support.

While prioritisation of strategic relevance will likely continue to drive future decision making on funding allocation in the East Africa region, by acknowledging this context and understand implications for programming in specific locations intelligent programme design can be supported.

### 3.1.6 SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In all three case studies the research team found that many livelihood programmes being implemented in the refugee settlements and camps face ongoing challenges with developing approaches that genuinely respond to the unique contexts in which they are framed. There are a number of reasons for this, some which are not necessarily limited to refugee settings.

Often livelihoods programmes address the supply side of the market, focusing on building vocational skills and economic infrastructure, with limited evidence of how this responded to demand. When asked about needs, beneficiaries tend to suggest TVET activities, which should be certainly serviced but with an understanding of whether these skills can be effectively utilised in the market after. This may be exasperated by a gap between the needs of individuals of limited groups and the demands of implementers and donors who need to demonstrate numbers and figures of beneficiaries reached.

In addition, much of what is being applied suits a 'non-refugee' context, which does not consider differences with the refugee context such as lack of access to land, limited practical application of already restrictive government policies, feelings of transience among populations, social dynamics between host and refugee and locations that are far from economic centres in the country.

Self-reliance and longer-term development aspirations that look at the broader picture is an emerging space. Currently many actors seek to explore innovative programming options and models addressing these issues. However, perhaps a more important focus for implementing partners should be on identifying programming models that directly respond to market and community contexts and that can be scaled to reach as many refugee and host community members as possible.

## 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

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This project paper serves to introduce the findings of Altai Consulting's RLCRS, commissioned by the IKEA Foundation. The study resulted in the delivery of three case studies in camps and settlements in Ethiopia and Uganda and has delivered a conceptual framework and accompanying toolkit to support implementing partners in applying the same model to understand the context and potential enablers and inhibitors to sustainable and scalable livelihoods programmes in selected refugee and host communities.

Altai Consulting believe that the case studies speak to the need to take a community-based approach to livelihoods assessments and that it is important to have a clear contextual analysis that fully understands

whether refugee and supporting host communities are in a position to fully benefit from targeted livelihoods programming, the socio-economic and political nuances that are intertwined with livelihood activities and the extent to which livelihood support can be self-sustained or self-scaled, prior to pursuing targeted livelihood interventions.

To learn more about applying the framework please review the accompanying toolkit and the case studies.

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