

Energy Solutions for Displacement Settings (ESDS) Uganda

Support to UNHCR in facilitating the operationalization of the Global Compact on Refugees in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

Background

Uganda is one of the largest refugee hosting countries worldwide, with approximately 1.5 million refugees, mainly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia. Despite the substantial numbers that enter the country annually, Uganda provides refugees with land, freedom of movement, equal access to social services and the right to work and set up businesses.

The country applies an integrated approach, whereby refugees are included into national planning frameworks and national statistics. By doing so, Uganda closely follows the paradigm of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), focusing on:

- Easing the pressures on host countries
- Enhancing refugee self-reliance

Influx of refugees has placed overwhelming demands on already strained capacities and resources of the government, host communities, and the environment.



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One of the country's main challenges is lack of access to sustainable energy, in both host and refugee communities. Households, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and social institutions like schools and health centres often have very limited access to energy and are not able to afford essential needs.

Additionally, electricity infrastructure in refugee and host communities is minimal. Electricity is usually generated through expensive and environmentally harmful fossil fuels. Lack of sustainable energy results in heavy pressure on and degradation of natural resources, a situation that can result in social tension.

The Global Programme with UNHCR

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the Global Programme with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2018.

The programme assists the refugee agency and other stakeholders in operationalising the GCR in selected displacement contexts. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and UNHCR jointly implement the programme.

It consists of four components that incorporate a range of activities in ten countries. The programme consolidates and analyses lessons learned from all four components for comprehensive approaches within the operationalisation of the GCR in the HDP Nexus. The Energy Solutions for Displacement Settings (ESDS) is one of the four components, and is implemented in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Project Information

Project Name	Energy Solutions for Displacement Settings (ESDS)– Uganda
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partners	Ugandan Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) and UNHCR
Duration	August 2019 – December 2024

The ESDS Uganda project addresses the lack of sustainable energy supply in refugee hosting areas through advisory services and implementation of measures in three main areas.

1. Improving the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Access to Energy

Advisory services have been provided to MEMD and UNHCR in strategic energy planning and better inclusion of refugees into national service delivery systems. For example, GIZ supported the development of the Sustainable Energy Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (SERP) in line with the National Plan of Action to implement the GCR and its CRRF. This was achieved in collaboration with a task force led by MEMD and comprising key stakeholders such as UNHCR, the Office of the Prime Minister, the CRRF Secretariat, the former Rural Electrification Agency, and the World Bank.

2. Greening UNHCR Infrastructure

Market-based approaches for the replacement of diesel generators to power UNHCR's

infrastructure with cost-efficient renewable energy have been developed. ESDS conducted energy assessments and developed regulatory guidelines and project proposals for UNHCR based on private sector energy delivery models.

3. Sustainable Energy Access for Households, Social Institutions, and SMEs

Market-based solutions for access to sustainable cooking energy and electricity for households, social institutions, and SMEs, have been piloted and promoted, benefitting both refugees and host communities.

ESDS established solar-powered energy kiosks with local entrepreneurs selling improved cook stoves, quality solar products, and offering energy-dependent services. The project provided photovoltaic solar systems to health centres and schools. Support is further rendered to private sector companies to build solar powered mini-grids for electricity or to market their cooking and solar goods.

Results of a feasibility study for solar e-waste management and one pilot on biomass will guide new interventions.



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