Report

Gambella regional report

2018–2019 refugee and host community context analysis

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About this paper

This report is part of a context analysis commissioned by UNICEF Ethiopia in support of its work in refugee-hosting regions of Ethiopia. It was carried out by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and ODI, with funding from UK Aid. The authors are Freddie Carver (lead author and ODI Research Associate), Dr. Fana Gebresenbet (Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University) and Dominic Naish (DRC Ethiopia). Five separate reports on each of the main refugee-hosting regions in Ethiopia will be published during the course of 2020–2021, based on research conducted in 2018–2019.

These studies are intended to support the government of Ethiopia's efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its models for hosting and supporting refugees. These efforts have been undertaken in light of the global policy reform set out by the Global Compact for Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Ethiopia's approach is laid out in the government's 2017 'Roadmap for the implementation of the CRRF' and the pledges made by the government in 2016.

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Acronyms

ARRA	Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoWCA	Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs
BSRP	Building Self-Reliance Programme
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DICAC	Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRDIP	Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	focus group discussion
GER	gross enrolment rate
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
IDI	in-depth interview
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IP	implementing partner
KII	key informant interview
MSF	Médicins Sans Frontières
NCRRS	National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy
NGO	non-governmental organisation
RCC	Refugee Coordination Committee
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

Gambella represents a challenging environment for implementation of the Ethiopian government's Refugee Roadmap and National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS). It contains more than half of the refugees in Ethiopia, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spends more than a third of its overall country budget in the region. As such, it will inevitably be a key target for reform. However, it is also likely to be where progress is most challenging, and the risks are most severe: it is the region where refugees play the most significant role in relation to wider economic and political life, and there have been significant outbreaks of violence in the past connected with the refugee presence. This study has confirmed that implementation of the service delivery components of the NCRRS will be challenging, and attempts to provide not only contextual understanding as to why this is the case, but also potential ways forward for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), other development partners and key policy-makers.

The study seeks to bring out the complexity of the interactions between refugees and the local population of the region (referred to hereafter as 'residents'). These populations are highly mobile and have fluid connections to national identity, with kinship networks reaching freely across borders. This fluidity creates opportunities for creative navigation of the parallel systems operating in the region. The fieldwork conducted for this study confirms that the most important distinction in rural Gambella is not refugees versus residents, but those who have diversified networks versus those who have not. Whether or not they are refugees, those with wider networks have greater access to resources and are therefore more mobile and able to develop more diverse livelihood opportunities. The study suggests that refugees have at least as good access to these more diversified networks and opportunities. For those who do not, whether refugee or resident, there is increasing competition over the limited livelihood opportunities available in rural Gambella, particularly the collection of local resources such as firewood, which can lead to tension and conflict around the camps.

Service delivery systems inside and outside the camps are directly implicated in these complex interactions. In most sectors, the services on offer inside the camps are of higher quality than those available for free outside, and this plays an important role in drawing local populations into the wider camp environment. But there remains a great deal of uncertainty over who is eligible for which services. With the refugee operation an external input to these local areas, there is little sense of local accountability or ownership of these services. If the support provided by the operation to 'host communities' provides as many benefits to outsiders to the area as it does to more indigenous communities, this contributes further to local grievances, and a wider sense that the presence of refugees has a negative impact on local residents. This sense of grievance informs the views of many of the residents interviewed for the study, who expressed scepticism about the desirability of Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) implementation.

Service delivery systems themselves were found to operate largely in isolation from each other. While there have been significant efforts to bridge this divide in recent years, and some instances of positive interaction, overall the relationships between the federal agency running the refugee operation and the regional and woreda-level governments were limited. In recent years, with such large numbers of refugees in the region, ARRA's resources have often dwarfed those of local authorities, making equal partnership a challenge. Successes in developing such partnerships have been tied to the provision of additional resources, or where

there are existing complementarities between the two systems, as with some parts of the health sector. While many local government officials interviewed expressed support for the integration of service delivery systems, seeing it as an opportunity to increase the resources available to them, it was notable that refugee authorities were more hesitant, focusing instead on efforts to increase quality and access within the existing set-up.

Overall, if the CRRF is perceived to focus primarily on the provision of further benefits to the refugee population at the cost of residents, it could easily worsen conflict dynamics. The relative size of the refugee resources in Gambella means that the stakes are high, and it may therefore be harder to promote rapid changes in the short term. Implementation therefore needs to proceed with care, and the recommendations outlined in the final chapter of this report lay out the building blocks of a strategy that seeks to manage risks and grievances, increase the ownership of regional actors and be realistic. Communication will be a key component of this, alongside a two-level approach:

- At the macro level, it is necessary to shift the dialogue around the CRRF from being largely driven by humanitarian actors towards being developmental, making refugees one part of a wider discussion about development needs and challenges in the region, rather than the other way round.
- At the micro level, the approach needs to be opportunistic and coordinated, focusing on feasible interventions that support an overall communication strategy designed to bring sceptical stakeholders on board.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

UNICEF commissioned this context analysis to support implementation of the Building Self-Reliance Programme (BSRP), a four-year programme funded by UK Aid and intended to improve service delivery to refugees and 'host communities' across Ethiopia. Specifically, the DRC/ODI team is conducting a series of studies to better understand the implications of the programme's operating context. The focus of the studies is therefore the service delivery sectors that UNICEF focuses on under BSRP: health; education; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); nutrition; and child protection.

Of particular significance at the policy level is the national process under way to implement the government's Nine Pledges related to hosting refugees, agreed in September 2016, and in support of the CRRF. The pledges of most specific relevance to service delivery are the education pledge ('Increase of enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education to all qualified refugees without discrimination and within the available resources') and the social and basic services pledge ('Enhance the provision of basic and essential social services'), although the wider ambition to allow refugees to integrate more fully into Ethiopian life, particularly through 'local integration', is also relevant (GoE, 2017). This process has led to the development of a roadmap for implementation, and the government, led by ARRA, is currently agreeing a 10-year strategy that will shape the future support provided to both refugees and 'host communities'.

This study is one of five being conducted as part of this context analysis. The objective of each is to provide UNICEF with a more detailed understanding of the contextual factors affecting relations between refugees, non-refugees and key institutional actors involved in service delivery. It was carried out in Gambella in April–May 2018.

1.2 Methods

The study used a mixed-methods approach – outlined in more detail in a separate methodology note available from the research team. To elicit the views of policy-makers, 53 key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out at regional, zonal and woreda level: these included current and former government officials from all of the key bureaus involved in sectoral policy and delivery, ARRA and a wide range of United Nations (UN) agencies and international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Anonymised details of the interviews are given in Annex 1. In-depth fieldwork was carried out with refugees and members of 'host communities' to elicit their views on service delivery and integration. Thirty-eight in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 14 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in camps and 'host communities' with – where necessary – support from a team of locally recruited male and female Nuer and Anuak translators.

Two camps were selected for the study, Kule and Pugnido I, and interviews and FGDs were conducted in the camps, in Itang and Gog woredas and in Gambella town itself. The camps were selected to provide diverse perspectives on the refugee operation: Kule was opened in response to the post-2013 refugee influx from South Sudan, and located in a 'special', ethnically mixed woreda; Pugnido I is a much older camp (it opened in 1993),[1] in primarily Anuak territory and with a mixed population of Anuak and Nuer refugees. 'Host communities' were broken down into constituent groups based on localised mapping.

1 While the current camp was opened in 1993, it should be noted that there was previously a refugee camp in Pugnido between 1988 and 1991, when most refugees left in the aftermath of political instability in Ethiopia (Bayissa, 2010).

1.3 Structure of the report

This report opens with an overview of key structural factors shaping the context of the refugee operation in Gambella, before highlighting key challenges and issues that emerged from interviews and FGDs with local populations. It then sets out findings in terms of the key institutional relationships linked to different service delivery sectors. It then reflects on perceptions of integration and self-reliance, before finally considering implications and making recommendations.

2 Gambella: refugees and the region

The presence of refugees is far more significant in Gambella than it is in other parts of Ethiopia because of both the scale and history of the refugee presence. At the time of writing, the latest Ethiopian government population projection for Gambella is 435,999 (FDRE Central Statistical Agency, 2013), against an estimated refugee population (as at 31 May 2018) of 423,888 (UNHCR, 2018), meaning refugees are almost double the entire population of the region. This significance is reinforced by Gambella's relatively marginal position in the wider Ethiopian context. Its small, widely dispersed population (which make up less than 0.5% of the overall Ethiopian population) means that it does not feature prominently on the national agenda.

Refugees have been woven into the politics of the region since the 1960s. Gambella was the first rural area in Ethiopia to host refugees following the start of rebel activity in the first Sudanese civil war in 1955. The imperial government allowed refugees to settle, farm and graze their livestock in Itang, and collected taxes from them, while UNHCR provided agricultural inputs and tools. Itang was also the site of the country's first refugee camp, established by UNHCR in 1969 and shut down after the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord in 1972 (Bayissa, 2010). While many of these refugees returned to Sudan, 'a large number … remained in their camps and bases … and many established permanent settlements' (ibid.: 103).

As the second civil war intensified in southern Sudan in the mid-1980s Gambella hosted upwards of 300,000 refugees, mainly in Itang, Pugnido and Bonga (not far from today's Jewi camp). This was much higher than the Ethiopian population of the region at the time, and coincided with the resettlement of 60,000 famine-affected Ethiopians from Tigray, Wollo (Amhara) and Kembatta (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR)). In addition to providing refuge, Gambella also served as a training ground and operational base for South Sudanese rebels. The rebels played an important role in administration of the camps, with the blessing of the then Ethiopian government. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) also recruited from among refugees, as well as Ethiopian citizens (Bayissa, 2010; Feyissa, 2011).

The majority of the refugees returned to South Sudan after the fall of the Derg in 1991, as the incoming government made it clear that the rebels were no longer welcome as an active presence in the region. However, the number of refugees in the region steadily increased again as the civil war in South Sudan continued, peaking at around 95,000 in 2005 (Data extracted from UNHCR Population Statistics Reference Database). After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 the numbers once again declined, until the start of the South Sudanese civil war in 2013. Since then there have been multiple waves of new arrivals and the infrastructure of the refugee operation expanded significantly, with new camps opening around Itang, Gambella town itself, Pugnido and in Dimma in the south of the region.

It is critical to remember, then, that Gambella has been hosting refugees continuously for decades, and on a number of occasions in very large numbers. As well as placing considerable strain on the local population and available resources, this has also had the effect of making the refugee operation an established part of the economy of the region, whether in the form of the employment it creates or the inputs it provides to local populations and the impact that has had on local markets (Kurimoto, 1992).

For local populations who cannot always be easily distinguished as South Sudanese or

Ethiopian, the presence of the refugee operation has also created incentives to frame their identities in line with the best available opportunities at a given moment in time – there have been examples in the past of both South Sudanese citizens settling outside the camps, and of Ethiopians claiming refugee benefits (Bayissa, 2010; Feyissa, 2011).

These costs and benefits have also not necessarily accrued equitably to all sections of the population of Gambella. Local perceptions of this inequality, whether between Nuer and Anuak (with Nuer making up the majority of the refugees), or between locals and 'highlanders' (who form the majority of the staffing and suppliers of the refugee operation) have fed directly into tensions and, on occasion, violence in the region.[2] Two key incidents are worth highlighting. In December 2003, eight 'highlanders', including three ARRA staff, were killed travelling to Pugnido to visit a proposed new refugee camp in December 2003 (UNHCR, 2003). The attack was blamed on Anuak rebels, triggering widespread violence against the Anuak population, reportedly with the participation of Federal security actors (Human Rights Watch, 2005). In 2016, two refugee children were killed by a car driven by 'highlander' international non-governmental organisation (INGO) staff in Jewi camp. Nuer refugees from the camp attacked and killed 10 'highlanders' they found in the vicinity of the camp, followed by further retaliatory violence against Nuer in Gambella town (Sudan Tribune, 2016). The escalation of violence was rapid and dramatic, demonstrating the significant underlying tensions in the region. These tensions will have a critical influence on how the CRRF will be understood by local populations.

Finally, it is important to note that the refugee operation places pressure on land in the region, in a context in which there are already tensions over the allocation of land by the federal government. Between 2008 and 2013, the federal government leased land to foreign investors and large (above 5,000 hectares) domestic commercial farms using powers that were later deemed to be unconstitutional (Gebresenbet, 2016). Close to 85% of the leased land was not put into production; one flagship project (run by the Indian company Karuturi Global) went bankrupt, and another (run by Saudi Star Agricultural Development) consistently failed to meet its production targets (ibid.).

In parallel, the federal fovernment launched a villagisation project in the region in the early 2010s, focused on sedentarising 'indigenous' populations in rural woredas. Although this was done in the name of service delivery, there were claims that it was also an attempt to free up land for larger-scale investments (ibid.). The scheme, implemented mainly by the Equitable Development Support Directorate of the Ministry of Federal Affairs, was implemented with minimal consultation and led to a significant local and international backlash against the Ethiopian government (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Gebresenbet, 2016).

Tensions over villagisation and agricultural investment have created a climate where any attempt by the federal government to allocate land can be controversial. Locally, there are perceptions of inadequate consultation before the establishment of refugee camps (FGDs 12 and 13). The potential allocation of land to refugees, or the prospect of new Federally-directed agricultural or irrigation schemes in line with the Nine Pledges, therefore has clear potential to increase tensions.

2 The terms 'indigenous' and 'highlander' are used commonly in Gambella, the former referring primarily to Anuak, Nuer, Majang, Opo and Komo populations, and the latter to people originally from the highlands of Tigray, Amhara and Oromia. For more background on the history of relations between different groups, see Bayissa, 2010; Feyissa, 2010; 2011.

3 The challenges facing refugees and residents in Gambella

3.1 Access to income

The most consistent challenge facing all local populations in the areas of Gambella visited for this study is the lack of reliable sources of income and low level of formal employment (IDIs and FGDs in the region). In some areas, many of the income opportunities that do exist are in some way related to the refugee operation, for example through formal employment by ARRA or its implementing partners, or through the creation of economic hubs where goods can be bought and sold (such as Tharpam, a road junction in Itang woreda which has become a thriving market and site for cafes and restaurants thanks to its location near three large refugee camps). However, these opportunities are often dominated by 'highlanders', with fewer opportunities for formal or informal employment open to 'indigenous' populations (FGD 7). Better economic opportunities are available in the bigger markets, particularly Gambella town.

Both refugees in the camps and local communities living nearby cited the collection and sale of firewood and grass, almost entirely by women, as a primary means to supplement income (consistent across all IDIs and FGDs).[3] In Itang, this strategy is increasingly under threat given the expansion of the population since the refugees began to arrive, with over 200,000 now living in a woreda with a non-refugee population of roughly 50,000. A number of refugees said that they were increasingly concerned about security threats when collecting firewood, with anecdotal reports of violence (IDIs and FGDs with refugees in Kule and Pugnido).

Another formal opportunity to earn income available to refugees in the camps is the 'incentive worker' scheme, under which refugees are employed informally by ARRA or its Implementing Partners (IPs) as teachers, health workers or social workers. Due to restrictions on formal employment, wages are capped at around 700–800 Birr a month, far below the rates ARRA pays for Ethiopian national equivalents. Despite the small amount (a source of considerable frustration), these positions can constitute very important livelihood opportunities given the lack of alternatives in the camps, and concerns were raised about untransparent recruitment processes favouring certain groups over others (IDIs 1 and 5).

More informally, refugees can earn income through the sale of goods provided to them for free in the camps, although this has become increasingly difficult following cuts to monthly food rations in late 2017 and early 2018 by the World Food Programme (WFP) (from 16kg of cereals a month to 10kg) (IDIs and FGDs in the camps).

A final source of potential income mentioned in interviews is connections with kin outside Gambella, both in South Sudan itself and in countries of resettlement. Interviewees spoke of

3 One respondent indicated that one bundle of sticks, requiring a six-hour round trip to collect, could sell for 25 Birr (IDI 12). In Pugnido there were reports of economic discrimination, with Nuer refugees suggesting that they were forced to sell their firewood for half the rate of Anuak refugees (15 Birr as opposed to 30) (IDI 27).

utilising cattle still in South Sudan as economic assets in the camp, particularly for marriage bridewealth, both 'virtually' (i.e. committing cattle to another family on the basis of knowledge of the herd's existence) and through physically returning to South Sudan to bring cattle back (IDIs 4 and 5).

It appears that economic activity within the camps (for example, running the shops that sell goods or provide power-charging facilities) is dominated by those who can access capital through family connections. Some respondents cited the need to collect remittances as a key reason for travel to Gambella town (FGD 2).[4] It appears that, as refugees have a greater history of displacement and international resettlement in recent decades, these transnational networks skew more heavily towards the refugee population, giving them a potential economic advantage over those from Ethiopia.

Overall, then, while 'indigenous' residents[5] have – in theory – greater access to economic opportunities than refugees, by virtue of being Ethiopian citizens and having the right to work or own land, in practice this is not always the case. With 'highlanders' playing a dominant role in the formal economic sector, and with refugees more likely to have options in terms of access to capital, making increasing use of local natural resources, they find themselves increasingly squeezed economically. The sense of grievance on both sides is strong, and this is an area where CRRF should seek to build understanding and communication.

3.2 Interactions between residents and refugees

On the surface, it appears that interactions between refugees and non-refugees are limited, with the majority of respondents within the camps keen to emphasise a high degree of separation. However, as interviewers probed more deeply, and through triangulation with a wider range of stakeholders, a more complex picture emerges, partly in response to the economic picture outlined above. These interactions can be categorised into a number of different types:

- **Economic interactions:** The most commonly cited forms of interaction were around accessing markets for the sale and purchase of goods, on anything from a weekly to a monthly basis: refugees often referred to going to local markets to buy clothes and shoes for themselves and their families (IDIs and FGDs in the camps).
- **Social interactions:** It is clear from the number of marriages reported between residents and refugees – including in the more recently established camps – that there is extensive social interaction (IDIs and FGDs in the camps). One foundation for this is local churches: as most of the 'indigenous' populations are from the same Protestant tradition as the refugees, both groups share religious worship, and this has provided an important bond over the years (IDIs and FGDs in the camps). As one respondent said: 'there is only one God, so it is a uniting factor' (FGD 10). Respondents also cited joint use of bars and nightclubs in the camps (IDIs 5 and 12).
- **'Refugees' living among 'residents':** Several respondents outside the camps explained that they lived in the 'host community' despite being South Sudanese, having arrived with those registered in the camps, and then securing space to live from local authorities via kinship connections (IDIs 12 and 13). The reasons for not wanting to be in the camp were linked to a sense that, once there, people tended not to leave, because of the benefits available. As one woman put it: 'I don't want to be a refugee, I want to go back to South Sudan' (IDI 12). It was also explained that families divided, with more vulnerable members entering the camps, while others remained outside trying to find other ways

4 At the time of writing, Wegagen Bank was in the process of opening the first branch in Itang, meaning that refugees from the camps there will have closer access to remittances.

5 The term 'resident' is preferred to 'host community' to define those populations who live in the vicinity of refugee camps but are not registered inhabitants of the camp with refugee status.

to make a living (IDI 12). Some refugees live outside the camps because they have no other choice: one refugee living in Pugnido town reported that her shelter in the camp had been destroyed in a storm and, despite preferring to live in the camp because of the services available there, had been obliged to rent a house in the town (IDI 34).

Security and localised conflict are a critical factor shaping these interactions. In both sites visited by the study team, refugees clearly feel under threat, and greatly value the protection provided by ARRA and UNHCR. In Pugnido, this is particularly the case for the Nuer refugees who are more isolated from the town itself, and who generally do not feel welcome (IDIs with Nuer refugees); for Anuak refugees, interaction appears to be more straightforward. In Kule, refugees cited security issues with all local resident populations (IDIs and FGDs in the camp), partly related to competition for resources and partly to ethnic tensions. It should also be noted that there is a significant gender component to security concerns, with women facing particular threats on their trips outside the camp to collect firewood or visit markets (IDIs with women in both camps).

Those living permanently in the camps appear to be the most vulnerable, lack alternatives or have specific needs that can only be catered for there. It is these people who, in some cases, have the most genuine security concerns around leaving the camp. Others face economic barriers to integration: 'how can the poor and rich become friends? We don't even have enough money for water. If we go to host areas, they will treat us well. We don't have the means to return that treatment' (FGD 8). One impact of being in the camp is being displaced from the kin networks which are the primary sources of resilience and protection to these communities: formal governance arrangements in the camps are not organised along these lines (IDI 4). When considering possible policy approaches to meeting needs, it is critical to remember that those living permanently in the camp are the most vulnerable – but do not make up the whole population of refugees.

3.3 Service delivery issues

This complex network of interactions feeds into the ways services are accessed and understood. Below we present specific findings in each of the main sectors under consideration.

3.3.1 WASH

Inside the camps, feedback on availability of water was almost universally positive.[6] Water was reported to be generally available from pumps in relatively close proximity to people's homes, and available free of charge. Refugees reported people occasionally coming to fetch water in the camps from outside when there were shortages in their home areas, but did not express any concerns about this (IDI 1).

Outside the camps, the situation is more complex and there is significant variation between locations. In Itang woreda, a new water scheme appears to have improved water availability in areas close to roads, but less so in more remote areas where the longer-standing residents of the woreda live – and even those communities closer to tap stands indicated that these only worked periodically (IDIs and FGDs outside Kule camp). Tap stands in Tharpam primarily serve businesses (FGDs 3, 4 and 7). Costs varied widely, with some individuals (particularly those with a household connection to the water supply) paying on a monthly basis (up to 50 Birr a month) and others paying per jerrycan (up to 2 Birr per jerrycan), with variations in costs depending on location and season (IDIs in Tharpam; KII 45).

Respondents indicated that there have been tensions in the past in relation to water trucks passing through Tharpam on their way to the camps, with local youths feeling that the water 'belonged' to the residents (IDI 18; KII 37). In Pugnido, water availability was a major concern for the residents of the town, with the single pump inadequate to the needs of the population, and long queues (IDIs 29 and 35; FGDs 12 and 13). At least one water point in the woreda was reported as carrying guinea worm (IDI 29), and again the tap stand facilities that have been built

6 It should be noted that Kimetrica's baseline findings are that 23% of refugees in Pugnido had not had water from their main source for a day or longer in the previous two weeks (Kimetrica, 2018).

primarily benefit traders along the road (KII 53). Overall, while the free water in the camps is desirable to local communities struggling for water, the distances involved appear to be prohibitive apart from during times of crisis (IDIs and FGDs outside camps).

3.3.2 Education

Inside the camps, perceptions of education were mixed. While education appears to be available to all refugees who want it, concerns were raised by a number of refugees about the quality of the teaching provided (for example primary school incentive teachers who were secondary school students in the other half of the day, or language barriers between nationally recruited Amharic-speaking teachers and Nuer or Anuak children) (IDIs and FGDs in the camps). There are also clearly issues with class size, particularly at Upper Primary level (one respondent indicated class sizes of more than 150 were normal (IDI 11)). There was some concern that, after schools were handed over from implementing partners (IPs) to ARRA, there is a reduction in the amount of teacher support and supervision (IDIs 7 and 11).

Despite these sometimes negative perceptions of school quality, educational outcomes in the camps are seen as relatively good, with one of the schools in Kule camp reported to be delivering the second-best results in the whole region (IDI 11), and some refugees indicated that the quality of education was better than in their home area in South Sudan (IDIs 2 and 5); one mother in Itang said that the quality of schooling available to her four children contributed to her desire to remain in Gambella (IDI 2).

In terms of access, Ethiopia's national education data indicates that enrolment rates are far lower in the camps than in surrounding areas: in 2016–2017, the gross enrolment rate (GER) for primary schools in the camps was 75.9%, as opposed to 150.3% in Gambella as a whole, with the numbers of girls, in particular, dropping considerably as they progress through the school system (from a 79.6% GER in years 1–4 to 32.0% in years 5–8 and 4.6% at secondary level) (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017). The fieldwork for this study found few examples of families holding their children back from attending school (KIIs and IDIs inside and outside the camps), although concerns were raised about resident parents preferring that their children look for income rather than attend school (KII 6).

Interaction between residents and refugees around education is complex and case-specific. In Kule, the local school in Pulkot is clearly inferior to the refugee school in terms of infrastructure and supplies, but did have a functioning teaching staff (KII 44). It is clear that refugee children attend the school if they are old enough to manage the walk of up to an hour; the school director was aware of this and did not indicate it was a problem, but it appears not to be openly discussed within the community (KII 50; IDI 9). It appears to be primarily older children who make this shift, in some cases because they fail a year at the camp school and are not allowed to retake (IDI 9; KIIs 44 and 50). We heard no incidents of refugee children being refused access to local schools. In the other direction, there appeared to be less of a flow of non-refugee children into camp schools, partly as these schools sometimes appear to require proof of refugee status via ration cards (IDIs and FGDs inside and outside camps).

Experience with education in Pugnido demonstrates how wider tensions can interact with service delivery systems. Previously, there was only one high school in Pugnido town receiving all students, including both Anuak and Nuer refugees, but, after conflict at the school in 2008–2009, ARRA supported the establishment of a DICAC (Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission)-run school for children from the camp (KII 50; IDIs 25 and 32). In practice, however, Anuak refugees still predominantly attend the closer high school in the town (although this option is only available to those families who can afford the related costs) (KII 50; IDI 37). There are also indications that some Anuak and 'highlander' resident children also seek to attend the DICAC school because the quality is perceived to be better (KII 50; IDI 37).

3.3.3 Health and nutrition

Health services in the camps were perhaps the most consistently criticised (along with the cuts to monthly rations). In Pugnido, Médicins Sans Frontières (MSF)'s recent departure from oversight of the health post was blamed by

respondents for a reduction in the quality of services (IDIs and FGDs in Pugnido camp; KII 26). However, in Kule, despite MSF running a substantial health post in the camp, there were similar complaints about the availability of medicines, quality of staff and challenges with referall to Addis Ababa (IDIs and FGDs in Kule camp). Given the human and financial resources available in the health post the complaints seemed surprising and were strongly refuted by MSF staff (KII 48).

Healthcare for residents is also problematic, with local health posts short of both qualified staff and medical supplies. Overall, the majority of respondents familiar with services inside and outside the camp said that the former is significantly better, and it was reported that up to 25% of patients seen in Pugnido camp are non-refugees (KII 1). The most reliable source of healthcare cited in both locations was private pharmacies, but the financial obstacles to this care are substantial for residents (50 Birr cited as the cost for one appointment in Tharpam (IDI 12)). Although some respondents indicated that they used camp facilities, it was also widely understood that, without a ration card, it was difficult to access care in the camps (IDIs 6 and 10). Again, this was refuted by the service providers themselves (KII 48).

The only referral hospital in the region is Gambella hospital, which is significantly overburdened. While ARRA and UNHCR pay for treatment and medicine for refugees, this does not address the strain on the hospital's bed to patient ratio, doctor to patient ratio and overall infrastructure. Estimates suggest that as much as 60% of patients treated in the hospital are refugees (KIIs 10 and 35). While refugee patients are provided with a 50 Birr daily subsistence allowance and accommodation during referrals, there are concerns that this is too low, and expenses related to an accompanying caregiver family member are not covered (KII 27). Some stress that the CRRF should provide resources to establish a hospital in Itang to help ease this pressure (KII 27).

Nutrition needs appear to be much higher in the camps, with the Global Acute Malnutrition rate double that among residents. This is partly because the standards for defining malnutrition used in the camp are higher,[7] although it is likely that it is also linked to the relatively high proportion of women and children in the camp population (KII 10). Overall, the treatment of malnutrition in the camps was reported to be of higher quality than outside (KIIs in Gambella and FGDs in the camps).

3.3.4 Child protection

Child protection interventions vary greatly between the camps and resident communities. Outside the camps, they tend to build on existing community structures and systems, whereas in the camps this work tends to involve IPs building new structures from scratch. This means that child protection services are far more visible in the camps, with greater international involvement and far greater resources (IDIs and FGDs in the camps). There was no evidence of resident children accessing these services, with distance a significant barrier, particularly in relation to very young children (KII 11). Distance is also a constraint on regional initiatives such as the recently opened 'one-stop' sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)/child protection centre in Gambella town, which has struggled to provide meaningful assistance to refugees given the distances involved: of the 40 cases seen in the previous year, only two were refugees.[8]

7 Inside the camps, the internationally agreed cut-off of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) of less than 11.5 cm is used for eligibility for malnutrition programmes, whereas in Gambella more widely the national standard of less than 11 cm is applied. There is ongoing discussion at a national level about potentially bringing these standards into line.

8 This centre, opened in 2017, appears to be facing serious resourcing issues despite international support, with no available water supply and no money to pay social workers.

4 Institutional relationships across service delivery sectors

Insecurity in the region has led to an emphasis within the refugee operation on managing mobility as closely as possible. This is achieved through a hierarchy of structures within the camps, from the Refugee Coordination Committee (RCC) to zonal and block leaders.[9] Respondents in the camps described these structures as being as much about top-down management as upward accountability (IDIs 4 and 20). Entry into the camps for external actors is also tightly managed: this applies to both international and national actors, with many local government bodies indicating that they were sometimes not allowed access to the camps (KIIs with regional and woreda government officials).

This can become a major challenge to close partnerships between ARRA and local government actors. While there are examples of joint working and positive interaction (see Table 1), across sectors many actors emphasised the challenges of developing such partnerships. Bureau staff across sectors described how limited their access to the camps has been, with many unable to visit them (KIIs at regional and woreda level).

Instead, ARRA's traditional mode of operation is to act fairly independently, something that both its Federal status, and the significant resources associated with the refugee operation, enables. In terms of finances, ARRA's budgets in the region are not available, but the overall refugee budget for the region can be used as a proxy given that it is the primary source of ARRA's finances. UNHCR spent $52 million in 2017, which, although representing significant underfunding from UNHCR's perspective, is more than double the government budget for all the woredas in the region combined.

This creates a financial imbalance in the region, although ARRA and UNHCR seek to offset this by providing support to 'host communities': it is believed by local actors that between 20–30% of the refugee budget should go directly towards supporting 'host communities' (KIIs with local government officials). Such efforts are ultimately at the discretion of ARRA, either directly or through directing the work of IPs, which in practice leads to high levels of variation. Local government officials provided a mixed picture on the level of support that was forthcoming (KIIs in Itang and Pugnido towns), and examples from IPs were similarly varied: one gave an example of a project where 345 out of 2,000 beneficiaries were from the 'host community' (KII 31), another of five out of 3,000 (KII 30).

Staffing is another major issue. Within the refugee operation itself there are issues around the enormous disparity between incentive worker salaries of 700–800 Birr and those available to national staff, which for teachers, for example, start at 5,500 Birr. This is a source of considerable frustration to incentive teachers, especially those with qualifications from elsewhere, and leads to extremely high turnover among this group (KIIs in Gambella; IDIs in the camps). It is also a concern for the local

9 ARRA organises all refugees camps in the country into a hierarchy of zones and blocks.

Table 1 Examples of interaction and coordination between ARRA and local governments, based on KIIs with relevant officials at both regional and woreda level

Sector	Positive examples	Negative examples
WASH	• Development of joint Water Utility in Itang woreda that – despite challenges – has increased the reliability of access inside and outside the camps • Allocation of UNICEF resources to Itang allowed for new ONE WASH resources to be prioritised elsewhere • UNICEF using refugee resources to improve water supply in Pugnido town	• No routine joint planning of water investments, despite shared use of water resources • Integrated Water Utility approach has brought in complexities and created disagreements around governance and management: still to be fully resolved • Water Bureau reports it has been very difficult to access camps
Education and child protection	• Provision of textbooks and other supplies by Education Bureau to refugee schools • Joint school inspections in the camps, joint monitoring visits starting • Refugees formally utilising resident schools in some locations (e.g. Pugnido) • Pool of teachers trained in Gambella available to both resident and refugee schools • Joint verification of Education Management Information System and inclusion of refugee data • Joint Child Protection Working Group established	• Challenges over higher salaries in the refugee operation attracting teachers away from national system, particularly in harder-to-fill subject areas (e.g. science teachers) • ARRA perceived as making high demands on local bureau officials, e.g. for supplies • Parallel coordination mechanisms for those working inside and outside the camps • Local government child protection actors had no detailed knowledge of nature and scale of child protection activities in the camps
Health and nutrition	• The sector with most joint working, particularly in vaccination campaigns and responding to disease outbreaks • Examples of each system borrowing medicine from the other as required • INGO partners working with refugees undertake capacity-building of the local system: in Pugnido MSF worked extensively with the local hospital • Complementary strengths in the two systems: national system better equipped for TB, refugee system better for nutrition and ante-natal care. Raises quality of service overall • Joint planning for nutrition programming, and single supply system for nutritional supplements via UNICEF • ARRA uses the national health extension system in preventive aspects of operations	• Challenges over high salary scales in the refugee operation attracting health workers away from national system • ARRA facilities not sharing data with national system, no formats for joint reporting • Coordinating over Dimma is especially challenging, as ARRA does not run that zone from Gambella town • Local system has no control or ability to plan for key decisions that shape the environment: e.g. MSF leaving Pugnido camp, and taking equipment with them • Resources are unbalanced in terms of nutrition programming

government education system, where salaries are closer to 2,000–3,000 Birr a month (KII 6). There were reports that salaries are often paid three or four months late (KIIs 13, 14 and 52). There is significant concern about teachers looking to move from the local government system into the refugee programme: particular issues were raised with regard to science teachers (KII 1).

Given the decentralised nature of Ethiopia's service delivery arrangements, a host of potential obstacles can be thrown up to coordination or partnership between regional and federal actors. One respondent indicated that it was impossible for ARRA resources to be considered as part of regional planning processes because they were allocated and planned federally (KII 4). The formation of the Itang Water Utility governance system has faced challenges in determining appropriate roles and responsibilities for ARRA and the woreda and regional governments (KIIs 2, 4 and 33). Concerns were raised by ARRA that existing regional legislation governing water utilities did not allow refugees or ARRA a formal governance role, and UNICEF and UNHCR have supported a redrafting of local legislation to enable this (KII 33). ARRA's desire for a degree of control over this system is understandable given that refugees account for at least 80% of its beneficiaries, and a sudden outage in supply would quickly become a security issue, but there

are real challenges in bringing together very different accountability systems. Only if ways can be found to build confidence on both sides will it be possible to identify pragmatic solutions.

One emerging approach to resolving these challenges has been to engage the Regional President's Office, the formal bridge between the federal and the regional state, more proactively in discussions. Since the Gambella regional launch of the CRRF in May 2018, the Regional President has had fuller ownership of the process, and the Presidency is clearly supportive of the CRRF as an initiative that should bring additional resources to the region (KII 5).[10] Feedback from UN officials is that the Regional President's office has started trying to resolve disagreements between ARRA and the regional government, although at the time of writing it was unclear whether this has, for example, successfully broken the deadlock on the Itang Water Utility governance arrangements (KIIs 15 and 33).

Local government systems face fundamental resource and capacity challenges. The regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) indicated that all but one of the woredas in the region were in deficit three months before the end of the fiscal year, and that in the majority of cases resources were only able to cover salary and operational costs, with almost nothing left for capital expenditure (KII 20). Gambella struggles to attract national-level funding allocations because of its small population. Whereas ARRA has large and reasonably well-maintained compounds at camp level, woreda government offices are noticeably more basic. Some direct benefits do accrue to local government from the presence of the refugee operation: in addition to the support that ARRA provides locally, there are some opportunities for local revenue-raising, in particular income tax from staff who have the woreda in question as their official base (although the majority of refugee staff are based in Gambella) (KII 46). But overall, it seems that the refugee operation has generally placed significant strain on woreda governments.

Expectations are high among some regional and woreda government actors that CRRF-inspired programming will bring additional resources under their control (KIIs at regional and woreda level), but this will require long-term investment and support on a scale not yet seen. Large-scale national programmes, such as the industrial parks referenced under the Economic Opportunities Programme, will struggle to be relevant or meaningful to people in Gambella. The World Bank's Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) is starting to be appreciated by government officials in the region (KII 46; IDI 6) but, capped as it is at $75,000 a project per kebele per year, it will be unable to deliver the kind of longer-term transformation required on its own. The Japanese government, through UNDP, committed $1.5 million to livelihood projects in refugee-hosting woredas in the region, but only on a one-year basis (KII 29). In 2020, the UK government launched a new livelihoods programme, SHARPE, which will operate in Gambella, but thanks to a delayed contracting process it has yet to start delivering on the ground.

10 It should be noted that since this report was written there has been a change in Regional President.

5 Views on integration and self-reliance

It is difficult to discuss integration and self-reliance with local populations as these concepts have not yet been fully defined by the Ethiopian government, and communication to date appears to have left the citizens of Gambella feeling uncertain. People are having to decide for themselves what they think these ideas mean, drawing on their experience of what has happened to refugees in the past. In general, it appears that integration and self-reliance are primarily interpreted as being about the provision of more rights to work and, potentially, land on which to farm, with some form of naturalisation involved. Those more involved in the provision of service delivery frame the issue more directly in terms of the integration of systems.

Among all of the respondents, across KIIs, IDIs and FGDs, there are a range of views about the likely implications for resourcing. This section seeks to provide a representative picture of these views, as far as possible in people's own words.

5.1 Negative responses

Many respondents expressed serious concerns about these concepts. which can be grouped as shown in the following sub-sections.

5.1.1 Contentment with current arrangements

Any kind of major change will always raise concerns for the individuals and organisations involved. The refugee operation has been implemented in the same way for so long that all actors are inculcated in the current approach. Refugees in Pugnido, when asked about the prospects for integration or self-reliance, reflected this with statements such as: 'to share all these things is impossible. It is good that those of the host community have their own and refugees have their own' (IDI 34) and 'if ARRA and UNHCR give us what we want, why would we want to live outside?' (FGD 10). Institutionally, there was a strong sense that all actors were sceptical that real change would come, and therefore reluctant to consider it too deeply (KIIs at regional and woreda level).

5.1.2 Fear of exacerbating existing grievances

Particularly in Pugnido, this was the most serious and consistent concern raised, from almost all stakeholders. In an FGD, Anuak refugees stated baldly: 'Integration will be a terrible idea. The Anuak will not accept us, conflict will be more likely with the Nuer' (IDI 25). Anuak residents confirmed these concerns, with a series of strong statements in FGDs and interviews. Kebele leaders agreed: 'Integration is not good with both Anuak and Nuer refugees … it will lead to resource competition … it will be a cause for homicide. It is better to give services separately' (IDI 32). 'Highlander' groups concurred: 'such integration will bring violence and conflict, not development' (FGD 14).

One woreda official in Pugnido put these concerns in context, explaining that 'refugees are living a better life than the host. Priority is given to their needs, and more money is spent on them. They can go anywhere, even places members of the host community cannot. Everybody knows of this. So why now go for this [integration]?' (KII 52).

Furthermore, there was a strong feeling that resistance would be required to prevent refugees from being provided with land or more rights, with repatriation offered as the best alternative: 'we [the host community] are the government, we won't allow that [refugees getting land]'

(FGD 12); 'If the refugees need land they should be repatriated' (FGD 12); 'which law is so attentive of the rights of refugees? They either have to go, or we will become refugees' (FGD 13). These concerns need to be taken seriously if conflict is not to be exacerbated.

5.1.3 Political concerns

Concerns about a loss of national identity were raised by refugee leaders who saw integration as a threat to future political dynamics in South Sudan. Those with leadership roles among the refugee community regarded the refugee population in Gambella as a political asset ('the refugees belong to Riek Machar') and made clear that they had an important future role in the country (KII 12). An Anuak RCC official framed the issue differently, in terms of land: 'if we are given land, the assumption will be that our fathers' land in South Sudan will be legitimately taken away by others … the South Sudanese government will not be happy: why give land to our citizens? We still think our land is waiting for us' (IDI 25).

5.1.4 Resourcing concerns

Some respondents saw the problem as being about further stretching a limited resource base in the region and, ultimately, creating a further burden 'to be shouldered by the host community' (KII 14). This was of particular concern as there was a feeling that the provision of land would only attract more refugees to Gambella (FGD 14). There was considerable scepticism from some as to whether additional resources would really be forthcoming, and therefore a view that the overall effect of CRRF implementation would be negative for the region (KIIs at regional and woreda level). One ARRA official raised this concern as well, indicating that if resources were not supplied the 10-year timeframe of the Pledges would be unlikely to be achievable (KII 19). The regional BoFED was also concerned about the potential capacity implications of the regional government taking on hugely increased responsibility. One regional government official was concerned about the assumptions being made in terms of employment opportunities: he raised the spectre of 'refugees becoming Ethiopians to join the ranks of the jobless multitude' (KII 17).

5.2 Positive responses

Despite this negativity from many respondents, there were some more positive perspectives. These can be grouped into three areas.

5.2.1 Political responses

Those with formal roles in this process know that they need to champion it and emphasise the potential benefits if resources are to be forthcoming. The Regional Vice-President emphasised the potential for the CRRF to reverse the environmental degradation that the region has suffered over the past 30 years thanks to the refugee presence, and explained that it provides an important opportunity to kick-start agricultural development (KII 5).

ARRA officials reinforced these messages, although they clearly recognise the importance of nuance in their communication given the extent of the grievances felt across Gambella about the presence of refugees. Their message was that the emphasis for now should be on raising the quality of services and providing a better balance to refugees and residents, and that 'integration comes later' (KII 3). At the CRRF Launch Event, the then Deputy Director of ARRA, speaking in Amharic, explicitly framed the CRRF as a resource mobilisation effort in support of government priorities: 'the intention is to mobilise resources from the international community in the name of refugees, and link it to government development plans' [research team's translation of the speech].

5.2.2 Regional/woreda government officials

Those who have heard this message most clearly appear to be officials within the regional government. While there is undoubtedly scepticism as to whether additional resources will be provided, some individuals clearly see an opportunity for increased capacity to meet the needs of their people. These views were heard from the Regional Health Bureau and the education and health bureaus in Gog woreda. One respondent stated: 'Integration will be good. It will help refugee-targeted resources to reach the host. Not going for integration will lead to the continuation of the current trend of benefitting refugees much better than the hosts. That will continue to be a recipe for conflict' (KII 50).

5.2.3 Refugees seeking wider networks

In Kule, for those refugees who expressed feelings of being 'stuck' in the camps, with poor networks into the wider world and genuine security concerns when needing to leave, there was a potentially positive side to greater integration. In particular, this was framed around the development of stronger social networks that could in turn bring benefits to individuals, although there was concern that ARRA and UNHCR would need to create the right conditions for this to take place (IDIs 1 and 5).

6 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the findings of this study confirm the need for a great degree of care to be taken around implementation of the government's pledges in Gambella. The refugee presence and operation is so fundamental to the economy, politics and social dynamics of the region that significant policy shifts will be certain to have a major impact. The views of local populations, both refugees and residents, need to be taken into account far more as implementation moves forward.

In terms of the dynamics around service delivery, the main challenges to integration involve the significant capacity and resourcing issues on the part of local government actors. It seems unlikely that an initiative led by humanitarian agencies will be able to achieve the kind of developmental results required in Gambella. It will be necessary to develop a strategy that, in the long term, enables a shift in relationships, but does so gradually, and emphasises confidence- and trust-building.

Three broad areas of recommendations are identified below: a need to focus on risk management; shifting the emphasis towards a more developmental approach; and being realistic and strategic in implementation.

A stronger emphasis on managing risks

Given Gambella's history of conflict and rapid escalations of violence, and the extent to which the refugee operation has been implicated in this, it is essential to place a strong conflict-sensitive lens on everything that is done in relation to the pledges. Repeatedly, respondents expressed concern at the lack of clear communication and consultation with local communities, and the risks that this will bring if it is not addressed quickly. The development and implementation of the pledges has been a very top-down process to date, and unless this can be changed this approach is highly likely to make the situation worse. The emerging narrative that the CRRF will primarily benefit refugees is of particular concern, and it will be essential that it is implemented in a way that avoids this framing. It is incumbent on all actors to consider how to improve their capacity to design and implement conflict-sensitive programming as part of CRRF implementation, with appropriate roles for national and international actors based on existing capacities. External resourcing for such work is likely to be critical, at least in the short term.

This also means taking a very precise and nuanced approach to understanding where the potential costs and benefits of CRRF interventions fall. It is not enough merely to seek to prioritise 'host communities': as we have seen, the 'host community' concept fails to adequately capture the reality of the environment around the camps. If interventions focus on the immediate surroundings of the camps, or on the main road networks, then it is possible that the primary beneficiaries may end up being either traders or refugees living outside the camps. In the name of equity, it may be necessary – in some cases – for programmes to sacrifice cost-efficiency in order to reach more remote communities that may not appear to have such obvious connections to the camps, but which in practice have felt the burden of their presence over many years. Given the widespread concerns expressed around access to clean water, and the low levels of investment made by regional and woreda governments, this would seem to be a particularly fruitful area to explore if the resources can be found.

Paying close attention to localised conflict dynamics will also be necessary: this is clear from the extent of concern expressed around Pugnido. The level of tensions between Nuer and Anuak communities there makes the idea of shared resources problematic, as can be seen by the ending of the previous arrangement of a single high school for all students in the area. Reports of Anuak youth blocking water trucks going through Tharpam highlight the potential risk of a single water system being channelled through Itang town. The conclusion is not that such shared resources are unfeasible, but that they will need careful thought, and significant investment should be made in activities focused on peaceful coexistence to mitigate risks (including, for example, applying a conflict-sensitivity lens to all joint governance arrangements). After the violence of 2003, significant investments were made in peaceful coexistence programming, but these have declined in recent years, partly as a result of the restrictions imposed by the NGO Act.[11] As these restrictions are lifted as part of the political changes being led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, there will be significant new opportunities for programming in this area.

In parallel with greater efforts to promote peaceful coexistence, there is a critical need to improve communication around the government's Pledges and the CRRF: the lack of clear messaging will undoubtedly allow rumours and conspiracy theories to emerge. The Ethiopian government, at all levels, needs to lead the way on this, but it will be important as far as possible to increase local ownership of the process by giving local actors the opportunity to shape local approaches. This will require strong joint work from ARRA and local governments, and could be an opportunity to build relationships at that level too. Such a communication plan will need to ensure that it reaches different linguistic communities, and might need to consider engagement with the diaspora as well.

Another area of activity that could help build local populations' ownership of the integration process would be for the refugee operation to make an explicit, proactive effort to improve employment opportunities for 'indigenous' people, perhaps, for example, on roles specifically focused on integration. If there are areas where skills do not currently exist, these gaps could be identified, and the regional government supported to develop new interventions to fill them within the next 3–5 years.

Recommendations for UNICEF

- Advocate to the government of Ethiopia and to the rest of the UN system for the joint resourcing of an intensive, government-led CRRF communication strategy in Gambella.
- Increase conflict sensitivity capacity within the UNICEF and wider UN team in Gambella, mandating at least one role to apply conflict sensitivity analysis to all BSRP interventions, and to develop context-appropriate tools to understand potential conflict risks at local levels. Engage with Protestant church actors in the region to seek their advice.
- Build extensive consultation with multiple possible 'host communities' into future BSRP planning processes to ensure that the benefits of programming can be felt widely, and to inform the identification of specific activities designed to respond to strongly felt needs.
- Work with other UN agencies and INGOs in Gambella to develop a common strategy for increasing the number of staff positions held by Anuak and Nuer, where feasible, working with the Regional Government.

Recommendations for the federal government

Invite the Regional Government to work in partnership with ARRA to form a CRRF implementation advisory board made up of locally credible leaders from key refugee and

11 Pact Ethiopia's 'Culture of Discussion Initiative' was one of the leading projects working in this area, and the organisation has a suite of evaluations and lessons learned documents from the 2006–2012 period. The 2012 evaluation found that the project had 'demonstrated that effective programming to contribute towards conflict prevention, conflict management, peace consolidation and enhanced governance involving government/community consultations is both feasible and important in contemporary Gambella' (Greene, 2012).

resident communities, the purpose of which should be to advise leaders at the regional level (through existing coordination structures) on appropriate implementation modalities, flag key risks and support communication and consultation at local levels.

Recommendations for the regional government

Ensure all levels of government within Gambella are encouraged to take ownership of the CRRF agenda, with adequate human resources made available to lead consultations with affected communities, and to develop and implement a detailed communications plan.

Recommendations for ARRA and UNHCR

- Provide leadership of efforts to develop a more comprehensive communication and consultation strategy for CRRF implementation in Gambella, helping create spaces for open discussion about risks and opportunities with a wide range of partners.
- Create new partnerships to improve the conflict sensitivity of CRRF implementation, working with organisations with expertise in these areas on a comprehensive approach to strengthening this area of work.
- Work in close coordination with regional and woreda governments to identify key risks in relation to each camp-hosting area.
- As part of work under NCRRS to define 'host community' more clearly, commission detailed analysis around each camp in Gambella to develop alternative approaches.

Recommendations for donors

- Make resources available for a far greater investment in communication and peaceful co-existence activities related to CRRF implementation in Gambella, particularly if there are changes to the NGO law at the national level. Do not fund programmes in Gambella that do not demonstrate they have considered these issues.
- Challenge implementing partners on the extent of their analysis of 'host communities' to avoid superficial programming.
- Ensure that national-level plans for increasing economic and livelihood opportunities will create meaningful opportunities on the ground in Gambella that will be accessible to the full range of relevant populations. Build greater bottom-up consultation into these processes.

Recommendations for NGOs

- Use relationships with communities on the ground to strengthen their voice in CRRF strategy and policy discussions.
- Provide conflict sensitivity capacity and expertise, where it exists within organisations, to support the wider refugee operation.
- Develop collective strategies to appropriately shift staffing towards greater numbers of indigenous staff.

Shift from a humanitarian-led to a development-led approach

Leadership of the pledges/CRRF agenda to date – particularly on the ground – has come from ARRA and UNHCR. But the intent of the agenda is ultimately developmental: it is about improving the overall development picture in the region, both to improve the absorptive capacity of local government and to provide greater opportunities for self-reliance for local communities. Past experience confirms that such a shift will never take place if resourcing is primarily humanitarian and short-term, and strategies are being led by people with a humanitarian background. Joint leadership needs to be broadened beyond ARRA and UNHCR. So far, much of the resources that have materialised in relationship to the pledges has been short-term in nature. It should be noted that most of the positive views on integration came from actors that thought it would lead to an increase in development funding.

It is therefore essential that donors and the UN system make a decisive shift in their approach if they are serious about the intent of the CRRF. Part of the problem is that developmental resources take longer to come through the system, so there is an in-built delay to these coming online, but they also tend to be shaped primarily at the national level as this is where developmental actors are based. It might be advisable to start a joint conversation, primarily with the regional government, about development needs in Gambella independent

of the refugees: where the biggest gaps are, what resources might be required and where these could come from. A clearer articulation of the region's vision for future development – and particularly economic development and the creation of alternative livelihoods – might provide a firmer base for the CRRF agenda.

Finally, all those supporting the CRRF agenda should consider what kinds of actions might be necessary to incentivise more constructive joint working and to build confidence on both sides. On the part of ARRA, it might be helpful to make some symbolic gestures to make it easier for regional government actors to work with them: for example, bringing Dimma under the leadership of the zonal office in Gambella, or providing blanket approvals for regional or woreda government officials to visit the camps. On the part of the regional government, they should seek to demonstrate leadership in finding creative solutions to potentially challenging bureaucratic obstacles. Ideally, the design of a process that can lead to the gradual harmonisation of salary scales would feature in this agenda, but this may prove too challenging as a starting point.

Recommendations for UNICEF

- Advocate at regional and national level for a more intensive process to reflect on Gambella's development needs irrespective of the refugee operation.
- Continue to ensure that the approach taken to BSRP implementation is in line with good development practice, and advocate for other key actors to take the same approach, avoiding projectisation.
- Identify and agree confidence-building measures for ARRA and regional government staff within specific sectoral programmes, seeking to obtain compromise from both sides.

Recommendations for the federal government

Invite the regional government to form an appropriate mechanism to provide leadership to CRRF implementation in the region, using existing structures for the coordination of development programming as far as possible. While ARRA's participation will be critical, this participation should be within an existing mechanism led by the Regional Government (rather than the creation of a new one under their control), emphasising the message that the CRRF is ultimately a developmental enterprise.

Recommendations for the regional government

- Take more leadership over the CRRF process, involving all the required stakeholders within the region to avoid accusations of capture by one party or another.
- Develop a well-articulated post-villagisation service delivery scheme which aims to benefit residents, while integrating planning and monitoring with the refugee service delivery system and easing tension with refugees over resources and other interactions.

Recommendations for ARRA and UNHCR

Identify and implement actions to improve regional government ownership over refugee issues, for example increasing access to the camps, reorganising lines of authority within ARRA to bring Dimma under the authority of Gambella and the routine sharing of budgetary information.

Recommendations for donors

- Invest more time and resources in a discussion of development needs in Gambella, and ensure that national development programmes are adequately resourced.
- Improve coordination and alignment of CRRF-related programming behind common approaches and principles, such as improving the visibility of funds and activities to regional BoFEDs.
- Do not fund programmes in support of CRRF implementation of less than three years' duration.

Recommendations for NGOs

Gather lessons learned from work in host communities, particularly around livelihoods, to inform CRRF implementation.

Be both realistic and strategic

Finally, it is important to recognise that Gambella is likely to be the most challenging place to implement the kinds of changes that the CRRF agenda implies. This is not only because of issues around conflict, but also because the sheer scale of the refugee presence in the region means that every action in relation to it is more difficult. This has two important implications: on the one hand, it means that expectations should be tempered as to how much progress can be made in Gambella; on the other, it reduces the relevance of experience elsewhere in the country in terms of what may or may not be successful.

While it would be sensible not to set ambitions and targets for progress in Gambella too high – particularly in terms of integration and self-reliance – it would equally be a mistake to deprioritise the CRRF altogether. All activities and actions should instead be designed to maximise the chances of success and minimise the risks of doing harm, in line with the confidence-building approach suggested above. This will involve finding ways to lower the stakes for key actors in the region so that reforms are seen as less of a threat: for example, there could be an agreement to test new approaches within explicitly timebound periods and with a clear evaluative framework to avoid them being seen as necessarily permanent changes. Large-scale projects with complex governance arrangements are likely to present particular challenges, as has been seen with the Itang Water Utility.

Activities that meet this strategic and realistic approach are likely to be highly localised to specific contexts and sectors. Some possible suggestions that arise from the research conducted for this study include:

- Resourcing the establishment of a new hospital in Itang town might be a suitable 'flagship' project for CRRF implementation in the region, transferring resources to the regional government. Easing the demands on Gambella hospital would have a significant impact for refugees and residents in Gambella town and Itang woreda.
- Working with the regional government and MSF Spain to reopen the regional blood bank in Gambella town, and investigating the feasibility of allowing refugees to donate as well as residents.
- Building on the initiatives already under way in Itang to encourage resident youth groups from areas near refugee camps to register as cooperatives that can take on contracts relating to the refugee operation or CRRF implementation. These could send an important message that 'indigenous' populations can benefit directly from the work of the operation. The research team heard of interesting work in the Pugnido area to develop agricultural cooperatives including both refugees and residents, although only among Anuak populations (KII 39).
- Expanding child protection services for residents in Pugnido town to reinforce the message that refugees are not always prioritised at the cost of residents.
- Working with the Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs (BoWCA) to operationalise the establishment of the Child Protection Task Force at the regional level, with ARRA's full involvement, and supporting it to develop conflict-sensitive, jointly owned and planned initiatives in the region.

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Annex 1 Interviews conducted

Table A1 In-depth individual interviews

Interview code	Date	Location	Sex	Age	Ethnic origin	Status
IDI 1	16/05/18	Kule Camp	F	30	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 2	16/05/18	Kule Camp	F	31	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 3	16/05/18	Kule Camp	F	30	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 4	17/05/18	Kule Camp	M	67	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 5	17/05/18	Kule Camp	M	25	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 6	17/05/18	Pulkot Kebele	M	30	Nuer	Resident
IDI 7	17/05/18	Kule Camp	F	36	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 8	17/05/18	Kule Camp	M	29	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 9	17/05/18	Thierpham/ Pulkot	M	20	Nuer	Resident
IDI 10	17/05/18	Thierpham/ Pulkot	M	45	Nuer	Resident
IDI 11	18/05/18	Kule Camp	M	32	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 12	18/05/18	Pulkot Kebele	F	21	Nuer	Resident
IDI 13	18/05/18	Pulkot Kebele	F	35	Nuer	Resident
IDI 14	18/05/18	Kule Camp	M	–	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 15	19/05/18	Kule Camp	M	–	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 16	19/05/18	Kule Camp	F	28	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 17	19/05/18	Thierpham/ Pulkot	F	20	Nuer	Resident
IDI 18	19/05/18	Thierpham/ Pulkot	M	37	Nuer	Resident
IDI 19	21/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	–	Anuak	Refugee
IDI 20	22/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	–	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 21	22/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	–	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 22	22/05/18	Pugnido 1	F	28	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 23	22/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	–	Nuer	Refugee

Table A1 In-depth individual interviews (continued)

Interview code	Date	Location	Sex	Age	Ethnic origin	Status
IDI 24	22/05/18	Pugnido 1	F	45	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 25	22/06/18	Pugnido 1	M	35	Anuak	Refugee
IDI 26	23/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	27	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 27	23/05/18	Pugnido 1	F	27	Nuer	Refugee
IDI 28	23/05/18	Pugnido town	M	40	Anuak	Resident
IDI 29	23/05/18	Pugnido town	M	75	Anuak	Resident
IDI 30	23/05/18	Pugnido town	F	33	'Highlander'	Resident
IDI 31	23/05/18	Pugnido town	F	39	'Highlander'	Resident
IDI 32	23/05/18	Pugnido town	M	47	Anuak	Resident
IDI 33	24/05/18	Pugnido 1	F	50	Anuak	Refugee
IDI 34	24/05/18	Pugnido 1	F	32	Anuak	Refugee
IDI 35	24/05/18	Pugnido town	F	30	Anuak	Resident
IDI 36	24/05/18	Pugnido 1	M	–	Anuak	Refugee
IDI 37	24/05/18	Pugnido town	M	42	Anuak	Resident
IDI 38	24/05/18	Pugnido town	M	–	Anuak	Resident

Table A2 Focus group discussions

Interview code	Date	Location	Description of participants	Number of participants
FGD 1	16/6/18	Kule RC	F, Nuer refugees	6
FGD 2	17/6/18	Kule RC	M, young Nuer refugees	7
FGD 3	17/6/18	Pulkot Kebele	M, young Nuer residents	6
FGD 4	18/6/18	Pulkot Kebele	F, Nuer residents	6
FGD 5	18/6/18	Kule RC	F, Nuer refugees	7
FGD 6	19/6/18	Kule RC	M, Nuer refugees	8
FGD 7	19/6/18	Tierpham	M, 'Highlander', traders	5
FGD 8	20/6/18	Pugnido RC	F Anuak refugees	10
FGD 9	20/6/18	Pugnido RC	M Anuak refugees	9
FGD 10	21/6/18	Pugnido RC	F Nuer refugees	12
FGD 11	21/6/18	Pugnido RC	M Nuer refugees	12
FGD 12	22/6/18	Pugnido town	F Anuak residents	11
FGD 13	22/6/18	Pugnido town	M Anuak residents	8
FGD 14	23/6/18	Pugnido town	M 'Highlander'	5

Table A3 Key informant interviews

Interview code	Date	Location	Description
KII 1	27/04/18	Gambella	Roundtable discussion with UNHCR staff
KII 2	27/04/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 3	27/04/18	Gambella	ARRA official
KII 4	27/04/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 5	27/04/18	Gambella	Vice-President of Gambella Region
KII 6	27/04/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 7	27/04/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 8	27/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 9	27/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 10	27/04/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 11	28/04/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 12	28/04/18	Gambella	Roundtable discussion with senior representatives of refugee community
KII 13	28/04/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 14	28/04/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 15	29/04/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 16	29/04/18	Gambella	Roundtable discussion with Gambella residents with memory of the 1980s and 1990s refugee operation
KII 17	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 18	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 19	30/04/18	Gambella	ARRA official
KII 20	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 21	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 22	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 23	30/04/18	Gambella	ARRA official
KII 24	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 25	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 26	30/04/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 27	30/04/18	Gambella	ARRA official
KII 28	01/05/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 29	01/05/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 30	01/05/18	Gambella	National NGO employee

Table A3 Key informant interviews (continued)

Interview code	Date	Location	Description
KII 31	02/05/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 32	02/05/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 33	02/05/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 34	02/05/18	Gambella	Federal government official
KII 35	02/05/18	Gambella	Gambella City Council official
KII 36	02/05/18	Gambella	UN official
KII 37	02/05/18	Gambella	International NGO employee
KII 38	03/05/18	Gambella	Regional government official
KII 39	03/05/18	Gambella	Pugnido resident and businessman
KII 40	03/05/18	Gambella	Private business owner
KII 41	03/05/18	Gambella	Private business owner
KII 42	03/05/18	Gambella	Federal government agency employee
KII 43	16/05/18	Kule Camp	ARRA official
KII 44	17/05/18	Pulkot	Kebele government employee
KII 45	18/05/18	Itang	Woreda government official
KII 46	18/05/18	Itang	Woreda government official
KII 47	18/05/18	Itang	Woreda government official
KII 48	18/05/18	Kule Camp	International NGO employee
KII 49	21/05/18	Pugnido 1	National NGO employee
KII 50	23/05/18	Pugnido	Woreda government official
KII 51	24/05/18	Pugnido	Woreda government official
KII 52	24/05/18	Pugnido	Woreda government official
KII 53	24/05/18	Gambella	Regional government official

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