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Refugee local integration: Local governments as stakeholders in the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Uganda.

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ABSTRACT.

In 2016, member states of the United Nations, by consensus, adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in which they also agreed to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The framework, arguing for a multi-stakeholder inclusive approach that includes local authorities, was suggested to be a progressive step in establishing an international regime offering predictability in dealing with large scale refugee movements, placing focus on self-reliance, economic inclusion, and support for both refugees and host communities. The CRRF was inserted in the Global Compact on Refugees adopted by UN General Assembly in December 2018.

This thesis sets out to enunciate the involvement of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF and to explore the role of this stakeholder status in refugee local integration solutions, with Uganda as an exemplifying case of refugee hosting countries implementing the CCRF. As an entry point, the thesis posits the following research question: “As stakeholders in the comprehensive refugee response framework, what is the role of local governments in refugee local integration in Uganda?”. The thesis utilizes concepts including stakeholders, local government, decentralisation and integration to construct an analytical framework employed by the thesis.

The thesis claims that as stakeholders in the CRRF, local governments are relevant in enhancing refugee local integration, but this role can only be maximized if and when the decentralized functions and structures of local government are adequately utilised by other stakeholders in the CRRF including the central government and international community. Local governments, under the right circumstances, potentially play a role in ensuring host communities do not impede the enjoyment of refugee rights by mediating refugee-host community relations. But as it stands; the political, administrative, and fiscal functions of local government in Uganda are yet to be adequately harnessed by CRRF structures.

Keywords: CRRF, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, GCR, Global Compact for Refugees, Refugees, Forced Displacement, Integration, Local Integration, Local Government, Decentralization, Refugee Policy, Triple Nexus, Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAO - Chief Administrative Officer

CRRF - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

DEF - District Engagement Forum.

DEO – District Education officer.

DHO – District Health Officer.

DLG - District local governments.

GIZ - Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

GCR- Global compact on Refugees.

GOU - Government of Uganda.

INGO- International Non-Government Organisation.

LG - Local government.

LGDP - Local government development plan

LC - Local council.

RWC - Refugee Welfare Council

MDAs - Ministries Departments and Agencies.

NGO - Nongovernment Organisation.

NDP - National Development Plan.

UN – United Nations.

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund.

UNHCR – The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the introductory chapter, the author presents the research topic situated in the international refugee regime. The chapter also presents the relevant literature to locate the research problem and gap. The thesis proceeds to discuss the relevance and objective of the research followed by an overview of Uganda's refugee context. Uganda is taken as the exemplifying case of the research. The chapter concludes with a summary of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background.

By the end of 2019, UNHCR estimates suggested that the number of forcefully displayed people around the world stood at 79.5 million. Of the total number of forcefully displaced people, 26 million people were classified as refugees, the majority of whom are in protracted refugee situations in developing countries (UNHCR 2020: 2-10). Flash back to 2015, it was suggested that on average, 24 people per minute were forcefully displaced, majorly accruing from new and protracted armed conflicts in Syria, Burundi, Iraq, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Myanmar, Eritrea, Somalia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Yemen. Large refugee flows in 2015 and the few preceding years accounted for 16.1 million refugees excluding Palestinian refugees. The majority of the refugees (13.9m) were hosted in developing countries, 4 million of whom were hosted by least developed countries that already struggle to meet their citizens' needs (UNHCR 2016: 2, 3, 6, 18, UCDP 2019). Many refugees, migrants and asylum seekers risked their lives, with as many as 4,000 dying at sea, while attempting to reach the developed world. Europe registered over a million migrants and asylum- seekers in 2015 (UNHCR 2016: 22, IOM 2020, Ferris and Martin 2019: 6-7).

In 2016, member states of the United Nations, by consensus, adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in which they also agreed to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The framework was argued to be a progressive step in establishing an international regime offering predictability in dealing with large scale refugee movements. The international community committed to burden- and responsibility-sharing for large refugee movements. This is anticipated to be realized by supporting refugee hosting countries and communities plus the promotion of durable solutions including legal stay for refugees. Member states, taking into account their contexts, retained the prerogative to determine the design and subsequent incorporation of the CRRF into their national development plans. The CRRF was without alteration inserted into the

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) (UNHCR 2020 A: 16-20, Aleinikoff et al 2018: 8).

On 17th December 2018, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) as called for by the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Anticipated to transform the way the world responds to mass displacement and refugee crises, the GCR seeks to ease the pressures on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity (UNHCR 2020b, UNHCR 2019: 1, 3, 19, 20).

The GCR builds on international human rights treaties such as the Universal declaration of human rights, the 1951 refugee convention (UN 1951) and 1967 protocol (OHCHR 2020) for which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a guardian. The CRRF acknowledges that mass displacements have political, economic, development, and security ramifications for low- and middle-income countries that shoulder the most burden and responsibility of refugees.

Overlapping with the goals of the GRC, the CRRF concerns itself with four (4) focus areas: policies and practices for refugee admission, reception, and protection; support for immediate and ongoing needs for refugees and host communities in concert with humanitarian and development actors; incorporation of CRRF in national development planning with emphasis on refugee host communities; and the promotion of durable solutions including but not limited to refugee local integration solutions (Aleinikoff, et al 2018: 8, UNHCR 2020: 17-20).

Albeit non-binding, it is argued that the GCR is a new way of thinking about refugee management particularly because suggested interventions are adaptable to different contexts. It further creates an enabling environment for the engagement of relevant actors across the board involved in managing refugee situations. The CRRF places focus on self-reliance, economic inclusion, and support for both refugees and host communities (Bettis 2018: 625). The CRRF argues for an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach that looks beyond national institutions, civil society, and international organisations, to include local authorities and community leaders among other actors in management and governance of large refugee flows (UNHCR 2020B: 16, UNHCR 2019: 7-8).

1.2 Relevant Literature Review

Among the suggested durable solutions recommended to refugee hosting countries by the GCR, particularly in the CRRF, is local integration preceded by the provision of legal stay for refugees, including where possible permanent residence or naturalization (UNHCR 2020: 19). Few countries on the African continent have been open to formal recognition of integration processes leading up to citizenship for refugees in their national laws. Instead, literature suggests that the majority of African countries have opted for national policies that ensure interim legal stay for refugees (Bakewell 2018: 105, 106, Kuch 2017: 473). These national policies have facilitated the implementation of interventions through which refugees have come to be settled in designated sites (camps or settlements) whence they locally integrate (ibid) and encounter local government structures. Lucy Hovil (Hovil 2007: 602) argues that hardships and restrictions experienced by refugees living in gazetted refugee settlements in Uganda have forced many of them to "self-settle" among their host communities or in the capital Kampala, something that brings them within the remit of local government structures f local government structures. However, literature suggests that this self-settlement is unstable because of the existing gaps between national policy initiatives and local realities, something argued to derail genuine local integration (Bakewell, Landau 2018: 39, Betts and Collier, 2018). There is a tendency for national policy and interventions targeting refugees - usually situated in the international refugee regime - to overlook local authorities and actors in areas where refugees are anticipated to locally integrate. Literature suggests that the lack of involvement of local governments and other local actors does not only potentially contribute to suspicion and resentment towards national officials, but also derails policy interventions geared towards refugee integration (Bakewell, Landau 2018: 39, Betts and Collier, 2018).

The Global Compact for Refugees recognizes the importance of local authorities in refugee integration processes. The compact stresses that it is not only important to include local governments and other local actors in refugee intervention governance structures (such as state, humanitarian, and development agencies) as envisaged in the multi-stakeholder approach of the CRRF, but also to support them through funding and capacity development to strengthen institutional capacities and infrastructure to enable them carry out their functions (Kale 2019: 226, 236). Such functions ought to be embedded in interventions aimed at fostering self-reliance for refugees and expansion of their opportunities to access education, health care, livelihood opportunities, and labor markets, among other services (UNHCR 2019: 7-8, UNHCR 2020: 19-20). Other measures captured by the CRRF where this thesis posits local governments have a role to play include direct

empowerment measures targeting refugees, particularly women and youth. Empowerment here is anticipated to contribute to their livelihoods and the prosperity of their host communities (UNHCR 2020: 19-20).

Literature on local government involvement in refugee local integration in the context of CRRF is scarce. The existent literature on the issue seems to agree that local governments are an important actor. For instance, a study carried out in Turkey argues that local governments in refugee hosting situations have an important role to play in refugee integration processes particularly because they are in many cases the first respondents in large scale refugee movements. On top of enhancing refugee's self-reliance, the research suggests that involvement of local authorities not only promotes collective responsibility but also eases pressure on the refugee host communities. Although Turkey is currently not implementing the CRRF, the above augurs well for the objectives of the CRRF, but as the author of the study argues, the ambiguities regarding the role and responsibilities of local governments derail local integration processes (Kale 2019: 226-227, 232-235, 236).

A study carried out in Uganda indicated that it is unclear how much consultation there was with local authorities, who are those responding to refugees on a daily basis, at the point that the CRRF was adopted (Thomas 2017: 70, Joakim 2018: 47). Nonetheless, in recognition of local government functions in the governance structures of Uganda, local governments were incorporated in the multistakeholder coordination structures of the CRRF in Uganda right from its inception. This is suggested to have enhanced collaboration between the central government, line ministries and district authorities (Crawford, O'Callaghan, Holloway, and Lowe 2019A: 12). However, the CRRF regime in Uganda continues to be embedded in a top-down approach with gaps in decentralising refugee management to local authorities. This is argued to arise from an apparent lack of confidence in the competences and capacities of local governments among other CRRF stakeholders (Crawford et al 2019A: 14, 15, 17).

1.3 Research Problem and Gap

The CRRF has so far mostly been rolled out in developing countries including, in Africa, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. Others include Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama in the Americas, and Afghanistan. In research carried out in Uganda, as pointed out earlier, it is unclear how much consultation there was with local authorities prior to adopting the CRRF. The authors point out that input from local

government, among other stakeholders, should be captured in the early phases of the CRRF implementation (Thomas 2017: 70, Joakim 2018: 47), something that was not done prior to implementing the CRRF. This, even when local governments are emphasized as important actors in multi-stakeholder inclusive approaches such as the CRRF by the GCR, say, in managing durable solutions such as refugee local integration.

The thesis therefore argues that current research shows that little consultation with local government was undertaken before implementation of the CRRF in Uganda, but local governments are still involved and part of the CRRF fabric in Uganda. However, there is a research gap around how they in practice engage with the implementation process and their effects on interventions such as refugee local integration. This research attempts to contribute to filling this gap.

1.4 Relevance of the research.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges to leave no one behind, including refugees. Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals argues for peace, justice, and inclusive institutions (UN 2020). This research attempts to respond to these calls, making it relevant to international policy. This is specifically done through an investigation focused on the institution of local government and its role in refugee local integration, traced from the international refugee protection regime. The research investigates the contributory role of local governments as CRRF stakeholders in refugee local integration solutions, with Uganda as an exemplifying case of a CRRF implementing country.

At the time of writing, UNHCR statistics suggest Uganda hosts 1,450,317; the highest number Africa (UNHCR 2020A), and among the top five in the world, Uganda is chosen because its CRRF structures already include local government, thus offering a good entry point in studying the contributory role of local governments in refugee local integration solutions. Additionally, the research contributes to understanding some of the mechanisms for streamlining the role of local government in CRRF implementation, for implementation elsewhere as envisaged by the Global Compact for refugees. The thesis contributes to knowledge resources on local government inclusion in refugee interventions grounded in the international refugee regime.

Further, the thesis intends to find out whether this contributory role of local governments can be harnessed to bridge the gap between the national policies of CRRF implementing countries and de facto (Hovil 2014: 489) refugee local integration practices, something hypothesized

to contribute to sustainability and resilience of refugee integration interventions. Inclusion of local authorities does not only support refugee integration mechanisms but also the institutional capacity of the countries in question, in line with goal 16 of the sustainable development goals. The CRRF and the GCR recognise that low-income refugee hosting countries require resources for infrastructural development to support refugees and host communities (Khan & Sackeyfio 2019: 697, Dick & Rudolf 2019). This is argued to be compatible with local government development priorities and to this end the refugee compact is an avenue of accessing whole sector financial support to build institutional sustainability (Ibid).

The research therefore contributes to generating knowledge on sustainability and resilience mechanisms of refugee local integration interventions while simultaneously contributing to knowledge within the framework of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (International Council of Voluntary Agencies 2017, Barakat & Milton 2020 147 -163, Zetter 2019: 1-21).

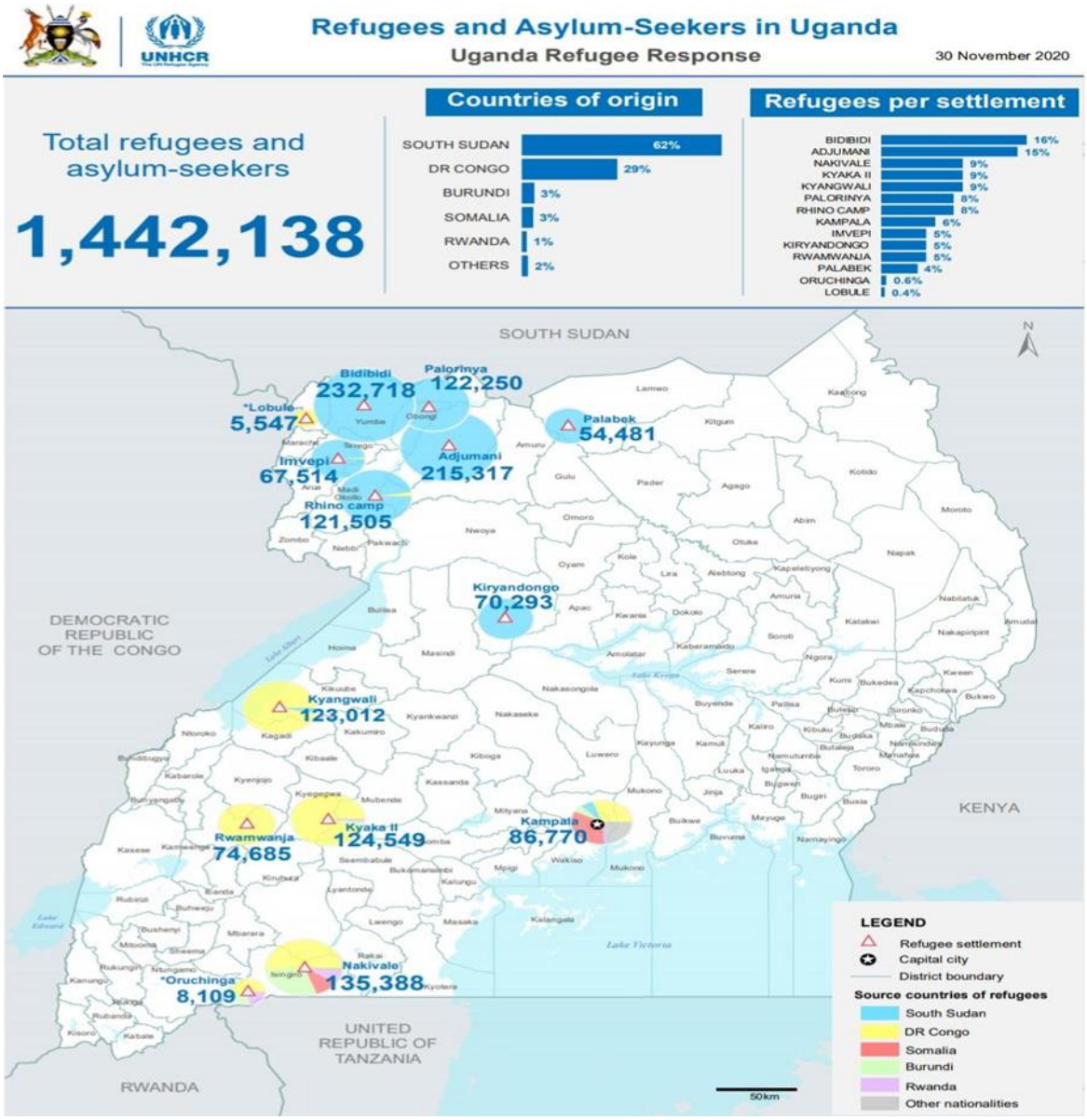
1.5 Research Objective.

The purpose of this study is to explore and enunciate the relevance of local governments as stakeholders in CRRF implementation and their role in refugee local integration. Specifically, taking Uganda as an exemplifying case (Bryman 2016: 62) of CRRF implementing countries, the research investigates local government involvement in the CRRF implementation. It has been suggested that the CRRF borrows from the defunct “self-reliance strategy” originally implemented in Uganda (Betts 2019: 625), and this helps to explain why the country has made considerable progress in the implementation of the CRRF. For instance, it has established a multi-stakeholder CRRF coordination structure involving development actors, humanitarian actors, different Ugandan government ministries, local governments, as well as refugee and host community representatives (Crawford, O’Callaghan, Holloway, and Lowe 2019A: 8-9. UNHCR 2019A, OPM 2020). Other CRRF implementing countries such as Kenya and Rwanda are yet to establish diverse and inclusive CRRF implementation structures like those in Uganda, and as envisaged by the GCR (O’Callaghan, Manji, Holloway, and Lowe 2019: 7- 8, Crawford, O’Callaghan, Holloway, and Lowe 2019B: 6-7). While different factors could explain the variation in CRRF implementation progress among the countries, Uganda is chosen because its multi-stakeholder CRRF design directly involves local governments.

1.6 Uganda's Refugee Context.

Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees and is today said to be the top refugee hosting country in Africa and one of the top 5 in the world (UNHCR 2019 B). During the period of the research, UNHCR estimates suggested that Uganda hosted 1,442,138 refugees, the majority of whom are from South Sudan, with others originating from Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The majority of refugees in the country are placed in refugee settlements spread across eleven (11) districts and the capital Kampala (UNHCR 2020A). Refugee settlements in Uganda are synonymous with local settlements, an approach to large scale refugee influxes wherein refugees are provided with land on which they engage in subsistence farming and other livelihood activities (Crisp 2004: 2). These refugee settlements, first established in 1958 and now totaling 13, are jointly administered by the government of Uganda (through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)) and the UNHCR. According to the Refugees Act 2006 and the 2010 refugees' regulations, refugees in settlement are guaranteed freedom of movement, albeit with restrictions under certain circumstances. Refugees can access employment outside the settlement and have a right to social services including healthcare and education. Refugees have a right to association but limited to non-political associations and trade unions. This legal regime also allows for the issuance of travel documents for movement outside Uganda, an entitlement to justice without discrimination and the right not to be refouled in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, plus the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, to which Uganda is a signatory. However, the legal regime in Uganda does not provide for citizenship for refugees who cannot be repatriated or resettled (Government of Uganda 2006, National Authorities 2010). Consequently, refugees and their children were to remain with a refugee status in the country, and an emphasis on their self-reliance began to take root. In 2015, the government of Uganda introduced the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) aimed at achieving refugee's self-reliance and development interventions for refugee host communities. The STA was hinged on six main objectives including land management, sustainable livelihoods, peaceful coexistence between refugees and hosts, environmental infrastructure, and community infrastructure. The STA was incorporated into the National Development Plan for the period 2015/16 – 2019/20 (Government of Uganda 2015, Government of Uganda 2019B:10) and received financial backing from the World Bank through the ReHoPE Initiatives (UN and World Bank 2017). The ReHoPE Strategy is aimed at strengthening public service delivery and economic empowerment for host communities and refugees and is now suggested to be incorporated in the CRRF.

In March 2017, the CRRF was launched in Uganda. To fit with in the global CRRF agenda and objectives, Uganda set the following CRRF objectives: support government policy and protect asylum spaces, support resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities, expand solutions including third country options, and support Uganda's role in the region and invest in human capital and transferable skills. (Government of Uganda 2019B: 6) The CRRF in Uganda encompasses five pillars, namely: Admission and Rights, Emergency Response and Ongoing Needs, Resilience and Self-reliance, Expanded Solutions, and Voluntary Repatriation (Government of Uganda 2019B: 6)



Map showing distribution of refugee settlements in Uganda. Source: (UNHCR 2020C)

1.7 Research Question.

As stakeholders in the comprehensive refugee response framework, what is the role of local governments in refugee local integration in Uganda?

Sub Questions

1. How are local governments involved in the multi-stakeholder implementation of the CRRF in Uganda?
2. In the context of the CRRF, what is the role of local government in refugee local integration?

1.8 Structure of the Thesis.

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 1, the introductory chapter contains the research topic, relevant literature review, research problem, research gap, research objective, a summary of Uganda's refugee context, and the research questions. Chapter 2 is dedicated to constructing an analytical framework for the research generated from relevant concepts. Chapter 3 presents the methods employed for data collection and discusses the identified limitations and delimitations of the thesis. Chapter 4 contains the results, integrated with the analysis and later discussed in Chapter 5. The last chapter, Chapter 6, concludes the thesis with pointers to areas for future research.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEOWRK

This chapter starts with presentation of relevant theoretical concepts, upon which an analytical framework for the thesis is constructed.

2.1 Stakeholders.

The stakeholder concept can be traced from business science literature, right from Adam Smith. It is suggested that the term "stakeholder", in its modern sense was introduced by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 to refer to "all groups on which an organization is dependent for its survival" (Bonnafous & Rendtorff 2016: 1). In Edward Freeman's 1984 publication, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholders Approach* (Freeman, 1984), stakeholder theory began to take root and the concept broadened beyond the confines of company shareholders to include ethics and management scholarship (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 721). Freeman suggests that stakeholders are "groups and individuals who can affect or be affected" by the achievement of organisational objectives" (Freeman 1984: 25, Freeman 2010: 9).

Stakeholder theory is no longer only applied as a theory in business and corporate strategy, but also applied in other fields such as business ethics, organization theory, political and moral philosophy, political sociology, and political science (Bonnafous & Rendtorff 2016: 7). The usage of the stakeholder concept therefore spans different entities and forms including government organisations, non-government organisations, projects, government departments, media, global governance, and others (Miles 2011: 2, Hemmati 2012, McGrath & Whitty 2017: 723, 736). However, this wide usage of the concept has led to contention around its definition, once resolved removes restrictions, releases the concept from original dependence on financial considerations, and provides clarity for general application, in say, research and governance (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 721, 739, 741, 742).

In the field of peace, a stakeholder is understood as any person or group with an interest in a specific issue, either affected by problems associated with the issue or who can affect the issue in question. The stakeholder concept in this field is part and parcel of negotiation processes, particularly in multi stakeholder processes convening different stakeholder groups in attempts to seek solutions and develop strategies aimed at conflict prevention. (GPPAC 2021: 13 - 14). Multi-stakeholder processes are aimed at bringing major stakeholders into a new form of communication and decision making, in recognition of the importance of equity, accountability, and democratic principles of representation, transparency and participation in good governance geared towards attaining sustainable development (Hemmati 2012: 19, 40-46). This thesis posits that refugee integration could be viewed as a peace process, particularly because, among other aims, it seeks to

prevent or resolve tensions between refugees and host communities. It goes without saying that such tensions have been suggested to lead to communal violence or affect conflict dynamics in a host country (Young, Stebbins, Frederick, & Al-Shahery 2014, Salehyan, Gleditsch 2006, Forsberg 2009, Fisk 2019). However, because the usage of the concept is also traceable to its original use in business studies, the thesis will not limit its conception of 'stakeholders' to that emerging from negotiation processes but retain a more open definition of the term. Further refugee integration, although it includes conflict resolution and peace objectives, also has broader objectives to do with livelihoods and the broader flourishing of communities.

The stakeholder concept applied in this research, defines stakeholders as an entity with a stake (interest) in a subject or activity (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 730). Stakeholders undertake some form of activity with their interest in this undertaking depicted in relation to the activity in question as opposed to other stakeholders' interests. An activity denotes "a task, a project, a program, an undertaking of a corporation or government entity or even a particular instance of a person's behavior" (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 731). Suggested categories of stakeholders include invested stakeholders, which denotes a stakeholder who has some control of the activity in question; contributing stakeholder, denoting a stakeholder whose participation is required to sustain an activity; observer stakeholder, denoting a stakeholder whose acceptance or compliance is required to sustain an activity; and end user stakeholder, meaning the stakeholder who uses the output of the activity (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 740).

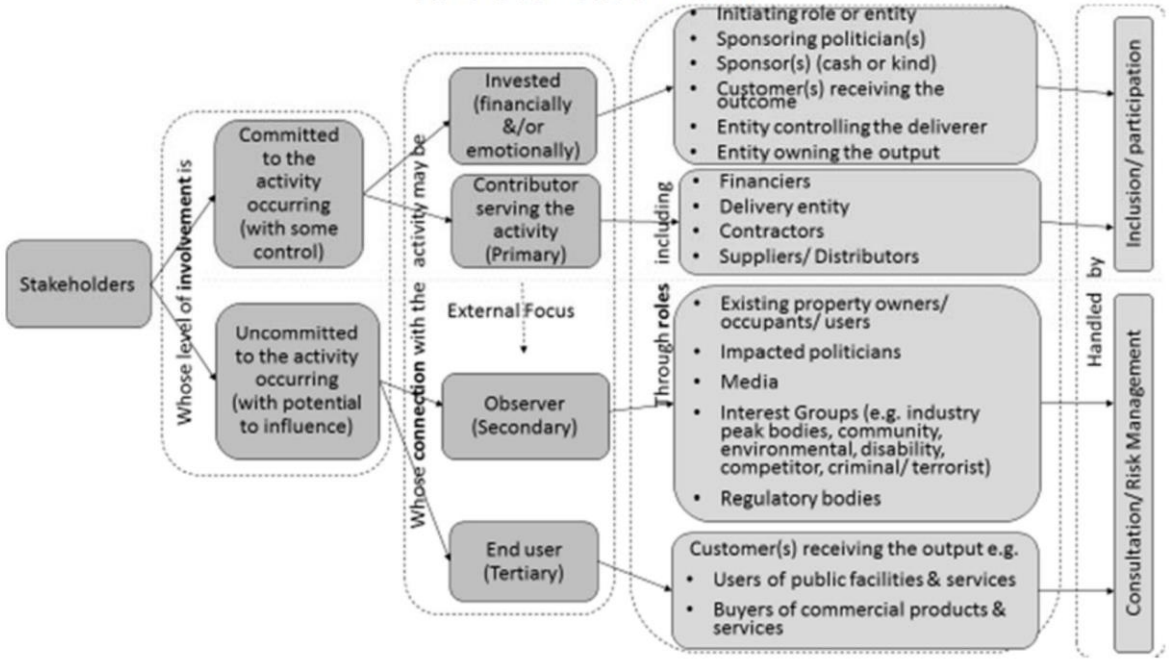
It is argued that because the concept draws from the business oriented joint stock company model, it carries an assumption of customers paying a monetary price for services rendered by shareholders, but this not necessarily the case with entities such as local governments (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 738). For example, people may use services rendered by local governments without paying for them. In the conceptualization of stakeholders applied in the research, all people who receive services from activities that local government engages in are understood as output customers. These outputs have consequences of value to some people on one hand but of no value to others. This leads to another category, referred to as outcome customers (ibid). For example, in the context of refugee settlements, services from an activity meant to benefit refugees (output customers) may also benefit or have consequences for the host community (outcome customers).

The thesis contends that this conceptualization of the concept can be applied to this research context because it is already invoked in the CRRF implementation structure in Uganda. The concept is later adopted to firstly position local government within Uganda's CRRF

implementation structures and secondly facilitate the analysis of local government as stakeholders in CRRF implementation.

The figure below depicts a mapping of the "stakeholder conceptual space" (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 731,741).

Figure 1
Stakeholder Locus of Interest



2.2 Local government.

Local governments can be understood as institutions created by constitutional arrangements or legal statutes to provide services, on behalf of the central government and on their own behalf, to residents of a delineated sub state geographical area (Shaah 2006: 1, 33). The design of local governments and their mandate is contingent on their legal status (ibid). For example, while some local governments are corporate bodies that can sue and be sued, others are not. In unitary states where local governments act on behalf of the national government, their responsibilities are limited to service provision while policy development and oversight are situated at national or provincial level respectively (Shaah 2006: 6).

New Public Management (NPM) literature suggests that local governments are "agents'' of the people (principles) and are thus charged with the role of serving public interest and creation of public value. Public value concerns itself with "measurable social outcomes or quality of life" (Shaah 2006: 16). The roles of formal local government institutions and national government hierarchies intersect in facilitating good local governance through the idea of decentralization.

Decentralization can be understood as “the transfer of powers and resources from the central government to lower levels in the state hierarchy” (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10). Drawing on the subsidiary principle, decentralization spells out the relationship between institutions of governance at the central level and local level through which responsibilities for serving “public interest” and “creation of value” are shared, with emphasis on the level best suited to accomplish such responsibilities (UNDP 2004: 4). Traditionally taxes and expenditure fall under the purview of national governments but Shaah argues that for them to serve the interest of the people, local governments must possess local autonomy over taxes and expenditure to adequately respond to their own peculiarities (Shaah 2006: 18).The decentralization theory suggests that local governments are better placed to make fiscally sound decisions that are responsive to people’s needs because they are closer and understand the concerns of residents (Shaah 2006: 4). The theory further postulates that bringing government closer to the people does not only ensure more political participation of ordinary people but also makes government more knowledgeable and responsive to the needs of the governed, thus increasing relevance and effectiveness of government policy (Ewald, Mhamba 2019:16, Öjendal, Dellnäs 2013). In the general application of the concept of decentralization, it is argued to be a multi-dimensional concept capturing three distinct but interrelated dimensions: political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization (OECD 2019:16).

2.2.1 Political or democratic decentralization refers to transfer of public authority to democratically elected local officials accountable to their voters (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10). “Where such transfer is made to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority, devolution takes place” (UNDP 20O4: 4) and the functions and geographic authority of the local government legally spelt out. Political authority is transferred from the central government to local governments’ elected officials, who carry out direct oversight functions over local executives (Boex and Yilmaz 2010: 13). Through this dimension, local democratic institutions are strengthened, something suggested to enhance public participation and local ownership (Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94).

2.2.2 Administrative decentralization refers to assignment of functions by the central government to local governments through “deconcentration” or “delegation”. Through deconcentration, service delivery functions and authority are transferred from central government authority to a local unit branch. The local unit branch accounts to the central authority. Delegation, on the other hand, denotes redistribution of functions and responsibilities to local units that are not branches of the central authority. Here, accountability is

still majorly to the central unit in contrast to political decentralisation (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, UNDP 2004: 4, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 92). Local governments ensure that service provision and management is brought closer to the people with the anticipation that this will improve quality and quantity of services (Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94).

2.2.3 Fiscal decentralization refers to the transfer of some degree of resource allocation and financial responsibility to local governments (UNDP 2004: 4, Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 92). This is the financial dimension of decentralization through which the central government and international development community avail resources to local governments enabling them to carry out their functions and responsibilities. Both conditional and unconditional grants are made available to the local governments to enable them to provide services in different sectors such as education and health services (Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94). In the framework of the CRRF, this would then support interventions aimed at refugee local integration.

2.3 Local integration.

The thesis traces the policy concept of local integration and its component concept 'integration.' The concept of integration emerged from criticism of the one-sided idea of assimilation in United States scholarship that posited that for migrants to become part of the societies where they migrate, they ought to adopt, among other things, the language and culture of their host society or country (Gordon 1964). Following this criticism, scholars, based mostly in Europe, conceptualized integration, which postulates a two-way process entailing expectations of both host societies and migrant groups in the inclusion of migrants in host society and its institutions (Esser 2004, Bommes et al 2012, Penninx 2019, Alba & Foner 2015). This process of integration is imbued with political, economic, social, and cultural implications for individuals and society as a whole (ibid). However, while some scholars argue that integration is a theoretical concept for use in social sciences (Penninx: 2019, Klarenbeek: 2019, Alba & Foner 2015) others argue that it is a policy concept (Favell: 2019, Schinkel 2018, Hadj Abdou: 2019) for use as an area of study and policy practice. This thesis takes the later position and attempts to contribute to its elaboration.

Generally, literature on integration posits integration as a rights-based inclusion process leading to citizenship for individual migrants or migrant groups. As a policy concept in the developed world, this is how the concept is predominantly applied particularly in the context of

migrant groups including resettled refugees. However, in some contexts of mass forced migration in developing countries, integration processes leading up to citizenship continue to be resisted. For example, in the majority of African countries, interim legal stay is preferred over enshrining integration policies leading to citizenship in national laws (Bakewell 2018: 105, 106, Kuch 2017: 473). To accommodate this scenario, the concept has been reimagined, adopted, and applied as "local integration" by the refugee protection regime, particularly the UN body charged with refugee affairs, the United Nations Agency for Refugees. Local integration seems to emerge as a way to accommodate the practices of countries that don't want to give citizenship, but one might argue that citizenship approach does not necessarily guarantee integration in its truest sense.

The UNHCR posits and recommends local integration as one of the durable solutions for mass refugee movements especially in developing countries. The other durable solutions being resettlement and repatriation, applicable to movement to developed countries and back to refugee sending countries, respectively. According to the Global compact for refugees championed by UNHCR, the durable solution of local integration is defined as a "dynamic and two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population" (UNHCR 2019: 20, Hovil 2014: 488). As the reader will notice, this understanding of local integration is similar to the conceptualization of integration. Local integration is included in the Global Compact for Refugees, particularly the third part of the compact, dedicated to suggested concrete measures to help meet the objectives of the refugee compact.

This thesis concentrates on two different theoretical conceptualizations of local integration. Firstly is "*de jure local integration*", which captures formal processes around gaining citizenship or interim legal stay and accruing rights for refugees. However, Lucy Hovil (Hovil 2018: 29, 39, 45) argues that a document focused approach to local integration undermines refugees' legitimacy to belong particularly because this does not guarantee rights and privileges at the local level (Kuch 2017: 473), something that runs counter to the intention of integration. It is thus argued that the formal institutional approach such as legal stay would better serve the desired local integration agenda if used to reinforce more localized and sometimes informal integration processes (Hovil 2018: 45-46).

This leads us to the second part of integration, *de facto local integration*, recognized by its informality and understood in terms of "informal processes that take place primarily at a local level whereby refugee individuals or groups negotiate belonging in the locality in

which they are living" (Hovil 2014: 489). Karen Jacobsen (Jacobsen 2001: 9) defines successful de facto local integration as a situation where "refugees are not in physical danger, are able to sustain livelihoods through access to land or employment, and can support themselves and their families, have access to education and vocational training". As earlier discussed, the GCR and CRRF emphasizes the importance of authorities including local governments in measures aimed at fostering refugee self-reliance and expansion of their opportunities to access education, health care and services, livelihood opportunities, and labor markets plus empowerment of women and youths (UNHCR 2020: 19-20). This research will attempt to find out the role local governments play in support of such interventions aimed at refugee local integration.

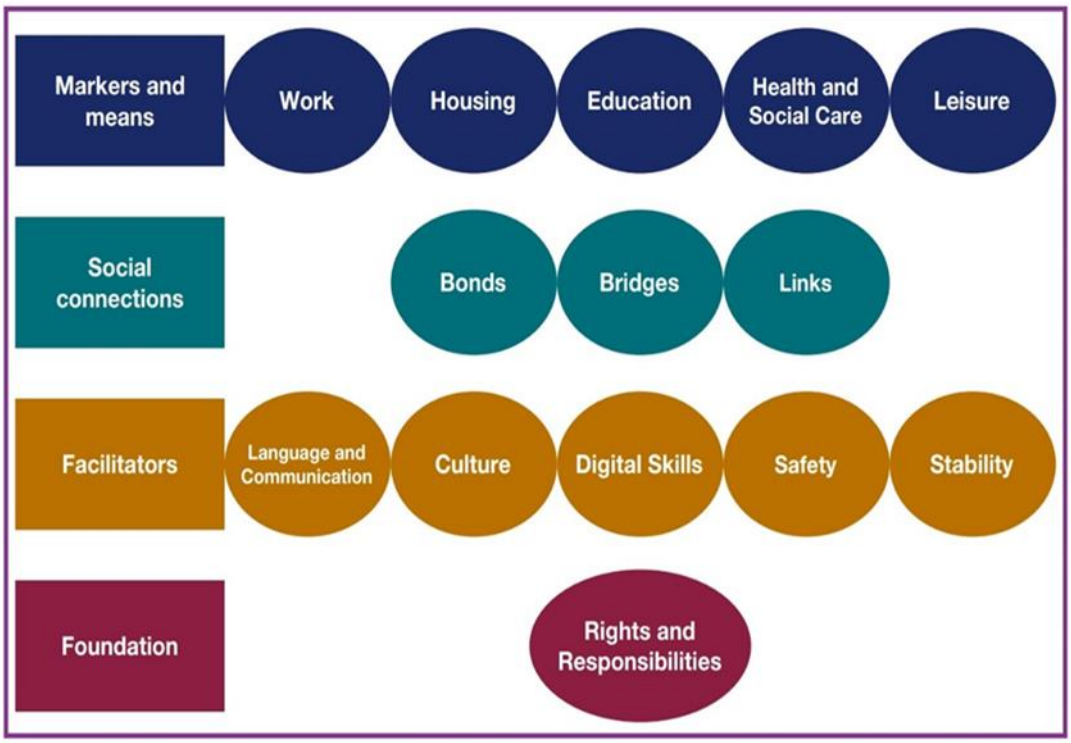
2.4 Towards an analytical framework of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF and their role in refugee local integration.

As argued in the literature review, the history of the policy idea of integration can be traced in close relation to the general idea of integration. Considering that local integration does not offer detailed analytical categories that the author could use to analyze the role of local governments in the CRRF and their relevance in refugee local integration, the author draws on a framework applied to integration. Ager and Strang (2004, 2008) suggest a framework for integration previously used to normatively explain and analyze integration.

FIGURE 2. Indicators of integration (Ager and Strang 2004, 2008)

The integration framework is characterized by four interrelated levels that are further subdivided into ten core domains. The first level, “markers and means” are divided into four domains: housing, health, employment, and education. “Means and markers'' are functional for integration in that success in these domains indicates a positive integration process (markers) while also supporting achievement in other aspects (means) (Ager and Strang 2004: 3, 14, 15, 16, 17). The second level, “Social connections”, captures the importance of social relationships in the integration process. Domains in this level include social bonds, social bridges, and social links (Ager and Strang 2004: 3, 4, 18, 19 20). The third level consists of two “facilitators” for the integration process. Domains include language and cultural knowledge, plus safety and stability (Ager and Strang 2004: 4, 21, 22). The final level, “Foundation” is argued to be the domain upon which the integration process is based (Ager and Strang 2004: 4, 22). This original framework (see figure 2) has been revised by the UK home office and extended to include new domains that capture changing new knowledge trends and the idea of sustainable development (Refer to figure 3) (Home office 2019: 13). To this effect, work and leisure domains have been added to “Means and Markers”, while culture and digital skills domains have been added to the “facilitator” level (Home office: 16-17).

Figure 3: Indicators of Integration (Home office 2019)



The framework is suggested to provide flexible and appropriate indicators used as a research basis for integration policy and practice (Ager and Strang 2004: 2). It is designed to enable general understanding of integration, how it can be achieved and how progress can be measured including at the practice level (Ager and Strang 2004: 5). As an integration theory of change model, underpinned on multidimensionality, shared responsibility among different stakeholders, and context adaptability (Home Office, 2019), the author of this research deems it fit for adoption for research in a Ugandan context that seeks to understand local authorities and their role as stakeholders in the implementation of the CRRF in pursuance of refugee local integration solutions. This is firstly based on the framework's conceptualization of integration as a context specific multi-dimensional process dependent on access to resources and opportunities for refugees plus active "social mixing", and as a multidirectional process requiring adjustment and responsibility-taking by everyone in society including newcomers, receiving communities and government at all levels (Home Office 2019: 11, 20). This understanding of integration is in line with the policy understanding of local integration as a "dynamic and two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population" (UNHCR 2019: 20, Hovil 2014: 488). The conceptualization of integration in the framework is in close alignment with the theorization around the concept of local integration, particularly, local integration being a combination of de jure local integration (concerned with formal processes) and de Facto integration (concerned with informal processes of belonging).

The thesis suggests that local governments are a constituent of the host community and public institutions anticipated to adjust to include refugees in their geographical jurisdiction. Through their administrative, political, and fiscal functions, they enable access to resources and opportunities for social mixing that can be studied through the categories suggested by the framework, namely, means and markers, social connections, facilitators, and foundation. Domains under the level of *Means and Markers* that fall within the focus areas of this thesis are particularly education, and health and social care (refer to fiigure 3). These domains are 'markers'; because success in these domains is an indication of positive integration outcomes, and 'means' because success in these domains is likely to assist the wider integration process (Ager and Strang 2004: 3, Home office 2019: 16). For example, employment provides an income but also supports refugees to get social connections (Ager and Strang 2004: 14). Education is not only a marker of integration but also allows the refugees to bolster employment opportunities, language competencies,

and social connections (Ager and Strang 2004: 16, Home office 2019: 16). Access to health services is not just a human right that refugees are expected to enjoy; good health enables refugees to participate in social activities and other livelihood engagements (Ager and Strang 2004: 17).

Social connections entail refugee's personal experience of integration projected through relations among refugees and between refugees and their hosts (Ager and Strang 2004: 3-4). Domains in this category include bonds, bridges, and links. *Social bonds* capture the experience of a refugee's sense of belonging to a particular ethnic, religious group, or geographical community. Social bonds involve exchange of practical and emotional support among refugees creating strong networks characterized by high levels of trust and reciprocity (Ager and Strang 2004: 19, Home office 2019: 17). *Social bridges* establish social connections and interaction between refugees as communities with their hosts. Through social bridges, refugees and hosts potentially share information, resources and opportunities through interaction, trust, and reciprocity. Social bridges support social cohesion and allow refugees to build networks among their hosts (Ager and Strang 2004: 18, Home Office 2019: 17). *Social links* on the other hand connect refugees to local political processes, services, and institutions. Social links are 'vertical' relationships between refugees and the institutions of the society in which they live, links suggested to be necessary in accessing rights and services, plus the fulfillment of responsibilities to society. This not only allows refugees improved participation in local community affairs but also access to services outside the refugee community. Social connections, therefore, facilitate both individual and collective access to resources (Ager and Strang 2004: 20, Home office 2019: 16).

Facilitators afford refugees the knowledge and circumstances to actively engage in a secure environment within the community. Facilitators of integration according to the framework include language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability and digital skills. Language enhances a refugee's ability to effectively communicate with their hosts facilitating social bridges and links. Cultural knowledge supports cultural understanding between refugees and their hosts enhancing peaceful co-existence and social cohesion. Cultural knowledge includes norms, customs, and expectations. New communication technologies requiring digital skills facilitate access to other people, services, and rights making them important to the integration process. Personal insecurity for refugees, either physical or projected through discrimination, stigmatization and hate speech, constrains refugee integration. This could be mitigated through platforms that exploit cultural knowledge and new informational technology (Ager and Strang 2004: 21, 22. Home office 2019: 17).

The *foundation* domain recognizes the importance of accesses to rights for refugees as stipulated in the law (Ager and Strang 2004: 22). These rights are also embedded in the international refugee regime. As earlier discussed, the GCR and the CRRF are partly grounded in other international human rights treaties. For example, access to health care or education is a right. It is suggested that attitudes of host communities towards refugees are influenced by perceptions of responsibilities, rights, and entitlements (Home office 2019: 17). Local governments may engage directly with their residents to elucidate the laws pertaining to refugees. Local governments may also directly provide support to refugees to understand laws and their legal responsibilities. It is also worth noting that national policies and laws are cascaded to local levels for implementation. Other entities such as churches, mosques, traditional leaders, and community based organisations in the jurisdiction of local governments might directly work with refugees to provide opportunities for integration (Home office 2019: 21).

The framework (Indicators of integration) recognizes local governments as relevant to the integration process. Secondly the different domains of the framework capture all relevant aspects of local integration as applied to this paper. The authors of the framework also suggest that it can be used flexibly in analysis with choice of relevant domains conditioned on available data. The need for new communications technology, for example, is different in places where all applications for government benefits or citizenship have to be done online and can't be done in person, as is the case in the UK from where the framework authors are writing, than in a place where you apply face to face at an office. Obviously access to computers and the internet are still important in UG, but the stakes, and the consequences of not having access, are a bit different depending on the administrative setup. Because the authors are flexible in the use and application of the framework, it makes it adaptable to the research context of the thesis. Therefore, recognizing that the framework has been widely applied in different international contexts including scholarship and applied research (Home office 2019: 13), I therefore select relevant domains from this framework to identify areas where local governments have a role to play in the context of the CRRF, and later use these categories to untangle the role of local governments in refugee local integration as conceptualized in this thesis. The author tries to find out whether local governments play a role in the selected indicators in the context of the CRRF. It is from this role that the potential relevance of local government in local integration interventions can be deduced. It is important to emphasis that the thesis does not attempt to measure outcomes of local government involvement in the selected indicators.

2.5 SUMMARY OF ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Analytical framework developed by the thesis follows the posited research questions and the concepts discussed above. It is structured to firstly capture the involvement of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF, followed by the role of this involvement in refugee local integration.

2.5.1 Involvement of local governments in the multi-stakeholder implementation of the CRRF in Uganda.

Where a refugee hosting local government is also a refugee entry point, such local governments could also be first responders in mass refugee influxes. Going by the conceptualization of "stakeholder" earlier discussed, this thesis argues that refugee hosting local governments are committed-invested stakeholders (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 740) in the CRRF implementation in Uganda. Firstly, refugee settlements are in their geographical jurisdiction, and secondly the design of the CRRF bestows administrative, political, and fiscal responsibilities onto them affording them some control. Therefore, their involvement in the CRRF is analytically best captured in their purview as decentralized units of governance with political, administrative, and fiscal roles, something that is suggested to enhance public participation and local ownership (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, UNDP 20O4: 4, Boex and Yilmaz 2010: 13, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94). Local government in Uganda is carried out under districts and structured along five tiers called Local Councils (LC) with the highest being LCV, an elected decision-making body at the district headed by the LC V chairperson. Below the district level is the Local Council 3, 2 and 1 (Government of Uganda: 1997, Also see Appendix 1). It is here that we trace their involvement in the CRRF.

In terms of *Political dimension*, where local governments have political representation within CRRF organs, local governments are thus envisaged to be engaged in political processes and political oversight in the management of refugee affairs on behalf of the central government and on their own behalf. Turning to the ad*ministrative dimension*, local government, as a stakeholder in the CRRF, undertakes a task, project, program, and the like, with their interest in this undertaking depicted in relativity to the activity in question as opposed to other stakeholders' interest (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 731). Local governments undertake both delegated and deconcentrated tasks, particularly related to provision of services for refugees within their area of jurisdiction. In regard to the *fiscal dimension*, local governments are invested financially because they collect taxes some of which are remitted to the central government. These remittances make part of the resource envelope the national government commits to providing services to refugees. Therefore, they are also financial sponsors through taxes collected and remitted to the central government used to provide

services for refugees. Through this dimension, in the context of the CRRF, they take on financial responsibilities allocated from the central government.

2.5.2 Local governments in CRRF implementation: role in refugee local integration.

From the previous section, it is posited that involvement of local governments in the structures of the CRRF bestows political, administrative, and fiscal responsibilities in managing refugee affairs. This is something suggested to enhance public participation and local ownership of interventions (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, UNDP 20O4: 4, Boex and Yilmaz 2010: 13, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94). It is here that the thesis traces and develops analytical categories for role of local government in refugee local integration.

A. Political Dimension

Through the idea of devolution captured by political decentralization (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, UNDP 20O4: 4), some of the public authority over refugee affairs are transferred to elected local officials of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF implementation. Political authority could be captured in their oversight functions over local executives (Boex and Yilmaz 2010: 13) managing refugee affairs. Through their public authority function, political leaders of local governments, being committed stakeholders (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 740) in the CRRF, are part of policy making process that sets out priority areas of intervention that could either be supportive or non-supportive of local integration. Some of these priority intervention areas could be captured by domains under the “means and markers” the research draws on, particularly education and health. As earlier argued, means and markers are indicative of positive integration outcomes and support other dimensions of the integration process, particularly the social connections, facilitators, and foundation (Ager and Strang 2004: 3,14,17; Home office 2019: 14, 16, 17). Secondly, through their oversight function, it is envisaged that political leaders within local government ensure proper implementation of CRRF policies within their jurisdiction. As elected officials of refugee hosting districts representing their host communities, political leaders are relevant in ensuring local ownership of interventions supportive of refugee integration. Further, their relevance also extends to contributing to the preparedness of local institutions and host communities to integrate refugees within their society. This is based on the understanding that local integration, being a two-way process, there are expectations that the host community prepares and adjusts to include refugees (UNHCR 2019: 20, Hovil 2014: 488).

B. Administrative Dimension.

Through deconcentration and delegation captured in the administrative dimension of decentralization, local governments carry out assignments cascaded from the central government (Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, UNDP 2004: 4, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 92). Based on the principle of deconcentration, service delivery functions in domains of means and markers of integration such as education and healthcare are transferred to line local government sector units that account to the sector ministries or agencies at the central government. Through delegation, other functions are redistributed to local government structures that directly account to the local government political authorities. This is anticipated to ensure that service provision functions are brought closer to the people and in the process improving the quality and quantity of services (Kasim & Agbola 2017: 94). In the implementation of the CRRF, this ensures that refugees and host communities have access to qualitative services and facilities, something that supports refugee integration. In the process of accessing social services, refugees also gain access to formal local institutions and spaces where they interact with members of the host community. These interactions not only build bridges and links to local institutions (also a gateway to national institutions in the case of deconcentrated functions) but also afford spaces for cultural exchange.

C. Fiscal Dimension.

Through fiscal decentralization, resource and financial responsibilities are allocated to local governments by both central government and international development agencies (UNDP 2004: 4, Öjendal & Dellnäs 2013: 10, Kasim & Agbola 2017: 92). As stakeholders in the CRRF, both conditional and unconditional grants are made available to local governments to plan and manage the provision of services in different relevant sectors. Local governments are envisaged to take some responsibility in allocating resources for service provision within means and markers of integration. This reinforces local ownership of refugee local integration interventions and legitimacy of local governments as committed stakeholders in the CRRF implementation.

Figure 4. Summary of Analytical Framework.

LOCAL GOVERNMNET	POLITICAL DIMENTION	ADMINSTRATIVE DIMENTION	FISCAL DIMENTION
STAKEHOLDER IN CRRF	Political representation, policy formulation, Political oversight.	Delegated and deconcentrated implementation functions from central government.	Delegated resource and financial responsibilities from central government.
ROLE IN REGUGEE LOCAL INTEGRATION	Determining participation, access to means and markers, enhancing social connections and facilitators	Provision of services including means and makers, facilitating social connections.	Budgeting and resource allocation to means and markers, among others.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis will employ an abductive methodology (Danermark 2001: 88-95, Bryman 2016: 394) with a qualitative research design (Bryan 2016: 468-469). Through abduction, the researcher captures the perspectives of stakeholders in the CRRF with particular emphasis on the involvement of local government in the implementation of the CRRF, to give a systematic account of local government involvement in CRRF implementation and the relevance of this involvement in refugee local integration solutions in the management of refugee affairs in Uganda. This account draws on the conceptual framework and analytical framework discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis to fulfill the objectives of the research.

3.1 Data Collection.

The primary source of qualitative data used to answer the research questions was semi-structured interviews carried out both physically during a field study trip to Uganda (October and November 2020) and some virtual interviews. There was a challenge with the schedule and plans of the researcher particularly on account of the Covid-19 pandemic and election period, which was marred with incidents of electoral violence. The researcher therefore carried out some of the interviews and follow-up interviews virtually (Please refer to the full list of interviews, Appendix 3). Interviews were carried out with one District Chairman and two Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) representing refugee hosting districts on the CRRF steering group. These are coded as local government officials (LGO). At the CRRF secretariat, interviews were carried out with three (3) officials including the Director of the CRRF, a member of the secretariat recommended by the Department of Refugees of the OPM, and one officer on secondment from the donor community. Apart from the CRRF director, coded as a government official, the rest of the interviewees in the CRRF secretariat are coded CR, that is to say CR1-CR3 (See Appendix 3). I also spoke to CRRF sector coordinators for the Ministry of Local government, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education. Except for the coordinator of the Ministry of Local Government coded as a local government official, the rest are coded as central government officials (See Appendix 3). The researcher also spoke to two people working in one of the sub offices of UNHCR in Uganda. These are coded (S1 and S2) in the list of interviews.

The researcher also made use of secondary materials including the revised CRRF roadmap (Government of Uganda 2019B), Education response plan for refugees and host communities 2018-2021, Health sector integrated refugee response plan 2019-2024 (Government of

Uganda 2019A), Water and Environment Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (Government of Uganda 2019C), Uganda's National Development Plans- NDP II and NDP III, Local Government Act (Government of Uganda 1997), The Refugees Act 2006 (Government of Uganda 2006) and The Refugee Regulations 2010 (National Authorities 2010).

3.2 Ethical Considerations.

The researcher consulted with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology; the government body responsible for research ethics in the country (UNCST 2020). The consultation was aimed at fulfilling relevant requirements for carrying out research in the country. There were no special requirements for me to carry out the research.

For interviews carried out physically, participants were given a consent form that they signed. For interviews carried out virtually, consent forms were read out to them that they verbally agreed to, and a copy emailed to them.

3.3 Delimitations and Limitations.

As one of the delimitations, interviews with local government officials were only carried out with a sample of participants with representation on the CRRF steering committee. To suit the research questions, potential research participants from local governments not represented on the CRRF were not considered. Much as it was pointed out to the researcher that local government officials represented on the CRRF informally consult with their colleagues in other refugee hosting districts, it is probable that their perspectives on the CRRF, local government, and refugee local integration differ. One could thus argue that results on local government relevance in CRRF implementation cannot be generalized to all other refugee hosting districts, pointing to one of the limitations of the research.

The author delimits the research to interrogate two sector integrated refugee response plans. The two sector plans, Education sector response plan and Health sector response plan, are chosen due to the availability of data. Results and analysis of these domains and sectors may or may not reflect what happens in other domains. Their principal usage remains the same, they are means and markers of integration.

The researcher was unable to study evaluation reports of sector response plans because they were unavailable or inaccessible. For example, by the time of carrying out the research, a report capturing a financial tracking exercise for the Education Response plan set to expire in June 2021 was at a stage where comments were being

incorporated and it was unfortunately not made available to the researcher. This would have given insight into how local governments have been involved in the financial aspects of this plan. Nonetheless, relevant information that was likely to be contained in the report was shared with the researcher by some of the interviewees.

Another weakness of the research could be argued to be situated in the integration framework adopted and applied in the research. The difference in economies and democratic practice between countries such as Uganda and the UK, plus the different dynamics of refugee issues and their management potentially makes the applicability of the framework to this research problematic. However, the conceptualization of integration as applied to the framework is synonymous with local integration as understood in this paper, as indicated in the conceptual framework.

Because of the contextual specificity of this research, there will be a weakness in replicability and generalizability (Bryman 2016: 398-399) of results to other CRRF implementing countries. This weakness also arises from differences in the CRRF design for the respective countries, and the constitutional design of government and the legal regime that spell out the functions of local government. However, the study enhances arguments supportive of the importance of local government as stakeholders in CRRF implementation and their relevance, not only in inclusive sustainable refugee integration solutions but also in widening political participation, efficiency, and accountability, in at least some circumstances.

Given the conceptualization of local integration as being a “dynamic and two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population” (UNHCR 2019: 20, Hovil 2014: 488), the research delimits itself to local governments here argued to be on the side of the host society and its institutions. Another weakness of the research accruing from this could therefore be argued to be the absence of the perspective of refugees to cover the other side of integration in line with this conceptualization of local integration. The author suggests that there should be a separate independent research to allow for a proper investigation of the other side of local integration. Further, the thesis recognizes that it misses a gender perspective, arguably a weakness of the thesis. To fully investigate how gender is mainstreamed in the CRRF would require an independent inquiry. To this, end the thesis also suggests that this should be another area for further research.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.

In this chapter, the thesis presents the results and analysis of the research structured along the contours of the analytical framework presented in chapter 3. Each section firstly describes the results closely, followed by an analysis of the respective results. As the reader will notice, the sections are also structured to reflect the research questions.

4.1 Involvement of local governments in the Multi-stakeholder implementation of the CRRF in Uganda.

The entry point in administering interviews as per the interview guide was capturing the perspective of interviewees' general understanding of the CRRF in Uganda and how local government is involved. This was aimed at situating the position of local governments as committed-invested stakeholders in CRRF implementation in Uganda (McGrath & Whitty 2017: 740).

4.1.1 Results

In conformity with the secondary sources, all interviewees except for SI and S2 shared in the understanding of the CRRF as a coordination structure with two main components, namely the CRRF steering group and the CRRF secretariat. The Multi stakeholder CRRF steering group is the national policy body of the CRRF implementation structure, while the CRRF secretariat is the technical arm with a staff consisting of people seconded from the OPM, UNHCR, donors and NGOs.

The steering group at the time of the research was made up of thirty-two members including relevant sector Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), international organisations, Local development partners' group (LDPD 2020), private sector, local governments of refugee hosting districts, and refugees, among others (Government of Uganda 17 -22, also refer to Figure 5). Interviewees pointed out that the steering group is co-chaired by the OPM and the Ministry of Local Government. At the time of writing, local governments of refugee hosting districts were represented by the Local Council (LC) V chairpersons of Yumbe and Kamwenge district, and the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) of Adjumani district, Isingiro District, and Kiryandongo district. According to LG1, the representative of the Ministry of Local Government also represents the interests of local governments.

Figure 5: CRRF STEERING GROUP.

REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT MDA STAKEHOLDERS	REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS.
Permanent Secretary of the Office of Prime Minister	UNHCR
One representative from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.	UN Resident Coordinator
One representative of the Ministry of Local Government	Two United Nations (UN) agencies representatives.
One representative of the Ministry of Works and Transport	One representative from an international nongovernmental organization (INGO)
One representative of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development	One representative from a national NGO or civil society organization
One representative from the Ministry of Health	Three representatives from the Local Development Partners' Group (LDPG)
One representative from the Ministry of Education and Sports.	One representative of the Humanitarian Donor Group
One representative from the Ministry of Agriculture	One representative from an international financial institution (IFI)
One representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	One representative from the private sector
One representative from the Ministry of Water and Environment.	Two representatives from the Refugee engagement Forum.
One representative from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.	
One representative from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.	
One representative from the National Planning Authority	
One representative from the Refugees Department of the OPM	
REPRESENTATIVES OF REFUGEE HOSTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS.	
Three Chief Administrative Officers representing refugee hosting districts	
Two LCV Chairpersons representing refugee hosting districts	

According to LG 1, the Ministry of Local Government offers guidance, monitors, and coordinates local governments to ensure compliance with laws and effective execution of local government development plans. The thesis found that this function is not exclusive to CRRF implementation but rather a mandate of the Ministry of Local Government enshrined in the Local Governments Act part IX (Government of Uganda 1997). Responsibilities of local government included collecting taxes, formulating policies, and providing services. LG1 further suggested that the Ministry of Local Government supports local governments in mobilizing resources to implement integrated refugee response development plans. While there was no disagreement on the mandate of local governments as enshrined in the Local Government Act, LG2 and LG4 subtly disputed LG1's suggestion that the Ministry helps the districts mobilize resources for implementation of CRRF interventions. But this could also be because the sector response plans developed under the CRRF at the national level have not yet been fully cascaded or integrated into district development plans, yet they are mixed up with previous refugee-host interventions, as will be explained shortly.

In explaining how the CRRF works at the national level, GO1, GO2, and GO3 pointed out that the development of national sector response plans for refugee and host communities falls under the purview of Sector Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) that also have mini sectorial CRRF secretariats. Sectorial CRRF secretariats take the lead in developing the sector response, with the main CRRF secretariat coordinating roles during the process to ensure that the positions of all other stakeholders are captured. Based on interviews with the government officials and staff from the CRRF secretariat, triangulated with secondary sources (Government of Uganda 2019 b: 19, 21), national sector refugee integrated response plans are a result of a consultative process with various stakeholders including refugees themselves, implementing partners, development partners, and refugee hosting districts. As such they include district sector priorities. However, the mechanism of these consultations was not clear. For example, when I asked LG4 about the consultative process in his district, he said that consultations were carried out with technical people in the relevant sector departments at the District level but the CAO of the same district who heads all technical departments was unclear what exactly this consultative process entails. The thesis argues that much as the consultative process does not necessarily have to be explicitly laid out, to eliminate confusion and uncertainty, spelling it out makes a difference.

Sector response plans include the "Education response plan for refugees and host communities 2018-2021", the "Health sector integrated refugee response plan 2019-2024" (Government of Uganda 2019A) "Water and

Environment Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities" (Government of Uganda 2019C), and the recently launched "Livelihoods integrated response plan for refugee hosting districts" adopted by the CRRF steering group during the process of this research. GO1 and LG4, CR1 and, CR3 confirm that the Ministry of Water and Environment is also in the process of developing its sector response plan. District local governments lead the process of integrating these national refugee integrated sector plans in their local government development plans (LGDP) and budgetary frameworks. This process is guided by Local government planning guidelines (Government of Uganda 2014) that the researcher was told are undergoing a review by the National Planning Authority to capture the circumstances of refugee hosting districts (Government of Uganda 2019 b: 19). GO1 and LG 1 corroborated this. By the time of the research all the District development plans ran from 2015/16 – 2019/20 in line with the National development plan II. Considering that all national refugee integrated response plans were approved after 2017, it makes sense that the District development plans are not fully integrated with refugee interventions under the CRRF. Based on secondary sources however, the thesis gathers that the National Development Plan II 2015/16 – 2019/20 incorporated "The Settlement Transformation Agenda" (Government of Uganda 2015, Government of Uganda 2019 b:10). Because the SAT contained interventions aimed at refugee's self-reliance and development interventions for refugee host communities, Refugee Hosting Districts included refugees in their plans. However, this was not under the auspice of the CRRF.

4.1.2 Analysis

The involvement of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF is situated in their administrative, political, and fiscal functions. Firstly, refugee hosting districts are represented by three (3) LCV chairpersons and three (3) CAOs on the 32-member national CRRF steering group, the policy making body of the CRRF. It is worth noting that these positions highlight political and administrative decentralization but not financial. To some extent financial is included too because CAOs are accounting officers for districts rather than strictly administrative, but the emphasis of their role within the CRRF is administrative. One could argue that signals that central government is not ready to relinquish control over financial aspects to the local governments. Moreover, the representative of the ministry of local government seems to be posited as part of the local government representation group yet they ideally represent the interests of the central government. That being said, its clear that refugee hosting communities are represented within the national CRRF structures. Whether these representatives effectively represent local government is not clear, something that is anticipated to be addressed with the creation of the District

Engagement Forum (DEF). The DEF will bring together political leaders of the refugee hosting districts for consultations and discussions among each other before presenting their issues before the CRRF steering committee. It is through this forum that the local government representatives to the CRRF steering group will be elected instead of being appointed by the central government structures.

Refugee hosting local governments have no representation within the CRRF secretariat, the national implementing body of the CRRF. Nevertheless, they are consulted by CRRF sector secretariats in the development of national refugee integrated sector response plans such as the health sector integrated refugee response plan (Government of Uganda 2019A) and the Education response plan for refugees and host communities. Still, mechanisms for consultation with the structures of local government are not clearly spelt out or documented. Local governments are structurally committed stakeholders in the CRRF according to the design but are yet to systematically influence the development of sector plans. As it stands, one could argue that their representation in the national CRRF bodies is more about inclusivity within the national set up of the CRRF as opposed to harnessing their functions as local government. The thesis argues that functional involvement of local government is better understood through their political, administrative, and fiscal decentralized functions in the implementation of CRRF in their geographical areas of jurisdiction.

Within political decentralization, elected leaders of local governments hosting refugees are charged with the responsibility of approving and overseeing the implementation of district development plans and budgets wherein sector refugee integrated response plans are included. It was pointed out to the author of the research that these district development plans are aggregates of development plans from lower levels of local government particularly LC III (also known as sub counties). However, the author could not find evidence of integrated sector response plans at subcounty level. They may nevertheless exist but are clearly not easily accessible to local stakeholders. One could argue that this evidence that the consultative process is not working as it should.

The thesis, based on the theoretical literature on local governments, argues that elected political leaders at lower-level structures of local government are best suited to represent the interests of the refugee hosting communities closest to the refugee settlements. To this end, their involvement in the approval and oversight functions of these district integrated response plans enhances relevant public participation, contributes to local ownership and legitimacy of these plans. This will potentially make the local community more accepting of interventions geared towards refugee local integration. District

Political leadership also supervises the technical leadership directly responsible for implementation of interventions within the CRRF.

The involvement of local governments in the CRRF within the administrative realm is best captured through the integration of sector response plans developed at the national level into district development plans and budgets, a responsibility that has been delegated to them by the different line sector ministries and agencies at the national level. Beyond interventions that they directly implement, local governments through their technical departments under the leadership of the CAOs are charged with coordinating the activities of other implementing partners including humanitarian agencies, INGOs, NGOs among others; and ensuring that implementation is in line with refugee integrated district development plans. Therefore, through local governments, service provision and its management are brought closer to the refugees and host communities and ensure that interventions create public value benefitting both refugees and the host communities and, in the process, improving the effectiveness of the CRRF policies.

Regarding fiscal decentralization, the results and analysis section presented the fiscal responsibilities for local governments of refugee hosting districts within the CRRF. The responsibilities were situated in budgeting for and implementing cascaded sector response plans within their areas of jurisdiction. Where they lack enough resources to meet these budgetary needs, it is in their purview to find additional funding. From what the thesis gathers, local governments of refugee hosting districts seem to lack the capacity to find resources without the input of the central government. Further, despite the arrangement that local governments are involved in ensuring that activities by other implementing partners such as NGOs are aligned with refugee integrated response plans in their jurisdiction, they have no direct responsibility over their budgets and resource allocation. One could argue that their lack of direct responsibility accrues from the design of financial control mechanisms of international partners but the point the thesis attempts to make here is that these mechanisms curtail their ability to control allocation of resources where they are most needed in consideration of the integrated response plans.

4.2 Local governments in CRRF implementation: role in refugee local integration.

From the analysis in the previous section, the thesis posits three analytical categories for understanding the involvement of local governments in CRRF implementation traced from the dimensions of descentralisation, namely political, administrative, and fiscal dimensions. To untangle the role of local governments in refugee integration in the context of the CRRF, the thesis structures the results capturing the role of local governments along these dimensions. The results of each dimension are closely followed by an analysis section.

4.2.1 Political Dimension

From the previous section, the thesis indicated that local governments of refugee hosting districts have political representation on the CRRF steering group, the highest decision making and policy body. GO1 said that the CRRF steering group is also charged with the responsibility of setting priority areas, explaining why and when national sector response plans such as Education and Health come into being. On why its only 2 CAOs and 2 LCV chairpersons representing the 12 refugee hosting districts, yet they arguably seem one of the central stakeholders, GO1 responded that it is not possible to have 100% representation of all the refugee hosting districts, particularly given the financial implications. The author could not ascertain the criteria followed in choosing the political representatives of local governments on the CRRF steering group but the dominate hypothesis from data suggests that it is based on recognizing that refugee hosting districts are predominantly found in two geographical regions of Uganda: West Nile region and Southwestern Uganda. The local governments are thus represented by two (2) LC V chairpersons proportionally distributed between the main refugee hosting regions on a rotational basis. LG4 said that he consults his colleagues from other districts in West Nile before attending the quarterly CRRF steering group meetings. As earlier pointed out, at time of writing the chairperson of Yumbe district, where the biggest settlement in Uganda (Bidi Refugee settlement) is located, represented West Nile while the chairperson of Kamwenge district represented South western Uganda. LC V chairpersons are elected political heads of districts according to Part X of the Local Government Act (Government of Uganda 2007). Given the function of the CRRF steering group, their representation on the CRRF highlights their first role as stakeholders in the implementation of the CRRF in Uganda. But the thesis argues that this role could easily be muffled with the national government structures of the CRRF. According LG1, LG2, LG3, and LG4 agree that these political leaders are also supervisors of the CAOs who lead the civil service at the

district level and supervise the different sectors and departments such as Education and Health, something that the Local Governments Act also highlights (CAOs are discussed under the Administrative dimension of local government). All interviewees except for S1 and S2 (understandably so because they are not directly involved in policy processes of the CRRF) suggest that these departments are part of the consultation channels used by national sector CRRF secretariats in the development of sector response plans such as the Education and Health refugee integrated response plans.

LG 1 and LG 4 posit that to address individual district peculiarities within the CRRF, the refugee hosting districts design their own district sector response plans informed by the national sector integrated plans. These sector plans such as the Education and Health integrated refugee response plans reflect domains of integration classified under "Means and Markers" where elected officials of local government play a direct role. When the districts develop sector integrated response plans, in this case, Education and Health a, the members of the District Local Council (the supreme organ of local governments) under the leadership of the Chairperson LC V approve these plans and budgets, pointing to yet another role of local governments in the implementation of the CRRF. The researcher was not sure how the sector response plans could already be integrated and approved in the district development plans, particularly because the five-year district plans were already in place by the time the CRRF was adopted in Uganda. But LG1, LG3 and LG4, point to the third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (Government of Uganda 2020) as evidence that local government development plans are already approved particularly because the NDP III is an aggregate of local government development plans. Still, at the time of the research, the author could not access any of the Local Development plan for the 2020/21 – 2024/25 of the refugee hosting districts. Nevertheless, the thesis agrees that the principle captured here remains the same, local governments as decentralized units of government generate policy and have an oversight mandate over their local affairs. This role extends to the integration of sector refugee response plans of the CRRF in the local government Development Plans.

LG1 pointed out that District Development plans are derived from getting the aggregates of the LC III plans, that is the town councils (also known as sub counties) within a district (See Appendix 1). LG1 and LG4 say that within the district, refugee settlements are located within sub counties superintended over by Local Council III under the leadership of a chairperson LC III. To this end, representatives of local government and the Ministry of Local Government have successfully argued for a platform where the refugee hosting local governments including LC IIIs come together, look at their issues and present well

constituted positions to the CRRF steering group quarterly meetings. Subsequently, with support from the Germany international development agency - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), there will be a District Engagement Forum (DEF) bringing together the political leadership of Local governments. This information was corroborated by CR1. The DEF will also serve as the body through which representatives of local governments to the CRRF steering group are elected but beyond that, the thesis argues that DEF is potentially a viable mechanism through which local governments and refugees are consulted in the development of sector integrated response plans. The reader will notice that the author includes refugees. This is because refugees' administrative systems are to some extent distinct from the main LC system: in refugee settlements, there are Refugee Welfare Council III (RWC III) within the settlement that mirror LC III in local government structures in Uganda (Zakaryan and Antara 2018: 15). LG4 says that "when we invite chairpersons of LC III for meetings, the RWC III also attend these meetings".

Analysis.

As earlier pointed out, financial implications was the major reasons offered for the number of representatives of local governments on the CRRF. But given that that there are representatives of so many central government departments – each of these also has a financial implication but isn't targeted for exclusion on the basis of this, suggesting to the author that there is still a central government bias in the CRRF implementation. Still, the thesis suggests that when local government officials directly engage with refugee leaders (the representatives of the Refugee Engagement Forum) in the quarterly CRRF steering group meetings, they potentially create social bridges and social links, two of the domains under the social connection dimension of the indicators of integration. This follows the understanding that social bridges emerge from refugee–host interactions founded on trust and reciprocity through which refugees and hosts share information, resources, and opportunities (Ager and Strang 2004: 18, Home Office 2019: 17). At the CRRF steering group, local government officials directly come into touch with representatives of refugee leaders and this engagement is a channel through which both the refugee leaders and local government leaders establish networks into each other's spaces, something that could be a building block for building social cohesion. But while these bridges might also give rise to social links connecting the refugee leader to institutions of the host society which bolster access to rights and social services, they do little to translate into social links for the general refugee population particularly because the agenda for interaction is set at the national level. Also, the refugee representatives

on the CRRF were from refugee settlements located in refugee hosting districts with no direct representatives to the CRRF steering group. The thesis argues that interaction between refugee leaders and host community leaders situated in CRRF local government structures such as the proposed DEF better serve the purpose of social bridges and links for the general refugee population. The same goes for facilitators of integration including language and cultural knowledge, customs, and norms. Given the differences in culture and language, in this case, between the refugee hosting regions of Southwestern Uganda and West Nile, platforms for cultural exchange and language skills, argued to be important in supporting peaceful co-existence and social cohesion are better negotiated within local government structures bringing refugee host leaders and local government leaders together, as opposed to the quarterly engagement in the national CRRF steering group. One might argue that this might run counter to the national outlook of the CRRF, but local integration is better reinforced with more localized interventions (Hovil 2018: 45-46). This further reinforces the argument supportive of local governments as committed stakeholders in the CRRF, but more importantly, local governments taking up a leading position in generating and overseeing refugee local integration interventions.

The thesis argues that its worth considering the inclusion of RWC III in the structures of the DEF. Of course, one might argue that refugees already have representatives on the CRRF steering group chosen through structures of the Refugee Engagement Forum embedded in RWC structures. And that representation in DEF spells multiple representation. But the thesis argues that if you are to generate social cohesion and peace from below, it makes sense that mechanisms are established through which refugee leadership and local governments engage at the local level and present agreed positions at the national level instead of generating policy from above. Such policies have the likelihood of not being accepted at the local level or fail at mitigating potential friction that derails refugee local integration. In an attempt at boldness, the thesis goes further to suggest that the issue of multiple representation could be solved by merging the DEF with the Refugee Engagement Forum. More than that, this would reinforce social links at the local level, in the process improving refugee participation in local affairs.

LG4 intimated to the researcher that local communities especially in West Nile have given up their land on which refugees have been settled and expect improvement in service delivery in exchange for their good gesture. GO2 told the researcher that there are instances where health centers are overwhelmed by the increasing numbers of refugees, which worsens the quality and quantity of these services. The same problem may also apply to schools. Access to education and healthcare is a

marker and a means to integration, hence these problems are bound to cause a push back from the local community and as such destabilize refugee integration, as GO1, LG1 and LG4 suggested when we were discussing refugee-host community relations. The thesis argues that with the oversight function of political leaders at the local level, local governments are best placed to ensure that integrated refugee response development plans sufficiently capture the needs and expectations of the people that elected them to office. To this end therefore, through their role as stakeholders, local governments are relevant in ensuring that refugees locally integrate through access to land and social services, and most importantly, that this local integration is not threatened by a dissatisfied host community. This captures the understanding of local integration as suggested by Karen Jacobsen (Jacobsen 2001: 9), which is also one part of the operational definition of integration for this thesis.

4.2.2 Administrative Dimension.

Results indicate that the CRRF steering group has three (3) Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) representing refugee hosting districts. At the time of writing, the CAOs of Isingiro in Southwestern Uganda and Adjumani plus Kiryandongo in West Nile sat on the CRRF steering group. Section 63 of the Local Government Act (Government of Uganda 1997) states that CAOs are the technical heads and heads of civil service of the Districts. They are also the accounting officers of the districts. LG2 and LG3 referred to the Local Government Act when explaining what they do, even in the context of CRRF.

The CAOs also supervise the different sector and department heads at local government such as the District Education Officer and District Health Officer (DHO) who, in the context of the CRRF, are also charged with aligning district sector plans with national sector response plans. From previous results, interviewees indicated that the process of developing National sector integrated response plans includes consultations with the relevant sector departments in the refugee hosting district. Particularly, GO3 says that when they were developing the Health refugee integrated response plan, the CRRF sector secretariat for the Ministry of Health carried out consultations with the DHO and their technical teams in all refugee hosting districts. He says that they did this with technical assistance from the UNHCR. He continues to indicate that after drafting the Health sector integrated refugee response plan, it was shared with the DHOs of all refugee hosting local governments and their input sought. But as LG1 states, “having these plans at the CRRF national level or at the ministry does not capture individual peculiarities of districts”. What LG1, GO1, and GO3 point to is that individual districts must look at these plans and

come up with their district response plans that capture their “peculiar” interests.

GO3 indicates that District Development plans have been integrated with Health sector integrated refugee-host community response plan with approval from the local councils. But as the thesis indicated, district development plans for 2021 to 2026 are not yet readily available. Nevertheless, local governments have been assigned the task of developing district response plans by the central government within the context of CRRF. By virtue of the Local Governments Act, particularly because sector heads and CAOs also account and get approval for these plans from the political leadership of the district - the LCV council headed by the LCV chairperson - the functions they carry out can also be argued to be delegated from the central government. GO2 indicates that embedded in Education sector plans are activities such as sports and music competitions among schools within a refugee hosting district. Where you have schools within the settlements participating in such activities, or have refugees participating in these activities in schools shared by both refugees and host communities, local governments, in such a situation, not only offer spaces where social bridges and links are built but also, these activities facilitate the exchange of cultural knowledge between refugees and hosts.

LG1 points to the Local Government Act to suggest that being the head of the civil service in the district, the CAOs supervise the Refugee Desk Officer at the District even though this officer directly reports to the national office, which is the Refugee Department at the OPM. To further ensure checks and balances, the CAOs are also principal signatories to the accounts of the Refugee Desk Officers at the district. He goes on to suggest that under the CRRF, there are quarterly inter-agency coordination meetings where operating and implementing partners in refugee settlements come together to share information and progress on their activities in the settlements. These inter-agency meetings are co-chaired by the CAOs and RDOs. Inter-agency meetings mirror the meetings that take place at the national level chaired by the OPM. The difference being that the ones at the district level are squarely concerned with implementation while those at the national level are majorly policy oriented.

LG1 and LG4 point to another area, district management teams, which the thesis suggests captures the decentralized administrative dimension within the CRRF. Here, functions have been delegated to the local governments. District management teams comprise of respective district sector technical teams and representatives of all relevant implementing partners within a particular sector. These management teams are headed by the sector heads at the district but under the political oversight of the elected local councils. In their capacity as sector technical heads and leaders of the management teams, district sector heads such as the

DHOs and DEOs organize regular meetings aimed at coordination and monitoring implementation of service delivery in the settlements and host communities in the context of the CRRF policies such as the cascaded response plans for education and health. GO2 indicates that the education Sector response plan in its 3rd year of implementation and points out that implementing partners cannot build temporary structures for classrooms, and that schools should be located at borders between refugee settlements and host communities to ensure accessibility for both refugees and hosts. LG4 goes further to suggest that where an implementing partner or organization does not follow these policies or guidelines, the DEO can cause for the suspension of activities of such an implementing partner. When put to LG1, he indicated that this is possible under the law, but these scenarios have been avoided through regular engagement between local government technical officials and implementing partners. From the above, the thesis surmises that beyond ensuring that refugees receive access to services such as education and healthcare, local governments have the potential to play an important role in ensuring that the quality of services received by refugees is equivalent to the host community, something argued to be a benchmark of local integration. Similarly, they help refugees gain social links and bridges to institutions within the host community. For example, GO3 says that health centers in the refugee settlements and those shared by refugees and host communities have health unit management teams coordinated by the DHO's office. Refugees have representation on some of these health unit management teams.

Analysis.

GO1 suggested that the presence of the CAOs on the CRRF steering group is a space where he sees social links and social bridges emerge between refugee leaders and host community leaders. This is on the account that refugees also have direct representatives on the CRRF. In the process of the two groups engaging in the steering group, relations supportive of social links and bridges emerge. Simply put, refugee leaders gain social bridges and links through their exposure to the CAOs who head institutions of local governments where the settlements are located. Following the logic of the social connections in the indicators of integration framework, one could suggest that these social links and bridges potentially have a multiplier effect with tributaries flowing among refugees and refugee hosting districts, further supporting refugee local integration. However, the author suggests that, just like in the previous section, these social connections and their hypothesized multiplier effect might be difficult to achieve if engagement between the two groups of leaders is limited to the CRRF steering group. Moreover, the CRRF steering group meets four (4) times a year. According to GO1 and L4, they only met two (2) times in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the two refugee

representatives were not from the same districts as the representatives of local governments, LG2, LG3 or LG4. All this makes the potentiality of the CRRF steering group as a source of links and bridges supportive of refugee local integration questionable.

The thesis posits that deconcentration and delegation of functions from the central government to local governments within the CRRF takes place as the results highlighted. To this end, refugee hosting local governments play an important role in provision of services to refugees understood as means and markers of integration. Where these means and markers are shared with the host community, as in the integrated health care system at the district level, the role of the administrative dimension potentially extends to social connections. Beyond receiving services, refugees gain access to spaces from which social links and bridges are negotiated. The thesis hereby posits that when these means and markers are provisioned this way, refugees can directly interact with members of the host community while at the same getting access to the service provided.

Whether this interaction happens is another matter altogether that can be ascertained by speaking to members of the host community and the refugees. That being said, these avenues are established through the administrative role of local government. Through these connections, the thesis contends that refugees potentially gain cultural knowledge of the host community or better still, cultural exchange between the two groups: a key facilitator of refugee local integration. To this end, one might argue that refugee hosting governments, through the administrative dimension of local governments, play a role in reinforcing de jure integration through ensuring or supporting mechanisms through which refugees gain access to rights like education and health, but also potentially contributes to spaces where de facto integration is negotiated.

4.2.3 Fiscal Dimension

The District local governments under the law have the authority to plan, budget, and appropriate resources within their jurisdiction (Government of Uganda: 1997). Resources also include conditional and unconditional grants from government and development partners (ibid). LG1 indicates that other revenue sources available to local governments are generated from local sources such as licenses and points out that because most resources in Uganda have been largely centralized, direct local government contributions to local budgets amount to only 1-2% of the total budgets. LG1 and LG4 further indicated that when local governments generate revenue through local service tax, local hotel tax and especially Pay as You Earn (PAYE), these resources go directly to

Uganda Revenue Authority (URA 2020), a body that collects money on behalf of the central government. Government officials specify that when this money is appropriated through the Ministry of Finance to the different sectors, for example health and education, local governments receive money through these sectors that is used to fund their budgets. The thesis surmises that as committed stakeholders financially invested in the CRRF, local governments make financial contributions to the implementation of CRRF through tax remittances to the central government.

LG1 points out that using this "on budget funding" appropriated from the central government, local governments implement interventions or provide services to refugees such as refugee health programs for refugees in settlements, particularly in health facilities coded as government facilities. Through this avenue therefore, local governments are allocated some fiscal responsibilities to implement interventions including those embedded in the CRRF. But as GO1, LG1 and LG4 argued, these funds are rarely enough to meet the budgetary needs of the local governments. Moreover, local governments do not yet have many other sources of unconditional grants at their disposal to spend on their priority areas. Factor in integrating the refugee response sector plans accruing from CRRF implementation and there is a challenging financial situation for the local governments.

GO1 and LG4 indicate that refugee hosting districts receive additional funding from other stakeholders within the CRRF such as UNICEF to implement programs. LG1 argues that most times, local governments "have no flexibility or fungibility in allocation of these resources because they are earmarked for particular programs". This funding, though to a small extent, offsets some of the budget needs and shortfalls. Nonetheless, following the theoretical understanding of fiscal descentralisation, the thesis suggests that this highlights allocation of some financial responsibilities to local governments in the context of the CRRF given that some financial conditional grants are directly given to local governments by international organisations and donors. GO3 further showed that there is also "off budget funding" by other refugee implementing partners such as World Vision, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children Fund, Lutheran World Federation, Medical Teams International, among others. These non-government organisations fund and directly implement activities in the settlements, but as a condition within the CRRF they show their plans and budgets to the district for approval and coordination to ensure they fit within the District sector plans, arguably pointing to another area of fiscal responsibility. Another approach is where these implementing partners work together with local governments. As LG4 notes, "…. for example, when a school is coded as a government school, when refugees come to the school and overwhelm the numbers, partners

are anticipated to avail resources to cater for the extra number. If partners recruit teachers, build classes, bring furniture etc, they will share the responsibility of the extras, but the government continues to pay salaries of the previous number of teachers. Partners will pay the salaries of the teachers that they have recruited. Some of these teachers are refugees." However, the thesis notices that the former approach, in which non-government organisations implement separately, remains dominant today.

Analysis.

Following the logic that access to means and markers positively affects social connections and facilitators as per the indicators of integration (Ager and Strang 2004: 3, Home office 2019: 16), the thesis contends that financial responsibilities local governments carry out within the framework of the CRRF, particularly in earmarking resources for provision of means and markers such as healthcare, are relevant to refugee local integration. Ensuring that resources allocated to facilities shared by both refugees and hosts, such as education spaces, facilitates cultural knowledge and cultural exchange plus social links and bridges for the refugees. However, the financial responsibility allocated to local governments is quite limited, particularly because local governments do not decide on what to spend on.

From the information from local government officials, the thesis notes that partners do not financially account to local governments operating in their jurisdiction, something that arguably dilutes the fiscal responsibilities of local governments. But even with this "diluted" fiscal responsibility, local governments potential play a role in ensuring that service provision is within the boundaries of the district integrated refugee-host community response plans. Following the conceptualization of a stakeholder, the thesis argues that as stakeholders in the CRRF, humanitarian organizations' primary interest is extending services to their output customers, the refugees. Where local governments have a say in budget allocations of humanitarian organizations operating in their jurisdiction, local governments have an opening to ensure that residents or host communities, the outcome customers, gain from these interventions by ensuring that facilities, like health centers and schools are in line with integrated response plans. The CRRF arguably opens this fiscal role for local governments, with potential to support refugee integration. However, local governments still have little say about humanitarian organizations' budgetary decisions. In the auspice of the notion of humanitarian-development nexus, it would make sense if there they are allowed a larger role in this aspect.

Additionally, ensuring that resources are earmarked for, say, permanent structures, such as classrooms within the domain of education, supports

the thinking that these structures can be used in the future by the host communities when the refugees are resettled or repatriated. This is not only an additional incentive for local governments but also potentially builds goodwill for peaceful coexistence between refugees and their hosts in the meantime. LG4 stated that “as we take care of refugees, we are also looking at scenario planning, looking at a future scenario where refugees leave, what happens to facilities in the settlement. We asked government to code schools as government schools and work out an arrangement of responsibility sharing between us and these partners. For us in Yumbe, by July 2021, all health facilities in the settlement will be taken over by government. Then we have ownership. But also, these organisations will not be here forever. Even sometimes a lot of refugees are in the main district hospital because there is no medicine in the health center in the settlement. The organizations can lack money many times. If we are involved, we can help to sustain these facilities”.

To sum up this section, it is important to mention that the different dimensions of local government do not necessary function exclusively in supporting refugee local integration. As the reader will have noticed, some of the roles captured by the different dimensions supportive of refugee local integration are cross-cutting across the different dimensions leading the author to agree that the different roles captured by the different dimensions reinforce each other.

5. DISCUSSION.

In the results and analysis section, the thesis suggested, in line with the literature, that as stakeholders in the CRRF and based on their function as "co-implementers" of interventions, local governments have the potential to play an important role in ensuring that refugees gain access to social services and connections to the host community and its institutions, something that contributes to local integration. But more relevant to the idea of local integration is ensuring that the refugees' position among the host community is not threated by dissatisfied residents through widening participation and mobilizing support for interventions within the CRRF. Among the stakeholders in the multi stakeholder structures of the CRRF, local governments are in pole position to contribute to this endeavor.

Through the dimensions of local government discussed above, local governments have the potential to generate new information reflecting societal needs and aspirations of people in their jurisdiction. When this information constitutes local governments' agendas and is genuinely taken under consideration in the CRRF, this will ensure collective interventions championed by the CRRF are legitimate and acceptable to the local community. This has direct implications for social cohesion, peaceful coexistence among refugees and the hosts and ultimately refugee local integration.

In as much as the thesis argues that local governments have no direct relevance to de jure integration, they potentially reinforce avenues for the enjoyment of refugee rights as spelt out in the legal regime of the country. This is best achieved when local governments actively mobilize support for refugee integration interventions within the host community, something that reinforces local ownership of interventions in the context of CRRF. It was earlier argued that the disconnect between documented - driven (de jure integration) and de facto integration creates an unstable situation for refugees that locally integrate without full citizenship rights. But with shared responsibility for refugees between central government and local governments, where central government concentrates on de jure integration while local governments concentrate on de facto integration, this will contribute to sustainable refugee integration.

It was noted earlier that there seems to be a lack of confidence among other CRRF stakeholders in local government's capacity to successful implement interventions within the CRRF, something that is traced from the regime being a top-down affair driven by the central government (Crawford et al 2019 A: 15). The fact that the majority of refugee hosting districts have not yet fully integrated sector response plans into their District Development plans lays credence to this claim. The author is inclined to agree with this claim, much as some

government officials claim that capacity within local government exists and only requires fine tuning and availing resources. As its stand at the time of doing the research, the CRRF has not yet fully harnessed the decentralized functions of local government. Officials, particularly the government officials interviewed, argued that the CRRF is relatively new and the process of fully rolling it out takes time and at the same time requires reforms within Uganda's refugee policy. It is also plausible that humanitarian actors are not yet ready to relinquish their position and responsibilities to local governments particularly because they continue to be the dominant implementing agents of the CRRF. But given the increasing number of refugees on account of the protracted nature of conflicts within the great lakes' region, repatriation as an option could be argued to be far away. Yet the growing voices questioning Uganda's open refugee policy among the population will only increase beyond refugee hosting communities, especially given that there are refugee hosting districts such as Obongi district where the number of refugees outnumbers the host community. Further, there is not an endless availability of land for cultivation (Tumushabe and Tatwangire 2017), something that is arguably the basis of the settlement approach in Uganda. This is compounded by evidence that Uganda's self-reliance strategy is not exactly successful yet (WFP 2020:126 -130). The thesis suggests that there is need for further interventions and diversification of pathways to self-reliance to support sustainable and resilient refugee integration, an area where local governments have been argued in the thesis to be relevant.

The thesis continues to argue that when credibly found to be lacking, mechanisms for capacity building within local governments should be expedited and expanded by relevant stakeholders to allow the CRRF to fully take root within local government structures. It is argued elsewhere that local governments should be capacitated through technical assistance to enable them to successfully carry out their functions of planning, managing, delivering, and accounting for local public service delivery (Connerley et al 2010: 11, 12). The thesis argues that the yet to be activated District Engagement Forum would be a credible entry point for expediting mechanisms for capacity building in local governments.

It has been argued that given the need for developing countries that host refugees to access whole sector financial support for building infrastructure and institutional sustainability, the CRRF is a potential avenue for accessing these resources and local governments are important in this process (Khan & Sackeyfio 2019: 697., Dick, E. & Rudolf, M. 2019). Results of the thesis support this assertion. As LG4 states "as we take care of refugees, we are also looking at scenario planning ……. Then we also avoid white elephants". This approach supports the triple nexus humanitarian-development-peace approach to

sustainable development interventions that can be achieved through arrangements like the CRRF as GO1 demonstrated in the following statement: “Different actors in the settlement are now managed by the CRRF and how they implement their programs through this framework. UNHCR- education, health, WFP for food – Humanitarian assistance. But we are talking about the humanitarian–development nexus. Covid-19 has caused a lot of instability in sources of funding for humanitarian assistance affecting a lot of operations. These are discussions we have at the CRRF group. Development actors should work together with humanitarian agencies to ensure that where humanitarian resources are constrained, the development assistance has capacitated structures and local institutions that can sustain humanitarian activities or fill gaps left”.

The thesis suggests that local governments have the potential to play an important role in achieving the overall objectives of the CRRF, particularly supporting national government refugee policy and protecting asylum spaces, plus supporting refugee resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities. However, the research in Uganda also notes the suspicions around modalities like CRRF. Some government and local government officials suggested that there are prevailing suspicions that the CRRF is designed to entirely shift the burden of caring for refugees from the international community or donor community to national governments. That partners are fatigued and want to hoodwink national governments of refugee hosting countries to bear an increased burden for refugees. While they push measures like local integration as one of the durable solutions for refugees, at the same time, you have donor countries continuing to enact stringent migration laws that curtail refugee access to their countries. If these suspicions are true, this is not just a double standard but also goes against the commitment to burden sharing in mass refugee movements hosted in developing countries as espoused by the CRRF and GCR. It is such suspicions that could explain reservations about the CRRF in other refugee hosting countries, for example Tanzania, which ultimately withdrew from the mechanism. It makes sense for the international community to figure out ways of eliminating these suspicions by committing to their obligations.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to enunciate the involvement of local governments as stakeholders in the CRRF and explore the role of this stakeholder status in refugee local integration solutions, with Uganda as an exemplifying case of refugee hosting countries implementing the CRRF. As an entry point, the thesis posited the following research question: "As stakeholders in the CRRP, what is the role of local governments in refugee local integration in Uganda?". The thesis utilizes concepts including stakeholders, local government, decentralization and integration to construct an analytical framework employed by the thesis. It is from these concepts that an analytical framework was constructed. The analytical framework also guided the data collection process.

Based on the results of the research, the thesis contends that in the context of the CRRF, local governments have an important role to play in enhancing refugee local integration, but this relevance can only be maximised if and when the decentralised functions and structures of local government are adequately harnessed by other stakeholders in the CRRF including donors and government. It is plausible, given the understanding of de jure integration as being concerned with formal processes around gaining citizenship or interim legal stay and accruing rights for refugees, to limit the relevance of local governments to de facto integration, and argue that de jure integration is in the purview of the central governments. But as the thesis highlights, the potential role of local governments in refugee-host interventions go beyond implementation functions on behalf of the central government, particularly supporting access, and the enjoyment of refugee rights as spelt out in the legal regime of the country. Local governments, under the right circumstances, potentially play a role in ensuring host communities do not impede the enjoyment of refugee rights by mediating refugee-host community relations and institutions that support them.

This statement from a local government employee captures the situation best: "You see, my brother, the people are not against refugees. The people are angry at these organisations that do not appreciate that they give up so much for refugees to live here, especially land. In West Nile, the settlements are on community land, but now these people do not even consider the local people for jobs. It is a problem. But they are lucky we talk to the people". To this end, the thesis argues that if and when fully utilized, and their functions harnessed, local government institutions have the potential to play a leading role in mediating conflicts between refugees and institutions that support them, and the host communities.

Turning to the theoretical contribution of the thesis, the research was situated in the theoretical debate surrounding the application of the concept of integration. It was argued that while some scholars suggest that integration is a theoretical concept that can be used in social sciences, others argued that the concept is applicable to policy practice and not only theoretical. By tracing local integration to its origins in the general idea of integration and applying it to the CRRF implementation in a developing country, particularly the role of local governments in refugee local integration, the research adds voice to arguments that integration is a context specific policy concept. The concept is heavily reliant on the pragmatism of local actors and the legal regimes of a particular society. But even without explicit legal instruments spelling out its parameters, such as the liberal rights-based approaches to integration advocated by the international community, host societies adjust to play their role in integration out of solidarity with forced migrants. As one local leader says "It is not African or Ugandan to turn away somebody who is running away from danger. Besides, we also have an obligation to refugees because many Ugandans were also refugees at some point in time". Attempts at imposing legalities from above threaten this solidarity. To quote one government official:

> "partners have been trying to push government to adopt what they call naturalisation. They want us to come up with laws that say refugees who have stayed here for 20 years should be granted citizenship or that those that are born refugees should become citizens. I think partners should go slow on that. While the top leadership might understand this approach or express political will, they cannot risk it because it is bound to be misinterpreted by the local communities. People will think that refugees are grabbing their land or being used to grab land. This could be a spoiler of the current refugee policies and destabilise asylum spaces. Already there are many growing voices wondering how many refugees a poor country like Uganda can accommodate. It then becomes dangerous to begin pushing for naturalisation amidst these growing voices of discontent within the population. As it stands, local integration should be left to take its natural course or progression. Besides there are many self-settled within the host communities. Putting it into law will most certainly cause problems".

However, the author of the thesis argues that the above status quo puts refugees in an unstable and unpredictable situation. But instead of attempting to impose legislation from above, local authorities, through local government structures, should take the lead in building consensus and documenting local practices of integration. These could then be the basis and building blocks for national legislation or regulations. The

thesis contends that this is something applicable in other refugee hosting countries implementing the CRRF, especially in an African context.

To conclude, one of the weaknesses of the research the author highlights is the absence of the perspective of refugees on the relevance of local government in their integration. This weakness is evident because of the conceptualisation of local integration being a "dynamic and two-way process, which requires efforts by all parties, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population" (UNHCR 2019: 20, Hovil 2014: 488), yet the thesis does not capture the perspectives of the refugees. The author suggests that further research from the perspective of refugees would capture the other side of local integration. This is also the case for the gender perspective that the thesis misses. The thesis also suggests that it would be interesting to subject the analytical frame on another case of a CRRF implementing country.

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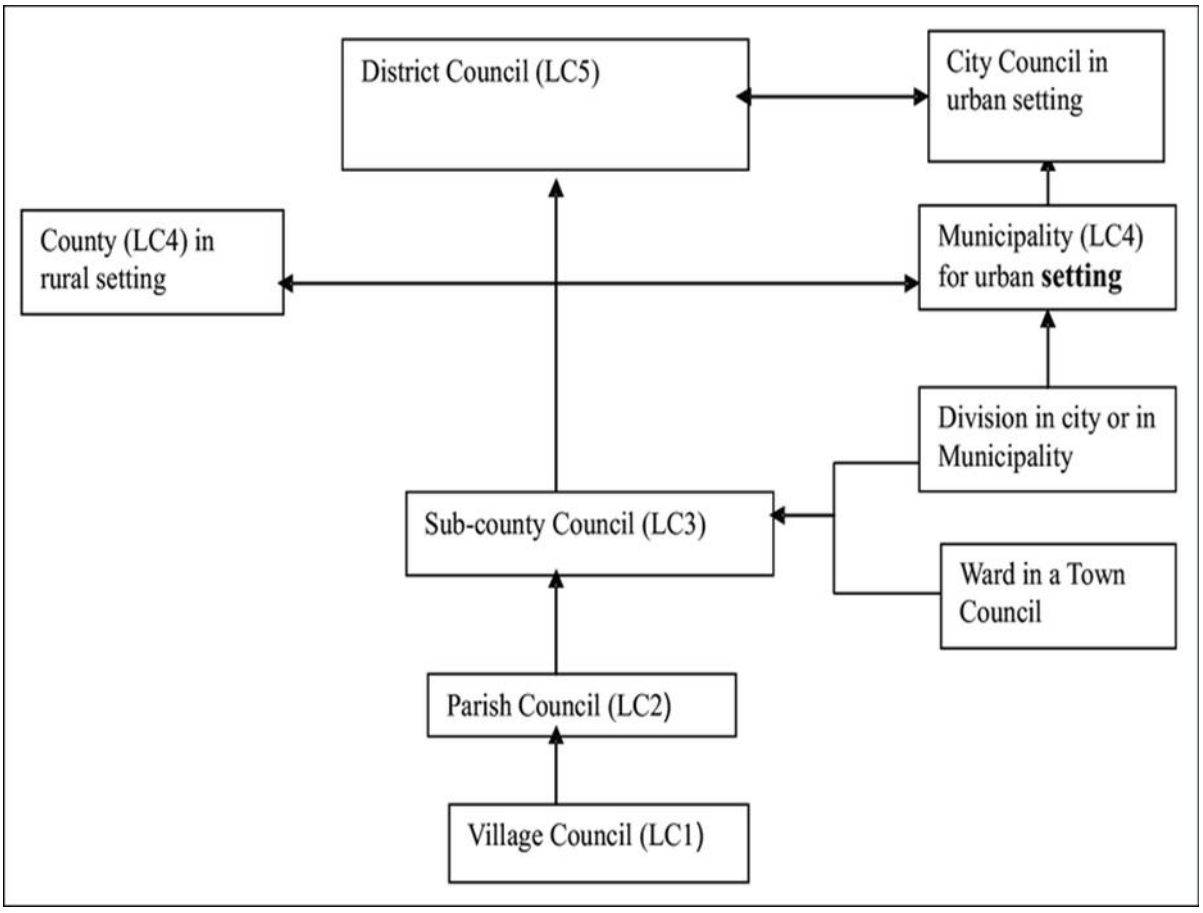
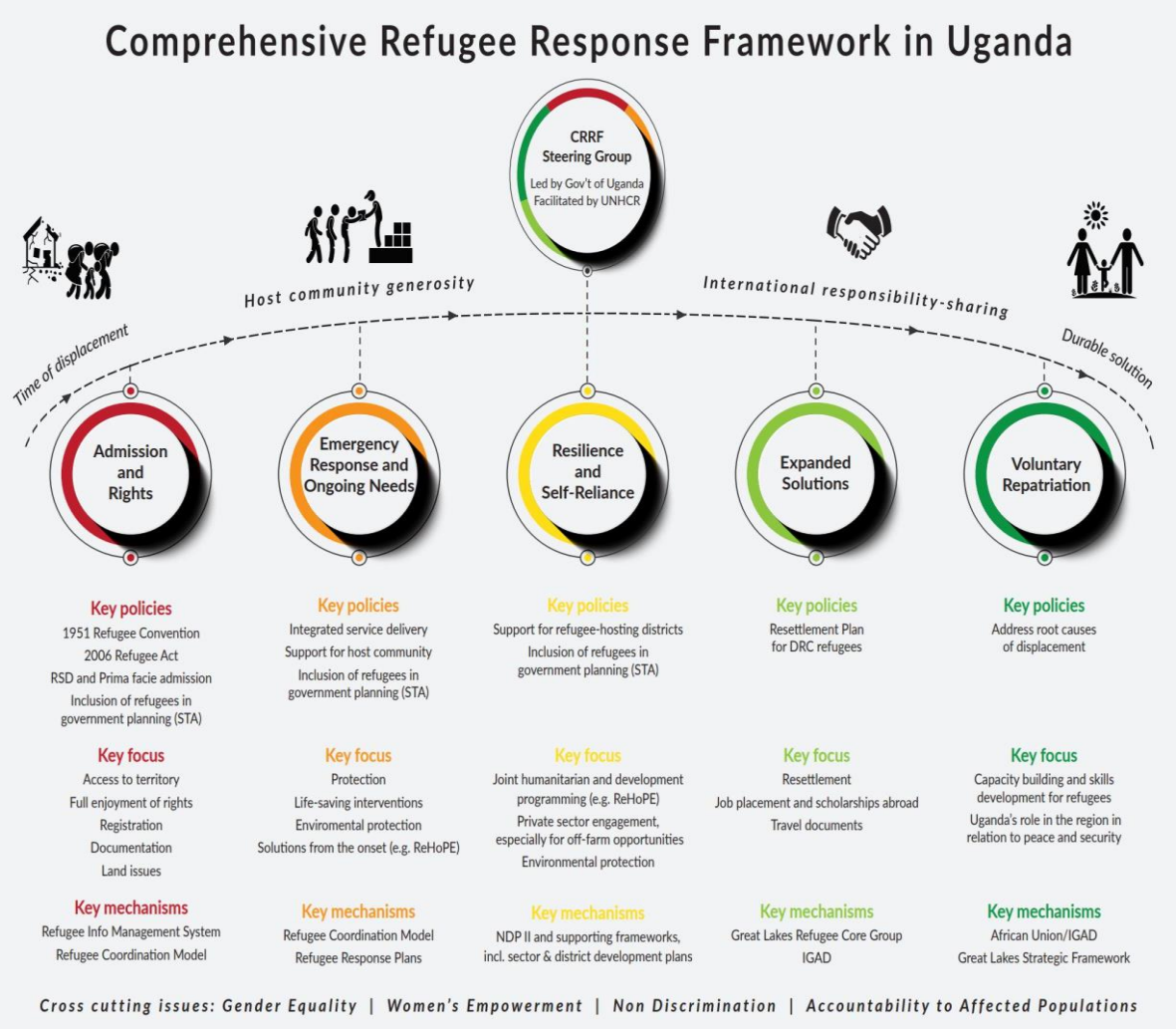
APPENDIX 1: Flow chart of local government in Uganda.



Appendix 2. Road Map to CRRF in Uganda, Summary.



Source: (Government of Uganda 2019 b: 7)

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWS.

CODE	PORTFOLIO	VENUE
GO1	Government Official, CRRF	Kampala
GO2	Government Official, MDA	Kampala
GO3	Government Official, MDA	Kampala and Online
LG1	Government Official, MDA	Arua and Online
LG2	Local government, CRRF	Online
LG3	Local government, CRRF	Online
LG4	Local Government, CRRF	Adjumani
CR1	Humanitarian- Development, CRRF secretariate.	Kampala and Online
CR2	CRRF	Online
CR3	CRRF	Kampala
SI	Humanitarian Organisation worker.	Adjumani.
S2	Humanitarian-Development Officer.	Adjumani.