DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

REFUGEE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE?
Evidence from Uganda

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Abstract

This qualitative study focused on refugee women's economic empowerment in Uganda, a country known for its progressive refugee policies built upon the notion of self-reliance. While one of the aims of the self-reliance approach is empowering refugees, there is a gap in the literature addressing the impact of self-reliance on refugee women, who constitute the majority. The data was collected through triangulation of methods combining policy document anlysis, semi-structured interviews with NGOs and government officials and focus group interviews with refugee women. The findings indicate that although self-reliance is an excellent approach in theory that aims to empower refugees and provide them with basic rights and dignity, there are obstacles hindering the success of self-reliance including; insufficient funding, shortage of land and not reflecting on the complex situation on the ground. The findings also lead to a speculation that implementation of a gender specific approach would be a successful measure to promote refugee women's economic empowerment.

Key words: Self-reliance, Strategy, Empowerment, Uganda, Refugees, Settlements

Abbreviations

CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAR	Development Assistance for Refugees
GoU	Government of Uganda
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
ReHoPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
SRS	Self-reliance Strategy
STA	Settlement Transformative Agena
UGA	UNHCR Global Appeal
UGR	UNHCR Global Report
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission

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1. Introduction

Uganda's long history of providing asylum to refugees dates back to as far as the Second World War, when the country opened its doors to 7,000 refugees from Poland fleeing the violence in Europe (Watera et al., 2017:4). Since then, Uganda proved to be a favourable destination for refugees particularly from neighbouring conflict-affected areas including Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan (ibid). The country has adopted unique refugee policies that are perceived as some of the most progressive self-reliance and empowerment measures in the world ever since. As of March, 2018, Uganda accommodates over 1.4 million refugees from thirteen countries in settlements located in nine districts (UNHCR, 2018: 1). After surpassing Kenya and Ethiopia in early 2017, Uganda is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa. Furthermore, Bidi bidi settlement in Uganda is the largest refugee camp in the world accommodating more than 270,000 refugees (Watera et al., 2017:2).

Uganda maintains a liberal approach to refugee policy through the self-reliance approach, which is the focus of this study. Under this approach, refugees in Uganda are integrated in settlements within host communities. They have a right to work, to access documentation and social services, are free to move and establish businesses and are even allocated with land for shelter and agricultural purposes through the generous asylum policy (United Nations and The World Bank, 2017).

Despite the widespread perception that the refugee policies built on the notion of self-reliance have been extremely progressive, there is a conflicting discourse on this view. While on the one hand, as highlighted by numerous policy documents from UNHCR, NGOs and other actors, that self-reliance claims to empower refugees, other studies have indicated gaps in the Self-reliance Strategy (henceforth SRS). In any case, there is no doubt that the practices of the SRS in Uganda has received a lot of attention by policy makers and scholars. However, research is largely silent on how this approach impacts the largest group of refugees: women and their children. As of last year, at least 86% of the refugees are women and children and women often find themselves as the primary caretakers and breadwinners of their families (Watera et al., 2017: 5). Thus, research on the impact of the self-reliance approach on women is highly needed. Indeed, refugee women are often identified as passive and vulnerable victims of violence in need of support and remain disadvantaged in various social and economic aspects

(Krause, 2014). Since one of the central goals of self-reliance is refugee empowerment, this study will investigate whether self-reliance is a successful approach for refugee women and their economic empowerment in particular.

1.1 Disposition

The study is structured as follows. As a point of departure, the following chapter gives an overview of the SRS and previous research on the implementation of refugee policies and women's empowerment. The chapter also identifies the research gaps that are later addressed in the study. Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework that conceptualizes empowerment and draws particular attention on economic empowerment of refugee women. The following chapters present the research questions and methodology used for this study. Chapter six showcases the findings gathered in the study that is followed by a discussion. The final chapters elaborate on the main issues encountered during the research process and ends with concluding remarks.

2. Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the previous literature on the implementation of the SRS. The review of the literature will further highlight how the SRS has worked in practice and what affect can be seen on refugee women. This chapter will comprehend refugee women's economic empowerment through factors such as refugeeism, displacement, and to capture whether self-reliance can provide an empowering experience for refugee women.

2.1 The Self-reliance Strategy

While the focus of this study is channeled towards self-reliance it is essential to note that Uganda's refugee policy has been forming over decades. The country is a signatory to the 1951 Convention connected to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol of 1967 as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Furthermore, Uganda has not only nationally implemented but proactively pursued the following laws. Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulations further showcases the enshrined rights of the refugees (United Nations and The World Bank, 2017). Uganda's dedication to self-reliance for refugees is included in its five year National Development Plan II for 2016-2020. The Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA), which is part of the five year Plan, is supported by the Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (ReHOPE) which brings together UN agencies, the World Bank, donors, development actors and the private sector. Both STA and ReHoPE are accounted as a core part of the UN-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) for Uganda (Amnesty International, 2017).

The SRS was designed and implemented by the Government of Uganda (GoU) and United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Kampala Branch Office in 1999 (Meyer, 2006). The SRS aimed to empower refugees, allow them to become self-reliant and reduce their dependence on humanitarian aid. The UNHCR's 2005 Handbook for Self-reliance defines self-reliance as "the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a programme approach,

refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance" (UNHCR, 2005a:1).

Various actors including UNHCR, government officials and NGO representatives working with refugees stress the need to reduce refugee dependency as a key goal of self-reliance. In the context of various refugee settlements in Uganda, the UNHCR and the Ugandan government aim to facilitate refugee self-reliance through subsistence agricultural and small-scale market activities. Refugees are allocated a small plot of land upon their arrival to the settlement that they utilize for agricultural and residential needs. As pointed out by the Uganda Refugee Regulations 2010, (section 65) refugees are expected to cultivate the land for personal consumption and, if surpluses exist, sell to traders or in the local market (Ilcan et al., 2015).

Initially, the SRS was developed in 1999 to respond to complex refugee situations, in particular, the Sudanese refugee influx in the West Nile districts of Arua, Adjumani and Moyo (Ilcan et al., 2015). Countless national and district officials saw the introduction of the SRS as an overall development strategy and the means to address broader post-conflict development needs (Meyer, 2006). The principal goal of the SRS was to "integrate the services provided to refugees into regular government structures and policies," by a shift from relief to development (Ilcan et al., 2015: 4). After gaining acceptance in 2002, the SRS has been adopted across the country as part of the UNHCR's broader global strategy of Development Assistance for Refugees and the Refugee and Host-Community Empowerment (ReHoPE) program and extended to other refugee nationalities including; Somalis, Burundians, Rwandans and Congolese in all the refugee settlements across Uganda (ibid).

The program entailed objectives of "empowerment of refugees and nationals in the area to the extent that they would be able to support themselves" and "establishing mechanisms that will ensure integration of services for the refugees with those of nationals" (Meyer, 2006: 20). SRS policy documents conceptualize empowerment as a process towards the ultimate outcome of self-reliance. It is argued that this outcome is beneficial for both refugees and host communities. Given the assumption that self-reliant refugees will transform from being a 'burden' to a 'benefit' for hosting communities, it is also beneficial for the development in the host country (Meyer, 2006).

According to SRS, refugees hold skills and capabilities that should be channeled to support themselves in the host country. Furthermore, these skills can later be transferred to their countries of origin when they return home (Ahimbisibwe, 2014). The strategy highlighted the need to integrate services, such as education and health institutions, for refugees into national schemes. The strategy included the following key elements:

> *1) allocation of land to refugees in designated "settlements" (for both homestead and agricultural purposes), to enable refugees to become self-sufficient in food production;*
> *2) relatively free access of refugees (registered or self-settled) to education, health and other facilities built by the government;*
> *3) the openness and generosity of local communities – related to the fact that many Ugandans had been refugees once and the cultural and ethnic affinities between Ugandans and many of the refugees – which has been a major factor in facilitating refugee integration into Ugandan society. (RLSS Mission Report, 2004/03: V).*

2.2 The Self-reliance Strategy in Practice

As highlighted by previous literature (Ahimbisibwe, 2014; Hunter, 2009; and Ilcan et al., 2015), the SRS has had varied and complex outcomes with a wide spectrum of implications for the actors involved in or affected by the program (Meyer, 2006). Ahimbisibwe (2014) has pointed out how the self-reliance strategy has very good aims and outcomes of empowering refugees to become self-reliant as it reduces their dependence on humanitarian assistance. Through evidence gathered from the Oruchinga Refugee settlement, the study found that through the SRS refugees were able to engage in a number of agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood strategies in an attempt to be independent. The study found that refugees' self-reliance was, however, dependent on a number of enabling factors; including availability of land, favourable weather conditions and local markets (Ahimbisibwe, 2014).

Despite the provision of land and other benefits in the refugee settlements, thousands of refugees in Uganda have chosen to leave the settlements and 'self-settle' amongst the host population, particularly in the capital city, Kampala, and border areas. Although the assistance under the SRS only applies in the settlements, refugees are also expected to be self-reliant in the urban areas. As pointed out by Hovil's (2007) study on self-settled refugees in cities of

Uganda, refugees often face limitations and challenges, but also the opportunities of employment and self-determined lives. "The fact that self-settled refugees are engaged in the local economy demonstrates that they are not, as assumed, passive victims of their fate" (Hovil 2007: 612). There is no doubt that self-reliance can be perceived as taking control over one's own life, yet it is presented with difficulties.

Despite the overall demonstration of the SRS as a successful approach, it has been speculated that one of the outcomes of the SRS indicates "suffering" of refugees as the program entails reductions in food rations and decline in provision of healthcare and community services for refugees (Meyer, 2006). This is further highlighted by a study carried out in Nakivale refugee settlement on humaniawhich found that self-reliance strategies positioned refugees in situations where they had inadequate access to protection and social support. Despite the attempt of the SRS to make refugees less reliant on humanitarian assistance and more independent through market-based initiatives, the SRS fails to consider the prevailing economic, political and social conditions that shape refugee environments. Hence, reductions in food aid, lack of market opportunities and post-elementary schooling competition contribute to refugees' isolation, marginalization and poverty (Ilcan et al., 2015). Developing on this point further, Hunter (2009) argues that reducing aid as an approach to promote self-reliance is negligent and counter-productive and hence it highlights a lack of attentiveness to the real needs of refugees. According to the author, to attain concrete and meaningful self-reliance the UNHCR must fundamentally alter its approach to refugee policy. Hence, the practical importance of refugee rights needs to be recognized, changing the structure of refugee assistance and altering its role in the provision of assistance and advocacy. Self-reliance has the potential to radically improve refugee welfare, but falls short of how it is at the moment (Hunter, 2009).

Similar to previous studies, reports by non-governmental organisations have identified gaps in the SRS policy. A report by *Amnesty International* on the influx of South Sudanese refugees has challenged the assumption that all refugees can become self-sufficient within five years. Uganda's refugee policy is of belief that refugees are able to fully sustain themselves and will no longer receive food aid and humanitarian support which is often not the case. Moreover, what the report identified as the biggest hindrance in Uganda's refugee policies including the SRS is the lack of funding as donors have failed to adequately support Uganda's initiatives including STA and ReHoPE. According to the report it is primarily this factor that has

prevented Uganda from achieving its "ambitious policy and vision of self-reliance" (Amnesty International, 2017: 16).

Additionally, as pointed out by a working paper by *The Refugee Law Project* on self-settled refugees in Kampala, the situation for refugees in urban areas can be also fraught with difficulties. Refugees in Uganda are expected to be self-reliant and while they receive initial assistance in the settlements, the majority of refugees are not provided with such support outside of the settlements. According to the findings, many refugees have talents, skills and abilities that would enable self-sufficiency in urban areas such as Kampala. However, to support refugees' own efforts to become independent and self-reliant, efforts should be made by UNHCR and the OPM. According to the working paper, they should inform and educate members of Kampala's civil administration and civil society concerning the urban refugee population and build the capacity of local service providers to facilitate service provision to refugees (Bernstein, 2005).

The SRS continues to guide Uganda as a host country to many refugees from various countries, but the question arises whether it is sufficient to equally empower all refugees. Uganda's advanced refugee policy and the contribution of refugees to the local economy appears insufficient. Refugee populated areas remain at risk as refugees often experience poverty and vulnerability. There are lack of viable economic opportunities that further contribute to higher overall poverty in refugee hosting areas than other parts of Uganda (United Nations and The World Bank, 2017).

2.3 Self-reliance and Refugee Women's Empowerment

What does self-reliance mean for refugee women? While limited research has been carried out on the impact of self-reliance measures on women in Uganda or elsewhere, self-reliance is included as one of the objectives in the vision of the Women's Refugee Commission. "Our Vision is a world in which refugee and internally displaced women, children and youth are safe, healthy and self-reliant; have their human rights respected and protected; and inform and drive their own solutions and development" (Women's Refugee Commission, 2013). There is no doubt that self-reliance is viewed as a positive approach for refugee women's empowerment, but the question remains what effect does it have on refugee women in reality.

Some of the previous literature on refugee women's empowerment includes a study by Krause (2014) which explores the idea of how refugeeism can have an empowering experience for women. According to the study conducted in Rhino Camp Settlement in Uganda, displacement can give women the opportunity to create or negotiate new and different gender roles in refugee camps and settlements. Women can be provided with new possibilities as a majority of them escape more patriarchal structures in neighboring countries such as South Sudan. Similar implications have been reflected on in the reports by UNHCR, as it is assumed that the gendered process of forcible displacement and settlement in a country of asylum could have both positive and negative effects for individuals and therefore be an empowering or a disempowering experience for women (Krause, 2014). Hence, refugee women in the settlements can experience a potentially positive impact as they can acquire new skills and economic opportunities. For instance, WRC reveals how women in a refugee settlement can gain educational and vocational training that allows them to follow trades that pays more than traditional female trades and thus empower refugee women (Women's Refugee Commission, 2013).

Literature on women's empowerment has often proclaimed how obtaining an income can increase women's autonomy and enhance their economic and social status. It can also increase women's control over the household budget and hence, shift the power relations between men and women (Esplen and Brody, 2007). Similar implications, can also apply for refugee women, furthermore, displacement can economically empower refugee women, in particular in female led households where women may face new challenges, but also gain new opportunities for gaining control over earned income. In these situations, women can be provided with a chance to obtain independence from their male companions. According to Bouta et al., (2005) women's mobility in displacement camps also becomes more difficult to control. Hence, it provides women with new opportunities to gain new experiences and to form links with women's groups. By gaining more independence women are able to acquire control over their own resources and income (Abril, 2009).

Nonetheless, as indicated by Buscher (2010), there is an absence of the in-depth understanding of women's distinct needs and exposure to risks. There is general awareness that displacement affects women and men differently and that women are often exposed to additional responsibilities and burdens. Refugee women are often left "time-poor" and likely to turn to desperate and unsafe measures in order to provide for their families. Hence, there has been increasing efforts to understand how the lack of economic opportunities affect women's

exploitation. Refugee women find themselves resorting to negative measures such as leaving the safety of their homes to collect firewood, resorting to sexual activities in exchange for food and staying in abusive relationships if they cannot generate income on their own. The issue of collecting fuel was raised by a WRC report, which highlighted how women are exposed to sexual violence and exploitation when they go out to collect firewood for household use or to sell. Developing on this point further, they spend long hours to gather wood, and loose time that they could spend on education or income-generating activities (Women's Refugee Commission, 2013). The economic empowerment of refugee women is crucial to ensure their protection, health and the welfare of their families. However, the achievements in refugee women's economic empowerment are limited despite the fact that sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be eliminated without creating safe economic opportunities for women (Buscher, 2010).

It remains unclear what effect exactly self-reliance has on the empowerment of refugees, particularly women. As pointed out by Meyer (2006) previously interviewed policy actors who were involved in the SRS policy process viewed the SRS as a step towards refugee empowerment, linking empowerment to the objective of refugee self-reliance. Therefore, the concept of refugee empowerment is crucial in this context and different approaches of conceptualizing empowerment are important for refugee's power and agency. The stated objective within the SRS is 'empowerment towards self-reliance', although the definition of self-reliance within the SRS poses some difficulties. The following section will provide a theoretical framework that will aim to conceptualize what is meant by empowerment for refugee women paying particular attention to economic empowerment.

3. Theory

The aim of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework. The chapter will begin by defining what is meant by empowerment. This will be followed by aspects of empowerment that are in particular crucial for refugee women. The focus will be on economic empowerment as underlined by previous literature it appears to be crucial for refugee women.

3.1 Empowerment

First, how can empowerment be conceptualized and defined? Numerous studies have attempted to measure empowerment; to highlight comparisons between locations or over time, to underline the impact of specific interventions on women's empowerment, and to stress the effect of women's empowerment for desired policy objectives. However, it is not widely accepted that empowerment can be clearly defined, let alone measured (Kabeer, 1999). Furthermore, there is difficulty in understanding and conceptualising what is meant by refugee empowerment (Meyer, 2006).

One way of thinking about power is the ability to make choices, hence to be disempowered is being denied choice (Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2005). Essentially, empowerment can be defined as the ability to exercise choice which incorporates three interrelated dimensions; resources (pre-conditions) which refers to access and future claims to material, human and social resources, agency (process) which includes processes of decision making, negotiation, deception and manipulation, and finally, achievements (outcomes) of wellbeing. Resources do not only cover material resources in the conventional economic sense, but also the various human and social resources as the means to enhance the ability to exercise choice. Agency as a dimension of power refers to the ability to define one's goals and to act upon them. This is central to understanding empowerment as it is not merely an observable action; but also an actual "meaning making", motivation and purpose that are brought by individuals to their activity and their own perception of agency. Agency tends to be operationalized as `decision-making' in the social science literature, but it can take a number of other forms (Kabeer, 1999).

Development of personal agency created a sense of empowerment for individuals. In other words, this signals a stage of maturation where one is conscious of their own values and chooses actions accordingly. For societies, on the other hand, human empowerment indicates the

development of civic agency which is also a stage of maturation where people are free to choose their actions in accordance to their own or mutually shared values. Human empowerment is, thus, the freedom to pursue individually and commonly valued utilities (Kabeer, 1999).

Together resources and agency constitute what (Sen, 1985; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007) refers to as capabilities. This is people's potential for living the lives they want. Measurement of agency may include measures of both positive as well as negative agency; for instance, prevalence of women's mobility in the public domain, but also the prevalence of male violence against women. However, the form of agency which appears the most frequently relates to decision-making agency. According to Welzel (2013), agency is an inherently emancipatory quality that holds the power to shape reality. People recognize the value of freedoms and act for their guarantee based on the extent to which freedom is found as a useful good (Welzel, 2013).

Correspondingly, values also play a central role in Zimmerman's definition of empowerment. Nevertheless, empowerment can not only be defined as a value orientation within a community, but a theoretical model to understand the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life. Hence, values that underlie an empowerment approach to social change need to be distinguished from empowerment theory. While a value orientation of empowerment conveys goals, aims, and strategies for implementing change, empowerment theory provides principles and a framework for organizing our knowledge (Zimmerman, 2000). Indeed, values are a useful approach of looking at empowerment, but they may present difficulties in conceptualising and measuring women's empowerment. One way of capturing women's empowerment is through 'insider values' which have been most commonly presented through variables measuring `cultural context'. Such studies tend to be comparative in nature and explore how differences in cultural context influence resources, agency and achievements (Kabeer, 1999).

3.2 Refugee empowerment

According to the 'advocacy' approach, refugees possess skills and capabilities to gain independence, integrate into host communities and establish livelihoods. However, these capabilities are often undermined by the international refugee regime and the actions of international aid agencies. The advocacy approach, thus, does not explicitly reference

empowerment, yet highlights it implicitly in terms of how refugee rights and welfare can be better achieved through a framework that allows for refugee empowerment. The understanding of agency from the advocacy perspective is therefore normative; it challenges top-down policy interventions and the view of refugees as passive recipients of aid. Rather than perceiving refugees as over-dependent, living in relative isolation with limited choices, self-settled refugees are given agency and ability to exercise "control and creativity". The 'institutional' approach to refugee empowerment is on the other end of the spectrum which indicates '*empowerment towards self-reliance*' (Meyer, 2006: 30). This perspective is of the assumption that once refugees 'have' acquired agency, power relations do not have an impact and can be ignored in creating 'empowerment'. The institutional approach conceptualizes empowerment based on a notion of agency as a "good" which can be provided to refugees through policy initiatives (Meyer, 2006).

Hence, from the outset, women's empowerment focuses on 'power given to' women and consequently recognises the imbalance of power between men and women. However, gender power relations are dynamic rather than static. Empowerment is a process of change, that is made up of political, economic and social aspects. As pointed out by Freedman (2007) in the context of forced migration, despite women's vulnerability and their need for protection in certain circumstances, it cannot be assumed that all women are 'vulnerable victims' (Krause, 2014)

This assumption is further highlighted by UNHCR's definition of empowerment. Empowerment of refugee women is a primary focus of UNHCR's empowerment discourse. Policy documents and statements by UNHCR link empowerment to input and participation in decision-making. Indeed, according to UNHCR empowerment is a capacity which allows participation, negotiation and accountability towards institutions that influence their own wellbeing (Meyer, 2006). The UNHCR acknowledges that refugee women's empowerment is promoted through 'independence and economic self-reliance and their leadership and decision-making abilities" which are relevant to promote women's empowerment' (UNCHR 2003: 37-38). Furthermore, as underlined by UNHCR empowerment is a "process through which women and men in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, and decision making power, and raise their awareness of participation in their communities in order to reach a level of control over their own environment" (UNHCR, 2001:3). The definition highlights the view that rather than empowering refugees in the local political economy of refugee aid,

empowerment should be achieved in relations between male and female refugees. Thus, it has been suggested that measures such as the SRS empower refugees as they change their perspective on material assistance and they gain a sense of self-reliance over dependency, which further indicates a change in values and economic self-reliance (Meyer, 2006).

3.3 Economic empowerment for refugee women

First and foremost, why is economic empowerment crucial for refugee women? Overall, women's economic empowerment, can help to improve governance, social cohesion, and economic growth (Abril, 2009). Improving women's economic opportunities can also lead to poverty reduction and contribute to development. The World Bank and other actors have recognised benefits for development that are brought by women's economic empowerment not just for themselves but also for their families (Esplen and Brody, 2007). As indicated by the World Bank's Gender Equality Action Plan for 2007-2010 – Gender Equality as Smart Economics 'women will benefit from their economic empowerment, but so too will men, children and society as a whole' (World Bank's Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-10: 2) Similar implications have been disclosed by previous literature and outlined earlier, discovering how refugee women's economic empowerment can help to improve their welfare as well as and their families and to ensure their protection from domestic and gender based violence. As indicated by Busher (2010) in the previous chapter, there have been increasing measures to see how a lack of economic empowerment contributes to the risks towards exploitation. Hence, it can be indicated that there is a correlation between economic empowerment and concealed factors such as economic and sexual violence.

3.3.1 Factors indicative of women's economic empowerment

How do we measure women's and even more concisely refugee women's economic empowerment? One of the earliest attempts to promote the adoption of sex-disaggregated approaches in measuring socio-economic indicators dates back to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The indicators include demographic situations, labour, poverty, educational attainment, health and, recently, access to and usage of ICT. Efforts to trace changes in the economic situation of women led to the development of a number of composite gender-related indicators such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Gender Development Index* (GDI) and *Gender Empowerment Measure* (GEM). Another

attempt to assess changes in women's economic and social standing includes The *Global Gender Gap Index* (GGG) of the World Economic Forum (WEF) which includes fundamental variables including economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment; health and well-being (Kapitsa, 2008). Although some of these aspects such as political empowerment do not apply to refugee women, the remaining aspects are crucial for refugee women's economic empowerment and were addressed by the SRS.

When conceptualising economic empowerment, it is important to go back to the dimension of resources as summarised by Kabeer (1999) earlier. Resources can be comprised of tangible resources such as material and financial assets, and intangible resources such as skills, knowledge and expertise. Intangible resources may also incorporate social capital that incorporates participation in organized social and political networks. There is lack of consensus among different scholars on the role of economic resources in particularly material assets in empowering women. Some depict economic resources as a source of power that affects the distribution of assets within the family, community or even the society as a whole and advocate for these measures in order to improve women's social status and their capability to generate wealth. However, some depict material assets merely as an empowering condition, which does not stress the redistribution of resources but rather the importance of access to resources (Kapitsa, 2008). Hence, economic empowerment for women does not solely depend on economic factors, but rather on the issues that are beyond the economic realm. It is influenced by women's ability to make strategic choices and to transform these choices into desired outcomes (Abril, 2009). Therefore, economic empowerment for refugee women can be linked to other forms of empowerment such as agency in terms of decision-making over their own economic autonomy or a change in value orientation as they become economically independent and escape patriarchal structures.

4. Aims and Research Questions

The focal aim of the research question is to investigate whether self-reliance is a successful strategy to empower refugee women in Uganda. The attention is drawn on refugee women's economic empowerment as it is crucial to improve women's livelihoods in the settlements and in the urban areas. The research question will be guided by the theoretical framework presented above and explore the conditions that improve and hinder refugee women's economic empowerment. Secondly, the research question will aim to capture a bottom-up perspective and investigate whether the success of self-reliance as an effective approach to refugee women's economic empowerment is likely to be perceived differently by governmental and non-governmental actors and refugee women themselves. As pointed by Ahimbisibwe (2014) the majority of the literature on the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS) captures the views from the top, especially from the UNHCR and the GoU, who present the SRS as a successful strategy. Hence, capturing the views from a bottom-up perspective will allow for a more in-depth and comparative interpretation of the issue. Another aspect to note, is that research about the phenomenon of refugee women's empowerment in the context of humanitarian and development aid has not been coherently defined, (Krause, 2014) therefore it is difficult to establish how successful is self-reliance in comparison to other forms of assistance. Keeping these aims in mind, the main research question is designed as follows:

> To what extent is the Self-Reliance Strategy a successful approach for refugee
> women's economic empowerment?

The study will specifically look at what measures if any were implemented to recognise the distinct needs and the complex position of refugee women. Furthermore, as UNHCR was one of the main actors in the process and implementation of the SRS and as empowerment of refugee women is the primary focus of UNHCR's empowerment discourse, it is necessary to investigate whether this is reflected in practice. By looking at policy documents and conducting interviews, the study will investigate how the SRS characterizes refugee women's empowerment. Hence, the main research question will be guided by two sub-questions:

> I. How are refugee women economically empowered through the key elements that
> are set out by the SRS?

II. How have self-reliance measures economically empowered refugee women in the urban areas?

The first sub-question, will look at the key elements highlighted by the SRS, which include: the allocation of land to refugees in designated "settlements", relatively free access of refugees to education, health and other facilities, the openness and generosity of local communities and exploration of how refugee women have been empowered through these aspects. The aim of the second sub-question is to investigate what self-reliance measures have been taken in the urban areas to economically empower refugee women. This aspect is crucial to understand the economic empowerment of refugee women as many refugees choose to leave the settlements and fend for themselves in the urban areas. While the key elements of the SRS only apply in the settlements, refugees are expected to be self-reliant and support themselves even if they choose to move to the urban areas.

5. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present and justify the methodology used for the data collection. The structure of this chapter is outlined as follows. It will begin by presenting the case selection for the research design that will be followed by a discussion of the chosen material. The chapter will then present the process and documents used for the policy document analysis first that will be followed by the interview procedure.

5.1 Case selection

Uganda has been selected as a single case study due to its unique and progressive approach to refugee management that is built upon the notion of self-reliance. Uganda has been often depicted as a country with the most progressive and empowering refugee policies in the world. Ugandan settlements are often made up of organized villages, churches, small markets and other facilities. These aspects of community life lead to a distinction between "camp" and "settlement," by government and camp officials preferring to refer to refugee hosting areas as settlements rather than camps. Settlements indicate a notable departure from camps as they are considered as more humane and more enabling for refugees to develop their capacities and to become independent and self-reliant (Ilcan et al., 2015). Reports on Uganda's policies have showcased an exemplary refugee protection environment that has allowed refugees to increasingly enjoy their rights and to live a normal life that resembles that of the citizens of the country. Uganda's refugee policies have often been depicted as progressive and both economically and socially advantageous not only for refugees but also for the host communities. The ideology behind refugee management is to protect the dignity of refugees and set out opportunities for refugees to become self-reliant. These laws and freedom combined with the settlement approach provide refugees with opportunities for normality, and self-reliance (United Nations and The World Bank, 2017).

Uganda's refugee policies are unique in the African context in comparison to its neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, where refugees are confined in the camps and their movement is restricted as they cannot leave without permission. For instance, Kenya's refugee laws have been criticised as they provide for the right to work and access work permits; but restrict the movement of refugees, where they cannot leave without authorization. Refugees

who choose to break these laws are subjected to penalties such as a six-month jail sentence or a fine of 20,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately USD 200), if not both penalties (Watera et al.,2017). On the contrary, Uganda's policies are built upon inclusion rather than marginalisation, it does not coerce refugees into camps, but rather upholds their rights to work, to gain education and to move without restrictions (Clements et al., 2006).

5.2 Material

The material for this study is collected solely through qualitative methodology. In comparison to quantitative methods, qualitative methodology does not focus on numerical representativity, but rather a more descriptive approach that aims to deepen the understanding of a given problem (Queirós et al., 2017). Hence, given the nature of the study, a qualitative approach is more suitable to get an in-depth understanding of refugee women's economic empowerment through self-reliance. Moreover, a qualitative approach incorporates the recognition and analysis of different perspectives; reflection that assists the process of knowledge production; and a diversity of approaches and methods (Flick, 2010). The qualitative approach in this research design, thus enables one to gain perspectives from different actors involved in the policy process and incorporate methodology that consists of semi-structured and focus group interviews as well as policy document analysis.

The core objective of this data collection method mentioned above is to investigate to what extent self-reliance is a successful approach for economically empowering refugee women. For the purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews are used in combination with focus group interviews and policy document analysis as a means of triangulation. Denzin (1970) defines triangulation as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (Denzin,1970: 291). This method as pointed out by Eisner (1991) provides evidence that breeds credibility and thus reduces the impact of potential biases (Bowen, 2009). Hence, semi-structured and focus group interviews are accompanied by policy document analysis. The role of policy documents in this study is the exploration of the key elements of the SRS and to investigate whether the strategy has reflected the distinct needs of refugee women. Moreover, policy documents enabled tracing changes and improvements in the SRS over time. On the contrary, semi-structured and focus group interviews presented a more in-depth perspective of refugee women's economic empowerment, and also through a different lens.

5.3 Policy Document Analysis

As conceptualised by Wolff (2004) documents "serve as a record or piece of evidence of an event or fact, occupy a prominent position in modern societies" (Wolff, 2004: 284). Documents can be referred to as standardized artefacts in so far as they usually appear in particular formats; including notes, annual reports and even expert opinions. Hence, document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents that entails examination and interpretation of data to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009).

The role of the policy document analysis in this study is to gather supplementary research data. As pointed out by Bowen (2009), insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base, thus it is an important contribution to the data derived from the interviews. Furthermore, documents can provide a measure of tracing changes and development (Bowen, 2009). In more concrete terms, it would be more difficult to track changes in the progress and adjustments of the SRS from the interview data alone. For the purpose of this particular study reports were used for the data collection and allowed to investigate to what extent refugee women's distinct needs and the steps towards their economic empowerment is reflected by the key actors involved.

5.3.1 Selection of the documents

First and foremost, the availability of the documents that focus solely on the SRS is relatively limited. Hence, as opposed to the data collected from the interviews, policy document analysis is capturing a top-down perspective from the actors that were involved in the introduction and implementation of the SRS. On the contrary, documents were retrieved with no restrictions as they can be accessed online by the public domain.

The policy document analysis in this study incorporates reports that were published solely by UNHCR or in cooperation and support of GoU, UN or the World Bank. The reports consist of both early publications that were released for the purpose to review the recommendations and highlight the progress of the SRS and more recent documents, that incorporate current strategies. The more recent reports applied in this research include *Refugee and host population empowerment strategic framework* (RehoPE) and the *Comprehensive Refugee Response*

Framework (CRRF) that have incorporated self-reliance measures that continue to guide refugee policy discourse in Uganda.

The policy analysis is accompanied by the UNHCR Global Reports (henceforth UGR) and UNHCR Global Appeal Reports (UGA) on Uganda. Although the following reports do not solely focus on the SRS or the recent strategies mentioned above, the reports were chosen for the analysis as they consist of a yearly overview of the main implications and objectives in Uganda's refugee policy discourse. More importantly, the reports were published by the UNHCR, an organisation that was behind the introduction and implementation of the SRS. A more detailed list of documents is outlined in the later section.

5.3.2 Analysing Documents

According to Bowen (2009) document analysis is combined of skimming - a superficial examination, reading - a thorough examination, and interpretation of the collected material. This process combines both elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. Firstly, content analysis involves organising information into categories related to the central research questions. For the purpose of this research, three categories were constructed before commencing the document analysis, which include self-reliance policy, empowerment and SGBV. This method also entailed a first-pass document review, where relevant passages of text were identified in the documents. The data from policy documents and interview transcripts progressed towards the identification of overarching themes. Thus the themes that emerged in the interview transcripts; such as exploitation, the future of self-reliance, humanitarian aid vs. self-reliance etc. were applied when looking at the content of the policy documents (Bowen, 2009).

5.3.3 List of policy documents:

Date of Publication	Organisation	Policy Document/Source	Themes that emerged from the policy documents
1998-2014	UNHCR	UNHCR Global Appeal – Uganda	**The Policy of Self-reliance** Key elements of the SRS: education, access to land, health The future of self-reliance Self-reliance vs. Humanitarian aid **Empowerment** Economic Empowerment **Sexual and Gender Based Violence**
2000-2014	UNHCR	UNHCR Global Report – Uganda	
2003	UNHCR	Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) for Uganda Self Reliance Strategy	
2004/03	UNHCR	Self-Reliance Strategy (1999 – 2003) For Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua and Adjumani Districts, Uganda	
2017	UNHCR	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	
2017	United Nations and the World Bank	ReHoPE and Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework Uganda	

5.4 Interviews

Qualitative interviews were chosen as the core method of analysis as they are a more naturalistic and less structured data collection tool in comparison to conducting surveys, for example. As highlighted by Tracy (2013) "Interviews elucidate subjectively lived experiences and viewpoints from the respondents' perspective" (Tracy, 2013:132). Furthermore, as interviews allow one to analyse the data and the results with the ability to interpret participants' social life (Alshenqeeti, 2014), they provide a deeper insight into refugee women's empowerment, in particular from the refugee women themselves.

Semi-structured interviews are a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. This type of method used in this study consists of questions that are planned prior to the interview but also allows the respondent to elaborate and explain particular issues through the use of open-ended questions (Alsaawi, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from the NGOs and government officials as they allowed respondents to elaborate on specific aspects of refugee policy and refugee women's economic empowerment.

In addition, focus group interviews were conducted with refugee women as they provide a more comfortable and natural environment (Dilshad and Latif, 2013). Hence, it was more suitable for refugee women who were sharing their personal views and experiences that touch upon sensitive issues such as gender based violence and exploitation. The suitability of this method is further highlighted by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) who demonstrate how focus groups provide a rich and detailed set of data about perceptions, thoughts, feelings and impressions of people in their own words. The focus group interviews were set up by two NGOs, which was also the location of the focus group interviews. The environment was the most familiar- and suitable for refugee women as they come to the NGOs to learn different skills, including sewing, craft making and learning English.

5.4.1 Selection of interviewees

The data was collected through interviews with sixteen respondents from thirteen non-governmental organisations, two government officials from the Office of the Prime Minister and two focus groups of refugee women. Out of the thirteen NGOs, twelve were international organisations, while two were local NGOs that were founded and directed by refugees. The

majority of the NGOs were selected and contacted beforehand through purposeful sampling, while the government officials and three of the organisations were selected through a snowball effect. The participants who were identified through purposeful sampling suggested representatives from other NGOs and the governmental officials who were knowledgeable about refugee policy. Snowball sampling was particularly beneficial when contacting government officials as they are more difficult-to-access due to their busy schedules (Tracy, 2013).

The majority of the organizations were initially contacted through e-mail, which was often followed up by a phone call or a visit. The interviews were conducted in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Kampala was chosen as the study location as the majority of the NGO headquarters that are working with refugees are located in the capital. Many of the organisations work with refugees both in the settlements and in the urban areas. Kampala is also the location of the Office of the Prime Minister (henceforth OPM) , where the interviews with government officials took place.

5.4.2 Interview process

The interview questions were designed prior to the data collection in a way that would allow participant's own interpretation of women's economic empowerment. Hence, the questions were focused on empowerment without specifically mentioning economic empowerment in order to investigate to what extent it emerges in the interview process and how it plays an important role for refugee women. The interviews took approximately 30-40 minutes on average. The majority of the interviews were conducted using a tape recorder, but four, including the focus group interviews were documented using notes, to provide a more relaxed environment.

Since the research material is collected through an interview process and it is regarding a sensitive topic, several ethical considerations were taken into account. Firstly, given the complex refugee situation in Uganda, in particular after some issues appearing in the news, research approval was requested and granted by the Refugee Commissioner from the OPM. Moreover, the ethical considerations were guided by the key ethical principles outlined by Diener and Crandall (1978) which include: whether there is harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Harm to participants may not necessarily

include physical harm, but also factors such as loss of self-esteem and stress. This was particularly relevant when preparing the questions for the focus group interviews with refugee women and ensuring that the questions are not invasive and too sensitive. Secondly, informed consent forms were used for this study to give participants the opportunity to be fully notified about the nature of the research and to ensure their agreement if any concerns were raised. The invasion of privacy issues are very much linked to anonymity and confidentiality, which in any case was also relevant for the study. All the participants were ensured anonymity regarding their names. The name of the organisation and their position were only to be used with their consent. Finally, in regards to deception, participants were fully informed about the exact nature and the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2008).

5.5 Transferability, validity and generalizability

The key objectives of the research are transferability and generalizability to see whether the findings are applicable in other research settings. The aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of the self-reliance approach and how it impacts refugee women's economic empowerment. Greater comprehension of Uganda's progressive refugee policies, thus provides an insight of whether similar approach can be adopted by other countries especially in the same region. Even though the findings may not be entirely applicable to other regions as the SRS is unique in the Ugandan context, the findings can indicate to what extent self-reliance measures may be an effective approach to economically empower refugee women. Economic empowerment for refugee women is something that is relevant across the globe and since Uganda is seen as a model country for refugees, it is necessary to investigate the progress and the gaps in the policy.

Another concern for this study is validity which will look at the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research. To ensure the validity of the research, the last section of the paper will reflect on whether the study has achieved the goals set out in Chapter Four (Bryman, 2008).

6. Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to present an analysis of the gathered data from the policy documents and the interviews. The findings from the policy documents will be presented first in order to highlight how the SRS evolved over time and what progress and measures have been made for refugee women's empowerment over the years. The policy analysis will be followed by the data collected from the interviews. The final section of the chapter will unveil a discussion and the summary of the findings.

6.1 Policy Document Analysis
6.1.1 The policy of self-reliance

First of all, in order to understand the impact of self-reliance on refugee women's empowerment it is crucial to comprehend the reasoning behind the introduction and implementation of the SRS. One of the earliest assessments of the SRS are highlighted in the UNHCR Global Reports (1999-2014) and the UNHCR Global Appeal reports (1998-2014) on Uganda. Initially, as accentuated by the UGA for 2000, the SRS was introduced to deal with the ongoing conflict in Southern Sudan between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The strategy was expected to be effective until 2003 and extend to other refugee populations from the DRC and Rwanda. The main initiative was to reduce their dependency and to integrate them into the host community:

> The aim of the Self-Reliance Strategy is to reduce dependency for the Sudanese refugees by improving their integration into national structures (not to be confused with naturalisation and citizenship) (UNHCR, 1999a: 79).

The strategy aimed to ensure that refugees were treated with dignity, successfully integrated within the host communities and would potentially return to their home countries in the future. The aims of the strategy are further pointed out by the report as follows:

> The Strategy will prepare the refugees for their eventual future return (even though repatriation is not a priority) and successful reintegration by acquiring skills and knowledge as well as possible assets. The Strategy will also enhance their dignity and self-confidence (UNHCR, 1999a: 80).

Emphasis has also been drawn on the involvement of different actors in the SRS in the following reports. NGOs and development agencies were encouraged to include the SRS in their future programs as that would be beneficial for both refugees and the host communities. For instance, UGR for 2000 mentioned how efforts were made to encourage operation partners to use their own funds to implement programs as a way to encourage eventual phasing-out of UNHCR's assistance. The report highlighted how:

> a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Finnish Refugee Council, which implemented adult literacy and income generation programmes, and with the Danish Assistance for Self-Reliance, which engaged in income generating activities, agriculture support, skills training and capacity-building for both refugees and nationals (UNHCR, 2001b).

Even though the SRS was introduced and implemented regarding hosting refugees in the settlements to reduce aid dependency and to empower refugees, the reports have indicated that the notion of self-reliance also spread to the urban areas in the following years. Measures were revealed by the reports that suggest how urban refugees had to achieve a certain level of self-reliance which further captures how self-reliance is the central approach in the refugee policy discourse in Uganda. As one of the aims as highlighted by the UGR for 2002 was to:

> provide protection and assistance to urban refugees in Kampala and ensure they achieve a certain level of self-reliance strengthen the implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) in collaboration with the Government of Uganda and implementing partners (UNHCR, 2003b: 193)

Despite the positive measures to expand self-reliance to urban areas and to incorporate self-reliance in the programs of different organisations, there has been some drawbacks in the SRS policy. They key obstacles that appear to hinder the positive achievements in the SRS, include shortage of land, unfavourable weather conditions, escalation of violence and most evidently inadequate funding. Availability of funds varies from year to year, however insufficient funding was particularly evident in 2005 and 2006. According to the UGR for 2005, the funding was restricted to the extent that with the absence of crop production and income generating activities, self-reliance became elusive and the settlement approach was considered to be

replaced with encampment for the first time. During that period of time, attention was mainly focused on life-saving activities rather than self-reliance. Hence, the main objective as underlined by the UGR for 2005 was to:

> intensify collaboration with other UN development agencies through the UN Country Team (UNCT) in order to increase funding for the implementation of the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) for refugees and host communities (UNHCR, 2006b: 201).

Despite the shortcomings in the funding, self-reliance remains as the key ideology for refugee management in the Ugandan context. The remaining reports suggest how objectives were continuously drawn on the implementation of income generating activities and agricultural projects to aid self-reliance. Subsequent initiatives such as Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) programme for Uganda was developed upon the SRS experience. Similarly, the recent strategies including CRRF and ReHoPE were built on and expanded from the existing self-reliance approach. The CRRF was officially launched in March of 2017 by the OPM and UNHCR as a way to create a more predictable and sustainable approach to refugee management. The third pillar of the CRRF focuses on resilience and self-reliance of refugees and the host communities as well as their peaceful co-existence:

> This pillar provides the key entry point for development interventions, in so offering an opportunity for refugees and host communities to be self-reliant. This primarily consists of livelihood initiatives, enhanced service delivery and activities to promote peaceful coexistence (UNHCR, 2017:2).

ReHoPE is a key component in the application of the CRRF. The ReHoPE framework is a transformative strategy and approach that brings together a range of stakeholders to deal with challenges faced in delivering protection and achieving social and economic development for both refugee and host communities. The strategy is led by GoU and the UN with partnership of the World Bank, international NGOs and other actors. ReHoPE forms a critical component of Pillar Three of the CRRF model, which focuses on self-reliance. The underlying aim is:

> To have in place strong and resilient institutions that can deliver appropriate, accessible, cost-effective, and affordable services to all people in the refugee-hosting districts in ways that build resilience and self-reliance among both refugee and host communities

and that maintains and promotes the asylum space (United Nations and the World Bank, 2017: 6).

Reflecting on the policy documents analysed above it can be speculated that, self-reliance has developed over time and is likely to be incorporated into emerging frameworks in the future. The main developments in the SRS can be seen in the objectives to integrate self-reliance into NGO and agency programs and to achieve a certain level of self-reliance in the urban areas.

6.1.2 Self-reliance approach in the future policy discourse

The root objectives of self-reliance continue to focus on empowerment, integration and freedom of refugees. However, the question remains how will the practices of the SRS operate and advance in the future? While the objectives in the recent policy documents are quite clear, self-reliance will continue to guide refugee polices in Uganda, yet it is more difficult to speculate whether self-reliance will be adopted in different contexts. Reflecting back to the first UGA report released for 1999, the objectives were focused on self-reliance of refugees as stated by the report:

> UNHCR and the Government work to increase the self-reliance of refugees - not only by helping them become self-sufficient in food production, but by providing skills training, confidence-building activities, and increasing their income-generating potential (UNHCR, 1998).

What can be postulated from the policy documents, however, is that more focus will be drawn on the host communities in the future. That is not to say that over the years the focus has been channeled solely on refugees as host communities were always mentioned in the policy objectives. However, more emphasis has been drawn on the host communities, since the ReHoPE framework clearly emphasized how 30 percent of the humanitarian response is to be provided to host communities within refugee interventions. It can be speculated that the influx of refugees in the recent years put more pressure on the local population and thus requires more focus on refugee-hosting areas to avoid situations of conflict. As of the most recent report, the future of objectives of self-reliance are stated as follows:

To have in place strong and resilient institutions that can deliver appropriate, accessible, cost-effective, and affordable services to all people in the refugee-hosting districts in ways that build resilience and self-reliance among both refugee and host communities and that maintains and promotes the asylum space (United Nations, 2017: 6).

6.1.3 Self-reliance vs. Humanitarian Aid

Although there are no clear indications of self-reliance being more effective than humanitarian aid, the progress towards self-reliance in both settlements and in the host communities further indicate a move away from dependency and humanitarian assistance. The UGR for 1999 highlights how:

The SRS aims at integrating services for refugees into existing district structures, so as to enable refugees to receive the same services as nationals. By decreasing refugees' dependence on humanitarian assistance. (UNHCRb, 2000: 168).

This is further highlighted by the UGA from 2003 as one of the desired outcomes was increasing involvement of development agencies in the SRS sand measures that would accommodate smooth transition from humanitarian to development assistance to refugees. (UNHCR, 2003a). Furthermore, after severe shortage of funding in 2005, economic recovery was to be best achieved by a transition from humanitarian aid:

Economic recovery and self-reliance will be further enhanced through an effective transition from humanitarian aid to development activities (UNHCR, 2005b:164)

The recent ReHoPE report, however emphasised the need for both humanitarian aid and self-reliance. The report stated that how the ReHoPE strategy aims to serve as a bridge for the humanitarian and development approaches and actors. The report further indicated, that humanitarian action should be integrated into long-term development:

ReHoPE aims to ensure that humanitarian action is embedded in a long-term development approach. In this way, humanitarian actions can be a catalyst for activities that are then transitioned to development actions, rather than seeing them end when the humanitarian funding dries up… (United Nations, 2017: 4)

6.1.4 Key Elements of the SRS

It appears that when the SRS was initially introduced it aimed to address a number of issues that were crucial for the empowerment of refugees. While the key elements of the SRS include access to health, education, provision of land and the openness and generosity of local communities, the eight key sectors of assistance integrates other factors such as environmental protection and infrastructure:

> The ultimate goal of the SRS was to integrate the services to refugees in the eight key sectors of assistance (health; education; community services; agricultural production; income generation; environmental protection; water and sanitation, and infrastructure) currently provided for the refugees into regular government structures and policies (UNHCR, 2004/3: 3).

While the significance of self-reliance is quite clear, it is more difficult to draw any conclusive remarks as to what extent the key elements of the SRS are successful in empowering refugee women. Few, if any of the documents make any clear links between the key elements of the SRS and refugee women's empowerment. One could speculate, that the provision of health under the SRS appears to have beneficial effects for refugee women:

> The emphasis was placed on safe motherhood, family planning, and promotion of awareness of sexual and gender-based violence as well as friendly health services for Adolescents (UNHCR, 2002b: 189).

Self-reliance programmes were briefly mentioned in the 2008 UGR report, as the focus has been drawn on health facilities, education and women's empowerment. On the contrary, it is difficult to establish as to how refugee women were to be empowered through self-reliance:

> To help all, people of concern enjoy their social and economic rights, the Office focused on self-reliance programmes; primary health care; prevention and treatment of malnutrition, HIV and AIDS and malaria; primary education; water and sanitation; and the empowerment of women (UNHCR, 2009b: 74).

6.1.5 Empowerment of Refugee Women through Self-Reliance

While empowerment is stated as one of the core objectives and outcomes of self-reliance, the objectives geared towards refugee women's empowerment remains relatively limited. Notwithstanding, empowerment is a clear objective outlined by the (DAR) report for Uganda released in 2003, which was introduced as a way forward to highlight the progress of the SRS. According to the report, empowerment is particularly crucial for refugee women as it leads to a number of durable solutions:

> Empowerment, particularly of women and enhancement of productive capacities and self-reliance of refugees would lead equipped and capacitated refugees to any of the three durable solutions i.e. repatriation to their country of origin, local integration in the country of asylum or resettlement to a third country (RLSS/ DOS Mission Report, 2003).

Few, if any, of the reports mentions refugee women's empowerment explicitly, yet implicitly it can be suggested that efforts were drawn to empower refugee women by provision of literacy programs, financial support to resume education and other measures. The UGR from 2003 demonstrated this by highlighting how:

> Teenage mothers who dropped out of school were provided with financial and other support to enable them to resume their education...The Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme continued in 2003 for 877 beneficiaries, 725 of them women. In Arua, 40 per cent of refugee management committee members were women, and 37 percent of refugee women benefited from leadership skills training (UNHCR, 2004b: 215).

6.1.6 Economic Empowerment for Refugee Women

Reflecting back to UGRs on Uganda, it is clear what progress and difficulties were encountered in the SRS throughout the years. On the other hand, it is more difficult to unmask the effects of self-reliance measures on refugee women's empowerment in terms of economic resources and opportunities. Although some progress has been noted on refugee women's participation in income generating activities, leadership programs and gaining new skills, the material available

is severely limited to make any concrete conclusions. The observations provided below are some of the few indications of women's economic empowerment in UGR and UGA reports on Uganda. It appears that the UGR released in 2001 has drawn considerable focus on the advocacy of gender awareness and specific women's issues. The report indicated economic empowerment as women participated in refugee committees, food distribution and grinding mill business associations (UNHCR, 2001b: 168). Economic empowerment can also be observed as the report provided figures of how many women acquired start-up funds and skills. The report emphasised how a significant number of refugee women in comparison to men were trained in new skills and participated in income generating activities:

> Women heads of families benefited from agricultural and other inputs to increase household income..In Adjumani and Moyo, 560 persons (91 per cent women) were trained in handicrafts, enabling them to provide for their families. Five business educators and 238 beneficiaries were trained in business skills. Over 80 savings and credit groups were formed, and 1,966 persons (93 per cent women) were supported with start-up funds. (UNHCR, 2001b: 171)

Similar implications have been provided by UGR released for 2009 as it was proclaimed in the report how women were empowered through income generating activities and microfinance programs. However, it is difficult to have any clear indications of how effective were these programs and how many women participated in them. In the report it is stated as follows:

> Communities were sensitized on empowerment of women and trained on income generating activities as well as microfinance program to improve livelihoods (UNHCR, 2010b: 93).

While the impact of the SRS and the progress on refugee women's empowerment is relatively limited in the remaining UGR and UGA reports, it can be speculated that more emphasis and measures have been drawn towards women's economic empowerment in the ReHoPE strategy. This is signified as one of the overall objectives of ReHoPE is expanding their refugee women's economic opportunities as stated by the report:

> Expanding economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods with a focus on women and youth (United Nations, 2017: 6)

Indeed, the ReHoPE Framework recognises the distinct needs of refugee women as clearly stated by one of the nine core principles addressed by the report. The strategy proposes a gender mainstreaming analysis and a more gender-sensitive approach in the future implementation of the policy. The second principle urges to:

> Follow a rights-based approach that prioritises equity, human rights, gender responsiveness, and women's empowerment. ReHoPE recognises that the needs of the women, men, boys, and girls in refugee and host communities are different and as such will need to be specifically identified and addressed, primarily through an enhanced age, diversity and gender mainstreaming analysis….A rights-based and gender-sensitive approach will be promoted in the formulation and implementation of ReHoPE programming. (United Nations, 2017: 9)

The report has also acknowledged economic factors that marginalise and affect refugee women. It identifies that both native and refugee women in the host communities face similar challenges and that economic uncertainties further exacerbate their vulnerabilities:

> women in refugee and host communities are disproportionately affected by changing livelihood patterns, conflict, natural disasters, and climate change. In particular, among refugee women, disparities in access to financial services, land, and property exacerbate their vulnerabilities (United Nations, 2017: 24).

The effects of displacement on refugee women is also raised by the ReHoPE strategy. The link between displacement and refugee women's empowerment is an area that often emerges in migration studies and its effects were briefly noted in the earlier section. Hence, the report has similarly indicated how displacement may affect refugee women's economic well-being due to the changed environment that comes with displacement:

> gender based inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources inhibit agricultural productivity and reduce food security. Because most refugee women depend on their male counterparts for protection and provision, with displacement, these ties are broken, causing insecurity and a lack of social amenities (United Nations, 2017: 24).

What came to light from the policy documents, is that very limited information is available to make any clear observations on women's economic empowerment. On the contrary, it is clear that the recent ReHoPE framework has recognised that refugee women face different challenges especially when it comes to economic empowerment. Thus, to speculate further from the available data it can be suggested that more emphasis has been drawn on the following issues in the recent years, due to the increasing number of refugee women and children.

6.1.7 Sexual and gender based violence

As proclaimed by Buscher (2010), lack of economic opportunities and empowerment may contribute to exploitation and sexual violence experienced by refugee women and make it more difficult to escape situations such as domestic violence. Although there is no clear link between SGBV and economic empowerment derived from the reports, the issue of SGBV came to light in the majority of the documents. The reports unmasked the reality that SGBV, domestic violence and early forced marriages were common problems among refugees and nationals alike. Over the years, training workshops and interventions were dedicated to gender awareness, gender discrimination and gender violence. Knowledge was also spread regarding laws banning female genital mutilation (FGV). It is clear, that SGBV is recognised as by the reports and that efforts have been drawn to prevent violence against women and girls. For instance, the UGR for 2008 outlined how:

> In collaboration with the Government, UNHCR provided training on the prevention of violence against women and girls. In addition, crisis intervention teams were set up to deal with sexual and gender-based violence. As a result, some 420 cases of such violence were reported to police or counsellors (UNHCR, 2009b :75)

Similarly, gender-based violence also emerged in the recent ReHoPE report. It was recognised that there is a need to address the needs of refugee women differently than those of men. Refugee women face difficulties that are unique based on their gender that need to be recognised:

> An additional dimension to avoid violence is the need to address the needs of refugee and host community women differently than those of men. While both women and men are affected by conflict, refugee experiences of women and men are different, with

women refugees bearing most the brunt of conflict due to the gender-specific atrocities they face. Their needs as mothers and family head, are more enmeshed in family networks than male refugees, and they may lose their traditional sources of income with displacement (United Nations, 2017: 24).

While, some observations can be postulated from the policy documents analysed above, overall it is difficult to make any clear conclusions on refugee women's empowerment through self-reliance and the link between SGBV and economic empowerment. The following section of the chapter will present the data collected from the interviews.

6.2 Data Collected from the Interviews
6.2.1 The policy of self-reliance

Representatives from NGOs, government officials and refugee women themselves who participated in the interviews positively reflected on the policies in Uganda. There was a consensus among all the respondents on how the policies are dignifying; they enable freedom of movement, the right to compete for employment and to access education. A response from UNHCR associate sheds some light as on how refugee policies are portrayed:

> Uganda has the best, the most progressive refugee policies in the world, because our policies give the rights to all the basic needs, including freedom of movement, refugees have the right to access education and if competent they can compete for employment. So in terms of policies, in Uganda we have the best policies. There is no doubt about that (UNHCR, Cash interventions).

It appears that progressive refugee policies in Uganda are an outcome of a number of different elements that are determined by the perceptions and governance at the top-level. According to a government official from the OPM, refugee policies in Uganda are built upon the notion that refugees are human beings who come to Uganda out of circumstances rather than choice. The respondent further indicated how the success of the refugee policies are a consequence of a number of factors; including the fact that many Ugandans were refugees themselves in the past and that the borders separating Uganda from its neighbours are a construction of colonialism:

The leadership of the government we have today, always makes clear, that a number of Ugandans, were refugees themselves. The president, the prime minister, the vice president, all look at refugees as brothers as sisters and that message conveys the treatment of what happens at other levels...most of the refugees are from the African countries they are Africans, and the borders that we see separating Uganda from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, are artificial, that they are the creation of colonialism (OPM).

Similarly to some of the data retrieved from policy analysis on the achievements of the SRS, majority of the interview participants have certainly praised the outcomes of self-reliance. This is particularly highlighted by an NGO associate who summarized the outcomes of the SRS as follows:

Before the SRS, there was a camp policy...with the SRS you see refugees constructing houses, there is a change, you see them establishing businesses, you see vibrant towns in settlements, refugees working hand in hand with the host communities (Interaid)

Positive outcomes of self-reliance were also accentuated by a Refugee Commissioner from the OPM, who praised the policy as it has an undeniable impact not just on refugees but also on the host communities. He stated:

It is an effective strategy, there a number of studies done on self-reliance, even host communities are being transformed, refugees are digging, cultivating, they are able to sell food in Uganda, a lot of food comes from settlements (Refugee commissioner, OPM).

A director from an NGO, emphasised how refugee policies have provided refugees with all the basic rights except for political participation. He empahsised the liberal nature of Uganda's policies where refugees like himself are able to start up businnesses and NGOs. On the contrary, he also highlighted the drawbacks in the settlements as most of the aid fails to reach the refugees:

Uganda has given us the right to work and everything else except political rights. Some refugees are progressing more than Ugandans themselves, you see them starting their own NGOs, businesses….there is another reality in the settlements, refugee scandals,

suffering of refugees, more and more aid does not reach the settlements only around 40 percent... There are many loop holes with refugee issues (Refuge and Hope in Action).

Revisiting document analysis, it appears that lack of funding is also the main drawback accentuated by some respondents who claim that success of self-reliance is hindered by the resource constrained environment. However, given the overall views from the respondents it can be suggested that despite the drawbacks in the self-reliance approach, there is no better alternative to empower refugees. This is clearly outlined by a director from INGO who evaluates self-reliance as an only way forward:

> I don't know what the alternative would be, we are already working in a resource constrained environment, so there is very little funding available so with that recognised as well as our common understanding that we do not want to create dependency, we do want refugees, asylum seekers and all those people to take control of their lives, we do want people to keep their dignity, so I can't think of another strategy that would be either more ideal or feasible (JRS).

Responses from refugee women further indicate the successful policy approach towards refugees. Majority of the women implied that they felt respected and cared for in Uganda and emphasised the freedom to choose if they want to stay in the settlements or in the city. A refugee woman from South Sudan, who has been in Uganda for over a decade, summarized the policies as follows:

> The policies are good, they are caring for us, women from different countries. You come to Uganda you get respect, an ID that has value. Uganda has a big heart to invite us. As a teacher I have students from different countries (Refugee Woman).

Overall, refugee women are aware that policies towards refugees in Uganda are unique in the African context. It can be speculated, that this further impacts women's responses, as they feel grateful to be presented with freedom to attend university, participate in the job market and hold hopes and aspirations for the future. When asked about their thoughts on refugee policies in Uganda, one refugee woman stated as follows:

You are free to work, you feel at home, you are not traumatized. In other countries they can arrest you if you leave the camp without permission. Imagine if you could not go to a university if you were in a camp. Now you can go back to your country and do something good (Refugee Woman).

Similarly to the respondents from NGOs, refugee women were aware of the gaps in the policy. Some even discussed the recent scandal in the news regarding the wrong statistics on the number of refugees in the country. One of the main gaps addressed by the refugee women was also the lack of funding. One refugee woman summarized the policy gaps as follows:

A lot of refugees are missing, they (the government) don't know the statistics. They are not budgeting properly...Integration is different at the bottom. There is lack of funding.

To review the overall perceptions, it appears that policies towards refugees in Uganda are developed upon the notion that all human beings are equal and should be treated with dignity and respect. The observations from the interview data are in line with Article 1 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (UN General Assembly, 1948). Despite the drawbacks in the policies, the SRS has good aims and objectives to empower refugees. To speculate even further the notion of brotherhood also emerged in the interview data when the government official from the OPM stated how refugees are portrayed as brothers and sisters.

6.2.2 Self-Reliance approach in the future policy discourse

When asked about the future of self-reliance, respondents emphasised different factors as to how self-reliance will operate in the future. Few of the interviewees highlighted the positive co-existence between refugees and the host communities that was already raised earlier by the ReHoPE report. Even so, with the number of refugees rising at an undeniable speed the question remains, for how long will Uganda keep its doors open for refugees. As one respondent raised the question as follows:

For how long will we keep the doors open? The general population does not see the refugees as a burden. They are bringing new insights into the host community...

Refugees and host communities building businesses together. Refugees are being trained and then refugees become trainers, we see tremendous achievements (Interaid).

Many, who participated in the interviews admitted that self-reliance will continue to predominate in the future, but also underlined the gaps and provided recommendations as to where the policy can be improved. One respondent indicated that Uganda's self-reliance approach will remain effective in the future only if the focus is drawn on the positive aspects of the policy. The aim is to go back to the fundamental idea that refugees are capable human beings with skills and abilities that need to be utilized in the future:

I think it will be effective... provided the country looks at the positive angles looks at the challenges and works from it. Uganda's policy can encourage more refugees to come here, but these are human beings and they do bring positive skills to the country, confining people can have more disastrous outcomes, environmental degradation, eroding skills, self-reliance is a more futuristic and more sustainable approach (NRC).

The main shortcomings in the policy is insufficient funding which indeed emerged in many of the interview responses. However, the fact that the policy does not take into account the dynamics of the population also unfolded in couple of the interviews. An NGO associate from FCA indicated how a more gendered approach needs to be implemented in the future that focuses on refugee women's self-reliance. He outlined that there are only few actors targeting self-reliance of women although they are the majority. Consequently, there is a need for specific interventions that target women's self-reliance.

Hence, another intriguing aspect that was examined, is whether self-reliance can be an effective strategy adopted in other contexts in the future. As conceptualized by the reports in the earlier section, self-reliance approach will continue to guide refugee management in Uganda, therefore it is critical to note whether it can develop further and extend to other regions. Several respondents demonstrated that self-reliance should be adopted in other countries and different contexts in the future:

I think we need more good examples, more success studies to motivate usefulness of self-reliance...Self-reliance needs to be tried in different contexts not just in one country. We can't do without self-reliance, because we are dealing with deploying resources, we cannot continue giving handouts, we need to make sustainable plans to help people help themselves... So the future of self-reliance is very bright (IRC).

What also emerged from the interviews, is that Uganda's approach to refugees has already gained attention in other countries. Governments from countries such as Malawi, Tanzania and Ethiopia visited Uganda to see how refugee policies operate in the settlements. Despite the positive feedback, there are certain obstacles as to why the SRS approach has not been adopted in other countries. The refugee commissioner from OPM summarizes the drawbacks as follows:

> We had the benchmarking trips from different countries including, Ethiopia, Malawi to Uganda, studying our approach and if they are able to apply this approach in their home countries I think it would be okay... but you find that probably country x might not have much chance to get land where they can negotiate.. It is an issue of how governments look at these issues of managing refugees (Refugee Commissioner, OPM)

Refugee women similarly indicated how self-reliance has a future in Ugandan policy discourse, however several remarks were made as to where the policy can be improved. One refugee woman stated that the policy itself is already realized, however there is a need to inform refugees of their rights and to raise awareness in the host communities regarding the existence of refugees. Another potential improvement is integrating local councils into the refugee policies and making them more aware of how many refugees are in the area. Given the observations outlined above, it can be deduced that self-reliance approach will continue to guide refugee management in Uganda, but whether it will be implemented elsewhere remains a question.

6.2.3 Humanitarian assistance vs. Self-reliance

Another factor indicative of how self-reliance will adapt in the future is by looking at whether it is more successful than other forms of assistance towards refugees. There was a consensus among all the respondents who implied that self-reliance is a more sustainable approach than humanitarian aid in the long run. One NGO respondent clearly emphasised how self-reliance is a way forward not just in Uganda, but in other countries:

> They have to exist in parallel, we put them against each other, they don't need to be separate…WFP is giving cash instead of food, it is already a development approach. It is also about cost efficiency, it is cheaper to give money instead of delivering food ...I don't understand why other countries don't do it. People feel constrained in camps, for example in Kenya and they try to break free and this creates conflict…. (DRC)

Self-reliance was depicted as a move away from dependency towards self-sufficiency and empowerment. However, respondents also accepted that self-reliance can only be realized with time and humanitarian aid is crucial in times of emergency crisis. One respondent highlighted how self-reliance empowers refugee women to look beyond humanitarian assistance. He stated how:

> Humanitarian aid does not empower, but it creates dependency. Self-reliance empowers women to look beyond humanitarian aid. Once you empower them with skills they don't need to wait for aid, they can turn their life around. Self-reliance is a more applicable approach in the long run. Humanitarian aid is good in the short term when there is emergencies and crisis. I recommend self-reliance as good approach the long run to empower women (Oxfam)

Based on the condensed findings above, it is likely that assistance for refugees in Uganda will move even further away from humanitarian aid. Developing on this assumption further, as indicated by the ReHoPE strategy the humanitarian assistance that will exist in the future is most likely to be interlinked with development goals.

6.2.4 Key Elements of the SRS

The respondents are in agreement that the key elements of the SRS help to empower refugee women, because it gives them the threshold to start from and the same factors also drive discrimination if you cannot access them. On the contrary, responses vary on how successful these practices are on the ground for empowering refugee women. An NGO associate from Oxfam outlined the empowering nature of being able to access education, land and skills as follows:

> If you give a woman education, her future is bright, so if you give a refugee woman education they can turn the scales to improve their livelihood... if we teach a woman craft and give her a start-up fee, it will help her acquire other things. If we empower a woman to go for secondary education or teacher training, they can teach other refugee children. If you empower a refugee woman to access land, a woman can use the land to grow vegetables, and to improve her nutritional status...she can use that land to construct a house to stay in...to even construct a small stall and start a small business...It

is also good to empower a woman to get money and resources for family and children (Oxfam).

A director from an international NGO further added how the key elements of the SRS empower refugee women as they recognise the needs of every human being and provide the means to be independent:

How do they empower women?... they recognise that a woman is a human being and that no human being wants to be dependent. How do we make someone independent?... You give them education, you give them opportunity to support themselves through meaningful work, you give them some peace and security by land... I think the law and I think the actors involved are doing the best they can within this challenging environment to make sure that empowerment is consistent with human dignity (JRS)

The findings also shed light on how the key elements of the SRS are implemented in theory, yet in practice they are often insufficient. The majority of the respondents highlighted how there is lack of post-primary education and the land provided is often insufficient. It appears that health services are the most successful aspect in the settlements. A respondent summarizes the inconsistencies as follows:

For education many agencies look at children, but few look at adult education in which women are part of. Most of the displaced people are not literate, refugees from low education countries do not do well even in their home countries. The situation replicates in Uganda. Health services are not so bad sometimes better than here. Land is inadequate. The plot of land is not much, nothing big can be done…it is a limiting factor, food for commercial purposes, inadequate (FRC).

The findings condensed above lead to an observation that perhaps the success of the key elements of the SRS is hindered by a lack of funding. Provision of land, education and health facilities are a good basis for refugee women's empowerment. Unfortunately, there is inadequate provision of the elements mentioned above due to insufficient funding available for refugees.

6.2.5 Empowerment of Refugee Women through Self-Reliance

One of the main questions that is crucial to comprehend from a bottom-up perspective is how are refugee women empowered through self-reliance? There is no doubt that empowerment is the imbedded aim of self-reliance, but how does it reflect on the ground? Despite the consensus among the respondents regarding the emancipatory nature of refugee policies in Uganda, the impact of self-reliance on refugee women's empowerment generated different opinions. One respondent from an NGO indicated how refugee women are empowered through self-reliance as it provides them with new opportunities since their basic needs can be met by the supportive environment provided by Uganda's generous policies and individual NGOs:

> Women are empowered through self-reliance, if women have access to income they can not only take care of themselves but also their families...Societal norms and beliefs have already created a lot of bias, for women...But now there is an opportunity, because one of the basic challenges that women face is addressing family needs, food. shelter medical care, education… So, if we provide that supportive environment, women can focus their energy on other things and that is exactly what is happening (IRC)

Despite the general perception that the SRS can empower refugee women, according to some respondents the policies are not targeting the population in a gendered way that is relevant to becoming self-reliant. This has already been stressed by few respondents as a key initiative to be adopted in the future. Similar remarks can be observed in the ReHoPE framework, which proposed that a gender-sensitive approach was to be adopted in the future. Correspondingly, a local NGO director emphasized the need to recognise specific women's needs and how crucial it is to empower refugee women as they are often the breadwinners of the family:

> If we look at the reality there is a need to empower women because most of the time they are the breadwinners in the family. What can we do to support them on the ground? We need to look at what the reality is…we don't have a specific policy that is focusing on the women. You can't have a policy stating that it supports refugees, but you don't look who are the people...There are issues for women that are specific for them that they don't share with the men, yet they are the ones who need more support as they are the majority (YARID).

Another aspect that surfaced in the interviews is that majority of the NGOs are adopting their own initiatives to empower refugee women in the settlements and in the urban areas by implementing women's empowerment projects, leadership programs and equipping women with skills. Indicative of the findings, some refugees prefer the urban setting, as they cannot be in the settlements due to security reasons or they find the environment too challenging. Achieving self-reliance is more difficult in the urban areas, since refugees must access land, education and health facilities by themselves. For instance, as outlined by Women's Ministry leader from an INGO, the organization is helping urban refugee women by providing them with emotional and physical support:

> We work with urban refugees...For us, in the women's ministry here, we offer the skills and we offer leadership programs, whereby young ladies between 17 and 25 come here with trauma, we take their story, we assess them, we enroll them and they stay with us for 4 months whereby they are equipped with different leadership skills, discipleship, group therapy where they learn about hope, about business and how to survive..(Women's Ministry, Refuge and Hope)

Corresponding with some of the observations made by NGO respondents, some refugee women also found that the settlements were confining and that there are better opportunities in the urban areas in particular in terms of university education and employment perspectives. The majority of the refugee women stated how they felt that life in Kampala is better than in the settlements, yet there are many challenges in the urban areas as they must fend for themselves.

> In the camp you need support, you cannot go to university, but fending for yourself in Kampala is not easy (Refugee Woman).

Refugee women felt the need to feel empowered through education, skills and employment opportunities. Many had dreams and aspirations for the future in Uganda or in their home countries. Some felt that empowerment is important if they choose to go back to their home countries where they are hoping to bring back their skills and education. A refugee woman highlighted her aspiration as follows:

Yes, we need empowerment to go back with skills, to contribute to our countries, to know how to develop ourselves… if you feel that your home is not here, you feel like you are behind…starting from zero…(Refugee Woman).

Based on the findings outlined above, it can be suggested that empowerment can only be truly achieved if the focus is drawn on specific needs of refugee women.

6.2.6 Economic Empowerment for Refugee Women

As briefly indicated above, the majority of the NGOs have recognised the difficulties that refugee women face and have taken up initiatives that specifically focus on empowering women and providing them with economic opportunities. The programs carried out by the NGOs include income generating activities, savings groups and access to small loans to provide women with the basics for economic empowerment. This is particularly evident in Kampala, where the majority of the urban refugees reside. Another aspect that emerged in the interview process is that refugee women in the urban areas are not only being empowered by the NGOs, but they are trying to empower each other. One example of many is a refugee woman who came to Uganda from South Sudan and who is now teaching sewing classes to economically empower other refugee woman. The lessons are accommodated by an NGO which provides women with sewing machines and material which allows them to earn some money to and become self-reliant. Refugee women admitted how income generating programs and new skills helped them to feel empowered and change their lives for the better. For refugee women, empowerment comes in different forms; from learning English or the local language, participating in women's groups and being able to provide for themselves and their families. A refugee woman from DRC stated:

I feel empowered, I didn't speak english, I was crying every day. We started to make groups, and we opened a place. Started sewing from here, created a crafts class to empower ladies

Women revealed how important it is to be economically empowered not just for them but for their children as they can pass their skills and knowledge to their offspring. Some responses opened up a new lens regarding the challenges that refugee women face, particularly in the capital city. A couple of women indicated how displacement has altered their household structures, making them the breadwinners of the family. They openly stated how men are less

inclined to take precarious employment, because of the higher positions they had in their home countries:

> For us women we are struggling a lot. We are 2 in 1, mother and father because we have opportunities. As women we are flexible even if we were in a high position we are flexible to take on any work. And that's why you need to economically empower refugee women.... Men want big shops, as most were in higher positions. Men in Kampala are often supported by women. If you refuse they beat you. You have to support them... If women are empowered they can also pass it on to their children and other refugee women (refugee woman)

6.2.7 Sexual and gender based violence

As indicated by the last quote above, refugee women often face exploitation and gender based violence. The implications and measures to tackle SGBV had emerged in the reports from UNHCR and the issue was also emphasised in the interviews, as one of the obstacles impinging refugee women's empowerment. While the link between SGBV and refugee women's empowerment has not been evident in the reports, given the data from the interviews it can be highlighted that SGBV impedes refugee women's economic empowerment. Refugee women who are economically vulnerable may turn to exploiting measures in order to support themselves. As stated by a government official from the OPM, gender issues are exacerbated when one is a refugee, he outlined the challenges that women often face:

> ...when refugees flee as a result of war and violence as the majority of the fighters are men, the majority of who attend to the farms and families are women who are expected to look after their families and children…A vulnerable woman in a camp, unable to fend for herself can find herself exposed to a lot of risks including sexual violence (OPM).

Contrary to the findings by Bouta et al., (2005) on displacement as an economically empowering experience, some interviewees indicated how displacement can worsen the situation for refugee women. The government official from the OPM further demonstrated how economically empowering refugee women through self-reliance may help to fend off their vulnerability:

The refugee women come from patriarchal societies, where the men still have the strong hold on property rights, on family rights, on decision making. Those who come to refugee settlements as refugee families witness the same experiences that are often worsened because they are no longer in their home setting. When women are able to grow food and look after families then they can fend off the vulnerability they would be exposed to if they were just waiting in the camps (OPM).

As outlined by an associate from UNHCR, lack of economic empowerment and education leads to exploitation of refugee women particularly in their decision making ability. Refugee women's exploitation may be influenced by a number of factors such as power dynamics at home, middle men linking them to production and their low level of education:

Are women really empowered to make decisions? There is an issue of power dynamics and control, men influencing the decisions may result into violence...Sometimes the women who are growing the food might not be entitled to the money, because of the power dynamics at home. Single mothers who have access to markets, may similarly be presented with some difficulties, because of the middle men who are linking them to production. Refugee women may be exploited due to the lack of education and inability to count (Protection Associate, UNHCR).

The respondent further added that while the SRS has good aims it might not be translated into practice as there is a need to effectively address the situation and look at the hidden factors that are hindering refugee women's empowerment:

While SRS is a good strategy, but are we effectively responding to it. Are the ws getting what they expect, are you selling for 1000 shillings but bringing 500 back. Women get exploited because they are not empowered enough. Majority of the women don't know the basics like how to write. We need to look at all the aspects. You can't do a livelihood without the protection to achieve it…

While the majority of the respondents from the organizations indicated how refugee women are presented with new opportunities in the refugee settlements, refugee women on the other

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hand, underlined the more negative aspects in the refugee settlements; and how lack of economic opportunities were often linked to sexual violence and other challenges. This was emphasised by women who had previously stayed in or visited the settlements:

> Ladies in settlements have a lot of problems, they don't have enough water, only a 20l container, if you have 3 children how are you supposed to bath them? It is not enough what they provide in settlements. And what if they give the land in the middle of the forest, water is far away...it is not easy to get firewood, women get raped picking the firewood...

Refugee women emphasised how important empowerment is to face these challenges. One refugee woman from Rwanda, clearly highlighted how economic empowerment is the first step to end exploitation of women including economic violence:

> To end economic violence, to improve gender relations, you need economic empowerment. By making refugee women self-reliant, they have a choice. If men have control over the means and outcomes of production, economic empowerment becomes really hard. Let's say you start an income generating business, but if a man takes all the profits how can it be an empowering experience (refugee woman).

What became clear from the data collection presented above is that economic empowerment for refugee women is not a straightforward process, but rather a journey that is filled with a number of challenges. As previously outlined in Chapter Three, economic empowerment is linked with other factors including decision-making and value orientation.

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 The Future of self-reliance

What came to light from the data collection is that while self-reliance may be an excellent approach for refugee management in theory, there are gaps in the implementation of the policy. Revisiting the policy document analysis, the aims and objectives of the SRS and the recent ReHoPE and CCRF reports are comprehensive and clear, however measures specifically looking at gender related challenges that are affecting women appear to be limited. Similar, to the policy analysis, data retrieved from the interviews further indicates how there are drawbacks

in the practices of self-reliance and how there is a need for an approach that focuses specifically on empowerment of refugee women.

Responses from the government officials, NGO representatives and refugee women are relatively similar when asked about the general overview of the refugee policies and self-reliance measures in Uganda. While almost all the responses positively described refugee laws and policies, different aspects were emphasized by government officials and NGOs. The respondents from the OPM tended to focus more on the governance at the top level and the historical background of how the policies came about in Uganda. What had also emerged in the interview data is the depth of the work carried out by local and international NGOs in terms of promoting self-reliance and empowerment in both urban areas and the settlements.

A common link between the policy documents and the data that unfolded from the interviews is that there is a move away from dependency towards development and self-sufficiency. Although, the recent ReHoPE report emphasized the necessity of humanitarian assistance, it urged the need to integrate humanitarian action into long-term development approach. Similarly, majority of the interview respondents indicated that self-reliance is a more sustainable approach, yet humanitarian aid cannot be disregarded especially in times of emergency and crisis. Although it remains unclear as to whether the SRS will be adopted in other countries, especially in the surrounding area, there is a consensus among the respondents that self-reliance is an exemplary approach for refugee management.

6.3.2 Economic Empowerment through Self-reliance

The main focus of the policy document analysis was to get a clearer indication of how the SRS evolved over time and what impact it had on refugee women's economic empowerment. From the UGR's it can be speculated that there has been some efforts over the years to economically empower refugee women through income generating activities, provision of land and skills. Economic empowerment has been emphasized even more by the ReHoPE Strategy as it has not only recognized the distinct differences between refugee men and women, highlighted how displacement may result in a loss of traditional sources of income, but also incorporated more measures towards refugee women's economic empowerment including expanding economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.

Refugee women and the respondents from the NGOs unmasked the answers to one of the research aims which looks at the empowerment of refugee women in the urban areas. What came to light in the findings, is that refugee women are becoming self-reliant and empowered in the urban setting by other refugee women and through the programs and initiatives accommodated by the NGOs. While some NGO associates state that the policies have not adequately responded to the refugee women's needs and challenges, majority proclaimed how refugee women's empowerment is often embedded in their programs, and that they have certainly recognised the apparent troubles that refugee women face on the daily basis.

Developing on this point further, there is no doubt that there are hidden obstacles that may hinder refugee women's economic empowerment. For instance, one of the key elements of the SRS is the provision of land which can economically empower refugee women as it provides them with opportunities to support themselves and their families. A refugee woman can also sell the leftover produce and even start a small business. On the other hand, even if the woman generates an income from the land, she may not be entitled to the benefits from the income because of the power dynamics at home. Similarly, a single mother who has access to the markets, may be presented with some difficulties, because of the middle men who are linking them to production.

Another important aspect and an element of the SRS is education. While relatively free access to education is one of the key elements of the SRS, provision of post-primary and adult education in the settlements remains severely limited. Hence, even if a refugee woman is presented with opportunities that derive from the access to land, if she has no basic literacy and mathematical skills that may limit the outcomes for her economic empowerment. Likewise, refugee women that were provided with skills such as sewing or craft making have also indicated how there are obstacles such as lack of income to buy the material and the unpredictability in the market.

Hence, the findings correspond with Kabeer's (1999) and Kapitsa's (2008) conceptualization of resources which incorporate tangible resources such as financial assets and intangible resources such as skills and knowledge. The findings further suggest that is not sufficient to provide refugee women with material resources such as land because to be truly economically empowered one needs skills and knowledge on how to work the land, how to start a business and how to generate an income. Economic empowerment is interlinked with other factors

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including decision making, agency, and gender power relations. For instance, Krause (2014) recognizes the imbalance of power between men and women and this as indicated by the findings can also affect refugee women's economic empowerment when it comes to generating an income. Furthermore, as defined by UNHCR, refugee women are empowered through independence, economic self-reliance as well as leadership and decision-making abilities. Hence, it appears to be insufficient to provide refugee women with material resources as there are other aspects that need to be addressed including choice and access to the material resources.

6.3.3 Exploitation, SGBV and Economic Empowerment

One of the fundamental aspects that emerged in the data collection is the extensiveness of SGBV. The issue was both evident in the policy documents and in the interview process. Although there was no clear link between SGBV and economic empowerment in the policy documents, the ReHoPE report indicated the need to recognize gender-specific issues as a way to avoid violence. The correlation between SGBV and economic empowerment truly emerged in the interview data, however, as majority of the informants highlighted how women often face exploitation, discrimination and violence.

Drawing from data retrieved from the interviews it appears that economic empowerment is crucial for refugee women given their vulnerability that is exacerbated by displacement as they are no longer in their home setting. Developing on this point further, extensive amount of refugee women become the breadwinners in their families and are sometimes supporting not only their children but also their husbands. As indicated by the previous literature including Krause (2014), displacement may provide women with new opportunities, but at the same time aggravate their exposure to exploitation. Lack of economic empowerment may result in refugee women turning to victimizing measures such as sexual activities as a way to generate income. Besides, as stressed by the respondents, refugee women are often exposed to other risks such as sexual violence and economic violence. Hence, there is no doubt that SGBV may hinder women's economic empowerment. On the other a woman who is economically empowered may be provided with more opportunities to change the power dynamics at home, to escape violence and to avoid vulnerable situations.

7. Limitations

When contemplating the limitations of this research design, one of the first aspects to consider is the limiting nature of a single case study. While, it is clear that Uganda's refugee policies are quite unique in the African context, at the same time looking at Uganda alone is a limitation as it is not representative of the African continent. Hence, it is more difficult to make exhaustive conclusions on the success of self-reliance as it has only been adopted in one context.

Secondly, one of the main limitations with the policy document analysis can be referred to as biased selectivity (Bowen, 2009). For the data collection in this study there was a limited availability of the policy documents that capture a bottom-up perspective of the issue. Majority of the policy documents used for this study were reports from the UNHCR and the GoU. Policy documents from the NGOs were disregarded for the study due to the lack of availability and their focus on specific aspects that cannot be generalised. Hence, policy document analysis combined with the interviews provided a more balanced and comparative perspective on the issue. Another limitation of document analysis is insufficient detail. Often speculated as a potential flaw of document analysis, insufficient information to answer the research question can also be seen in this study. However, as with the previous limitation, the use of interviews for the data collection helped to eliminate the impact of this limitation (Bowen, 2009).

Despite interviews becoming an increasingly appealing method for data collection, there were some drawbacks. As pointed out by Hammersley & Gomm "what people say in an interview will indeed be shaped, to some degree, by the questions they are asked" (Hammersley and Gomm, 2008:100). One of the main limitations that was contemplated before using interviews as a data collection method was the potential of subconscious bias. Given the nature of the study and the representatives interviewed, there is a possibility of bias, as most of the NGOs interviewed were working in the settlements and promoting self-reliance measures, therefore the focus might have been drawn on the more positive aspects of the strategy. Moreover, as foreseen and encountered in the study interviews proved to be time-consuming, both with data collection, transcribing and analysis (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

The limitation that was foreseen with the focus group interviews is the effect of refugee women's responses from other members in the group. Given the nature of the group in focus

group interviews some participants may conform or be influenced by responses of other participants, even though they may not agree. Furthermore, as experienced in the focus groups, some participants were more conversant than others. The group discussion was dominated by couple of the members in the group, especially by refugee women who were in the country longer, were fluent in English and were the leaders of the group (Dilshad and Latif, 2013).

Finally, another difficulty encountered in the research process is fusing primary and secondary data. The themes that emerged in the interview process, were quite unique and often not explicitly addressed in the in policy documents. Furthermore, even when the themes such as empowerment and SGBV emerged in the policy documents, the statements were very brief and it was difficult to make any concrete conclusions.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, it is clear that self-reliance continues to guide refugee policies and management in Uganda. The findings have shed light into the successful nature of the SRS but at the same time revealed the gaps and inconsistencies that need to be addressed. Referring back to the phenomenon of economic empowerment for refugee women it can be observed that more focus has been drawn on recognising the distinct needs of refugee women, yet no specific strategy has been implemented. Furthermore, as revealed by the data collected from the interviews it can be stated that local and international NGOs are taking up individual measures to address the issues that refugee women face in the host communities.

While it remains unclear to what extent self-reliance would be a successful measure adopted in other countries, in particular the neighboring states, it can be speculated that self-reliance is more successful in addressing long-term rather than immediate needs. As initially stated by the policy documents and pointed out by NGO representatives self-reliance is a more sustainable approach than humanitarian aid that continues to guide refugee policies in many countries. Furthermore, it is important to note that the faults in the self-reliance approach may not be due to a failed policy implementation, but rather obstacles such as lack of funding and poverty in the country that hinders the success of the policies adopted in Uganda.

Given the summary of the findings indicated above, it can be signified, that number one; self-reliance is a good approach to promote refugee women's independence and provide them with opportunities to become economically empowered. It can be further speculated that rather than measuring the success of self-reliance on refugee women's empowerment it is important to note the aspects that are hindering these outcomes. Secondly, even if women are encouraged to be self-reliant by the existing policies in Uganda that enable them to access education, work and land, what may hinder the outcomes are the existing gender power dynamics and patriarchal structures that are rooted in the communities and domestic settings. Empowerment of refugee women can only be improved if the hidden factors impeding women's empowerment are recognised and addressed. We need to start from the bottom, by changing the root causes of women's exploitation that are hidden in gender relations. We have to begin by recognising the key factors that restrict refugee women's economic autonomy and empowerment, that should be followed by raising awareness and changing the deep-rooted cultural perspectives.

Finally, as of now, Uganda continues to receive refugees from neighboring countries, with refugees from South Sudan exceeding one million. The most recent fact sheet released by the UNHCR has stated how chronic underfunding is threatening humanitarian organisations' ability to continue delivering lifesaving and critical assistance (UNHCR, 2018: 1). Hence, self-reliance is similarly fraught with difficulties and is likely to be presented with a number of challenges. There is no doubt that self-reliance is a progressive approach in theory, but there are obstacles in practice that are hindering the full potential of the strategy.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Interview Questions

In short, could you please state your organization/department and your main line of work within the organization?

1. In general, what can you say about refugee policies in Uganda?

2. Uganda is known for encouraging refugee self-reliance. What can you say about the outcomes of self-reliance?

3. One of the main objectives emphasised by the self-reliance strategy is the empowerment of refugees. Do you think this is reflected in practice?

4. It has been widely accepted that women refugees are more prone to discrimination and violence. Majority of refugees in Uganda are women and children, has self-reliance strategy reflected the distinct needs of refugee women?

5. How is self-reliance an effective or ineffective strategy for refugee women's empowerment?

6. The key elements of self-reliance include; allocation of land to refugees in designated "settlements" to become self-sufficient in food production; relatively free access to education, health and other facilities and the openness and generosity of local communities. How/if these key elements of SRS empowered refugee women in Uganda?

7. What can you say about humanitarian aid vs. self-reliance? Which approach is more efficient to empower refugees, in particularly women?

8. Do you think self-reliance would be a successful measure adopted in other countries for refugee women's empowerment?

9. What can you say about the future of self-reliance, do you think it will be an effective strategy? How/if can it be improved?

Appendix 2: Focus Group Interview Questions

Could you please state your country of origin and how long have you been in Uganda?

1. Based on your own experience, what can you say about Uganda's policies towards refugees? (e.g. Are they inclusive, progressive, how can they be improved?)

2. Uganda is known for encouraging refugee self-reliance. What can you say about the outcomes of self-reliance? Is it an effective or ineffective measure for refugee women's empowerment?

3. How would you describe and define empowerment? What makes you feel empowered?

4. Do you feel empowered through the refugee policies in Uganda?

5. Do you think of self-reliance as an empowering experience?

6. The majority of refugees in Uganda are women and children, do you think the Self-Reliance strategy reflected the distinct needs of refugee women?

7. The key elements of self-reliance include: allocation of land to refugees in designated "settlements" to become self-sufficient in food production; relatively free access to education, health and other facilities and the openness and generosity of local communities. Do you feel that these key elements contribute to empowerment?

8. Do you think self-reliance would be a successful measure adopted in other countries for refugee women's empowerment?

9. In your opinion how can self-reliance measures be improved in the future?

Appendix 3: Consent Form

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR

[Research study on self-reliance and refugee women's empowerment in Uganda]

You are invited to participate in a research study on self-reliance and refugee women's empowerment in Uganda. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Brigita Dantaite, a master's student of International Administration and Global Governance at Gothenburg University, Sweden. It is funded by the International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD), Sweden.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of the Self-reliance Strategy (SRS) on refugee women's empowerment in Uganda.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:

You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. Interview questions will be broadly based on refugee policies in Uganda, in particular self-reliance and in what way it has impacted refugee women in Uganda. The duration of the interview is approximately 30 minutes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your personal information will be kept confidential, the organization will be mentioned only if consented to by the participant. Tape recording will be held by Brigita Dantaite if agreed to by the participant.

All information will only be published or circulated for the purpose of the thesis or a report required by the International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD).

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study or other research-related questions, contact the researcher Brigita Dantaite at +353851219566, or e-mail dantaitb@tcd.ie.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty.

DATE ———————————

SIGNATURE ———————————

Appendix 4: List of Organisations

Government Institutions

Office of the Prime Minister

Department of Refugees, Office of the Prime Minister

International Non-governmental Organisations

Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

Finn Church Aid (FCA)

Finnish Refugee Council (FRC)

Interaid

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Oxfam

Refuge and Hope

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Uganda (UNHCR)

Local Non-governmental Organisations

Refuge and Hope in Action

Young African Refugees For Integral Development (YARID)