

# IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE: THE ZAMBIA EXPERIENCE

“We will continue to invest in the emergency short term response, but this needs to be accompanied by longer term international support that will allow refugees and the local communities to benefit from economic opportunities, and boost local infrastructure and services”

Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



*Lusaka*

*December 2019*

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
COR	Commission for Refugees
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DoR	Department of Resettlement
DFID	Department of International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IRP	Integrated Resettlement Program
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LIRS	Local Integration Resettlement Schemes
NCSC	National CRRF Steering Committee
PS	Permanent Secretary
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
WFP	World Food Programme
ZIDP	Zambia Initiative Development Program
7NDP	7 <sup>th</sup> National Development Plan

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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With a population of over 16.5 million, Zambia is a landlocked country that lies in the heart of Central Southern Africa. The country shares its borders with seven countries<sup>1</sup>. Zambia has enjoyed peace and stability since gaining independence on 24 October 1964. The first President, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, chose UN Day for the country's Independence Day, as a symbol of Zambia's commitment to the principles of the UN Charter, in particular "to practice tolerance and live together in peace and security". Zambia is divided into 10 administrative provinces with 106 districts.

Zambia has a long history of hosting refugees and asylum seekers dating back to the 1940s when the country gave refuge to asylum seekers from Poland displaced as a result of World War II<sup>2</sup>. Since then, the country has hosted refugees from Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, among others.

Being one of the most stable countries in the region, Zambia has played a significant role in providing a safe haven to displaced persons from Rwanda, Angola and the DRC. Between 1999 and 2002 Zambia hosted up to 250,000 refugees, mainly from Rwanda and Angola. At the height of the refugee influx, the country had five major refugee camps and settlements in Nangweshi, Ukwimi, Kala, Mwange, Mayukwayukwa and Meheba. All of the camps were closed save for Meheba and Mayukwayukwa. In August 2017, Zambia received a new influx of refugees fleeing conflict in the DRC, which led to the establishment of a new settlement at Mantapala. Notwithstanding the encampment policy, some self-settled refugees live in more urban areas, particularly in the capital city, Lusaka and there is a possibility for persons with specific needs to apply for a residence permit enabling them to reside in urban areas. Zambia continues to keep its borders open and currently hosts about 85,000 refugees while still receiving an average of 500-700 refugees per month.

In 2017, the country introduced its 7<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (2017– 2021) with the theme "Accelerating Development Efforts Towards Vision 2030 Without Leaving Anyone Behind,". This plan aims at building a more resilient economy through sustained socio-economic development across all sectors. The developmental goal of Zambia comes against the backdrop of the country achieving a middle-income status in 2011. Despite a drop in the average economic growth rate of 7.4% between 2004 -2014 to 3.5% in 2017 and 3.7% in 2018 the economy continues to grow due to the expansion of some sectors such as wholesale and retail and information and communication.

Zambia is a champion in the Southern African region in providing opportunities for the socio-economic integration of refugees. Refugees in Zambia have access to basic social services on the same level as Zambians. The country adheres to the relevant international conventions on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers (including those at risk of statelessness) and further promulgated in the *Refugees Act* in

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<sup>1</sup> Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Malawi and Angola

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/when-the-polish-were-refugees-in-africa/a-49029649>

2017<sup>3</sup>. This new domestic refugee law enshrines the legal pillar, not only for the protection of persons seeking asylum in Zambia, but it also enables the socio-economic integration of refugees in the country.

Decades before the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was conceived, Zambia adopted a whole-of-society approach, enabling social and economic inclusion and facilitating local integration of refugees through the Zambia Initiative and the Local Integration Program for former refugees. The response to the 2017 influx of refugees from neighbouring DRC was the first time that a country adopted a CRRF approach in an emergency context through a settlement approach envisaging a durable solution from the onset of the crisis, inclusion into national services and engaging all in-line ministries in an All-of-Government approach.



Figure 1; Map of Zambia, depicting refugee hosting areas

<sup>3</sup> Zambia's *Refugees Act 1* 2017 available at: <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/acts/The%20Refugees%20Act%20No.%201%20of%202017.pdf>

## 2 THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES AND THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

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On 19 September 2016, Member States of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.<sup>4</sup> Member States committed to achieve a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees by adopting a Global Compact on Refugees, to develop a comprehensive refugee response initiated by host countries in cooperation with UNHCR, using a multi-stakeholder approach spanning national and local authorities, international organisations, international financial institutions, civil society partners, the private sector, media, academia, traditional authorities and refugees themselves<sup>5</sup>. The global objectives of the CRRF are to ease pressure on host countries, increase refugee self-reliance expand access to third country solutions, such as resettlement of complementary pathways, and support conditions in countries of origin.

On 20 September 2016, at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees, forty-eight Heads of State and Government made commitments toward enhancing responsibility-sharing in regard to refugee management. The commitments included increased financing to respond to refugee situations, expanded access to third-country options, strengthening of asylum legislation and refugee policies in host countries. At the Summit, the Government of the Republic of Zambia pledged to improve the life of refugees living in the country by:

1. Locally integrate eligible Angolans and Rwandans and extend the local integration program to protracted Congolese refugees;
2. Consider relaxing the encampment policy, allowing for more freedom of movement for refugees by easing the process for acquiring urban residency and permission to leave the refugee settlements;
3. Promote self-reliance and enhance favourable measures for refugees to access work and engage in income generating activities of their choice;
4. Focus on ensuring access to education for refugee children through the provision of education infrastructure in the refugee settlements;
5. Simplify its admission procedures for a fair refugee status determination process;
6. Ensure that refugees have access to civil registration and other legal documents.

In November 2017, the Government of Zambia declared its interest in becoming a CRRF roll-out country piloting the CRRF approach in its response to the Congolese emergency. The Government of Zambia designed a national roadmap for the application of a comprehensive refugee response in 2018 with the priority areas: admission and rights, emergency preparedness, inclusion, self-reliance and solutions. In April 2019, UNHCR validated its multi-year, multi-partner, protection and solutions strategy complementing the national Roadmap. In December 2019, area-based action plans supporting the Roadmap in the fields of education and self-reliance were launched. As of January 2020, a National Refugee Forum led by the

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/new-york-declaration-for-refugees-and-migrants.html>

<sup>5</sup> Stakeholders for the implementation of the CRRF approach

Cabinet Secretary will lead the comprehensive refugee response and the implementation of pledges made by the Government of Zambia at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2019.



*Figure 2; Refugees and Zambians trade at a market in Mayukwayukwa*

### 3 THE ZAMBIA INITIATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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The Zambia Initiative Development Program (ZIDP) was introduced in 2002 in Western Province of Zambia. It had a two-pronged approach of facilitating the self-sufficiency for refugees while, on the other hand, contributing to the development of one of the poorest regions of the country. The initiative started informally by the traditional chiefs as a show of goodwill to Angolan refugees who shared similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Refugees were allotted between six to twelve acres of arable land for farming.

The Zambian government and the international community bolstered this initiative by funding development projects that support the refugees and their hosts. In a more formalized program, the ZIDP targeted over 450,000 beneficiaries of which up to 150,000 were refugees. The key objectives of the ZIDP

were to contribute to the comprehensive social integration, poverty reduction, security and stability in the region.

It was estimated, at the time, that a total of 25million USD would be needed for the implementation of developmental projects to meet the objectives of the program for three years. Donors such as Denmark, Japan, USA, Sweden, ECHO, JICA stepped up to provide about USD 14,000,000 USD to the program. Through these contributions by both the state and donors, several projects were implemented to support agricultural production and the construction of key infrastructure, particularly in health and education. By 2004, refugees and Zambians beneficiaries were able to sell 564 metric tons of maize to the World Food Programme<sup>6</sup>, a remarkable transition from being dependent on food aid to being suppliers.

The relationship between host communities and refugees has by and large been a harmonious one and refugees are socially included in various community groups, such as churches and agricultural societies. The good relations can in part be attributed to the awareness among the Zambian of the refugees' potential to contribute to socio-economic development of local communities. An independent evaluation of the ZIDP in 2006 found the initiative contributed to an improved relationship between refugees and host communities since it had enabled the host communities to refugees as partners in development and not a burden, which led to inter-marriages, exchange of cultural values, reduced xenophobia and social integration.

## 4 LOCAL INTEGRATION PROGRAM

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The cessation clause was invoked in 2011 to end the refugee status of residual groups of Rwandan and Angolan refugees leading to a legal limbo those who had not found a durable solution. Many of the Angolan refugees were either born in Zambia or had lived in the country for decades and thereby established roots and acquired the local language. In recognition of this situation, the Government of Zambia pledged in 2011 to locally integrate some 10,000 Angolan refugees who had settled in Zambia from 1996 to 1986. The GRZ further decided that it would implement the legal integration pledge by creating mixed communities of former Angolan refugees and Zambians and provide them with plots of land in new "resettlement" schemes to be created by de-gazetting large tracts of land that form the Meheba and Mayukawukwa refugee settlements. In 2015, the local integration criteria were expanded to cover all 18,685 Angolans and some 4,000 Rwandans.

Between mid-2013 and beginning of 2014, UNHCR and the Government of Zambia elaborated a three-year *Strategic Framework for the Local Integration of Former Refugees in Zambia*, which was designed to advance durable for former refugees still in the country and who seek to locally integrate. Since its launch by UNHCR and the Government of Zambia in 2014 it has provided overall guidance for the implementation of the program. The Strategic Framework was developed focusing on three main areas of intervention or "pillars":

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<sup>6</sup> Source; <https://reliefweb.int/report/zambia/zambia-initiative>

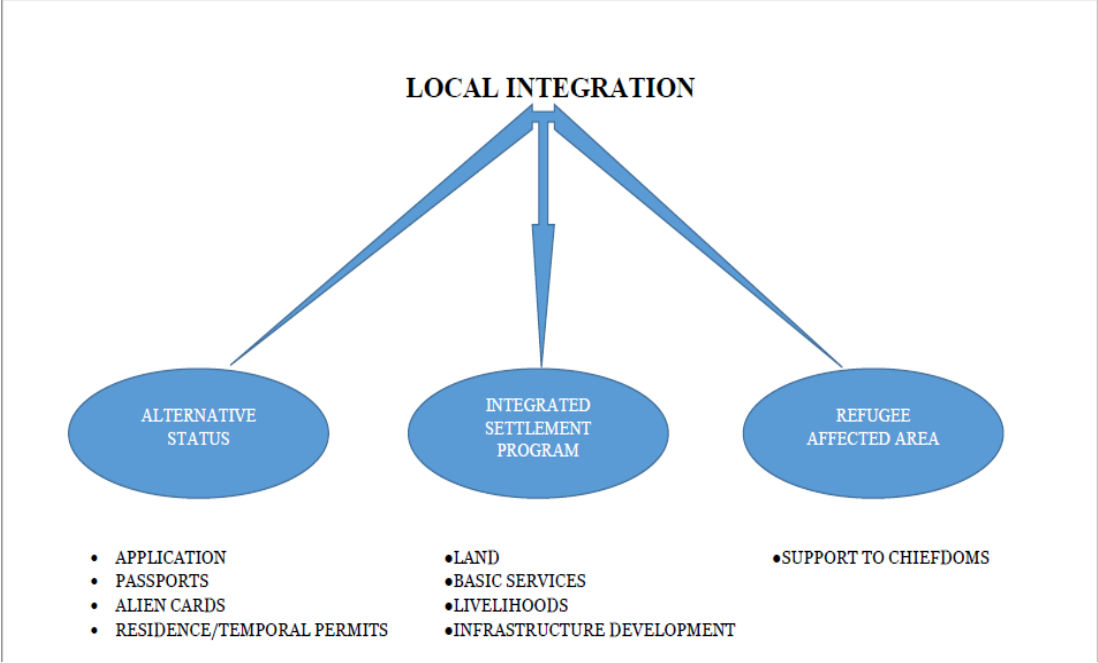


Figure 3; Pillars of the Local Integration Scheme

**Alternative legal status pillar:** aimed to facilitate legal integration of eligible former refugees through the issuance of long-term residence permits, and derivative citizenship for some and the issuance of identity documents and passports. The process consists of the screening of applications, obtaining national passports from the country of origin, issuance of Zambian Aliens’ Card and the issuance of Residence or Temporary Residence Permits. Once in possession of a Residence Permits, the Angolan former refugees can settle where ever they wish in Zambia. UNHCR is a co-operating partner to the office of the Commissioner for Refugees, Ministry of Home Affairs, for the conclusion of the legal pillar.

	Nationality	Eligible for LI	Screened	National Passports	Residence Permits	Temporal Permits
<b>Meheba</b>	Angolans	6052	6020	1155	715	0
<b>Mayukwayukwa</b>	Angolans	6264	4077	1138	758	0
<b>Urban</b>	Angolans	9	9	9	9	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12325</b>	<b>10106</b>	<b>2302</b>	<b>1482</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Meheba</b>	Rwandans	3214	3186	18	0	1473
<b>Mayukwayukwa</b>	Rwandans	128	109	0	0	0
<b>Urban</b>	Rwandans	784	784	100	63	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4126</b>	<b>4079</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1473</b>

Figure 4; Progress in the implementation of the legal pillar of the Local Integration Scheme<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 18,051 permits needed for former Angolan and Rwandan refugees amounting to \$3,000,000



The second pillar is the **integrated resettlement program (economic and socio-economic pillars)**: which ensures that former refugees and their Zambian hosts settling in the two designated resettlement areas have access to land and basic services consistent with national standards, that will enable them to sustain and improve agricultural productivity, employment and household income. The Government of Zambia (GRZ) is providing each new permanent resident with five to ten hectares of land with a pathway to legal land tenure in two new resettlement schemes. The new resettlement schemes are near the refugee settlements of Mayukwayukwa (Kaoma District, Western Province) and Meheba (Kalumbila District, North-Western Province). They are vast (over 100 square km in Mayukwayukwa and over 300 square km in Meheba), and are expected ultimately to grow to around 8,000 to 10,000 households (approximately 30,000 to 40,000 persons). To help integrate the new permanent residents, these new resettlement schemes are also open to Zambian citizens and the Government plans to have the final allocation of plots done on a 50-50 basis between Zambians and former refugees. The GRZ committed to reserve land in the refugee settlements, demarcate and allocate farm plots, but it was also envisaged that the international community would support livelihoods projects, entrepreneurship initiatives, vocational training and provide agricultural support, as well as, the continued development of infrastructure and expansion of basic social services. UNDP is supporting the Department of Resettlement in co-ordinating these activities with IOM, UNHABITAT, ILO, UNFPA and UNCDF as lead agencies for designated sectors.

The third pillar focused on support to **refugee-affected areas** and advocacy for additional, targeted community-based assistance to refugee-affected areas.

It was expected that the local integration program would be completed by the end of 2016 and subsequent activities included in the *Zambia UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework 2016-21* and the *UN Joint Program on Sustainable Resettlement*.



*Figure 5; A proud former refugee with his Zambian residence permit*

In 2017, GRZ handed over the management of the Sustainable Resettlement Program to the Department of Resettlement in the Office of the Vice President. The Department of Resettlement manages this area with the support of UNDP and other UN Development Agencies. The overall vision is that, by 2021, communities living in the resettlement schemes should be cohesive, productive, sustainable and fully integrated into development at all levels. Both schemes have been included in the District Development Plans. The Sustainable Resettlement Programme brings together the knowledge and expertise of UN Agencies in Zambia (UNDP, UN HABITAT, FAO, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM) that will seek to create synergies by each complementing each other and following their respective mandates

The revised outcomes of the Program include that the Government at national and sub-national levels undertake inclusive and participatory planning and governance processes that incorporate the targeted resettlement schemes, that communities, in and around, the targeted resettlement schemes have access to social services and sustainable economic opportunities, and that the resettlement communities are tolerant, inclusive and integrated with the surrounding society, enabling people to live in peace and harmony to realise their aspirations.

Road access in Meheba, construction of low-cost houses, provision of safe drinking water, education and health equipment has been supported by UN Habitat and UNICEF financed by Japan. Community-based activities to promote cohesion and security have been conducted through AAR Japan's activities supported by JICA. In regard to entrepreneurship/skills training, ILO, with US funding, has provided start-up loans for businesses, while agricultural equipment, inputs and livestock, and trainings to cooperatives and farmers has been provided by FAO with the support of the US. A livelihood project for inclusive market-oriented agriculture, with better household management, will be implemented as of 2020.

## 5 APPLYING CRRF IN AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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In 2017, Zambia opened its doors to displaced persons fleeing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Based on past experiences, whereby refugees from the border areas repatriated only to be forced to flee again, GRZ decided to establish an integrated settlement with a view of providing a durable solution from the onset of the crisis. Yet again, local chiefs demonstrated their generosity by offering some eight thousand hectares of land for a transit centre and the establishment of a settlement at Mantapala. The refugee settlement integrated 12 host community villages and the emergency response allowed both host communities and refugees to benefit from the services that were set up with funding from the Central Emergency Refugee Fund (CERF) during 2018.

CERF allocated US\$6,559,772 to the UN system in Zambia from its Rapid Response window to respond to the refugee crisis and sustain the provision of life-saving assistance to 25,000 Congolese refugees in Mantapala in Nchelenge district between December 2017 and August 2018. A total of 15,425 refugees and 4,204 host population were reached with various services and interventions supported through the CERF. Specifically, this funding enabled UN agencies, government and other implementing partners to provide education support benefiting 5,016 refugees (2,405 girls and 2,611 boys); food aid to 13,275; nutrition

support to 4,286; access to emergency and child protection, including sexual and gender-based violence response services to 11,684; and access to safe water and appropriate sanitation to 11,538 people. Two schools and a health post were constructed by the international community, to which GRZ contributed with staff and supplies through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, while the Zambia Police Service provided security and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services supported community-based protection. Refugees were allocated land for farming and 500 refugees benefited from the Farmer Input Support Program. WFP is still ensuring food security for new arrivals while UNHCR, UNICEF and implementing partners support basic services and protection delivery.

GRZ’s comprehensive response envisaged an all-of-society approach with solid investment and support from the international community in various key life-saving sectors to guarantee a dignified reception and productive stay in the country of asylum. GRZ co-ordinates the response to refugee arrivals through the Office of Commissioner for Refugees (COR), with the support of UNHCR. An Inter-Ministerial Committee was established in 2017 to co-ordinate the response to the Congolese refugee situation using an All-of-Government approach. An Inter-Agency Task Force for the Congolese Situation, co-chaired by UNHCR and COR in Lusaka, co-ordinates the ongoing reception and response through monthly co-ordination meetings, while in Mantapala a similar inter-agency task force with sectoral working groups on protection, WASH, health, shelter and education co-ordinates the response in bi-weekly co-ordination meetings. The transition from humanitarian assistance towards development is envisaged through the completion of existing infrastructure enabling inclusion into national programs and inclusion into existing development programs and projects in the District. UNHCR and partners will continue to support urgent humanitarian needs, community-based protection and emergency preparedness.

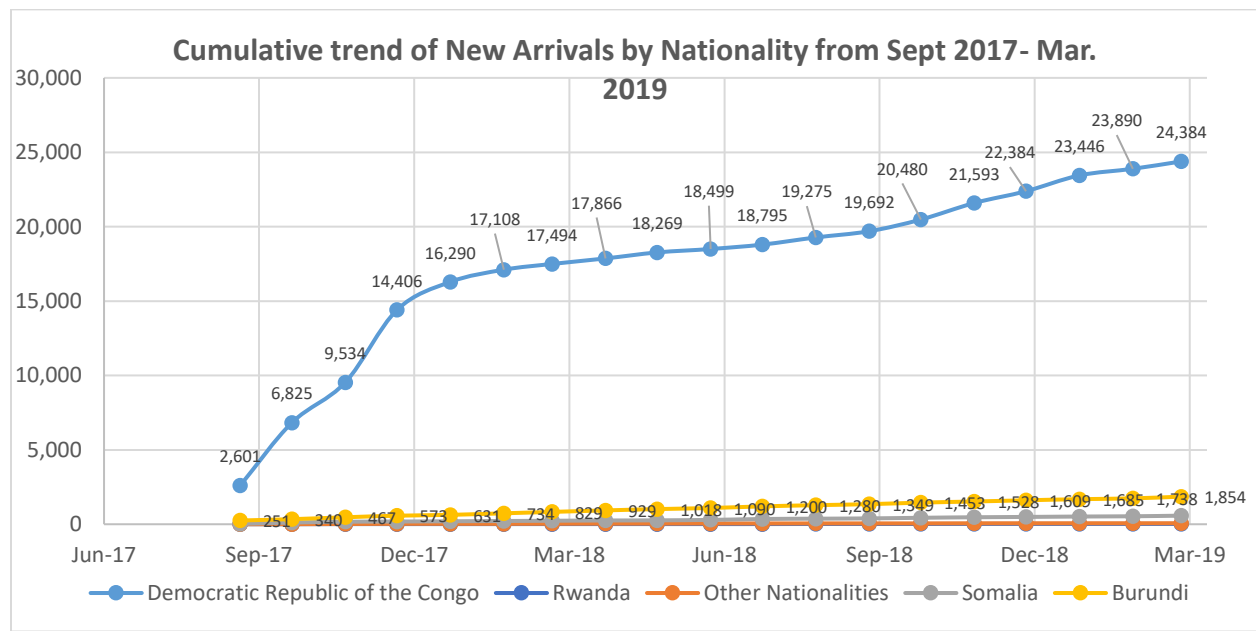


Figure 6; Population trends as at March 2019.

## 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Zambia has demonstrated tremendous generosity to refugees and all displaced persons that has sought asylum within its territory. This hospitality has been shown by government at national and local levels, by the chiefs and traditional authorities in the hosting areas as well as with the ordinary citizens, particularly those in the host communities who have gladly shared their resources albeit within the context of poverty in these hosting areas.

Beyond the show of goodwill, the GRZ has invested over 2 million USD on salaries for workers in the settlement, about 176 million in worth of land allocated refugees and over 8 million USD in construction of schools in Mayukwayukwa settlement alone in responding to the refugee crises.

To fully address challenges in the host communities a whole of society approach is required where donors and other key stakeholders further support the government adequately support refugees and their Zambian hosts. Infrastructure remains a major gap as well as other interventions such as extension of electricity remain a developmental gap all three host districts. Without a show of solidarity with the significant support by GRZ these commendable interventions would not be sustainable and may lead to friction between refugees and their hosts. The CRR approach and the Global Compact on Refugees offer an important framework for continuing to garner critical contributions from all stakeholders in Zambia.