



**UMOJA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

A refugee CBO since 2022

NEWSLETTER:

Vol 1 APRIL 2025

Email: ucf@daseintropic.au

VISION: Refugees Are A Flourishing New Society

The Umoja Community Foundation is based on a new context that the situation of refugees and dislocated peoples is a permanent rather than a transitory situation. In this context refugee 'camps' should be thought of as emergent rural cities. While some refugees do transition on to a host nation or return to nation of origin, the numbers of refugees in any camp continues to increase due to the continual regional conflicts called ever-wars and climate change impacts on survival.



In a recent report from one of the UCF refugee Board members, "Since January 2025, more than 41,000 Congolese have sought refuge in Uganda, bringing the total number of Congolese in Uganda to almost 600,000, out of the 1.8 million refugees currently hosted in the country. Another large group of refugees come from Sudan. Over the past two weeks, an average of 600 people per day have crossed the border.

Many of the new arrivals come from the Rutshuru, Masisi, Goma and Ituri regions of the DRC. They witnessed massacres, sexual violence and other traumatic experiences during their flight."

Hind Alshoubaki likewise argues, "it is quite important to recognize the emergency settlement from the start as cities and to shift the refugee camps planning policies from the temporary solutions to more sustainable one and to apply long-term strategies ..."
The Temporary City, Dec 2017, Hind Alshoubaki, Housing Policies and Urban Economics Vol.7 , pp 5 - 15

Neither could it be considered appropriate human or ecological development were financial development organisations to direct investment according to economic dividend models that might simply create manufacturing slums out of refugee camps

Geography

Nakivale refugee camps is a zone of about 185 square kilometres with upward of 140,000 refugees and 40,000 Ugandan nationals bordering the south bank of Lake Nakivale towards the Rwandan border.

It has 3 regions defined by the major communities of: Base Camp (the original refugee camp); Juru to the west and Rubondo to the east.



Governance

There is a ready foundation on which to create a dynamic future for Nakivale in the well-established system of village leadership. As a refugee-lead organisation, UMOJA Community Foundation recognises the potential of the people and spaces of Nakivale for immanent and vital transformation, simultaneously holding to the opportunity for solving food security and health problems; building a sustainable and flourishing society; and making a contribution to Uganda.

Drawing on the expertise within the Nakivale camps, and collaborations from Africa and the developed world, UMOJA has identified a number of lines of action to the work towards a flourishing human and ecological system:

1. The development of widespread eco-agricultural and ecosystem restoration approaches;
2. Establishing community centres for education and training, community gathering and cultural expression, and community kitchens;
3. Leadership, empowerment and mental health;
4. Occupational skills training;
5. Public Health
6. Microfinance and entrepreneurship training

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Over the inaugural 3 years since the registration of UCF, a number of programs and projects have been commenced:

1. Agriculture
 - i. Seed bank
 - ii. Women's Gardening (permaculture) training
 - iii. Children gardening training
 - iv. Biochar manufacturing



2. Carbon Marketting
 - i. Biochar manufacturing with ISO accreditation
3. Micro-Finance
 - i. Savings program
4. Entrepreneurship
 - i. Emerging leader projects
5. Public Health
 - i. Biochar Water Filtration
6. Cultural and Training Centre
7. Disabilities Awareness and Occupational training



INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANTS

UCF FOUNDER

UCF was founded by Marius Ziganira, refugee agronomist in conversation with Owen Allen (Australia)

UCF BOARD ADVISORS

There are four internationals working with the UCF board especially to guide the development of board capacity, directorship, financial rigour, and general integrity.

These currently are:

Owen Allen (Chair of Board, Australia)

Physiotherapist, Farmer, Rural Health Organisations

Frednand Furia (Board member, Tanania) Business Consultant

Dominique Vasile (Advisor, Australia) Accountant

Richard Fechner (Advisor, Australia) Engineering, Sustainable Finance, Renewable Energy



SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS

There are now a number of other international experts consulting and championing and facilitating programs and projects. These consultants are primarily concerned with the development of Nakivale community capacity in their area of experience.

These currently are:

Health

Lauren Brooker (Australia) Public Health and Water Quality

Dr Japhet Nakiriyitiki (Rwanda) Disease Specialist

Dr Desire Uzele (Refugee) General Practice Clinician

Disabilities (Uwezo Program)

Owen Allen (Australia) Physiotherapist

Paul Brown (Australia) Advocacy - elderly & mental health; Board directorship

Mathew Zaranski (Australia) Industry Skills Training

Biochar

Chris Clarke (Wales), Biochar
Manufacture and Carbon marketing
Prof Lionel Clarke (Wales) Biochar
manufacture and Application research
including water filtration
Bluvin Ravindrin (India) Commercial
Biochar Manufacture
Chris Neidl (Biochar, Carbon
Sequestration)



Agriculture

Ananda Fitzsimmons (Canada) Regenerative
Agriculture and Permaculture
Liaquat Hussain (Pakistan/Uganda) Regenerative
Agriculture Consultant Tree Crops
Keith Noble (Australia) Architecture, Tropical
Fruits Agriculture



Entrepreneurship and Occupational Skills

Katrina Mellick (Australia) Occupational Skills
Specialist, Project Leadership
Mathew Zaranski (Australia) Industry Training Specialist, Disabilities

Mental Health

Fayez Nour (Australia) Mental Health, Trauma and
Conflict Counselor
African Leadership Transformations Inc



Renewable Energy Systems Development

Jagdeep Singh (Australia) Engineer, IT, StartUp
Consultant,
Remember Samu (Australia) Renewable Energy
Systems

Microfinance & Finance Literacy

Amit Dubey (India/Nigeria) Microfinance
Frednand Furia (Tanzania) Business Consultant

Cultural and Skills Training Centre

Mauricio Umman (Portugal) Permaculture and Building Designer

