

# Guidance for a Landscape Approach in Displacement Settings in Sub-Saharan Africa

Case Study on the Landscape of Garamba, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ADSSE:</b>	Association pour le Développement Social et la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement – Association for Social Development and Environmental Protection
<b>AIDES:</b>	Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social – Actions and Interventions for Development and Social Support
<b>CIFOR-ICRAF:</b>	Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry
<b>CNR:</b>	National Commission for Refugees
<b>DGM:</b>	Directorate-General for Migration
<b>DC:</b>	Hunting area
<b>ETD:</b>	Entité territoriale Décentralisée-Decentralised territorial entity
<b>ICCN:</b>	Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature – Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation
<b>GESI:</b>	Gender, equality and social inclusion
<b>GLADS:</b>	Guidance for a Landscape Approach in Displacement Settings
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>PNG:</b>	Garamba National Park
<b>WFP:</b>	World Food Programme
<b>RCE:</b>	Radio communautaire Étoile
<b>DRC:</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>UNHCR:</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children's Fund

## Summary

Through this report on Guidance for a Landscape Approach in Displacement Settings in Sub-Saharan Africa, CIFOR-ICRAF aims to help improve living conditions and promote sustainable development at refugee-hosting sites. It is based on the experiences of a range of stakeholders in the Garamba landscape in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The report aims to provide guidance to support the implementation of a set of integrated interventions based on the landscape approach and to improve the living standards of refugee and host communities. It seeks at once to expand the opportunities available to refugee and host communities, to improve their socioeconomic context, and to conserve the biodiversity of the Garamba landscape where the refugee sites are located.

This report is based on the five guiding principles for case studies on the landscape approach in displacement settings. This approach guides our interpretation of the conclusions of the stakeholder consultations in Garamba. These conclusions are organised taking into account economic, social and environmental sustainability, the complexity of social-ecological systems, the need to apply interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, dynamics of multifunctionality and trade offs, and the participation and engagement of stakeholders.

These consultations revealed that the Garamba landscape is a complex and diverse social-ecological system. It is home to Garamba National Park (PNG), three adjoining hunting areas and neighbouring villages. It is under strong anthropogenic pressure due to high demand for wood energy and building materials, slash-and-burn agriculture and gold panning.

Three categories of actors coexist there, each undertaking a range of activities. They are: local communities, refugees (mainly South Sudanese people living in the Méri and Bélé refugee settlements in the Faradje territory), and development partners (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners, the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and Garamba National Park).

Given its social-ecological complexity, the Garamba landscape serves a multitude of functions, including biodiversity conservation, social protection and environmental protection. Organised refugee sites, joint conflict resolution committees and associations also play different roles in the landscape. Land is also given to refugees to farm. This multifunctionality is central to the peaceful coexistence of the different communities present in the Garamba landscape.

Taking an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach, each actor operates within its own area of intervention to support social, economic and environmental development. Although the key actors are working to this end, there is still some disparity between the demands and the needs of host communities and refugees. The participation of these different communities in stakeholder activities is notable. Unfortunately, however, implementing partners, host communities and refugees often fail to coordinate at the planning stage.

Opportunities exist to crystallise social sustainability (access to basic social services, peaceful coexistence, strong social cohesion, joint conflict resolution committee, economic sustainability (income-generating activities, mutual savings and credit, and social savings groups at the Méri refugee settlement) and environmental sustainability (reforestation and agroforestry programmes and distribution of improved stoves).

These guidance notes are intended to help consolidate the progress already made on social, economic and environmental sustainability in the Garamba landscape. They are based on a number of focus areas:

- Understanding the Garamba landscape hosting South Sudanese refugees (understanding the actors present and their roles, identifying existing tools);
- Developing a common vision for the Garamba landscape (reflecting on the risks and/or positive changes at the social, economic and environmental level related to the presence of refugees and taking into account the level of degradation, etc.);
- Implementing integrated interventions tailored to the Garamba landscape (leadership by local communities and refugees, defining the roles of all stakeholders based on the realities of the landscape);
- Putting appropriate monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation systems in place for an integrated approach (platform where all stakeholders can share intervention successes and failures and suggestions for improving the governance of the Garamba landscape; existence of integrated and neutral bodies to unify, monitor, oversee, evaluate and coordinate interventions as a key way to ensure that the management of sustainable interventions in the Garamba landscape is integrated and effective);
- Mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) (participation of all social groups within host and refugee communities without discrimination on the basis of gender or religion, taking into account the recommendations and suggestions of different social groups).

These guidance notes will be further developed as stakeholders in the Garamba landscape work together.

As a CIFOR-ICRAF initiative, this work benefited from European Union funding and contributions from several stakeholders in the Garamba landscape in the DRC.



## Introduction

Inflows of refugees and their dependence on natural resources for building materials, fuelwood and subsistence activities tend to exceed the carrying capacity of the host ecosystem, leading to forest, land and soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. In most displacement settings, the natural ecosystem is damaged and there is noticeable tension between host and refugee communities. Supporting livelihoods over the long term, for both refugees and host communities, is increasingly recognised as a fundamental component of humanitarian responses when refugees are forced to extend their stay in host communities. Integrated landscape management is an overarching approach able to respond to the myriad demands of the countless stakeholders in refugee-hosting landscapes. This approach is designed to provide effective answers to the many issues arising from the process of sustainable development, both in relation to its socioeconomic and environmental aspects.

The Guidance for a Landscape Approach in Displacement Settings (GLADS) initiative is funded by the European Union and led by the Centre for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) in partnership with key stakeholders. GLADS aims to bring together every governmental, humanitarian, development and conservation actor present in a landscape to facilitate the adoption of a landscape approach when designing, implementing and monitoring all initiatives in displacement settings.

Despite its relevance, the landscape approach has not yet been adapted and applied to contexts affected by refugee reception or displacement. Actors present in the landscape at all levels have been slow to adopt environment and land management tools, such as environmental impact assessments. Doing so would optimise how different interventions in displacement settings interact. This would involve, for example, considering social and cultural factors, as well as factors related to water, soil, animal and plant biodiversity, among other aspects, when planning and setting up sites for refugees. In the majority of cases documented, sectoral approaches do draw on aspects of the landscape approach, but unfortunately fall short when it comes to considering the wider

social-ecological context and their willingness to engage with stakeholders. Moreover, the GLADS approach aims to facilitate interventions that take a participatory approach and seek to help establish and implement sustainable management tools. These tools should improve the living conditions of refugee and host communities while safeguarding the resilience of natural ecosystems.

Sustainability is at the heart of the landscape approach. Indeed, its first four pillars should themselves help to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability in displacement settings:

- The “complexity of social-ecological systems” is apparent in many refugee-hosting landscapes. The inflow of people into certain areas inevitably puts pressure on ecological services. It also leads to confrontations, incompatible demands and even conflict, as new social - and sometimes business - relationships are established between refugees, host communities and other stakeholders.
- It is necessary to adopt “interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary” approaches when planning and managing different sectors to effectively respond to the needs of stakeholders in displacement settings sustainably.
- Given the diversity of livelihood activities identified and socioeconomic dynamics driven by interactions between refugees and host communities, it is also necessary to effectively manage “multifunctionality and trade-offs”.
- “Stakeholder participation and engagement” is crucial in most cases, particularly given that the many stakeholders present in the landscape have a wide range of profiles and do not necessarily share the same vision. These stakeholders include refugees, local populations, local, sub-national and national authorities, national and international humanitarian and development organisations, donors and researchers, national and international NGOs, universities and the private sector. To achieve effective stakeholder participation and

engagement in implementation and monitoring, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of the different actors and to ensure they have a good understanding of stakeholder perceptions.

The diagram below presents the landscape approach in displacement settings and summarises its main pillars (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The integrated landscape approach in displacement settings (Schure et al. 2022, based on the principles of the integrated landscape approach of Freeman et al. 2015).







This framework has proven invaluable when jointly developing guidelines with key stakeholders on how to apply the approach to achieve sustainable development and resilience at the landscape level. Previous consultations with stakeholders in Cameroon (Garoua-Boulai and neighbouring municipalities in the East region), Kenya (Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana county) and Uganda (Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in the districts of Madi-Okollo and Terego) informed our preliminary assessment. They have improved our understanding of the tools used to implement the landscape approach in displacement settings. Data from the literature review and stakeholder consultations were then used to draft the guidance, which was discussed in greater detail at the national co-design workshops.

The results of the co-design processes were summarised in the Guidance for a Landscape Approach in Displacement Settings (cifor-icraf.org/glds). This guidance, which sets out aspects to consider and links to tools for implementation, is structured around the following five themes:

1. Understanding refugee-hosting landscapes;
2. Developing a common landscape-scale vision;
3. Implementing contextually appropriate integrated interventions targeting sustainability in displacement settings;
4. Putting appropriate monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation systems in place for the integrated landscape approach;
5. Mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).

This report on the Bél , M ri, Kaka and Dungen refugee sites in the landscape of Garamba National Park summarises the lessons learned from the review and stakeholder consultations on the relevance and applicability of a landscape approach in displacement settings and on the co-design of guidelines for the Garamba landscape.

### Objectives

This work aims to facilitate consultations and dialogue on how the landscape approach can support the sustainable management of the refugee-hosting landscape of Garamba.

This work presents guidelines for the implementation of an integrated intervention framework based on the landscape approach. It aims to improve the living conditions of refugees and host populations by expanding the opportunities available to these two groups, by improving their socioeconomic context and by conserving the biodiversity of the Garamba refugee-hosting landscape.

It further aims to provide evidence on the importance of an integrated landscape management strategy in displacement settings by developing mutually agreed guidance notes.

This guidance will help humanitarian actors and other national stakeholders present in Garamba to more effectively plan and implement efforts to restore degraded spaces, bolstering the resilience of refugee and host community livelihoods.

### Context of the Garamba landscape

The Garamba landscape is located in the north-east of the DRC in the province of Haut-Uel  on the border with South Sudan between latitudes 3°8' and 4°4' N and longitudes 29° and 30° W (IUCN 2012). The landscape complex comprises the Garamba National Park, its three adjacent hunting areas, and areas inhabited by local communities and refugees from Faradje and Dungen in the province of Haut-Uel , as well as Durba, a mining town of about 500,000 inhabitants.

The Garamba landscape covers 14,795 km<sup>2</sup>: 5,133 km<sup>2</sup> in Garamba National Park and 9,662 km<sup>2</sup> across the three hunting areas (PNG, 2023). Established in 1938, Garamba National Park is a protected area, open to tourists, with strict conservation rules (IUCN Category II).

It has been recognised as a World Heritage Site (UNESCO) since 1980, but is experiencing serious ecological disturbance, drawing the attention of the international community. It was added to the list of endangered sites from 1984 to 1992, and again in 1996. Hunting areas were set up in the landscape in 1974: Azande (to the west), Gangala Na Bodio (to the south) and Mondo-Missa (to the east).

The Garamba landscape is characterised by vast undulating plains traversed by a dense network of watercourses. Its altitude ranges between 710 m and 1,060 m and in the north, the plains are interrupted by granite inselbergs (IUCN 2012). There are four cities in the landscape: Faradje, Aba, Dungen and Durba. It is home to several ethnic groups whose main activity is subsistence agriculture. They include the Azande, Logo, Mondo, Kakwa, Baka and Padjulu. Only the Logo and Kakwa peoples are engaged in small livestock farming (ICCN-PNG, 2010). The Logo people mainly live in the east (DC Gangala Na Bodio hunting area), the Mondo in the east (Mondo-Missa hunting area) and the Azande in the west (Azande hunting area).

Armed conflicts in South Sudan have caused cross-border insecurity and an influx of refugees. Some refugees from Dungen have been settled in Kaka and then in Kpezu since the 1990s. The presence of refugees in the area has had a number of effects on the Garamba landscape. Between 1990 and 2006, it

correlated with an increase in poaching in Garamba National Park and the Kumborezi Community Reserve about 90 km north-west of Dungen, along the Uel  river. This observation has led to the repatriation of a large number of South Sudanese refugees. The landscape also hosts refugees at the M ri site (in Aba), and the B l , Kaka and Doruma sites (in the Dungen region, living among the host community).

In 2016, a new influx of South Sudanese refugees was recorded in Dungen. This led to the creation of the Kaka site 5 km from Garamba National Park. At this site, refugees and members of the host community were encouraged to live together. This integrated approach offers an interesting alternative to the classic approach, i.e. setting up a refugee camp.

Between 2017 and 2019, in anticipation of a spike in poaching, Park officials recommended that the National Refugee Committee and UNHCR set up another, more remote site for South Sudanese refugees based in Kaka. The B l  site was chosen by the provincial government of Haut-Uel  (see Provincial Decree No. 01/JPLK/028/CAB/PROGOU/H-U/2018 of 18/07/2018).

In addition to the Kaka refugee site, which is not fully operational given that many refugees broke off and settled among the local population, the Garamba landscape has two other sites: M ri and B l . Covering an area of 6 km<sup>2</sup> and able to accommodate around 20,000 people, the M ri site is the larger of the two. It houses more than 7,673 households (over 24,820 refugees), according to National Refugee Committee data from December 2022. The B l  site, opened for refugees displaced from the Kaka site and some from the M ri site, is designed to accommodate about 5,000 households (around 20,000 displaced people) (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2019). As at 31 December 2022, it houses 3,300 refugees.

This high population density has a major impact on natural resources (Figure 2). The Garamba landscape is subject to high anthropogenic pressure related to gold panning, shifting slash-and-burn agriculture and poaching. To better understand the dynamics and challenges of this landscape, a large volume of information was collected using techniques tailored to the context.

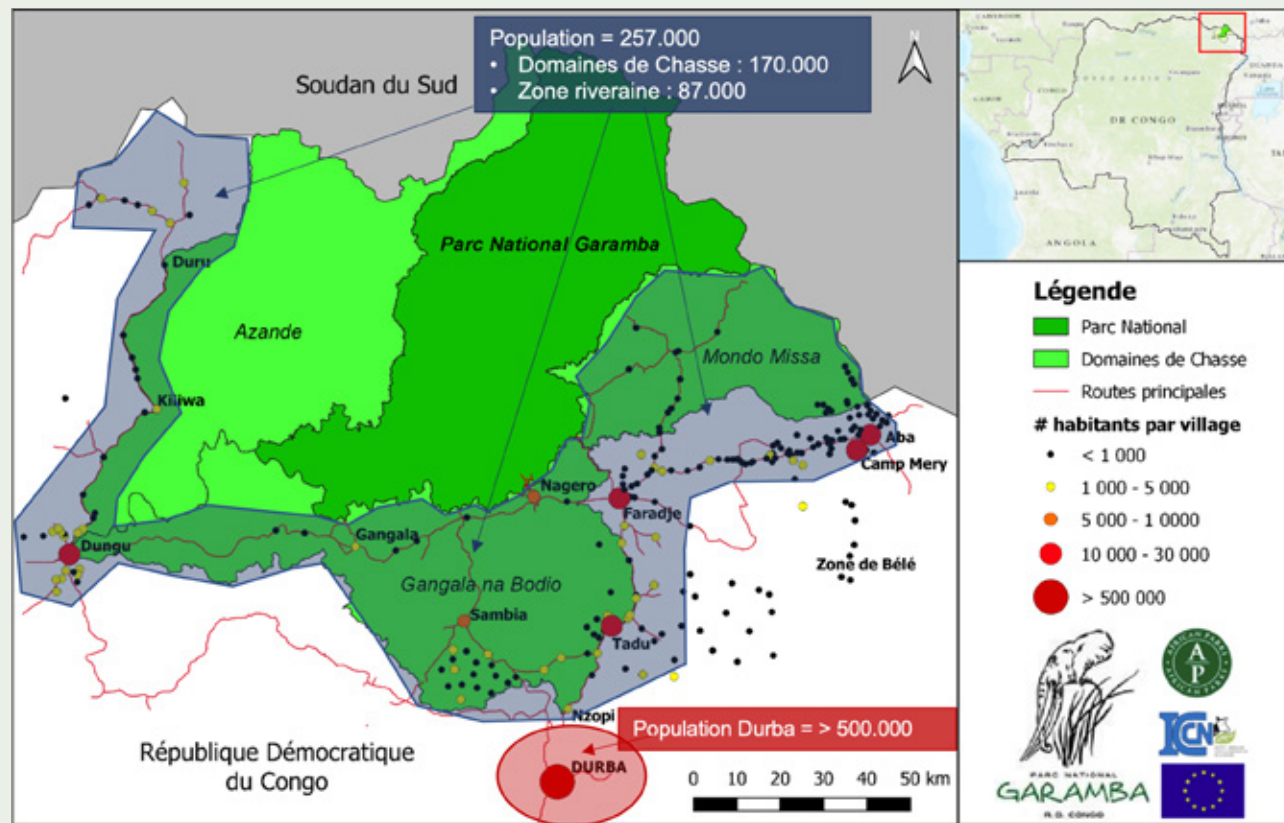


Figure 2: The Garamba Landscape: Main settlements and populations (source: PNG 2022)\*

\*The administrative boundaries and borders shown in Figure 2 are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to indicate the position of CIFOR-ICRAF or the European Union on their location.

## Information gathering techniques

Several techniques were used to cross check information and gain a better understanding of the dynamics and challenges of the Garamba landscape. Once they had mapped the actors operating in the landscape, the research team conducted a literature review, ran individual and group consultations and held experience sharing workshops:

- They conducted a documentary review on the Bélé and Méri refugee site to analyse a number of publications on the Garamba landscape and the context of refugees in the landscape, along with the interventions carried out there.
- Consultations with stakeholders — through key informant interviews — provided information on the history and dynamics of the landscape;
- Visits to refugee camps, and surrounding areas, provided an opportunity to observe relevant activities carried out by stakeholders;
- Workshops were organised to bring together stakeholders in the landscape. They provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the information collected during the consultations in depth, confirming or complementing it. Similarly, stakeholder perspectives were incorporated into the suggested strategies to respond to displacement in the Garamba landscape to support the sustainable management of its natural resources.



Figure 3: Consultation workshops for stakeholders to present, consolidate and approve the GLADS Garamba Guidelines (Faradje, 29 March and 4 May 2023)

The first workshop was held in Faradje in March 2023. Its purpose was to develop guidance for the Garamba landscape in Haut-Uelé province. The second workshop, held in May 2023, aimed to present the findings of the first consultation, with the ultimate aim of consolidating and reaching a consensus on the guidance for an integrated approach to the management of the Garamba landscape.



## Aspects of the landscape approach applied to the displacement setting landscape of Garamba

The sectoral gaps observed must be overcome to achieve sustainable development and resilience at the landscape level. To do this, it is important to adopt a scientific methodology applicable to the displacement setting landscape. As applied to the displacement setting landscape of Garamba, the landscape approach is based on five pillars or principles:

### Pillar 1: Complexity of social-ecological systems in refugee-hosting landscapes

Social-ecological systems are made up of actions and interactions between actors present in a single ecosystem. This includes the relationship between humans and their immediate environment, i.e. the land (André Ndzodo et al., 2022). Because displacement can be long lasting, it eventually creates new dynamics and social relationships within refugee settlements (Jansen 2011). At the same time, it leads to new power dynamics between key actors, including humanitarian organisations, central government, local government, and local populations (Napier-Moore 2005). New networks and social connections between refugees and members of host communities form systems of transactions between individuals and groups (Omata and Kaplan 2013). Such a system comprises, among other aspects, households and their economic activities, refugee and host community organisations and institutions, conflict and violence, and development activities (Vemuru et al. 2016). This new situation can present opportunities for stakeholders. Economic interactions between host communities and refugees contribute to the local economy (Omata and Kaplan 2013; Verwimp and Maystadt 2015; World Bank 2016).

The Garamba landscape is a complex and diverse social-ecological system. Geographically, the site comprises a national park complex, three adjacent hunting areas and neighbouring areas (see Figure 4). These areas have legal personality and are therefore managed as independent units. Three categories of actors coexist in this landscape: host communities, refugees, the majority of whom are South Sudanese, and development partners. They are all required to share the same physical space, in which they carry out a range of activities, such as crop and animal farming. Gold panning is also becoming increasingly popular among the population, particularly in Dunga and Durba. Durba is home to the headquarters of the company Kibali Gold Mine, a Congolese subsidiary of Barrick mining company, which operates the largest gold mine in the DRC.

Local communities are generally willing to give up land for agricultural activities, including subsistence farming and small-scale vegetable growing (rice, cassava, plantain, etc.). Outside the hunting areas, cocoa farming, poultry farming and fish farming are growing. Priority is given to environmental activities insofar as they also allow people to generate the resources they need to survive.

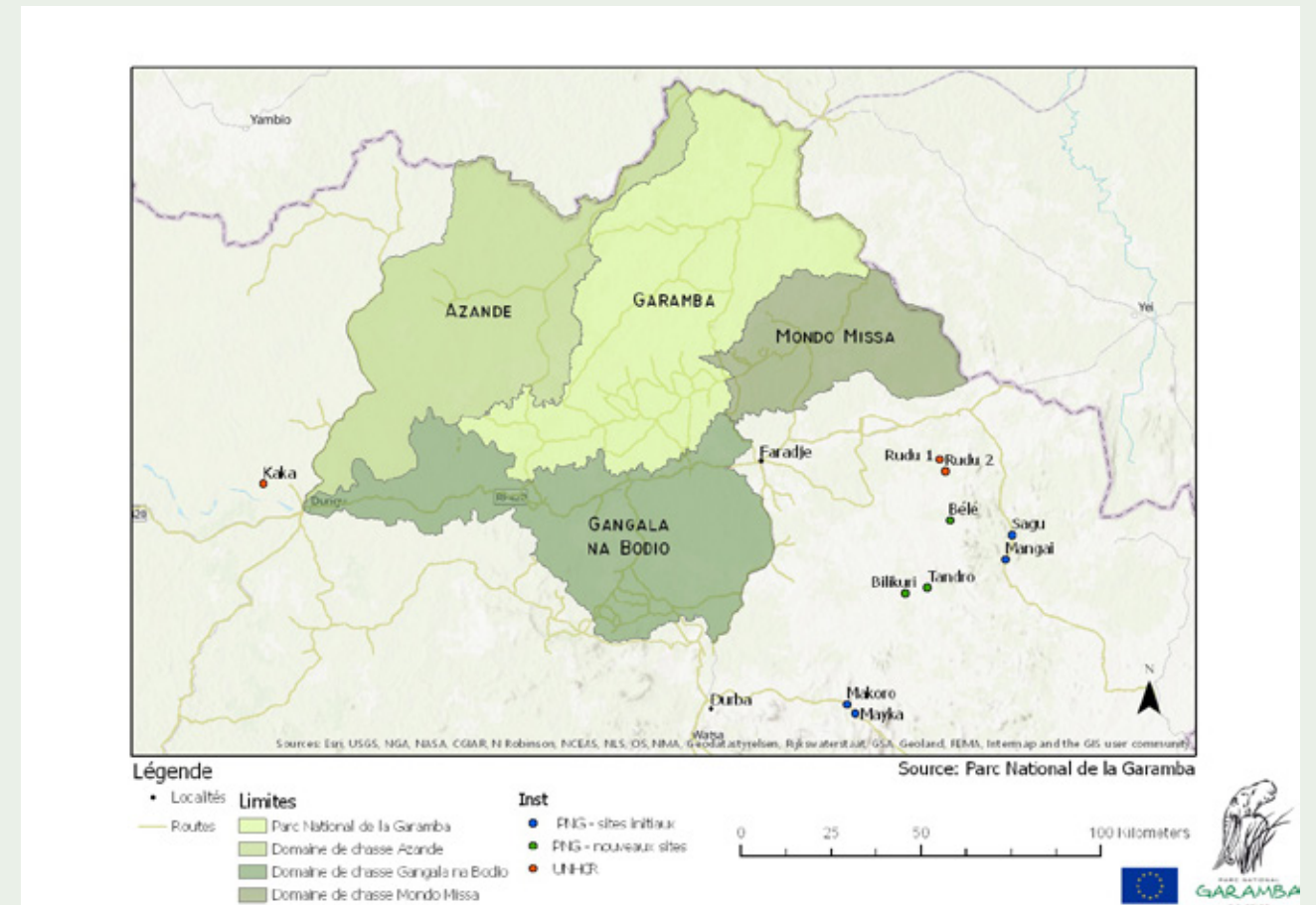


Figure 4: Garamba National Park complex, the three hunting areas and the refugee sites (source: PNG 2022)\*

\*The administrative boundaries and borders shown in Figure 4 are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to indicate the position of CIFOR-ICRAF or the European Union on their location.





Photo credit: Axel Fassio



Certain key partners responsible for running and/or managing the area are in an extremely delicate position and disparities in their approaches or actions could lead to social breakdown. The initiative to relocate the Kaka refugee site to Bélé is a particular point of contention in the landscape. It falls within the remit of the National Commission for Refugees, UNHCR, Garamba National Park and many other national and international humanitarian organisations. Notwithstanding the March 2021 collaboration agreement between African Parks and UNHCR, complaints persist about the difference in treatment between the Bélé and Méri sites. Some stakeholders asserted that refugees at the Méri site get preferential treatment because they receive “cash” more often,<sup>1</sup> while those at Bélé do not. Meanwhile, others argue that the refugees at the Méri site do not have enough space to carry out their agricultural activities, unlike those at Bélé.

The expression of these divergent points of view by key actors demonstrates how the complexity of the landscape manifests in Dungu. This reality is set against a backdrop of sociological and ethnic diversity, which is viewed as the source of harmful phenomena, such as conflicts, bloodshed, armed robbery and looting (recorded among some refugee groups in the 1990s), and land-related conflicts, such as over how the site should be managed or agricultural land distributed. However, the Azande and Baka communities do appear to coexist well, as do Central African and South Sudanese refugees with the host communities. Cohabitation is more strained between local communities and nomadic Mbororo herders. Their peaceful coexistence and social-ecological and cultural stability is fragile (haphazard settlements, carrying weapons, destruction of plantations and threats against the local population). Sambia, which draws large numbers of people from all groups, especially for gold panning, is at risk of disappearing due to major ecological impacts.

From the point of view of the host community, the influx of refugees into its territory calls for creative and innovative responses, as it is a source of both social and ecological tensions.

Social tensions arise when – due to limited resources – refugees and host communities are treated differently. This differentiation is especially apparent in the fields of health (members of the host community must pay for care, but it is free to refugees) and security (there is a commission responsible for refugee protection in addition to the UNHCR). Some informants also reported that the majority of projects are implemented in sites/villages that host refugees. Such projects include installing water supply infrastructure, setting up health centres and building schools. This narrow focus on refugees has led to frustration among host communities, who believe that refugees benefit from ordinary legal privileges as well as humanitarian assistance. In such a setting, finding ways to bridge the divide and define a common vision is a matter of urgency. Doing so would allow synergies to develop for the profitable and sustainable management of the Garamba landscape.

As regards ecological tensions, threats to forest ecosystems and their biodiversity are increasingly apparent. Excessive tree felling for fuelwood and charcoal production in the face of growing demand has led to forest degradation and deforestation in the Garamba landscape. In the city of Aba, for example, before the arrival of the refugees, fuelwood could easily be found at the Méri site. Now, people have to travel 5 km to 7 km to find it. Sometimes, they have to go over 15 km to source charcoal and timber. Mining activities in areas of Durba in Watsa territory and in part of the Dungu territory significantly worsen soil degradation. Prospecting for gold and other metals, such as by crushing stones, has a serious impact on the equilibrium of the Garamba landscape. Moreover, the large population in Durba, estimated at 500,000 people, exerts pressure on the hunting areas and neighbouring areas. This pressure has negative consequences, such as deforestation for agriculture, charcoal and illegal gold mining, and increased use of slash-and-burn and chemical fertilisers. For UNHCR, downsizing the Méri site would help to stabilise this ecosystem because an extremely high population density inevitably leads to ecological pressures on the local environment, in the absence of corrective measures.

For their part, the refugees are aware of the pressure on biodiversity (cutting trees for fuelwood, using inappropriate agricultural techniques that degrade the soil) and deplore how they are treated both by the host communities and by the many partners who work in the landscape. There have been cases, in Méri, for example, of refugees being forced to buy land to carry out their agricultural activities. Local people then waited for the land to be cultivated by the refugees before asserting their rights to the point of making the refugees leave without any compensation. The land allocated to refugees in Bélé for farming is located nearly 15 km away. They find this situation lamentable. Due to the high number of people at the camp, there is not always universal access to water. Some people are therefore forced to travel long distances to find water, which is not necessarily potable.

Meanwhile, development partners implement multisectoral interventions, in areas ranging from agriculture to agroforestry, education, health, housing, security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, some activities are plagued by divergent techniques, approaches or views on how best to proceed. African Parks seeks to encourage agroforestry, the use of improved stoves, fish farming, beekeeping and the wider adoption of agroecological techniques for growing food and vegetable crops (African Parks 2022). Conversely, UNHCR focuses, in addition to agriculture, agroforestry and empowerment activities, on refugee relocation, shelter, health and education through the construction of health centres and schools. The National Commission for Refugees, for its part, is responsible for the protection of refugees in and around the camps. Although these roles are well defined, this does not always play out on the ground. These actors diverge on which agroecology or agroforestry practices should be used (use of organic fertilisers or chemical fertilisers), on the resettlement of refugees and on how to protect the biodiversity of the Garamba National Park (such as in the case of the resettlement of refugees at the Bélé site).

All these actions and interactions can be a source of conflict and tension between the people living in the landscape and other actors. The complexity of the social-ecological systems in the Garamba landscape, which hosts mostly South Sudanese refugees, is further tested by the security, socioeconomic and multisectoral transformations in the area. Latent and active social conflicts brew alongside countless ecological challenges (landscape degradation and biodiversity loss in the Garamba National Park) in an area still without appropriate solutions.

<sup>1</sup> An expression commonly used by local people when talking about the distribution of money by UNHCR and the World Food Programme to support very vulnerable groups.

## Pillar 2: Multifunctionality and trade offs

Multifunctionality and trade offs in interactions between refugees and host communities should be considered at an early stage, when planning and designing refugee camps (Jahre et al. 2018). Mitigation measures include natural resource planning and targeted solutions, such as agroforestry, that take into account the need for land to farm animals and crops and produce forest products (Grosrenaud et al. 2021). This principle is illustrated by the multiple livelihood activities reported, and the socioeconomic dynamics between refugees and host communities.

The Garamba landscape serves a multitude of functions: biodiversity conservation, social protection and environmental protection, among others. Each partner present has a role to play in safeguarding the progress already made in the landscape. The mission of Garamba National Park, for example, is to provide security, restore biodiversity and stimulate economic development for communities. UNHCR, for its part, focuses on improving the living standards of refugees. According to Article 3 of the March 2021 collaboration agreement,<sup>2</sup> the activities of the National Park are largely oriented towards the host population. Nevertheless, refugees will make up 20% of participants attending training sessions on sustainable agricultural techniques as part of the training for community liaisons. This could however justify the fact that UNHCR devotes almost 80% of its efforts to refugees. The National Commission for Refugees, for its part, serves as the competent authority of the Congolese government responsible for protecting refugees and refugee sites.

Multifunctionality and trade offs at the refugee sites in the Garamba landscape can also be analysed horizontally, i.e. by looking at functionality within the different groups. From this viewpoint, the sites are well organised. The refugees have an elected leader and camp presidents who are responsible for managing the camps day to day and who act as spokespersons for the refugees. There are joint commissions for the peaceful settlement of disputes. These commissions are supervised by the National Commission for Refugees. There are associations within the different communities. In the Dhamada group, there is an association of stone breakers, an association of sand diggers, an association of block transporters (locally known as Broka) and a women's association. All these associations are made up of both refugees and local people. They were set up informally on an ad hoc basis in response to the needs of refugees and host communities. This multifunctionality is a major pillar of peaceful coexistence in the area. Associations organised and made up exclusively of refugees also operate within the sites. They include the WAHIDA savings and credit mutual (52 members), the merchant association Méri Traders Association (35 members) and the mothers' association Méri Women Initiative for Progress Association (41 members). These associations have been created on the initiative of these different social interest groups.

## Pillar 3: Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches

It is necessary to adopt interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches when planning and managing different sectors to effectively respond to the needs of stakeholders in displacement settings over the long term. The landscape is a subject of study for myriad interventions by actors from a range of disciplines, very often applying approaches from their own fields of activity and areas of interest. Each actor intervenes in their own field in an effort to alleviate the suffering of refugees and host communities. The landscape plays host to researchers from national and international NGOs (ADSSE, AIDES, MALTESER, INTERSOS and Action Aid International), and international organisations and development partners (UNHCR, World Food Programme, UNICEF). The issues covered range from humanitarian assistance and development support to environmental conservation, history, law, economics and climatology.

While some actors are aware of the need for interdisciplinarity, more robust multidisciplinary approaches are needed in this landscape, which faces enormous challenges, but has limited human and financial resources. The complexity of the landscape calls for a diversity of expertise to tackle each part of the problem, while remaining mindful of the shared vision and the ultimate objectives: the wellbeing of the people who live there and the sustainable management of the environment in equal measure. In the agricultural sector, for example, we should draw on the expertise of agricultural engineers specialised in a range of fields. Likewise for animal farming, health, the economy and even the social sector. Although key actors are working to this end, their efforts fall short of meeting the demands and needs of local communities and refugees. There are, for example, no veterinarians in the Ali group, despite the many animal health-related challenges, and there is a general shortage of agro-sylvo-pastoral workers.

As regards social dynamics, there is no consultation framework in place able to navigate the technical and historical aspects of the landscape. This explains why efforts can run at cross purposes. An interdisciplinary approach requires actors to be trained in areas as varied as they are specialised. However, under-education and a lack of technical training is evident in the landscape, especially in Morodria, Avu near Bélé in the Ali group and many other areas where people are forced to travel tens of kilometres to reach a health centre. The severe shortage of doctors and midwives, for example, leaves pregnant women without adequate monitoring. In practice, interdisciplinarity is sorely lacking in the landscape, which could well explain its high level of underdevelopment. Young refugees, for example, often engage in harmful activities, including prostitution, alcohol consumption and other drug use. Older and destitute people are virtually abandoned, receiving no specific assistance.

<sup>2</sup> The actors involved have had to overcome a number of challenges to implement this agreement, which aims to harmonise interventions to facilitate peaceful coexistence between host communities and refugees in the Garamba landscape.



#### Pillar 4: Participation and engagement

The participation and responsible engagement of stakeholders is a central pillar of good governance. To improve stakeholder ownership of interventions in various areas, it is crucial to engage the full gamut of actors on an equal footing: refugees, local people, local, sub-national and national governments, humanitarian and international organisations, donors, researchers, NGOs and private sector actors. Broad stakeholder participation can help prevent or mitigate land and property disputes (EU et al. 2019). Participation therefore provides an avenue for understanding refugee and host communities' perceptions of natural resource use and management solutions (Duguma et al. 2019b). Refugees and host communities can, for example, work together to plan joint tree planting and management efforts (Duguma et al. 2019a). When stakeholders have agreed on measures and expected results through discussion, they tend to show greater interest in assessing progress (Sayer et al. 2013). Effective participation and engagement requires capacity building and an understanding of stakeholder perceptions (Jansen and De Bruijne 2020).

Many private and public sector actors operate in the Garamba landscape, playing a wide range of roles. Public sector actors include the National Commission for Refugees and customary authorities (heads of chiefdoms, heads of groups, heads of settlements). Development partners also operate in the landscape, including African Parks Congo, which acts on behalf of the Garamba National Park under an agreement signed with the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) in 2005, alongside humanitarian organisations under the United Nations system (UNHCR, UNICEF and World Food Programme).

The National Commission for Refugees is the main government body for managing refugee situations. It was created by Law 021/2002 of 16 October 2002 on the status of refugees. As a government service under the Ministry of the Interior, it aims to regulate the status and improve the living conditions of refugees. Law 021 of 2002 grants the provincial branches of the National Commission for Refugees certain powers: to provide legal and administrative protection to refugees, to receive and register refugees, returnees and asylum seekers, to handle any other request from or concerning a refugee, to monitor returnee reintegration

programmes and interventions to manage and assist refugees implemented by UNHCR's implementing partners, and to liaise between government services and UNHCR/partners. In the territory of Dungu, in the absence of the National Commission for Refugees, the Directorate-General for Migration monitors and supports interventions by overseeing the movement and resettlement of refugees.

Humanitarian organisations working with refugees and host communities include UNHCR and other development partners. UNHCR carries out humanitarian work through local implementing partners, such as organisations like the Association for Social Development and Environmental Protection (Association pour le Développement Social et la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement), the NGO Actions and Interventions for Development and Social Support (Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social) and INTERSOS, with Malteser acting as an operational partner in the field of health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Other organisations under the United Nations system, such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, stand out for their multifaceted support for South Sudanese refugees.

Local communities and refugees participate in activities organised by partners of UNHCR, UNICEF and Garamba National Park. Unfortunately, however, implementing partners, host communities and refugees often fail to coordinate at the planning stage. Refugees, for example, complain that they are not fully involved in activities intended to benefit them because they are rarely invited to planning meetings. Despite the agreement between UNHCR and African Parks Congo to support host communities and refugees to set up income-generating activities, activities are still planned from the top down in the Garamba landscape. This is a common flaw among interventions intended to benefit people living in the landscape.

Two governments – namely the government of South Sudan and that of the DRC (specifically the sub-national government of Kinshasa and the provincial government of Haut-Uelé) – are also active in the landscape. Their involvement is supported by consultations and concerns security and, above all, the arrangements for South Sudanese refugees' return to their territory of origin. Summit meetings have been organised between the two governments, including a visit in 2021 to Isiro (capital of the Haut-Uelé province) and in 2022 to Aba (location of the Méri site), in the presence of all stakeholders.

Regular communication between stakeholders is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of participation. Particular attention must be paid to refugee and host communities to better understand their perceptions and expectations of the activities implemented. This should build trust between stakeholders and could lead to the reorientation of interventions in response to new challenges. Refugee and host community representatives have reported that implementing partners do not share enough information. In the Garamba landscape, informants lamented the total absence of refugee interventions involving local and national radio stations. Yet in Aba, the Étoile community radio station broadcasts information and messages on behalf of various stakeholders. Radio broadcasts should be used to ensure that everyone is able to access information and has an opportunity to speak, which would also provide insight into the perceptions of all stakeholders. To this end, programmes will need to be produced in the mother tongues of all stakeholders, including refugees.



Photo credit: Axel Fassio



## Pillar 5: Sustainability

Sustainability has three dimensions: social, economic and environmental.

### Social sustainability

To achieve social sustainability in refugee-hosting landscapes, it is necessary to create favourable conditions for refugees to integrate into their new environment. Such conditions should help allay their fears that they are more likely to die than to live when forced to leave their home. This dimension of sustainability is also associated with access to basic social services, livelihood opportunities, social cohesion and efforts to reduce the risk of conflict (Awono et al. 2022).

There are many opportunities to solidify social sustainability in the Garamba landscape. Although insufficient according to stakeholders, several factors contribute to social sustainability in the landscape. A number of actors organise activities to improve access to basic social services such as health centres, schools, water abstraction facilities and income-generating activities for refugees. These activities help to improve their living conditions and ensure their peaceful coexistence with host communities.

However, in some places host communities and refugees do not have equal access to these services. For instance, in the same hospital, refugees are treated for free while host communities pay for care, which leads to complaints and resentment within the host community. Partner support for refugees is also limited in time and space by the funds available, especially given that refugees are staying longer and longer, well beyond the timelines forecast in humanitarian planning documents (Laird et al. 2022). South Sudanese refugees have also expressed their frustration, in particular when it was announced that UNICEF was suspending school coverage and UNHCR was pausing co-payment for health care and when cash payments (for all refugees) and food deliveries (at the Bélé site) were delayed. To this, we can add the resentment expressed by local communities, particularly in Dungu, who believe that the interventions by UNHCR, Garamba National Park and other partners are discriminatory. Examples shared include the imbalance in interventions and the creation of institutional bodies

in the territories of Faradje and Dungu, despite the fact that the two areas are part of the same landscape with very similar realities. The withdrawal of UNHCR from Dungu shocked local communities when they had been promised that they would benefit from these organisations' interventions. Many view certain interventions by the Garamba National Park in this area unfavourably (for example, legal prohibitions or restrictions). The resulting social breakdown is a source of tension between the different communities, which manifests in acts and discourse that are damaging to social and environmental stability. This situation is at the root of the different areas' mutual disregard and rejection.

Social cohesion is however strong in the Garamba landscape among refugees and local communities who belong to the same ethnic group. For example, there are many people from the Kakwa ethnic group among refugees and host communities in the Aba area. Good social cohesion is found in schools where refugee and local students attend the same classes and have the same teachers. Indeed, no disputes have been reported there. This is the case at the Riko Minzo primary school in Aba, which has only nine classrooms to accommodate 1,180 students (810 refugees and 370 local students). However, in Bélé, the presence of South Sudanese refugees from the Dinga group on the same site aggravates old hostilities, to the point that residents live in fear. This jeopardises the security of the area and therefore social sustainability.

In an effort to reduce conflict, joint conflict resolution committees have been set up in areas with refugee settlements to facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes that arise between refugees and host communities.

Reintegration into the labour market is another important aspect of social sustainability. Unfortunately, there are few vocational training centres at either the Bélé or Aba refugee sites. The birth rate among refugees is higher than that of host communities. Data for 2022 from the birth statistics register of the Nyalanya health centre in Aba show that 925 babies were born to refugee mothers compared with 227 to local mothers. High population growth could be a source of social tensions between host communities and refugees, for example in relation to access to land. Mindful of this challenge, local NGO AIDES encourages

refugees to use natural contraception methods to help reduce the high birth rate.

Although refugees do sometimes coexist peacefully with the host communities, they are more likely to experience psychological problems. Most refugees pray for an end to the war at home in South Sudan. Based on the information collected at the Bélé and Méri sites, more than 75% of refugees want to return home if peace is restored, regardless of when that happens. However, in Dungu, where refugees are dispersed among the host community, returning is not their top priority; they would prefer to be supported to naturalise.

### Economic sustainability

In refugee-hosting landscapes, it is necessary to take a holistic view of host and refugee communities to ensure they have equitable access to income-generating activities from a range of livelihoods or labour markets, as well as equitable access to markets in general and capital (Awono et al. 2022). There are many initiatives aimed at supporting income-generating activities, both for refugees at the Méri site in Aba and Bélé, and for local communities.

For refugees in Aba and Bélé, ADSSE supports income-generating opportunities in a range of fields, including crop and animal farming, motorised tricycles, beekeeping and agroforestry. In Bélé, Garamba National Park promotes agroecology, based on the farmer field school approach. Garamba National Park also supports fish farming and beekeeping within its borders. These activities generate income for both host communities and refugees. They are carried out in the villages of Ndiri, Avo, Morodria Patarua, Ali, Gaga and Bogor (PNG 2021). There are many market opportunities for products, which are sold either locally in the markets of Aba and Bélé, or in Ariwara or Faradje. However, despite being authorised by the National Commission for Refugees, refugees at the Bélé site reported that they are sometimes harassed by police, which prevents them from selling their products at the Aba market.

Refugees have also adopted survival strategies to support their own livelihoods. One example is the WAHIDA savings and credit mutual and the mothers' association (Méri Women Initiative for Progress

Association), which grants loans to support the subsistence activities of its members (generally small businesses).

As part of the UNHCR refugee strategy, money is distributed to refugees at the Méri site, a practice commonly known in the Garamba landscape as receiving "cash". This money allows refugees to meet their basic needs such as food, medicine and school fees. The amount depends on the size of each household. In terms of economic effects, "cash" puts money into circulation in the Aba area, increasing the income of economic actors. However, it also pushes up the prices of goods and services on local markets, which causes problems for poor households. In terms of social effects, "cash" encourages dependency on aid among refugees, reducing them to eternal beneficiaries. It can also lead to conflict and jealousy between host communities and refugees. Meanwhile, according to Garamba National Park, environmental effects include increased poaching and deforestation in the region (due to higher demand for bushmeat and charcoal). All this calls into question the sustainability of the "cash" given to refugees at the Méri site.

Both refugees and host communities find it difficult to access the jobs created by activities carried out in the Garamba landscape. This is a source of frustration. They argue that they are not considered for posts that should be occupied by people who live in the areas affected by these activities. Implementing partners claim, however, that local job offers are made public, even though there is a conspicuous lack of applications from refugees.

### Environmental sustainability

In Africa, the arrival of refugees contributes to increased deforestation in host landscapes. When institutions plan these refugee-hosting areas, to achieve environmental sustainability, they must mitigate and reduce the degradation of wooded areas, other types of vegetation and natural habitats (wildlife). They must also protect or restore the multifunctionality of the landscape (trees, crops and livestock) and the associated positive benefits, such as increased biodiversity, soil fertility and water availability (Schure et al. 2022). Any activities that disrupt the balance of the ecosystem should be minimised or avoided (Sachs and Ban 2016).



The Garamba landscape is under pressure. If not well managed upstream, this pressure could increase deforestation and landscape degradation as a result of fuelwood collection, charcoal production, agricultural activities, and trees and straw being cut to build refugees' homes. These concerns have been raised by host communities in the Dhamada group and refugees at the Méri site in the Kakwa Ima chiefdom. In Bélé, the host community has expressed concern that the area is being degraded, for example, by stick gathering. The refugees at the site do recognise that this degradation is happening.

Efforts to restore degraded areas include a pilot reforestation programme covering 16 ha run by the Association for Social Development and Environmental Protection (UNHCR partner) and an agroforestry pilot (covering 3 ha) by the Garamba National Park in the Bélé area. However, given the complexity of the landscape and the demands on it, and the extent of degradation around refugee sites, these activities are too small scale. The landscape instead needs a robust agroforestry programme. Tailored and harmonised methods will be required to restore the degraded landscapes in the Bélé and Aba areas (reforestation, good agricultural practices to boost and maintain soil fertility, improved charcoal production and the use of alternative fuels to wood and charcoal). South Sudanese refugees are willing to participate in the reforestation programme because they are aware that they have contributed to the degradation of the area, and because of their "cut one stick, replace it by five" principle.

Tree plantations are at risk of forest fires. This is true of the plantations set up by ADSSE in Rudu 1 and Rudu 2. It would therefore be worth training those participating in the reforestation and agroforestry programmes how to combat these fires.

To reduce the consumption of fuelwood and charcoal Garamba National Park promoted improved stoves in the Bélé area. The stoves themselves were manufactured by 1,000 host community and 7 refugee households. Given the low participation of refugees in this activity, awareness raising should be stepped up to increase the level of interest among this group. Refugees are a key target group for the promotion and popularisation of improved stoves given the scale at which they harvest firewood and use charcoal. However, given their significant number, it is also important that refugees at the Méri site are consulted on how best to make this easy for them and adapt stove use to their customs.

There is a risk of human-wildlife conflict in Garamba National Park due to the destruction of local community and refugee crops in Aba by hippos from the Avuku River. The Park, in collaboration with the affected communities, needs to find a way to return these hippos to the park, to prevent them destroying crops and to peacefully resolve these human-wildlife conflicts in the Bélé area.

Generally speaking, the interventions of different actors in the Garamba landscape provide opportunities for social, economic and environmental sustainability. However, sustainability can only be achieved if all actors work in synergy and adopt harmonised and integrated approaches to interventions for host and refugee communities. Collaboration between stakeholders is a major contributor to the sustainability of interventions.



Photo credit: Axel Fassio

## GLADS at the Garamba site: Key guidelines for an integrated landscape approach

These guidance notes provide general advice to all stakeholders in displacement settings on how to work at the landscape level – through collaboration and intersectoral planning – to improve the resilience of the ecosystems and livelihoods of refugees and host communities (Awono et al. 2022). They are intended to be applied to a given landscape to harmonise and optimise the interventions of the various actors present. Following consultations and co-design sessions with stakeholders, the guidance on the Garamba landscape is divided into five areas.

### Understanding the refugee-hosting landscape in Garamba

Understanding the landscape according to the five principles described in the previous chapter should make it possible for stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the landscape. The complexity of the social-ecological system of the Garamba landscape means that the wishes of all actors operating in the landscape need to be taken into account to build this common vision and harmonise their approaches to ensure the sustainability of interventions. To this end, it is necessary to categorise the key actors and partners whose activities have a significant impact on the landscape. They include: host communities, refugees, the National Commission for Refugees, UNHCR and its partners, Garamba National Park, civil society actors and religious authorities.

Efforts to identify existing tools at the landscape level are part of an ongoing process of understanding the current institutional framework and stakeholder experiences (Table 1).

Table 1: Tools applicable to the Garamba landscape

Relevant tools and instruments	Description	Sector
Law 021/2002 of 16 October 2002 on the status of refugees created the National Commission for Refugees.	This law gives the Commission for Refugees jurisdiction over the status of refugees and efforts to improve their living conditions.	Governance and regulations
Decree No. 03/014 of 5 August 2003 on the organisation and operations of the National Commission for Refugees and the Appeals Commission.	This decree describes the powers, operating procedures and bodies of the National Commission for Refugees in application of Law 021/2003 on the status of refugees.	Governance and regulations
Law 14/003 of 11 February 2014 on nature conservation.	This law clarifies certain rules on the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, biological diversity, ecosystems, sites and monuments on the national territory.	Environment
Provincial Order No. 01/JPLK/028/CAB/PROGOU/H-U/2018 of 18 July 2018 on the relocation of South Sudanese refugees to the Bélé site in Faradje territory in Haut Uélé province.	This order concerns the creation of the Bélé site and the relocation of South Sudanese refugees from the Dungu sites to Bélé.	Environment
UNHCR Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern.  Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme (2003).	Guidance on Policy Development and Preliminary Operational Activities Related to the UNHCR Framework for Durable Solutions. This document covers:  development assistance for refugees,  repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction (4Rs),  development through local integration.	Sustainable development



## Developing a common vision for the Garamba landscape hosting South Sudanese refugees

To develop a common vision for the Garamba landscape, it is important for all stakeholders present in the landscape to consider how the presence of refugees from South Sudan might give rise to risks and/or positive changes, at the social, economic and environmental level. It is therefore essential to support the livelihoods of local communities and refugees through strategies with a very low environmental impact, as proposed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Management Plan for the 2018 Bélé Refugee Settlement Project. Interventions in the Bélé and Aba area must not only aim to improve people's social and economic conditions, but should also seek to strengthen the ecological functions of the landscape, degraded by slash-and-burn agriculture, fuelwood collection, stick gathering for building refugee homes and gold panning around hunting areas. The income-generating activities set up by ADSSE and the Garamba National Park provide opportunities to boost the economy if the intended participants are given greater autonomy and if training is offered to improve value chains and participants' knowledge of markets. For example, producing eco-charcoal, manufacturing improved stoves and encouraging the creation of associations to respond to specific needs can support refugees to move away from dependence on cash and participate in the development of the Garamba landscape. Moreover, aware of the short and long-term consequences of forest degradation and deforestation, South Sudanese refugees are prepared to contribute to efforts to raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection.

Better awareness of the degradation of the Garamba landscape among all stakeholders is key to fostering landscape restoration efforts with positive environmental outcomes. The initiatives to support agroforestry, sustainable agriculture, beekeeping, fish farming, environmental education and the manufacture of improved stoves are clear examples of stakeholder engagement. However, they should be strengthened by making way for the intended participant communities to take on more responsibility at different stages. This could include refugees themselves running awareness-raising sessions on the use of improved stoves and setting up tree nurseries for agroforestry cultivars at the Méri and Bélé sites and at the village level for host communities. Refugees use both charcoal and fire wood, for cooking and as a good to sell. Beyond agroforestry initiatives, it is therefore important to consider how to improve charcoal production and promote other cooking fuels that can form part of a circular economy.

In parallel to these activities, it is necessary to raise awareness of the law on biodiversity conservation and other national and international texts and protocols on the protection, conservation and preservation of natural resources, with a view to improving people's understanding of and compliance with them. In short, this common vision for sustainable outcomes can only be achieved, if all stakeholders take a landscape approach, by harmonising their strategies, and coordinating their interventions and ongoing monitoring activities.

The table below summarises the stakeholder contributions and gaps observed in the Garamba landscape.

Table 2: Analysis of stakeholder interventions at the workshop held on 23 March 2023

Domain	Positive aspects	Areas for improvement
<b>Social</b>	Peaceful coexistence between host communities and refugees Peaceful conflict management Host community welcome Construction of health centres Construction of schools Water source development and drilling Road improvements	Delays to the distribution of cash and food No vocational training centres Labour market integration Harassment by state services, including the police and the army, against refugees Refugees' poor understanding of the French language Absence of interventions by Garamba National Park at refugee sites. However, this may be justified given that the Park does not have a mandate to work directly with refugees.
<b>Economic</b>	Agriculture Small-scale farming (small livestock) Fish farming Beekeeping Carpentry Tailoring and sewing Warehouse work Small businesses No problems arising from economic exchanges between host communities and refugees	Shortage of agricultural tools and seeds Lack of a profitable market Rise in agricultural product prices and increase in poaching during the payment of "cash". Cash can also make it easier to obtain ammunition for poaching in the Garamba Complex. Fewer people working in animal husbandry than agriculture and small businesses.
<b>Environmental</b>	Reforestation (woodyard) Agroforestry Improved stoves Compliance with Law 014	Low coverage of reforestation activities Low participation of refugee populations (refusal to participate in training offered by Garamba National Park on how to manufacture and maintain improved stoves).







### Implementing contextually-appropriate integrated interventions targeting sustainability in the Garamba landscape

The intended participants (host communities and refugees) must be the central focus of interventions. This starts with understanding who the target groups are and their size. When designing interventions with their intended participants, long-term results should be kept front of mind. For example, the income-generating activities proposed should reflect the needs of refugees and/or the host community. Giving the intended participants the opportunity to freely choose, for example, the type of livestock to raise, the crops to farm or whether to pursue another income-generating activity altogether, promotes their adoption and leads to lasting results. The choice of activities should take into account the needs and priorities of men, women, young people, girls and boys, as well as vulnerable groups such as disabled people, elderly people and people living with HIV.

To ensure activities are sustainable, the roles of refugees, local communities and implementing partners must be well defined at the outset in line with the realities and complexities of each sector in the specific context of the Garamba landscape and South Sudanese refugees. With this in mind, to support the wellbeing of communities and biodiversity conservation in the Garamba landscape, Garamba National Park is implementing a project entitled Conservation, security and development of the cross-border area between the DRC and the CAR. This project aims in particular to strengthen the capacities of the intended participants, mainly host communities, but also refugees to a lesser extent.

### Putting appropriate monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation systems in place for an integrated landscape approach in the Garamba landscape

Defining a common vision for stakeholder interventions is a prerequisite for the implementation of a system for monitoring and evaluation, learning and adaptation. This principle should be observed at all scales. Setting up a platform to bring together UNHCR and its local partners, Garamba National Park, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the National Commission for Refugees, administrative and customary authorities, civil society representatives and refugee representatives to discuss the successes and failures of interventions and suggest ways to improve the governance of the displacement-setting landscape of Garamba. Choosing a trusted, neutral organisation that can play a unifying role in interventions, monitoring, oversight and evaluation is a major focus area when it comes to consolidating and ensuring the effectiveness of project management in the Garamba landscape. It is also a solution that won the unanimous support of all stakeholders.

### Mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)

Gender equality and social inclusion should be of concern to all stakeholders at all stages of interventions in the landscape (Abdon et al. 2022). All social strata of host and refugee communities should be involved in interventions without any discrimination on the basis of gender or religion.

INTERSOS, a UNHCR NGO partner, works mainly in the field of refugee protection. It works in the areas of refugee rights, child protection, gender-based violence and peaceful coexistence between communities.

Engaging women is key to sustainability given their role in society. However, to properly involve them, it is necessary to take into account their demands and suggestions. For women to effectively participate in interventions, they should be offered training opportunities and support to carry out their choice of income-generating activities. Particular care should be taken to include marginalised groups, such as young mothers, people with disabilities and widows, in interventions. It is worth encouraging different groups of people to form associations, as a shortage of such bodies has been observed in both host and refugee communities.

Social inclusion in the Garamba landscape can also be improved by creating a positive environment for young people. This can be done by supporting activities that keep them away from harmful pursuits, such as juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drug taking and smoking. It will be important to include them in the different programmes run by partners operating in the landscape. Such activities might include income-generating activities, agroforestry, livestock farming, beekeeping and improved stove manufacture, especially at refugee sites. In this vein, recreational activities could also be run at refugee sites, for example, football tournaments.

Elderly people at the Bélé and Méri sites also require special attention and assistance given that they are more likely to be physically frail and have health problems.

With regard to these five fundamental components of an integrated landscape approach in Garamba, the discussions with the various actors and/or stakeholders made it possible to summarise all their expectations and suggestions. Participants also contributed a number of recommendations for interventions to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability in the Garamba landscape (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of suggestions made by stakeholders during the consultations and workshops held on 29 March and 4 May 2023

Domain	Stakeholder suggestions for positive change
<b>Social</b>	<p>Improve the “cash” system so all refugees feel involved.</p> <p>Find alternatives to “cash”.</p> <p>Set up vocational training centres.</p> <p>Raise the awareness of law enforcement agents to prevent harassment and allow people to sell their products at markets.</p> <p>Strengthen Garamba National Park's presence at the refugee sites in relation to income-generating activities.</p>
<b>Economic</b>	<p>Ensure enough materials and seeds are available.</p> <p>Find a profitable market for farmers.</p> <p>Monitor activities regularly.</p> <p>Seek support from people living in the landscape regarding animal husbandry, agriculture and small businesses.</p> <p>Advocate for the road between Bélé and Ariwara to be opened to allow the transport of produce from the fields.</p>
<b>Environmental</b>	<p>Expand reforestation and agroforestry activities.</p> <p>Raise awareness about Law 014.</p>

Nevertheless, it is important to note that each group identified its own priorities so that, ultimately, the guidelines drawn up would contribute to the successful pursuit of sustainable development in the landscape.

The suggestions from the host communities – represented by heads of chiefdoms, group leaders and settlement leaders – are outlined below. These actions should be tailored to the size of the landscape and the area of intervention.

- Facilitate the equitable management of land.
- Involve local communities more in decision making and activities to avoid frustration.
- Resolve conflicts or disputes fairly.
- Strengthen security at the sites.
- Focus on training and awareness raising on environmental topics.
- Encourage the practice of agroecology and agroforestry through reforestation, following the principle “cut one tree, plant five”.
- Train local people in practical trades, such as carpentry, mechanics, bricklaying, baking and hospitality.
- Strengthen the education and health systems by setting up schools and health centres, and recruiting permanent qualified teachers and health workers.
- Improve the drinking water supply system.
- Take into account the cultural and contextual specificities of each area when setting up income-generating activities.

Refugees – represented by site leaders and camp presidents – suggested the following measures:

- Simplify procedures for obtaining farmland (for sustainable management).
- Expand agroecology and agroforestry training.
- Set up multifunctional centres to deliver vocational training to young people, especially young women.
- Set up initiatives to retrain refugees and support qualified refugees to reintegrate into the labour market.
- Apply the principles of social justice.
- Support vulnerable and destitute people.
- Redesign the “cash” system (UNHCR and certain stakeholders).
- Improve the clarity and impartiality of Garamba National Park's interventions at the site level.
- Ensure the timely availability of the resources needed to treat a range of diseases. This includes infrastructure such as health centres with adequate equipment and supplies, including medicines and other health products
- Ensure the supply of drinking water to the refugee sites.
- Provide lighting in public areas of the sites.
- Make credit available through a credit union to support refugees' business activities.



The National Commission for Refugees, as the competent government authority responsible for protecting refugees, suggests:

- Redefining which actors and/or partners are responsible for which priorities to avoid them interfering in each other's areas of competence.
- Disseminate information about the legal procedures governing interactions between refugees, and between refugees and their host communities or the Congolese government.
- Ensure compliance with the regulations in force by all stakeholders.
- Reconsider the Park's exclusionary approach to the people who live around the park and its hunting areas.

UNHCR and its partners, including AIDES, INTERSOS and ADSSE, recommend:

- Continue agroforestry activities to improve soil fertility.
- Create reforestation parks to reduce deforestation.
- Respect the provisions of the different agreements entered into with specific stakeholders regarding interventions at the site.
- Strengthen and encourage an alternative to camps, i.e. gradually integrating refugees into some sectors of activity outside the camps.
- Mobilise donor resources quickly to facilitate efficient and effective interventions.
- Find synergies between interventions through sectoral meetings of stakeholders and create a virtual discussion platform for all stakeholders in the intervention chain in the Garamba landscape.

- Collaborate openly with actors responsible for site management to ensure the robust and effective management of the sites.
- Pay for translation in health care contexts and school fees for vulnerable or destitute people.
- Ensure that girls and women, especially pregnant women, are shown respect.
- Reduce the birth rate by improving awareness campaigns and promoting the use of different contraception methods.

Garamba National Park is a key partner in the management of the sites in the Garamba landscape. It is a vast complex that impacts the lives and habits of the people living in the landscape. Its activities aim to maintain ecological balance. However, despite its willingness and considerable efforts to improve the living standards of the people who live in different areas of the park, Garamba National Park faces many obstacles. To optimise the interventions of all the actors who operate and interact in this landscape, it makes the following suggestions:

- Harmonise approaches across sectors, including agriculture and agroforestry.
- Redesign the system of cash for refugees or find an alternative to "cash".
- Strengthen the agricultural programme by diversifying and providing agricultural inputs.
- Encourage activities aimed at environmental education.
- Motivate young people to take an interest in agricultural activities.
- Gradually relocate gold panning away from hunting areas.
- Set up a system to coordinate activities in the landscape led by a fully independent body.

For each area in the Garamba landscape, a civil society organisation acts as a mouthpiece for refugees. They include: the central civil society organisation Force vive of the Ali group, the civil society organisation of Aba, and so on, which all call for refugee and host

community living standards to be improved. They make the following recommendations:

- Increase the number of areas assigned to be reforested in the landscape.
- Improve the quality of health care and education.
- Actively involve the host population in all partner activities.
- Raise awareness and train young people, especially young women, in small trades.
- Retrain and integrate refugees into the economy.
- Respect the right of refugees to come and go in accordance with the regulations in force (free movement throughout the host country).
- Help host and refugee communities to share their experiences in relation to agriculture (Congolese and South Sudanese, especially

regarding rice, sorghum, sweet potatoes, etc.).

Religious authorities, for their part, advocate a number of principles that would improve the stability of the landscape:

- Accept yourself and others.
- Respect the rules that govern your immediate environment.
- Love your neighbour.
- Exercise tolerance and charity.





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## Conclusion

This report uses the GLADS approach to present a range of experiences of the Garamba landscape. It is a complex landscape due to its geographic location, its wealth of biodiversity and the presence of the Garamba National Park on the one hand and, on the other, to its sociological complexity, and the actions and interactions of the stakeholders present there. The stakeholder consultations improved our understanding of the different aspects of this displacement-setting landscape, which hosts South Sudanese refugees, (especially in terms of peaceful coexistence) and the activities already implemented for the benefit of host and refugee communities (agroecology, agroforestry and humanitarian assistance). Customary authorities, refugees and representatives of host communities spoke freely during these consultations. They made suggestions to key partners (Garamba National Park, UNHCR and UNICEF), especially in relation to ongoing consultations or dialogue, compliance with collaboration agreements or principles that could bind the parties to ensure the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the landscape. Developing agricultural and reforestation activities remains a priority in the landscape. Similarly, the effective engagement of host and refugee communities in the choice of projects affecting them is a determining factor of the social-ecological balance of the Garamba landscape. Development partners (UNHCR and its implementing partners, Garamba National Park and the National Commission for Refugees) expressed their views and

presented their interventions, approaches and how they collaborate with host and refugee communities. They all made suggestions regarding how to achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable outcomes in the Garamba landscape. On the economic and social front, the impact of the activities carried out by the various partners remains limited in view of the enormous socioeconomic needs of the host and refugee communities, and the scale of the degradation around the areas hosting South Sudanese refugees. Moreover, weak collaboration between different stakeholders impedes the sustainability of interventions for the benefit of host communities and South Sudanese refugees. To overcome this obstacle, it would be beneficial to set up a system that facilitates collaboration based on the harmonisation of intervention approaches and effective leadership by refugee and host communities.

The workshops in March and May 2023 were an opportunity for stakeholders to talk openly and to jointly propose inclusive, consensus-based guidance notes to support the response to the displacement of South Sudanese refugees in the Garamba landscape.

This report aims to serve as a working reference document for the future. It will be developed and expanded based on the joint efforts of stakeholders in the Garamba landscape.

## Annex 1: Stakeholders consulted during the GLADS fieldwork in the Garamba landscape

Type of organisation	Organisation name	Names of people consulted	Role in the landscape
Decentralised territorial entity	Haut-Uelé Province	Christian PITANGA MUNGANDRO	Provincial Vice-Governor
Decentralised territorial entity	Dungu Territory	Marcel ABULE KPINELIEDE	Territory Administrator
Decentralised territorial entity	Faradje Territory	Emmanuel MANDABHA MADRANDELE	Territory Administrator
Decentralised territorial entity	Agglomeration of Aba	Polycarpe MUTAMBI	Head of city the of Aba
Decentralised territorial entity	Dungu Group	Marc GBIAHIDI	Group Head
Governmental body	National Commission for Refugees	Prosper ABIYO KAMBA	Head of Faradje Branch
		Samuel ADHUKULE	Faradje Branch Secretary
		Clément KAHUMA	Office Manager
		Djimmy KABASEKE	Fieldwork Assistant
		Michel LUPANTSHA	Field Assistant
		Didi KALAMBAYI KASONGO	Data Collection Assistant
Governmental body	Directorate-General for Migration	Julien MPIA	Data Collector
		Faustin AWADRA	Head of Station
Decentralised territorial entity/ Chiefdom	Chiefdom of Logo Lolia	Belarmin NGBALI KOLEGO	Head of the cheifdom of Logo Lolia
Decentralised territorial entity/ Group	Ali Group	Joachim BATIZA ADRUPIAKO	Head of the Ali Group
Decentralised territorial entity/ Group	Dhamada Group	MADIBA NYELE Mabe	Group Head
Decentralised territorial entity/ Settlement	Morodria	Dieudonné BHAKONZI BADI	Head of Morodria



<b>Decentralised territorial entity/ Settlement</b>	Avo Village	Nemaya ATOMA DRASUMA	Head of Avo Village
<b>Humanitarian organisation</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Méthode BANTEA NKANGO	UNHCR Programme Manager for Faradje
		Josée BIKELE WASSO	Field Associate Faradje
		Jean Bosco NIMUBONA	Senior Protection Officer
		Issa MAMOUDOU	Head of Field Office
<b>Government/ National Park (ICCN - African Parks)</b>	African Parks	Pascal ADRIO	Deputy Park Manager (ICCN)
		Alefema AMAYO	Agroecology Programme Deputy Manager
		Carl MOUMBOGOU	Agroecology Programme Manager
		Zyta Kambissi	Technical Assistant
		Héritier WANDIMOYI	Agroforestry Specialist
		Quentin PEETERS	Reforestation Project Technical Assistant (with Nature+)
		Arnold AMUTRO	Veterinary Technician
		Samuel TALAGUMA KULINDE	Agricultural Adviser
		OSSIER OLAS	Community Conservation Agent
<b>Local NGO</b>	Association pour le Développement Social et la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement – Association for Social Development and Environmental Protection (ADSSE)	Adrien Alfani NSINGA	Branch Head
<b>Local NGO, UNHCR operational partner</b>	Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social – Actions and Interventions for Development and Social Support (AIDES)	Dr. Jacques MUYUMBA	Physician in charge of health and nutrition
	INTERSOS	Joseph ANIYESI	Head of Office

<b>Refugees/Méri site</b>	Méri Refugee Committee	Cosmos SINDANI	President of the Méri refugee site
		Morris LIWA	Secretary of the Méri refugee site
		Vivian PAMBA	Vice President of the Méri site
		David TABAN	Bloc Head
		Cosmas Ade Mark	Bloc Head
		John Musa	Bloc Head
		Charles MABE	Bloc Head
		Jackson MALISU	Bloc Head
		Morris KARABA	Bloc Head
		Haidar EZEKIEL	Youth leader
		Martin ABDAISAH	Bloc Head
Simon DEECKEL	Bloc Head		
<b>Central African refugees</b>	Dungu site	Moctar HAMAT	Former member of the Refugee Committee
		Jean Felix MBORIUNDO	Refugee
<b>Refugees/Bélé site</b>	Bélé Refugee Committee	Mathieu LUGALA	President of the Bélé refugee site
		Sarafino JUMA	Bélé Refugee Site Adviser
		Mathieu JUMA	Member of the Bélé Refuge Committee
		Wilson MARIBO	Member of the Bélé Refuge Committee
		Alison KARABA	Member of the Bélé Refuge Committee
		Fabiano TOWANGO	Bélé Refugee Site Adviser
<b>Civil society</b>	Aba Civil Society	Gilbert DJAMBA	Coordinator
		J.B MBATAYO BAHATI	Deputy Coordinator
		Ezechiel ONJO JEMA	Adviser
		NGADJOLI MUSAFIR	Adviser

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