

**Disability in Refugee Camps:
A situation of disabled girls in Nakivale Refugee Settlement Camp Isingiro
District South western Uganda.**

Abstract

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The study was conducted in Nakivale Refugee Settlement Camp in South western Uganda. The purpose of the study was to examine the state in which disabled refugee girls lived and participated, in their struggle to survive in the refugee settlement. The study was driven by four objectives, namely, to establish the availability of services for the disabled refugee girls in the settlement; to investigate the accessibility of services by the girls with disabilities in the camp; to examine the challenges faced by the girls with disabilities in the settlement camp and to suggest interventions that will add to the body of knowledge that already exists for the girls to be able to participate effectively in the camp. The study used a qualitative research approach. The study sample (n = 35) comprised 22 refugee girls, 9 household heads, 1 head teacher, 1 social reception officer and 1 medical officer who were purposively selected. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. Findings indicated that girls with disabilities living in the NSRC lacked adequate basic facilities such as medical services, food supply and clean water. It was also found that refugee girls live within large families, which raised a bigger burden to look after the girls. Further, it was found that the girls suffered sexual and physical violence which was not adequately reported to authorities such as the police. Physical violence was mainly meted by the girls' peers in the camp. Lastly, it was found that interventions to address the challenges of the girls required thorough consultation with them and their caretakers. It was recommended that the camp authorities come up with a comprehensive plan to provide facilities for girls with disabilities including medical services and schools at all levels. The family sizes where the girls originate need to be put into consideration during the planning process. The camp director, the police and the administrative structures ought to establish guidelines for reporting any abuse of the girls with disabilities whether be it physical or sexual. The camp authorities and the relevant Uganda government officials may look at the possibility of settling some of the girls with disabilities as citizens of Uganda. Furthermore, the parents and/or caretakers of the girls with disabilities, should be trained in some income generating activities for-example, small businesses in order to be able to provide for their families.