



Rapid Needs Assessment Report

Submitted by

Koboko Municipal Council



Figure 1: fire wood cooking Oven commonly used at Gaagaa cell, around the garbage collection site

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BACKGROUND

Koboko Municipal Council, in collaboration with Umoja Rescue Agency and the South Sudanese Refugee Association, conducted a rapid needs assessment in Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council. The aim was to gauge the understanding of migrants, refugees, and their host communities regarding eco-friendly energy technologies, as well as waste disposal and management practices. The assessment team concentrated on identifying existing gaps, current practices, and needs related to energy-efficient technologies and subsequently generated recommendations addressing the urgent needs and priorities requiring immediate intervention. The needs assessment was conducted for 5 days from 18th – 24th June 2025, in sampled villages of Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council respectively.

Background of study locations

Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council are situated within Koboko District, located

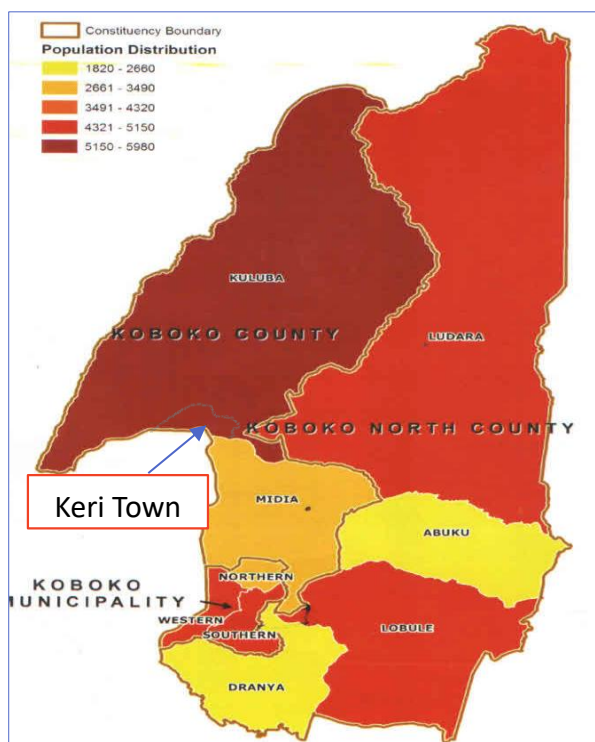


Figure 2: Map of Koboko District

in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda. This district lies in the extreme northwestern part of the country, bordered by South Sudan to the north, Yumbe District to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, and Maracha District to the south. Koboko town serves as the district headquarters and is positioned approximately 3 km from the DRC border and 18 km from the South Sudan border. Keri Town Council is one of the two town boards within Koboko District. The municipality is located 574 kilometres from Kampala, the city's capital.

Situational Analysis

Koboko Municipality faces challenges similar to those encountered in other Horn of Africa cities that accommodate refugees and migrants. These challenges include a rapidly increasing population, inadequate solid waste management, limited employment opportunities for both refugees and residents, and environmental degradation. The total population in the municipality is 99,919, of which 74,200 (36,200 male and 38,000 female) are nationals (UBOS 2024), while 25,719 (14,140 female

and 11,579 male) represent 25% of the self-settled refugees and migrants¹. The growing number of self-settled refugees and migrants in Koboko Municipality has placed significant strain on the already constrained services provided by the Koboko Municipal Council in the areas of education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, social protection, and livelihoods.

This strain arises from a mismatch between limited resources and the high population demand for these services. Many refugees and migrants are economically disadvantaged; they lack employability skills, with 82% of them struggling with job opportunities and having limited access to income-generating activities and entrepreneurship opportunities to improve their livelihood. Notably, 99% of municipal occupants rely heavily on biomass to earn a living; 74% of households use charcoal as their main source of energy, with firewood accounting for 25% and electricity for 1%. Additionally, with an increased population, 77.6% of residents in Koboko Municipality find waste management is poor, with significant accumulation, lack of segregation, and lack of economic value². This situation raises concerns about the effectiveness of local waste disposal practices.

Methodology used

The rapid needs assessment adopted a qualitative approach that is participatory in nature. The qualitative information was collected through key focus group discussions and document review to provide in-depth insights and explanations to the emerging themes.

Participants for the survey were selected using purposive sampling. 6 FGDs were conducted (3 refugee and 3 host community). The data collection was conducted by the staff who were trained on the tool and checked for consistency, accuracy, and appropriateness of the questions during the training.

The data analysis and reporting was conducted by the data collection team. The team coded the notes and analyzed using thematic and content approaches.

During the interviews, consent forms was signed with a clear statement on confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in safe spaces where information provided was not inadvertently be accessed by other individuals, including unauthorized persons, the community, and stakeholders.

¹ VNG Refugee Survey Report 2025

² Perception survey Report by Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari (ACAV), November 2024.

Key Findings of the Rapid Needs Assessment

This discussion occurred on 24/06/2025 with six distinct focus groups: women, men, and youth. It was held at six different locations (2 Koboko North Division, 1 South Division, 1 West Division and 1 Keri Town Council) : five within the Koboko Municipal Council and Keri Town Council. The FGDs were conducted in strategic places specifically garbage collection sites and markets, and the final location was at the Keri central cell, Keri Town Council garbage site.

Participants' understanding of waste management

The women from Koboko Municipal defined solid waste as any unwanted or discarded materials or residues, including food leftovers, human faecal matter, aborted fetuses, plastics, and polyethylene bags. They recognised these as both biodegradable (organic) and non-biodegradable (inorganic) waste. The men's group provided a similar definition, indicating that solid waste consists of used items no longer deemed useful. Examples included agricultural waste, animal waste, human waste, wood shavings, empty plastic bottles, polythene bags, and old clothing.

More so, the youth respondents identified various types of waste generated in their households, such as food residues like cassava peels and vegetables, polyethylene bags, and plastic materials.

Regarding littering, the participants of the focus group discussion (FGD) identified men, women, children and business men and women as those responsible for generating and discarding waste within the community.

Ways of management waste

The participants suggested some waste management measures in both Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council, like the installation of garbage collection points at strategic locations for households or individuals to dump waste, use sacks or dustbins to collect and dump at the collection sites in an orderly way and the government to enforce bylaws on garbage management.

“Good waste management is essential to for our health, saves money from disease treatment for other basic needs.” Women FGD Gaagaa Cell, Koboko Municipality.

More so, the men in Keri Town Council mentioned that families should dig collection pits both for biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes

Benefits of solid waste

The FGD participants noted that plastic materials can be sold to generate income, while boxes can serve as packaging for other locally produced items. In Keri, participants indicated that organic waste can be transformed into manure for agricultural fields, thereby enhancing productivity. Likewise, refugee respondents mentioned that if waste is properly segregated, it can also provide a source of income.

Refugee women expressed that items such as bottles could be repurposed for crafting, creating egg trays, producing manure from animal waste, and providing play materials for children in schools, provided they receive the necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, with adequate training, they could also create chairs and cups from such waste.

Women in Gaagaa and Market Square Cells highlighted the use of smart stoves and briquettes (clay mixed with charcoal) as a means to reduce smoke emissions.

Skills required

The youth highlighted the need for skills in operating reuse and recycling facilities to effectively collect and process these materials into valuable new products.

Challenges of poor waste management in Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council

The women reported unpleasant odours emanating from decomposing materials, including dead animals, aborted fetuses, and rotten food items, among others. Furthermore, there are few labourers working at the dumping sites, particularly in Koboko Main Market, and unnecessary waste is being dumped at night due to the lack of adequate lighting. Additionally, a participant in Keri noted that although Koboko Municipality has made progress in solid waste and garbage management—with the introduction of a garbage truck—only 22.4% of community members (respondents) rated the waste management as good. However, the majority of the population views it as a significant issue for the municipality, citing delays in garbage collection that result in unpleasant smells (pollution); a scarcity of waste collection sites and considerable distances to dumping sites; high waste collection costs; and the absence of waste treatment centres. Findings from the focus group discussion revealed that waste management continues to be a major concern in Koboko Municipality, especially in Teremunga and Triangle Cells. Both host community members and refugees reported inadequate garbage collection services, which have led to indiscriminate waste disposal. The lack of a systematic waste management approach has led to

environmental pollution and health hazards, making it essential to implement efficient waste disposal systems and public awareness programs on waste management³.



Figure 3: Waste collection site in Keri Market



Figure 4: Waste collection site in Gaagaa Cell in Koboko Municipality @ Field Officer – UREA

³ Perception Survey by ACAV, November 2024



Figure 5: Waste collection site in Ombaci Cell, Koboko Municipality

Sustainable Waste Management Practices

The respondent mentioned installation of dustbins by government in strategic locations especially in markets and road sides for collecting waste. Encouraging local residents to use dustbins and bags to collect waste materials in an orderly manner is essential to preventing littering in the area.

Sources of Energy Used by Households in Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council
Participants identified a variety of energy fuels used for cooking at home, such as charcoal, firewood, and mud-mottled charcoal remnants, with a minority using briquettes.



Figure 6: UREA field team in a focus group discussion with women next to Gaagaa cell

Ovens use for cooking at home

The community members cited smart stoves, metallic stoves and local three stone ovens. However, the respondents reported that the metallic and mud mottled stoves consumes lots of charcoal and smart stoves are expensive to afford.



Figure 7: Different types of ovens used by households in Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council © Photos by SSURA Staff



Figure 8: Energy stove in Ombaci Cell, Koboko Municipality

Reasons for Refugee Migration to Urban Centres

Respondents cited hunger as a significant factor, stemming from reduced food rations provided in monetary form, which are insufficient to sustain their families. Additionally, many are searching for employment to support their households.

Marketing

Participants identified multiple strategies for marketing efficient stoves and briquettes, including roadside vending, mobile markets, and traditional markets.

Environmental Protection and Climate Change

Participants noted that the increased felling of trees for charcoal production, tobacco curing, brick burning, construction poles, and firewood contributes significantly to climate change. There is a pressing need to encourage refugees, migrants, and host communities to engage in reforestation efforts, cutting down trees only to replace or replant them. Continuous sensitisation of local populations regarding the dangers associated with deforestation is crucial.

Households should receive support in the form of tree seedlings for planting, including fruit trees.

Recommendations

- It is essential to raise awareness among households about the importance of digging double rubbish pits for the separation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes at the household level.
- Enhancing waste management strategies and educating the community on recycling and proper waste segregation could promote a sustainable environment and improve the overall quality of life.
- Promotion of tree planting initiatives is vital for restoring lost forest cover within the municipality, alongside educating the public about the significance of trees.
- Strengthening the capacities of the women and youth especially in green skills would be value addition to waste management in Koboko Municipality and Keri Town Council.
- There is need to enhance capacities of the households to establish composite sites to generate manure to boost urban farming.
- Respondents highlighted the necessity of advocating for additional waste collection vehicles to manage the increasing volume of rubbish.

ANNEX; PHOTOS



Figure 9; Women next to Gaagaa garbage collection site giving their insights on garbage management in the area



Figure 10; the situation at Gaagaa garbage collection site



Figure 11; A woman collecting dumped reusable garbage materials like boxes, plastic bottles giving her views about the garbage site to our UREA



Figure 12: A woman in Ombaci Cell, Koboko Municipality using multiples energy stoves for cooking