TSAVONE CONSULTING

PUBLICATION

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PUBLICATIONS

Humanitarian and Displacement Research Practice Prospectus

Protection-sensitive field research, monitoring and evaluation in settlements and host communities

GROUND → DATA → INSIGHT → DECISION

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> **This prospectus explains what Tsavone Consulting's humanitarian and displacement research practice does, who it serves and how it protects the people it researches. It sets out the problems we help with, our services, methods, deliverables, typical assignment types and how to engage us, including as a field research partner to universities and institutes.**

About this publication

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1. About this prospectus

Tsavone Consulting is a Ugandan consulting firm that gathers reliable evidence on the ground and turns it into sound decisions, designs and systems. Humanitarian and displacement research is one of our deep practices. Uganda hosts the largest refugee population in Africa, under a policy that allows refugees to live in settlements alongside host communities, with access to land, freedom of movement and the right to work. That model generates some of the most important questions in humanitarian and development policy, and it demands research that is rigorous, safe and respectful.

This prospectus is for organisations that fund, run, study or coordinate refugee and host-community programmes. It describes the kinds of work we do and how we do it. It does not list past projects. Case studies with referees are available on request, and every proposal names the team for that assignment with CVs.

1.1 The practice at a glance

What we do	Field research partnership for universities and institutes; needs assessments; perception and accountability surveys; third-party monitoring and verification; self-reliance, livelihoods and settlement economy studies; cash, markets and targeting assessments; evaluations of refugee and host-community programmes; sector assessments in WASH, health, nutrition and education
Who we serve	UN agencies, humanitarian and development donors, international and national NGOs, research institutes and universities, humanitarian evidence organisations, government partners and the private sector working in displacement settings

Where	Refugee settlements and host districts across Uganda, including the West Nile and northern settlements, the south-western settlements and Kampala's urban refugee population; regional work across East Africa and the Great Lakes by arrangement
How	Protection-sensitive methods, community-based enumerators including refugee and host-community members where appropriate, multi-language tools, strict data protection and safeguarding throughout
Languages	English, Luganda and the Luo languages within the team, with trained interpreters for the languages spoken in each settlement

2. The problems we help with

2.1 Decisions that need fresh, local evidence

Humanitarian funding is under pressure, and agencies must decide who to serve, with what and at what level, often at short notice. Aggregated figures do not show how needs differ between settlements, zones, villages and household types, or between refugees and their hosts. Agencies need evidence collected quickly, to a known standard, and broken down in ways that support targeting and prioritisation.

2.2 Results that need independent checking

Donors increasingly ask for third-party monitoring and verification of distributions, cash transfers, construction, services and grants, especially where their own staff cannot visit often. They need monitors who are independent of implementers, who know the settlements and who report problems promptly and accurately.

2.3 The move from care to self-reliance

Uganda's approach, reflected in the Refugees Act 2006, the Refugees Regulations 2010, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018), puts self-reliance and inclusion in national systems at the centre of the response. Programmes and policymakers need evidence on livelihoods, markets, land, enterprise and the economic links between refugees and hosts to know what is working and what is not.

2.4 Accountability to affected people

Agencies have committed to listen to the people they serve, under the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and the IASC commitments on accountability to affected people. Turning those commitments into practice needs regular, honest perception and feedback data, collected so that people feel safe to speak, and reported so that managers act on it.

2.5 Researchers who need a reliable field partner

Universities and research institutes running studies in Uganda need a field partner that can recruit and train teams, manage data collection to a protocol, handle local ethics and research approvals, and keep data secure. They need a partner whose quality controls they can trust and inspect.

> **Displacement research involves people who may be at risk. We treat their safety, dignity and data as conditions of the work, not as add-ons to it.**

3. Our services

Service line	What it covers	Typical clients
Field research partnership	Protocol adaptation, translation and back-translation, local ethics and research approvals support, team recruitment and training, data collection, quality assurance and secure data transfer for academic and policy research	Universities, research institutes, evidence organisations
Needs assessments	Multi-sector and sector-specific needs assessments, rapid assessments after new arrivals or shocks, joint assessments with partners	UN agencies, NGOs, coordination groups
Perception and accountability surveys	Community perception surveys, feedback and complaints mechanism reviews, satisfaction and trust surveys, panel and tracker designs	UN agencies, NGOs, donors
Third-party monitoring and verification	Distribution and cash monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, verification of infrastructure, services and grants, spot checks and beneficiary verification	Donors, UN agencies, NGOs
Self-reliance and settlement economy studies	Self-reliance measurement, livelihood assessments, settlement economic profiles, refugee-host economic interaction and market systems studies	Donors, UN agencies, NGOs, private sector
Cash, markets and targeting	Market functionality and price monitoring, feasibility of cash and voucher assistance, targeting and vulnerability analysis, transfer value reviews	UN agencies, NGOs, cash working groups
Programme evaluation	Real-time, mid-term and final evaluations of refugee and host-community programmes against OECD-DAC criteria and the CHS	Donors, UN agencies, NGOs
Sector assessments	WASH, health and nutrition, education and skills, and protection-sensitive livelihoods assessments and evaluations	Sector partners and donors
Service transition support	Evidence and planning support where services move from humanitarian agencies to government or local systems	Donors, UN agencies, local governments

3.1 Training

We train partner staff and community researchers in protection-sensitive data collection, informed consent, safe referral, mobile data tools and data protection. See our Training Catalogue, available at www.tsavone.com/publications, which includes our enumerator training programme.

3.2 What we do not do

- We do not deliver humanitarian assistance, so we have no stake in which agency or modality is chosen.
- We do not register refugees, determine status or make eligibility decisions. Targeting analysis informs agencies; agencies decide.

- We do not share identifiable personal data with anyone except as the data-sharing agreement and the law allow.
- We never monitor, verify or evaluate a programme we helped design or deliver for the same client.

4. Methods and tools

4.1 Protection-sensitive research design

Every study is screened for protection risks before design is finalised, under our written protection-sensitive research and data ethics procedure. We ask what could go wrong for respondents if they take part, if they are seen taking part or if their data were exposed, and we design to avoid it. Sensitive topics are covered only where the study needs them, by trained interviewers, in private settings, with referral pathways agreed in advance with protection partners. We do not ask direct questions about experiences of violence unless the study is designed and approved for that purpose.

4.2 Sampling in settlements

Settlements are large, organised in zones, villages and blocks, and change as people arrive and move. We design samples from the best available frames, which may be agency registration data accessed under a data-sharing agreement, block lists or spatial sampling from imagery, and we state the limitations. Host communities are sampled to allow fair comparison. Sample sizes, stratification and weighting are set out in the inception report.

4.3 Teams that respondents trust

Where it is appropriate and safe, we recruit enumerators from both refugee and host communities, balance teams by gender and match interviewers to respondents' languages. All field staff are vetted, sign our Code of Conduct, complete safeguarding training and are supervised daily.

4.4 Translation and language

Tools are translated into the main languages of each settlement and back-translated, then piloted with respondents similar to the study population. Interpreters are trained on the tool and on confidentiality. We record the language of each interview so that language effects can be checked in analysis.

4.5 Mobile data collection and quality controls

Data are collected on encrypted devices using KoboToolbox or ODK, with built-in validation and GPS where consent and protection screening allow. Quality controls include daily data review, back-checks by phone or in person on a sample of interviews, observation of interviews by supervisors, and checks on interview duration and patterns. Problems are corrected in the field.

4.6 Third-party monitoring

Our monitoring follows written procedures. Monitors are independent of implementers, use standard checklists agreed with the client, take time-stamped and geotagged evidence where allowed, and escalate critical findings, such as diversion, fraud, safeguarding concerns or serious safety risks, within agreed deadlines through our incident reporting procedure.

4.7 Qualitative and participatory methods

Focus groups, key informant interviews, life histories, participatory ranking and community mapping explain how people experience programmes and why. Groups are separated by gender, age and nationality where that helps people speak freely.

4.8 Analysis and disaggregation

We disaggregate by nationality, sex, age, disability (using the Washington Group questions where suitable) and location wherever sample sizes allow, and we suppress small cells that could identify individuals. Analysis plans are fixed before data collection, and deviations are reported.

5. Data protection and research ethics

Data about displaced people is sensitive by nature. We follow the Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019, client data-protection rules and the research ethics requirements of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and accredited research ethics committees.

Commitment	How we apply it
Lawful basis and consent	Every respondent is told who we are, why we are asking, how data will be used and that taking part will not affect any assistance they receive. Consent is recorded; refusal has no consequence.
Minimum data	We collect only the personal data the study needs, and separate identifiers from responses as early as possible.
Secure handling	Encrypted devices and servers, role-based access, no personal data on personal phones or messaging apps, and secure transfer to the client.
Data-sharing agreements	Any transfer of personal data to or from a client or partner is governed by a written agreement that sets purpose, safeguards and deletion.
Approvals	Research approval and ethics clearance are obtained before fieldwork where the study requires them, and approval times are built into the workplan.
Safe referral	Field teams carry referral information agreed with protection, health and GBV service providers, and know how to act if a respondent discloses a risk.
Retention and deletion	Data are retained and destroyed in line with the contract and our records policy.

> **If a study cannot be done safely, we will say so and propose a safer design, or decline it.**

6. What clients get

Deliverable	What it contains
Inception report	Final questions, design, sample, tools, protection risk assessment, ethics and data protection plan, workplan and risks
Translated, piloted tools	Questionnaires and guides in each language with translation notes and pilot report
Field reports	Regular progress updates during data collection, with response rates, quality metrics and any incidents
Clean datasets	Anonymised data with codebook, weights, cleaning log and scripts, transferred securely as the data-sharing agreement provides

Deliverable	What it contains
Analytical report	Findings as found, disaggregated, with strength of evidence stated and practical recommendations
Monitoring outputs	Visit reports, issue trackers, periodic summaries and dashboards for third-party monitoring, with escalation logs
Briefs and validation	Short briefs for decision-makers and coordination meetings, and validation or feedback sessions with partners and, where appropriate, with communities

7. How we work

1. **Listen and scope.** We agree questions, deliverables, protection safeguards, approvals and assumptions in writing before work starts.
2. **Go to the ground.** Trained, supervised teams collect data in settlements and host areas, with back-checks and observed interviews.
3. **Analyse honestly.** We report what people told us and what we observed, including findings that are uncomfortable for implementers or donors.
4. **Build for use.** Findings are presented in the formats coordination groups and programme managers use, on time for their decisions.
5. **Stay accountable.** We share results back with communities where safe and agreed, and we follow up with clients on use.

7.1 Coordination and access

We work within the coordination arrangements led by the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR in refugee-hosting areas, obtain the required permissions to work in settlements, and brief settlement and district authorities and refugee welfare councils before data collection. We coordinate with other assessments to avoid duplicating questions and over-surveying communities.

7.2 Working as a research partner

For universities and institutes, we agree roles in writing: who owns the protocol, data and intellectual property, who leads ethics submissions, how quality will be inspected and how local contributors will be credited. We support equitable partnerships and fair authorship for local researchers.

7.3 Safety and wellbeing

Field teams work under our health, safety, security and wellbeing policies. Research on distressing topics includes debriefing and access to support for interviewers.

8. Sample assignment types

These are illustrations of the work this practice is set up to deliver, not records of past projects.

Assignment type	Typical question	How we would approach it	Typical duration
Field partner for a university household panel	Can we collect high-quality panel data across several settlements and host areas, to the study protocol?	Protocol adaptation, translation, ethics support, team training, multi-round data collection, tracking, secure transfer	Per round, 6 to 12 weeks
Multi-sector needs assessment	What are the priority needs of refugees and hosts in these settlements, and how do they differ by group?	Representative household survey, FGDs, key informant interviews, market observation, disaggregated analysis, validation	6 to 10 weeks
Post-distribution monitoring	Did assistance reach the right people, in full, safely, and how was it used?	Sample survey after each distribution, observation, feedback questions, quarterly summary	Ongoing, by round
Third-party monitoring of a multi-partner programme	Are activities happening as reported, to standard, and are there risks the donor should know about?	Monitoring plan, scheduled and unannounced visits, checklists, beneficiary interviews, issue tracker, escalation	Ongoing, monthly or quarterly
Self-reliance study	How self-reliant are refugee households, what drives differences, and what helps?	Self-reliance index survey, livelihood and enterprise modules, market interviews, qualitative case studies	10 to 14 weeks
Cash feasibility and market assessment	Can local markets support cash assistance at scale, and what transfer value is appropriate?	Trader survey, price monitoring, supply chain interviews, financial service provider review, household expenditure analysis	6 to 8 weeks
Accountability and perception survey	Do people know their entitlements, feel respected and trust feedback channels, and do they see changes as a result?	Representative perception survey, feedback mechanism review, community dialogue, tracker design	6 to 10 weeks, or repeated rounds
Programme evaluation	Did the programme meet its objectives for refugees and hosts, and what should the next phase do differently?	OECD-DAC and CHS framework, mixed methods, outcome survey, case studies, management response workshop	10 to 16 weeks

9. Who does the work and why Tsavone

9.1 The team

Role	What they bring
Practice lead and team leader	Long programme and research experience in Uganda's refugee-hosting districts, including livelihoods, agriculture, community development and monitoring and evaluation in and around settlements. Leads scoping, design, protection review and client relationship.
Senior associates	Independent specialists in humanitarian evaluation, protection, statistics and survey methods, cash and markets, livelihoods, WASH, health and nutrition, education, gender and disability inclusion
Associates and analysts	Data management, quantitative and qualitative analysis, GIS and report production
Field supervisors, enumerators and interpreters	Trained teams from refugee and host communities, balanced by gender and language, vetted and supervised daily
Partners	Research institutions, national NGOs and partner firms where an assignment needs them, under written agreements

9.2 Why Tsavone

Reason	What it means in practice
Protection first	Written protection screening, safeguarding and data protection procedures apply to every study, and we will decline designs we cannot run safely.
Independent	We deliver no assistance and never verify our own work, so our monitoring and evaluation findings carry weight.
Field reach	Teams that know the settlements and speak respondents' languages, with supervision and back-checks that researchers can inspect.
Development and humanitarian in one team	Livelihoods, agriculture, markets and MEL expertise sit alongside humanitarian methods, which suits a response built on self-reliance and inclusion.
Findings as found	We report what people tell us and what we see, including uncomfortable results, with the strength of evidence stated.
Fast and dependable	Standard tools, trained roster and written SOPs let us mobilise quickly without cutting corners.

10. How to engage

Most assignments start with a short conversation. Tell us the decision you need to make, the timetable and any funder rules that apply. We will reply with how we would approach it, the team and a timeline.

10.1 Ways to work with us

Arrangement	Best for	How it is priced
Fixed-scope assignment	A defined study, evaluation, assessment or design with clear deliverables	Lump sum against deliverables, or time-based against an agreed day budget
Framework or long-term agreement	UN agencies, development partners and companies with recurring needs	Pre-agreed day rates and call-off orders under the framework
Retainer	A part-time MEL, research or advisory function	A set number of days each month, reviewed quarterly
Subcontract or local partnership	International firms and research institutes delivering in Uganda and the region	Field and expert inputs priced per day, per completed interview or per deliverable
Consortium or joint bid	Larger tenders needing several firms	Roles, work share and fees set in a written teaming agreement
Purchase order	Short, well-defined tasks such as a data collection round, a training or a validation workshop	Fixed price per task

10.2 From first contact to contract

Step	What happens	Typical timing
1. Enquiry	You email info@tsavone.com or send terms of reference. Share the settlements or areas concerned, any data-sharing or ethics requirements, and when results are needed.	We reply promptly, in writing
2. Scoping call	The Humanitarian and Displacement Research Practice Lead discusses the question, users of the evidence, timing, budget envelope and constraints.	At a time that suits you
3. Fit and independence check	We screen for conflicts of interest, reputational risk and our own capacity before we commit.	Before any proposal
4. Proposal	A technical and financial proposal with named team, method, workplan, risks and a value-for-money statement.	To your timetable or the tender deadline
5. Contract and inception	We agree terms in writing, then deliver an inception report that fixes the method, tools and schedule before fieldwork.	Inception timing agreed in the contract

10.3 Fees

We quote transparent day rates for named people, itemised field costs and clear assumptions. We do not charge for scoping calls or for preparing a proposal in response to terms of reference. Where a client's budget cannot support the method a question needs, we will explain the trade-off and offer a smaller, honest design rather than a large design done thinly.

10.4 Contact

Email	info@tsavone.com
Web	www.tsavone.com
Main office	Martyrs Way, Ntinda, Kampala, Uganda
Registered office	Patiko Road, Iriaga Laliya, Iriaga Parish, Laroo-Pece Division, Gulu City
Postal address	P.O. Box 16113, Wandegeya, Kampala, Uganda
Confidential reporting	safeguarding@tsavone.com and integrity@tsavone.com

11. Our standards and related publications

Commitment	What it means for you
Findings as found	We report what the evidence shows, including results the client hoped not to see. Weak evidence is labelled as weak.
Independence	We never evaluate or verify work we helped design or deliver for the same client, and we declare conflicts before we accept work.
Data protection	Personal data is collected on a stated lawful basis and handled under the Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019.
Research ethics	Ethics screening, required clearances and informed consent are settled before data collection starts.
Safeguarding	Everyone we field is vetted, trained and bound by our Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
Integrity	No facilitation payments, no gifts that could influence an award, no fabricated data. Sanctions and debarment screening of partners.
Quality review	Every major deliverable passes an independent quality review before it reaches you.
Complaints	You can raise a concern at any time and receive a written response.

11.1 Key frameworks we work with

- Ugandan law and policy: Refugees Act 2006; Refugees Regulations 2010; Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019; UNCST research guidelines
- International frameworks: Global Compact on Refugees (2018); Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework; Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability; IASC commitments on accountability to affected people and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; OECD-DAC evaluation criteria; Washington Group questions on disability

11.2 Related publications

- Agrifood Practice Prospectus: www.tsavone.com/publications

- Nature and Climate Practice Prospectus: www.tsavone.com/publications
- Uganda Refugee Economy Outlook: www.tsavone.com/publications
- All Tsavone publications and insights: www.tsavone.com

Detailed method guides and toolkits are shared with clients on request.

Annex A: Questions to settle before you commission displacement research

Question	Why it matters
What decision will this evidence inform, and by when?	Humanitarian decisions run on cycles; late evidence is often unused evidence.
Which groups must the findings compare: refugees and hosts, nationalities, settlements, gender, age, disability?	Comparisons drive sample size and cost.
What sampling frame is available, and under what data-sharing terms?	Access to registration data or block lists must be agreed before design is final.
What protection risks could the study create, and who are the referral partners?	Risks shape the questions, the setting and the team.
What approvals are needed: research approval, ethics clearance, settlement access?	Approvals take time and must be in the workplan.
What other assessments are planned in the same areas?	Coordination avoids over-surveying and survey fatigue.
How will results be shared with communities?	Feedback to participants is part of accountability and should be budgeted.

Annex B: Enquiry form

Complete this form, or email the same information to info@tsavone.com. We reply to every enquiry promptly.

Humanitarian and displacement research enquiry

Field	Entry
Organisation name and type	
Contact person, role and email	
Settlements, districts or urban areas concerned	
Type of work needed (research partnership, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, other)	
Population groups to be covered	
Decision or reporting deadline the work supports	
Ethics, data-sharing or donor requirements we should know about	
Preferred start date and final deadline	
Budget envelope, if known (UGX or USD)	
Terms of reference or protocol attached (yes or no)	
How you heard about Tsavone	

TSAVONE
CONSULTING

Trusted evidence from the field.

Tsavone Consulting is a Ugandan consulting firm built around one capability: trusted field evidence. We reach the people and places a decision is about, collect data to a known quality, say what it shows and how sure we are, and give clients something they can act on.

Our methods work across sectors, with depth in agrifood, nature, climate and energy, youth skills and jobs, and humanitarian and displacement research. Rooted in Uganda, working worldwide.

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