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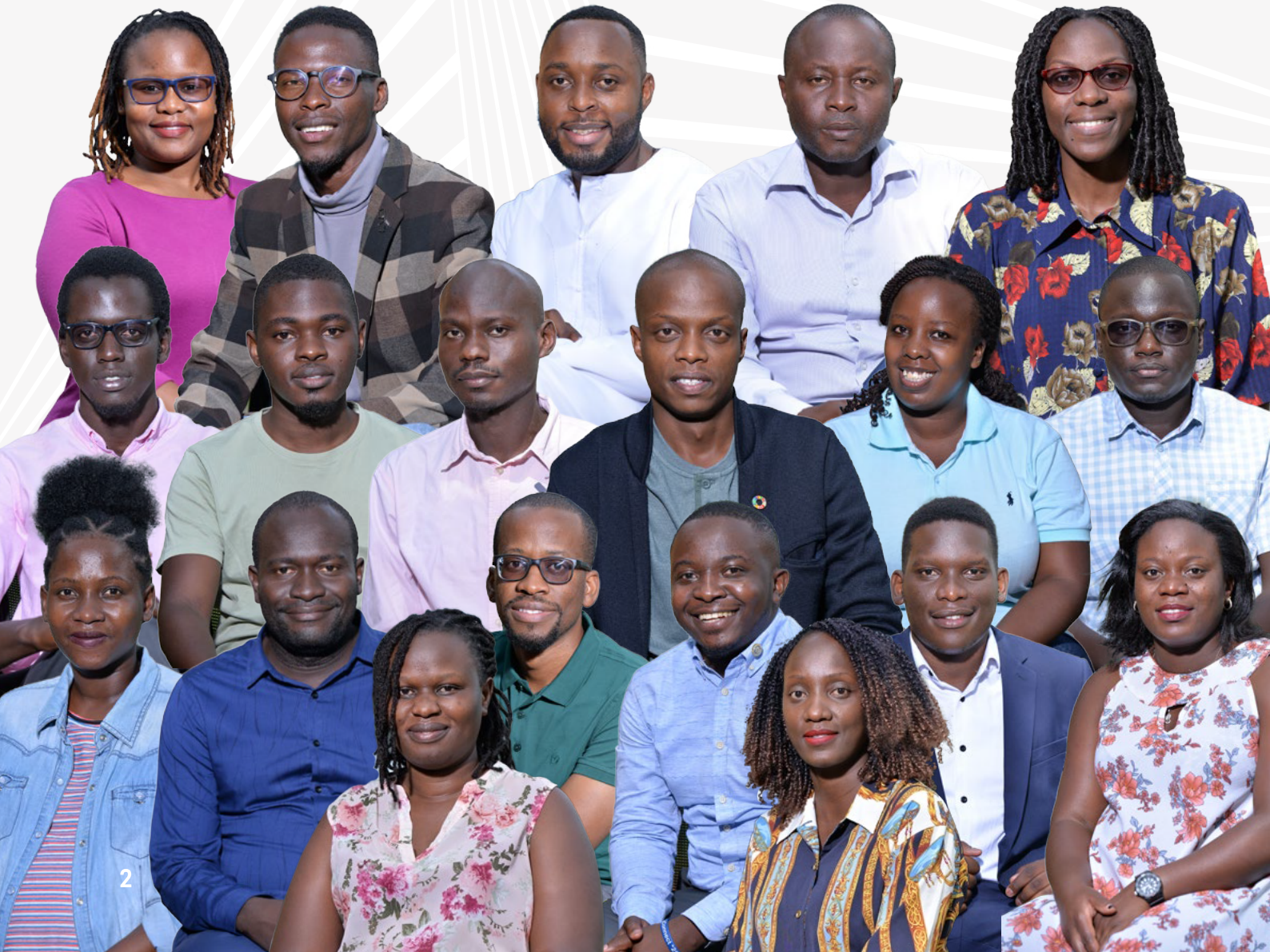
Examining Uganda's Migration Policy

POLICY PAPER



YOUTH4POLICY MIGRATION FELLOWSHIP

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Examining Uganda's Migration Policy

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Foreword

Migration and forced displacement are a global phenomenon with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and nations. Uganda is home to one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, with over 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers from neighboring countries, such as South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. Additionally, Uganda has been a source of labor migration to other countries, particularly in the Middle East. Young people make up a significant portion of these migrant populations, and their experiences are shaped by a range of factors, including their age, gender, education, and socio-economic status.

Internal migration has also been a significant trend in Uganda. Many people, predominantly the youth, have been moving from rural areas to urban centers in search of education and employment opportunities. This has resulted in intricate patterns of migration that have had both positive and negative impacts on the country.

As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of migration and displacement, it is important to explore policy options and research-based solutions that address the multifaceted dimensions of these issues. The following policy briefs present a collection of research topics that seek to do just that; by analyzing the response of regional bodies to refugee crises, expanding digital rights of refugees, exploring the impact of forced displacement on the environment, observing reception of asylum seekers and examining policy options for reimagining citizenship in Uganda, among others.

These research topics are timely and relevant, as they provide insights into important areas that require attention from policymakers, researchers, and practitioners. This includes addressing the root causes of migration such as, poor governance, conflict and climate change. They also highlight the need for collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing the challenges of migration and displacement.

I congratulate the authors - our very first KAS fellows under the Youth4Policy (Y4P) programme on migration, for their efforts in advancing knowledge and contributing to the discourse on voyage and displacement. For most, this is their first paper. I hope that this work will inform policy decisions, guide interventions, and ultimately improve the lives of those affected by migration and displacement.

Anna Reismann

Country Director

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Analysis of IGAD's Response to the Refugee Crisis in Uganda

By Ian Katusiime

List of Acronyms

CDDA:	Community-Driven Development Approach
CEWARN:	Continental Early Warning System
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
IDP:	Internally Displaced People
IGAD:	Inter-governmental Authority on Development
IRRI:	International Refugee Rights Initiative
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
MOE:	Ministry of Education
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Executive Summary

IGAD has played a significant role in the efforts by Uganda to deal with the refugee crisis that presents enormous challenges to deal with. The eight-member regional bloc has worked to establish its presence and impact in remote areas of Uganda like the Nyakabande Transit Centre in southwestern Uganda, conducting trainings for skills development in refugee settlements. It also enhances policy coordination with Uganda at high level engagements through workshops with Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) where feedback is elicited, synergies built and recommendations are made for better and more effective work plans as Uganda caters for 1.5 million refugees. With tools and plans of actions enshrined as 'Kampala Declaration', IGAD has been able to help Uganda with a variety of resources as it maintains the honor of being Africa's largest refugee hosting nation.

Introduction

The Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is an eight-member bloc that aims at promoting peace and security, regional cooperation and integration among member states. In the last years, the refugee influx among IGAD member states became a matter of urgency in the bloc's mandate. In Uganda, IGAD stepped up to ensure that refugees just like other human beings have a fair shot at life wherever they are. It came up with the Kampala Declaration in March 2019 as a guiding instrument for the institution towards the refugee response.

IGAD held its first Regional Technical Experts Meeting on the Kampala Declaration in March 2019 on the theme "jobs, livelihood and self-reliance for refugees, returnees and host communities in the IGAD region". This is important because IGAD as a region has a land mass of 5.2million square km in a region with sporadic violence, constantly causing forced displacement. "IGAD Member States have made considerable milestones towards the economic inclusion of refugees. The Member States have reiterated their commitment to implement the Kampala Declaration and to include refugees in their national systems".

IGAD member states are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Uganda is a key member because of the 1.5 million refugee it hosts, over 80% are from its northern neighbor South Sudan. In addition, the IGAD region is home to 4.8 million refugees and asylum seekers. As it crafts a refugee response in Uganda, IGAD has also tried to forge peace among member states. This includes peace agreements, ceasefires, heads of state summits. Amidst this, IGAD mobilizes several member states for a comprehensive refugee response where Uganda is involved in both its role as a guarantor of the South Sudan peace agreement and a host of its hundreds of thousands of refugees including women and children.

Uganda finds itself at the center of IGAD's mechanism to promote peace and security in the region. Uganda and IGAD worked closely in the build up to the signing of the 2018 landmark peace agreement in South Sudan. This means that Uganda is integral to IGAD's refugee response as the country has been cited as a model for its progressive refugee policy by IGAD and other countries and development partners. However, scarcity of resources means that Uganda and other partners ought to work hand in hand to improve regional refugee management.

IGAD has outlined concrete steps to implement its refugee plan. These include; advancing livelihood opportunities and economic inclusion to improve self-reliance of refugees, rolling out comprehensive national implementation roadmaps that facilitate multi-stakeholder participation. These action plans are extended into policy and legislative frameworks that aim at strengthening free movement of refugees, expanding access to labor markets for refugees and ensuring local and national development plans that align better conditions for refugees. In its wide-ranging refugee response mechanism in Uganda,

IGAD has brought on board other players like the private sector, the civil society and other multilateral players like UNHCR, World Bank who are also interested in providing refugee assistance. Private sector and civil society are crucial in enabling increased investment in both countries of origin and destination.

This paper seeks to come examine a comprehensive understanding of IGAD's refugee response in Uganda and analysis of IGAD through its instruments like the Kampala Declaration, its institutional weight, ability to mobilize member states and deployment of its financial and human resources to implement desired outcomes. The paper also analyses IGAD's on-the-ground impact in refugee settlements where the most stricken areas are based. It seeks to suggest recommendations for bolstering IGAD's refugee response in Uganda as an eight-member body that is bent on forging partnerships with other government agencies and international partners.

Methodologies

This paper relied on a mostly quantitative approach to its design and analysis. Literature was reviewed from archived material written about IGAD on social media, newspaper articles and television reports. IGAD's own documentation has been a good source for this research paper, its social media, website links, available documents, speeches and YouTube videos. In addition, interviews were conducted for this paper with a range of actors including aid workers at refugee settlements and heads of refugee agencies. The Ugandan government officials at the Office of the Prime Minister (the most critical refugee office in Uganda), ministers, and refugee settlement commandants were also interviewed. A field visit was conducted to Kiryandongo refugee settlement to establish the impact of IGAD's response on the ground.

Kampala Declaration

IGAD has been a vibrant body in dealing with regional issues among member states from border conflicts, famine, governance and nation building. Being based in a subtle region that's known for its volatility, it has inevitably taken on handling the refugee influx in the region. Its most renowned tool while dealing with refugee spillovers has been the Kampala Declaration signed in March 2019 which is described as a "holistic approach" for achieving self-sustenance.

One of the IGAD Heads of Mission in a member country lauded the Kampala Declaration saying it "commits IGAD member states to help refugees, returnees and host communities to build a new life in a new community with dignity, rather than waiting for humanitarian handout." As a Plan of Action on which IGAD policies are implemented, there has been a follow up with a Nairobi Declaration to replicate refugee policies in other IGAD member states.

To implement the Kampala Declaration in Uganda, IGAD has held workshops and events such as one held in Entebbe in May 2022 dubbed the 'National Coordination Mechanism and National Dialogue on Forced Displacement in Uganda.' This is meant to elicit ways of better refugee management and how to have comprehensive policies on the refugee situation in Uganda. The dialogue included partners like OPM, International Organization for Migration, (IOM), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Swedish Embassy and GIZ. This coordination is what the Kampala Declaration envisaged: a multi-partner engagement to raise funds, and build synergies and institutional capacity while ensuring national governments remain key players in the response efforts.

Some of the discussions at the dialogue tackled the impacts of the refugee influx on the Ugandan government and host communities; development initiatives in Uganda for sustainable solutions for refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and host communities and the role of IGAD in supporting and strengthening member states in addressing forced displacement.

As a takeaway, IGAD noted that some of the successes emerging from ‘Coordinated Implementation of Forced Displacement Responses’ in Uganda include; refugee hosting districts being part of the national level coordination structures and refugees also having a voice at the decision-making table known as ‘Refugee Engagement Forum.’

The recommendation from the four-day dialogue included: undertaking comprehensive mapping of IDPS; development of a refugee and migration policy and targeting and engaging non-traditional donors and the private sector.

IGAD has convened High Level Regional Meetings on Education for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities as part of comprehensive efforts in refugee managements as part of implementation of the Djibouti Declaration.

Dr Workneh Gebeyehu the Executive Secretary of IGAD, noted that IGAD has supported member states to “develop their costly national education response plans for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration and also developed a comprehensive regional education policy framework and a regional strategy for technical vocational education and training.”

IGAD - Uganda Efforts

In their joint efforts, IGAD has lauded Uganda on its refugee policy where Uganda decided long time ago that it would open its doors for all kinds of refugees. In March 2019, then IGAD Executive Secretary Mahboub Maalim said Uganda was the best example of refugee inclusivity in local and national settings because of its refugee settlements plan as opposed to ‘refugee camps’. Uganda insisted on the term settlements because it gives refugees free rein.

The eight-member bloc fully acknowledges the role played by Uganda, “the Strong partnerships and inclusive coordination under the leadership of the Government of Uganda that have ensured effective emergency responses to the influx of refugees since March 28th , 2022.” IGAD In a July 2022 Twitter post, it asserted that refugees continued to pour in fleeing from the fighting in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where M23 rebels had launched attacks.

At Nyakabande Transit Center in Kisoro district near the Uganda-DRC border where refugees were crossing from, Daniel Kisaamo, Settlement Commandant, shed some light on the process of how Uganda receives refugees saying health and security screenings take place with the former taking precedence. “We do test for COVID-19, Ebola and then after, we do immunization for polio, measles, tetanus,” Kisaamo said.

The eight-member bloc has made efforts at fighting epidemics in Uganda when refugees are affected. With partners like the European Union, UNOPS; the UN infrastructure agency, IGAD has donated ambulances, PPE and COVID-19 test kits to Busia, Malaba and Elegu boarder points and other refugee resettlement sites. These efforts have demonstrated close partnerships with the ministry of health in Uganda.

Engagements between IGAD and the Ugandan government run through several levels including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) which is the principal department tasked with dealing with the refugee response. National consultative workshops have been held on the “Cost Education Response Plan”. This is aimed at providing inclusive education as envisaged in the Djibouti declaration.

A key feature of IGAD’s work in Uganda is the multilateral coordination in the refugee response efforts. At the particular meeting held in July 2022, Ministry of Education (MOE) and UNHCR, the refugee

agency, were all involved. IGAD member state representatives have visited places like Nyakabande Transit Centre to assess the ever-revolving refugee situation. This was an example of how rooted IGAD was in local and national settings. This is important because refugees face a lot of hostilities where they go and because of that they are often relegated to the lowest rungs of any society.

Due to the widely acclaimed model of Uganda's refugee management, IGAD has organized benchmarking trips for some of its member states to draw lessons from Uganda. An example was an Experience Sharing and Field Learning Mission for Ethiopia Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) and Refugee Returnee Service (RRS) delegates to Uganda from January 24 – 28 2022. The purpose was for delegates to learn how to design and implement refugee-inclusive development responses.

Community-Driven Development (CDD) Approach

As part of all-inclusive efforts in refugee response management in Uganda, IGAD has explored Community-Driven Development approaches to deal with the issue of 1.5million refugees in the country. This has been possible through a number of development partners of global repute. CDD is favored by the World Bank whose leading aim is to fight poverty. CDD programs operate on the principles of transparency, participation, local empowerment, demand-responsiveness, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity.

With the help of partners like World Bank, IGAD and its member states have adopted the CDD model and documented some of the success stories in districts like Lamwo in northern Uganda where there are refugee settlements. Through the same approach, IGAD has conducted capacity building trainings for women in refugee settlements. This exercise was led by Hilary Onek, Minister for Relief and Disaster Preparedness.

IGAD has rolled out the CDD approach through training of secondary school teachers in refugee hosting areas in member states. Kebede Kassa Tsegaye, IGAD Senior Coordinator for Education, said teachers in these regions wanted training in mostly science subjects. DRDIP Uganda has invested in construction of schools and laboratories in refugee hosting communities in Uganda as a result of high numbers of children in the IGAD region not being in school.

An aid worker in Kyangwali refugee settlement said IGAD has had an impact in addressing the refugee issue in Uganda. He said in brief that IGAD has a mandate of resolving cross border issues and bridging service delivery gaps within the member states of East and Central Africa. He also noted some of IGAD's impact as "health care for noncommunicable diseases.... like TB among displaced populations (refugees) and some of the activities are community TB screening, diagnosis and management."

Achieng Akena, Executive Director of International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), says IRRI has done a fair share of policy advocacy calling on IGAD to take action on specific issues affecting the Horn of Africa. Answering a question on how IGAD could help while addressing refugee issues, Akena said "IGAD has a renowned early warning system - CEWARN which has a good grasp of the conflict typologies in the Horn of Africa, and could therefore do more to prevent conflict and mitigate other drivers of insecurity and conflict."

Akena added that with its history and firm track record in drought-related conflict, it could be a responsive tool to the climate change and food insecurity issues impacting refugees - displacing them, as well as affecting their livelihoods in their places of asylum.

She further stated that “IGAD could improve its free movement regime to ensure that refugees moving within the Horn, are able to benefit from their regional citizenship and free movement arrangements instead of being locked into restrictive refugee regimes.” She added that particularly with dwindling funding to support the refugee systems, a regime that empowers self-sufficiency while still providing protection is not only people-centered but also “pragmatic.” The head of IRRRI advised that IGAD should look more closely at the intersection between the dynamic of refugee returns and democratic governance in the country and facilitate a greater enabling environment for returnees to participate in their democracies or transitions.

Conclusion

IGAD has played an incredible role in Uganda towards the country’s refugee response. Instruments like the Kampala Declaration have had the desired trickledown effect for the refugees and the host communities that have grappled with new realities in their communities. IGAD’s close partnership with government of Uganda has been an important part of the process as any entity involved in humanitarian activities needs to work closely with its host government to achieve desired objectives.

The impactful follow up and hands-on engagement by IGAD in nearly all Uganda’s refugee settlements is testament to the lengths IGAD has had to address conflict in its member states and its aftermath. The community-driven development approach adopted by IGAD is another important aspect of IGAD’s strategy in addressing the refugee problem because Uganda’s refugee policy acknowledges refugees and migrants as one community that needs a whole of government approach in planning. IGAD has shown pragmatism and agency in its dealings with Uganda while also tapping into the opportunities provided by Uganda as a refugee hosting nation. The Kampala Declaration is buttressed by similar declarations such as the Nairobi Declaration and the Djibouti Declaration which makes it easy for the Djibouti-based body to replicate some of its response mechanisms in other member states.

Recommendations

Uganda should use its well-documented partnership with IGAD to lobby for more resources from the international community for its refugee response. IGAD is a renowned international agency in the realm of addressing conflict and therefore its commendable work in Uganda should be used by the latter to its advantage. Uganda has also faced food shortages because of taking care of 1.5 million refugees. Often appealing to the World Food Program for more resources and other UN partners, Uganda has at times been at a short end in mobilizing for resources. The workings with IGAD and the OPM, Ministry of Education, and other Ugandan government agencies show experience and expertise in terms of dealing with refugees and the attendant complications. Ugandan policymakers need to realize that the international community with its tones of aid in terms of financial funding is an opportunity it can tap into and this needs aggressive lobbying.

Uganda should invest in implementing its refugee response mechanisms to other IGAD member states. Of the eight members, none has got the renown of Uganda which hosts 1.5million of the 4.8 million refugees in the IGAD region. Ugandan leaders should be vested in selling its model of refugee settlement for integration purposes in a volatile and unpredictable region. Many of Uganda’s neighbors treat refugees as intruders with the notion of ‘camps’ with the Dadaab camp in Kenya being the most intense example. This should not be the case when Uganda and Kenya collaborate closely on so many issues. Uganda should approach this as a shared knowledge case study given that its status as a refugee hosting nation was feted with the UN refugee solidarity conference in Kampala in 2017. The other member states are also prone to conflict giving Uganda more reason to sell its success in integrating refugees, returnees and host communities.

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Expanding the Digital Rights of Refugees in Uganda to Facilitate Youth Organizing

By Brian Oduki

List of Acronyms

CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
EU:	European Union
GB:	Gigabyte
IRC:	International Rescue Committee
NGOs:	Non-Government Organizations
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
UCC:	Uganda Communications Commission
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Overview

This policy brief analyses digital rights within the context of refugees in Uganda. Uganda has passed several laws and policies to govern and regulate the enjoyment of digital rights. These laws and policies do not refer explicitly to the inclusion of refugees, present policy gaps which negatively impact refugees' access to appreciate digital rights.

To address digital inequalities in Uganda, this policy brief recommends the following policy options:

- a. Establishment of more digital centers in refugee settlements
- b. Reduction or scrapping of excise levy on internet data

Introduction

Advancements in digital technology have impacted every sector of modern human life, including migration. The emergence and recognition of digital rights as the human rights implicated in the access and use of the internet and digital technologies that present immense opportunities for the protection of human rights of refugees and migrants.

Humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies are taking appropriate steps to promote human rights in the context of forced migration and digital technologies. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has rolled out a Digital Inclusion Program to ensure that refugees and host communities have the right and the choice to be included in a connected society, have their voices heard in the design and implementation of humanitarian response. UN experts also recognize the role digital rights play in community organization, peace-building, as well as participation and access to justice and accountability processes in humanitarian contexts.

In Uganda, a number of international humanitarian agencies such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Mercy Corps have commenced digital cash transfer programs for refugees. The digital cash transfers ensure refugees receive monthly monetary assistance directly to their mobile phones and this has significantly reduced the operational costs and time for the exercise. While these are mostly livelihoods focused intervention, they are bold steps which pave the way for design of more broad programs for refugees' enjoyment of digital rights.

Digital technologies also present multifaceted challenges and oppressions to the human rights of refugees for a number of reasons.

Digital rights were first recognized by the United Nations about a decade ago. Like many countries, regulators in Uganda are still legislating and making policies to keep pace with the dynamic nature of the digital sector. In addition, there are concerns about the weaponization of digital technologies as tools of discrimination and authoritarianism. Marginalized groups such as refugees are exposed to new forms of human rights violations in the digital realm through practices such as digital borders, further amplifying their vulnerability.

In Europe, human rights groups have accused Greece and Turkey of deploying sophisticated, discriminatory and experimental digital measures such as long-range acoustic devices, palm scanners and sound cannons to deter refugees from their borders. These practices are not only contrary to the rights of refugees under international law, but there are concerns that they could be replicated elsewhere. The contrast between Turkey and Greece on the one hand and Uganda's refugee policies have demonstrated that digital policies relating to refugees mirror the overall political attitude towards refugees. Uganda's open-door policy means that digital policies and digital technologies have not been weaponized to deny entry to refugees. However, there are other concerns for digital rights given the Ugandan context, digital access and the government's perception of the digital sector being a leading issue.

Strides Towards Refugees' Digital Rights in Uganda

Existing global income inequalities are a contributing factor to digital divides. Data from UN's Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development shows that internet access levels in each of the regions Europe, Americas and Arab region is more than twice higher than Africa's. By 2019, internet use among refugees in Jordan was at 82% while in Bibibidi and Kibiza refugee settlements was 17% and 31% . Comparing data on internet access in Arab region and Africa, it can be deduced that there is a direct link between the level of internet access in a geographic region and how that impacts internet access for refugees who live in that region.

As at September 2021, Uganda's phone penetration was 69%, representing 29 million cellular subscriptions. However, UCC recognized that widespread multiple SIM ownership in Uganda; the foregoing figures could be lower. GSMA's Mobile Connectivity Index, which measures enablers of mobile internet adoption such as infrastructure, affordability, content and services, found that Uganda scored least in terms of internet affordability in East Africa .This implies that refugees' digital access challenges in Uganda are multilayered, going beyond refugee status and geographical location.

Policymakers' perception of the digital sector also impacts digital access and other digital rights. For instance, the government's justification for the introduction of social media tax in Uganda was that it would "curb gossip online." This was an attack on free speech online which had a ripple effect on internet access in the country. There is no doubt that such government actions as internet shut downs and tax on data and mobile money negatively affect digital access of refugees in Uganda.

When GSMA launched its Disaster Response project in 2016, it found that phone penetration was low among refugees in Uganda and there was limited 2G mobile connectivity in Bidibidi, the largest refugee settlement in the country. In 2017, through joint efforts of humanitarian agencies and mobile telecommunications companies, the network coverage had been expanded to 97% and the use of mobile money cash transfer significantly reduced the cost and time of delivering funds to refugees. With network infrastructure now widespread, humanitarian agencies' digital based services could be widened beyond cash transfer.

While youth constitute 21% of the refugee population in Uganda and are recognized as influential change makers in their communities, there is little data on their phone ownership and usage. However, youth in refugee communities have also been found to be at the highest risk of radicalization and some found difficulty escaping the patterns of conflict even in the host country. Therefore, collective youth participation in solving community challenges and engagement with humanitarian agencies and the government would contribute to peace and security. Using digital approaches in that regard would significantly reduce the cost and time of such youth organizing.

Problem Definition

Vulnerable group

More than 1.5 million refugees live in Uganda. One of the shocks forcibly displaced people encounter is that on incomes and livelihoods, which affects their ability to afford other human rights. A study found that 25% of refugees were employed in regular jobs in their home countries, this share dropped to just 6% in Uganda. This shift is particularly pronounced among refugees who settled in Kampala, 46% of whom had regular jobs before they left their country, compared to only 7%. It can be concluded from these figures that refugees now have less disposable income to spend on internet access in a country where 1GB of data costs more than 15% of the average monthly income.

Income inequality among refugees means that high cost of access to internet will exclude them from digital platforms such as social media, let alone for community engagements. Refugees are vulnerable populations given the fact of forced displacement, loss of family ties and livelihoods. Digital inequality is therefore severally intersectional and more pronounced for them. Digital inequality also means exclusion of refugees from opportunities for education and employment that can be accessed online.

Prevalence of repressive and disruptive policies

Uganda has gained a notorious reputation for disruption of digital rights. In January 2021, the government of Uganda instructed ISPs to shut down the internet, which they did for five days and access to Twitter and YouTube remained restricted for one month. To date, access to social networking site Facebook remains suspended. In 2018, the Parliament of Uganda introduced a tax on social media which it scrapped and replaced with a 12% excise on internet data.

These policies have had far-reaching impact on digital access for Ugandans and could exacerbate the same for refugees who have existing vulnerabilities. For instance, Uganda lost about 1 million internet subscribers during the first year of implementation of the social media tax. Coupled with the unfair enforcement of laws such as the Computer Misuse Act, there is a risk of self-censorship for both Ugandans and refugees with regards to access to information and freedom of speech online.

Methodology

This study entailed a review of existing literature on refugees and digital access in Uganda and beyond. This included policy papers, news articles, laws and policies governing refugees and digital rights in Uganda.

Collection of primary data was done in Bidibidi refugee settlement and among urban refugees in Kampala, specifically Ndejje. Two focus group discussions and interviews were conducted with 28 young refugees aged 18-35.

The key research questions were around the level of phone and internet access and usage, methods and effectiveness of youth and amount of monthly spending on airtime and internet data, knowledge and perceptions about digital rights and policies in Uganda.

Research Findings

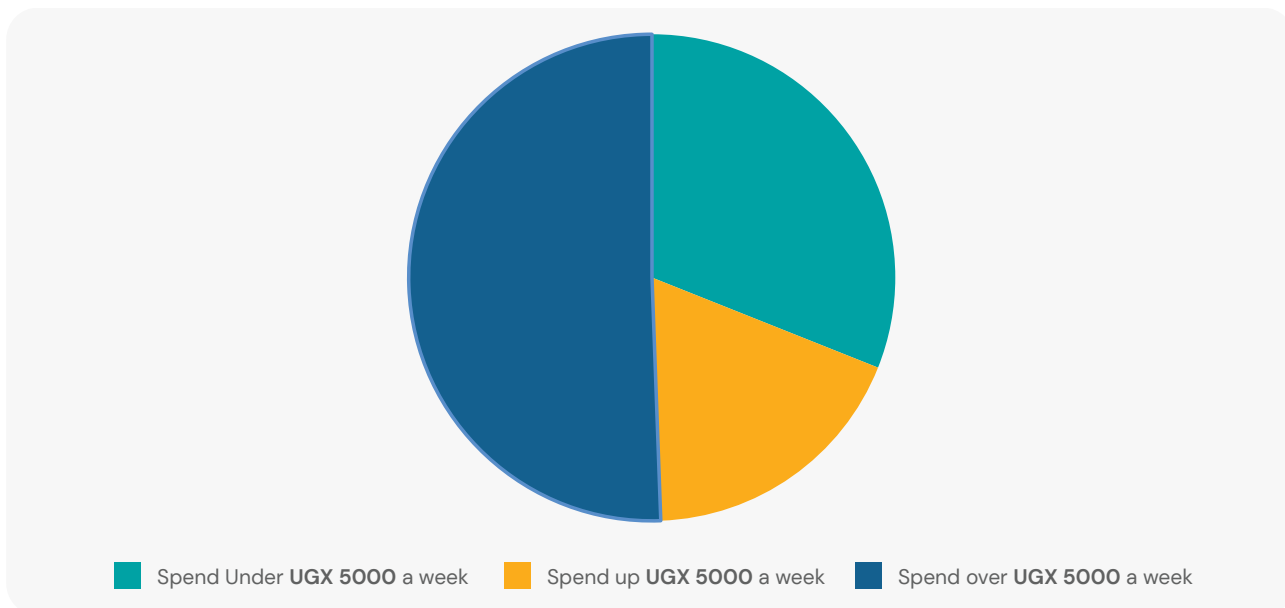
a. Key findings

- High cost of airtime and internet bundles is the greatest barrier to internet access and phone usage among young refugees.
- Online organizing is more effective among young refugees in Kampala.
- Only 3% of refugees interviewed were unaware therefore unconcerned about social media tax and the excise on internet data passed by the government.

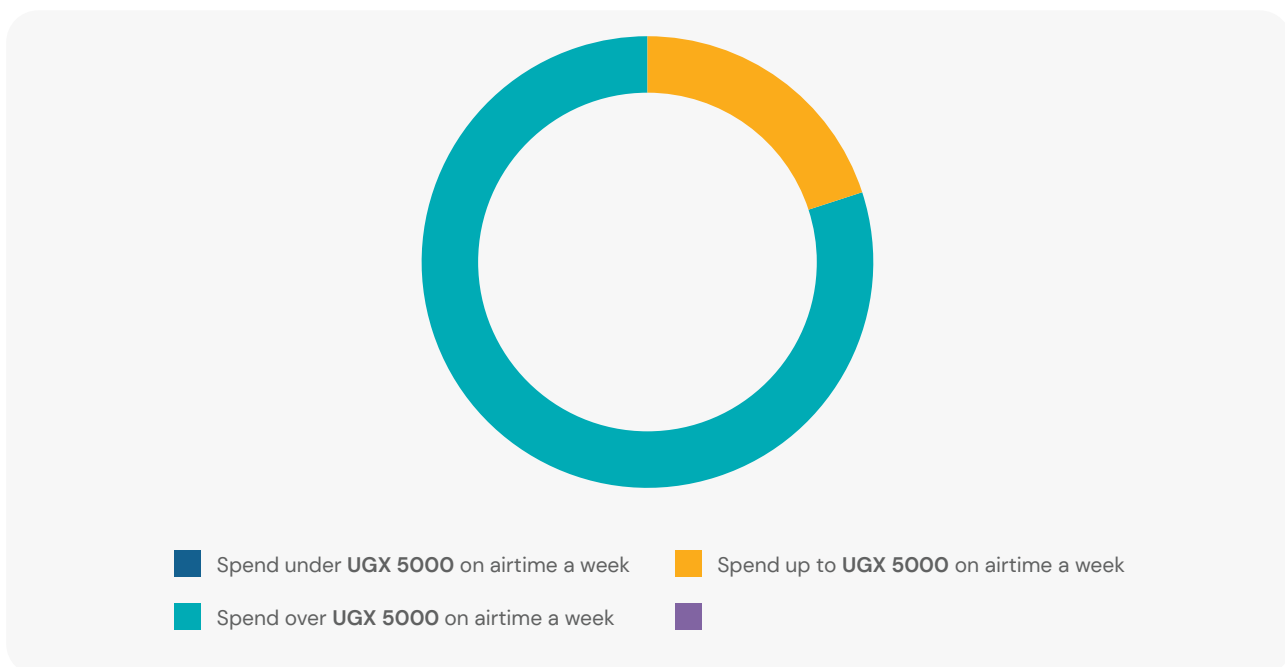
b. Detailed findings

All 18 respondents said the price of internet data and airtime is greatest barrier to phone and internet usage among young refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement.

Weekly spending on airtime



Spending on airtime and data in a week-Kampala Urban refugees



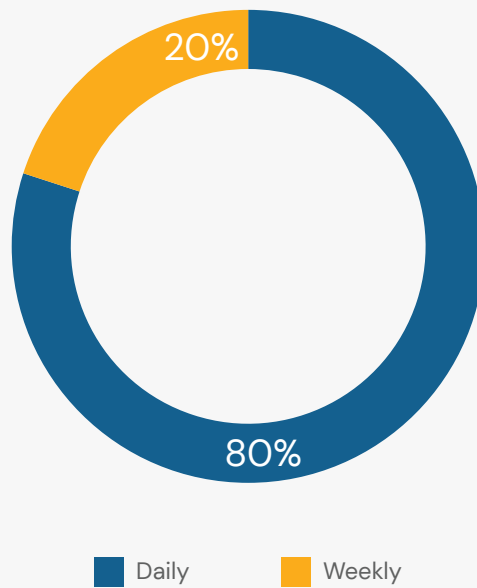
On average, urban refugees spent significantly more money on airtime and internet data compared to those in Bidibidi refugee settlement. This means that they have more disposal income and have more functions or social media platforms used.

Urban refugees in Kampala spend more time using internet and social media, use more social media, video conferencing, professional networking sites and on average spend more money on airtime and internet data.

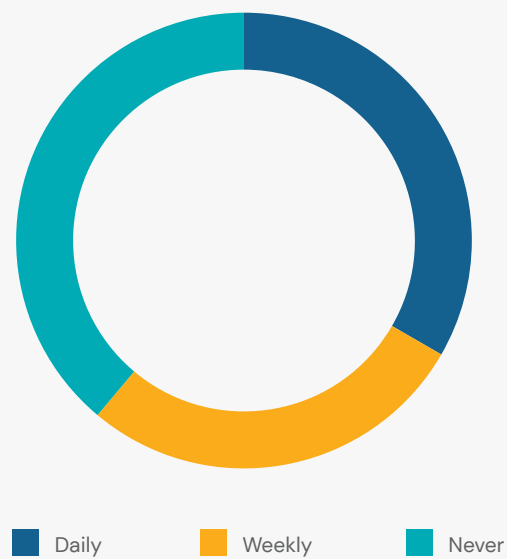
Omer: "It affects me in such a way that if that money (excise duty on internet data) was not taken, I would have more time to stay in touch with my family and to browse the internet."

Gabrielle: "I can't access YouTube when I am on zero MTN. It's just WhatsApp now."

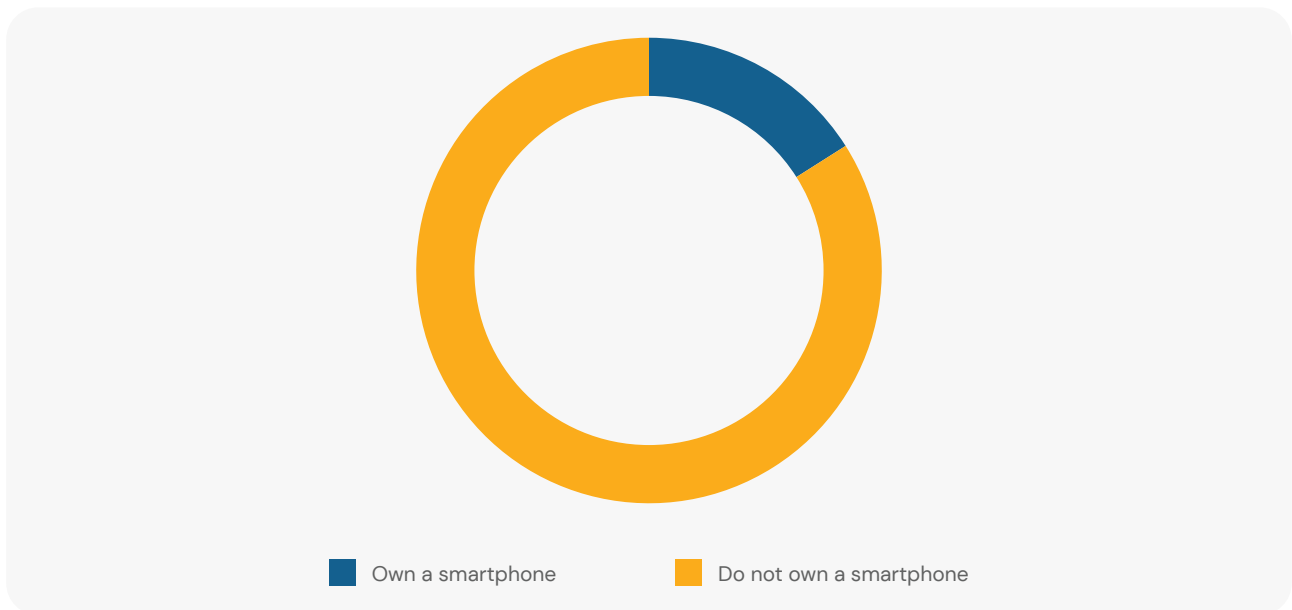
Frequency of social media use- Kampala Urban refugees



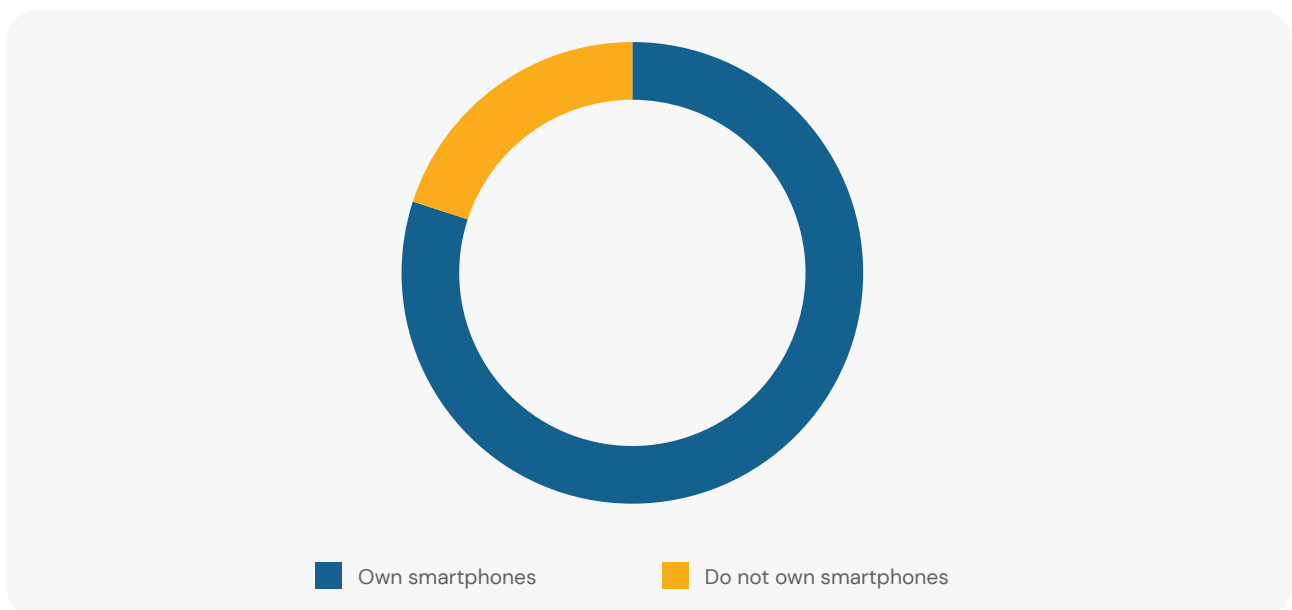
Frequency of social media use - Bidibidi



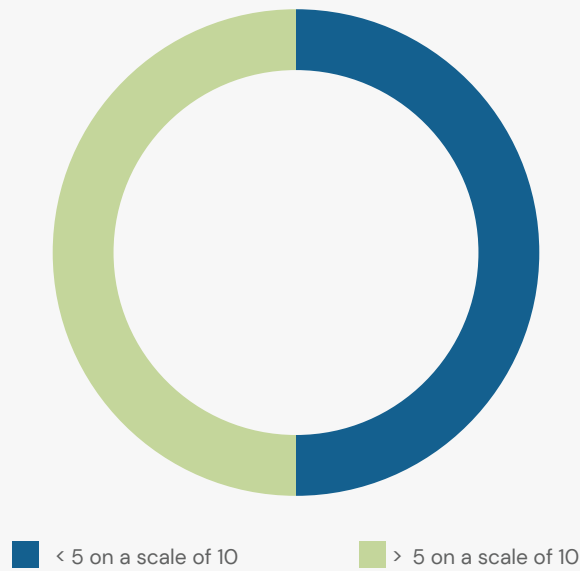
Smart phone ownership - Bidibidi



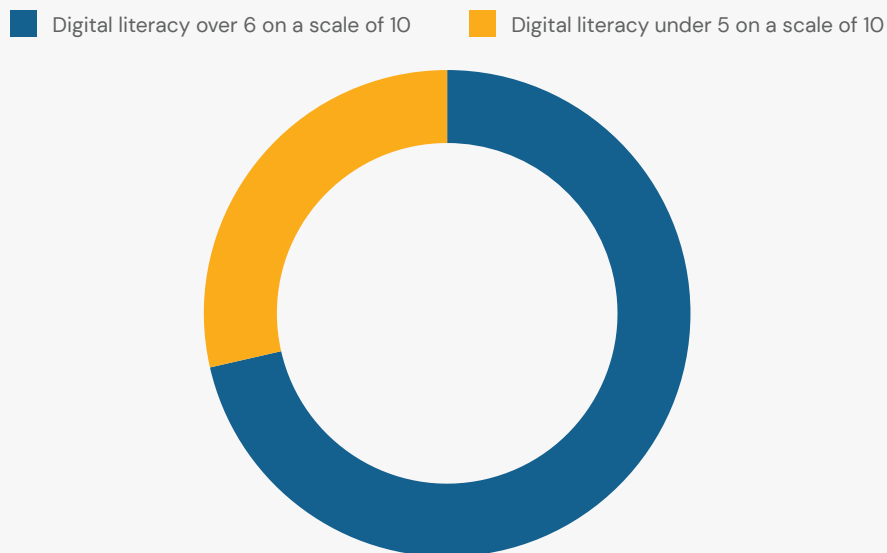
Smart phone ownership - Kampala



Level of digital literacy - Bidibidi



Level of digital literacy - Kampala urban refugees



Half of Kampala urban refugees said they had received some form of digital literacy training.

All 18 respondents in Bidibidi said that they are deeply concerned about social media tax and excise tax on internet data as it increases the price of internet data.

Digital organizing/organization is more common and effective among urban refugees in Kampala

During COVID-19 lockdown, WhatsApp was used to fundraise and coordinate distribution of humanitarian relief to urban refugees. They also used church WhatsApp groups to update the community about opportunities and fundraise towards their causes.

Young refugees in Bidibidi mostly use formal structures in the refugee settlement to organize. These include youth secretaries at village, cluster and zonal level who forward issues to NGOs and government.

Policy Recommendations

1. Uganda Communications Commission should encourage telecommunications companies to provide low-cost internet data packages for refugees. The Office of the Prime Minister should liaise with UNHCR to ensure that purchase of such low-cost bundles is limited to SIM- cards registered in the names of refugees, using their official Government of Uganda issued identification documents.

Low-cost internet bundles will reduce the cost of internet data for refugees, hence increase their internet access and extension of access to education and employment opportunities online, as well digital organizing in the refugee settlements. Effective youth organization has potential to improve peace and security among refugees and between refugees and host communities.

2. The Office of the Prime Minister should establish digital centers in refugee settlements. The digital centers will enable low cost or free internet access and enhance access to most in demands digital skills such as graphics design, digital marketing and website development, thereby expanding the range of livelihoods options and skilling for refugees beyond traditional fields such as tailoring, agriculture, among others. In the long term, the digital centers will also enable access to remote work opportunities for young refugees.

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Policy Options for Expanding the Dividends of Labour Externalization in Uganda's National Development

By Frank Nuwagaba

List of Acronyms

EEMIS:	External Employment Management Information System
GCC:	Gulf Corporation Countries
MDAs:	Ministries Departments and Authorities
MGLDS:	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
MOFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NDP:	National Development Plan
NES:	National Employment Strategy
NTR:	Non-Taxable Revenue

The Executive Summary

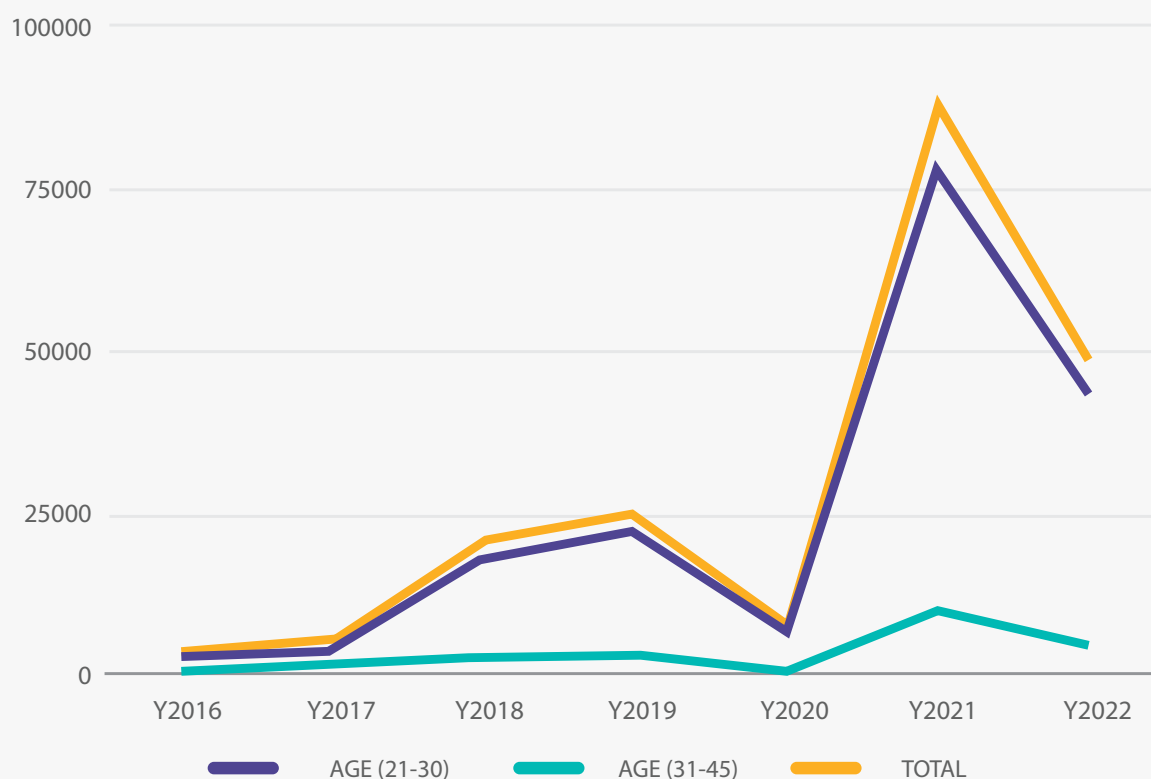
This policy brief explores the policy options for expanding the benefits of externalization of labour program in Uganda. It highlights benefits that have accrued from the program such as the Non Tax Revenue (NTR) collections and remittances, as well as the key setbacks such as the understaffing, underfunding at the Department of Employment at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD hereafter) and the Diaspora department at the Ministry of Foreign affairs which frustrate the effective monitoring of the labor export sector and extension of consular services to the migrant workers respectively. This policy brief argues that whereas most of the responses to address the shortfalls in the externalization of Labour program have been reactionary and impulsive. There is need for a comprehensive government-led monitoring framework of the entire labour migration cycle. There is also a need to review and sign new government to government bilateral labour agreements in the bid to widen the spectrum of the categories of labour Uganda exports as well as widen the safety spectrum for migrant workers in the destination countries.

Introduction

Africa's population is expected to double over the next 25 years with its working-age population projected to continue growing beyond 2035. With such high population growth, the prevalence of unemployment and underemployment among African youth is projected and expected to be high and will stay high for the foreseeable future. Uganda is no exception with a population currently projected at 43.7 million people (Mid-year 2022) and projected to at least 104 million people between 2020 and 2060. Approximately, 700,000 young people in Uganda reach working age every year and this is expected to rise to an average of one million in the decade from 2030-2040. With this kind of population growth, Uganda's level of unemployment has gradually risen over the years with the national unemployment rate at 9% of the working age population and unemployment rate for youth at 19.4% according to the Uganda National Housing survey 2016/2017.

In 2005, the Uganda government initiated the External Employment Program with the objectives of creating a safe, orderly, regular and formal pathway for Ugandans who chose to seek for employment abroad, as well as establish a short-term window for addressing the unemployment challenge in the country. According to MGLSD's External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS), the number of externalized workers has steadily increased over the years from 2,539 to 88,553 migrant workers in 2016 and 2021 respectively and this largely constitutes youth in the ages of 21-30 years.

Number of externalized migrant workers by age from 2016- 2022



Source: External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS), MGLSD.

Imperative to note is that the main composition of the Labour exported by Uganda to the Gulf countries constitutes mainly the unskilled and semi-skilled labour who earn relatively low salaries and wages which equally speaks to the remittances flow and the revenue collections by Uganda government from the same compared to other migrant workers from other regions. For instance, the labour externalization to Saudi Arabia sits at over 60% of the total Labour migrant workers and over 80% of those are domestic workers.

Number of externalised migrant workers from 2016 to June 2022.

DESTINATION	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Iraq	646	217	2,189	485	36	677	430	4,680
Afghanistan	342	416	228	414	50	0	0	1,450
Saudi Arabia	175	1,621	12,366	13,537	4,538	79,742	44,302	156,281
Qatar	487	520	923	256	1148	4,136	2,733	10,203
UAE	383	303	2,556	10,182	2,585	3,110	1,367	20,486
Bahrain	410	451	23	6	183	24	4	1,101
Somalia	96	162	745	139	172	832	528	2,674
Kuwait	0	0	0	38	109	21	52	220
Jordan	0	1,427	2,582	306	205	0	0	4,520
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	18
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Total	2,539	5,117	21,612	25,363	9,026	88,553	49,427	201,637

Source: External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS), MGLSD.

Currently there are 326 external recruitment companies licensed and authorized by the government of Uganda through the MGLSD to participate in labour recruitment for the purpose of externalization and the government through these companies' activities has collected Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) up to UGX 11.9 billion between December 2021 to 30th June 2022. The NTR is collected from license application fees, license fees, foreign job attestation fees, local job order fees, fines for late renewal of a license and training Centre accreditation fees. And this is projected to increase to about UGX 25 Billion in financial year 2022/2023 according to MGLSD.

This empirical study into the policy options for expanding the benefits of labour externalization in Uganda's national development focuses on the understanding of the current situations; benefits and challenges facing the labour externalization and policy interventions responding to the shortfalls of the externalization program as well as the pressures resulting from the high levels of unemployment and underemployment. The informal interviews focused on the understating the interventions undertaken by the government of Uganda towards addressing the challenges as well as harnessing the wide spectrum of the benefits that accrue from Labour export from key stakeholders in the labour export business, regulators and the migrant worker returnees. The proposed recommendations are aimed at consolidating the benefits currently accruing from the labour export sector as well as tapping into the different aspects of the sectors that have not been fully utilized under the current framework.

The Externalization of Labour Programme.

In the bid to create a supportive legal and regulatory framework to enable operationalization of the sections of the Uganda Constitution that relate to employment and the Employment Act 2006, the Uganda government adopted The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations, 2021 Statutory Instrument No. 47 of 2021 passed in August 2021 repealing the old Regulations No. 62 of 2005 and guidelines on Recruitment and Placement of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad, 2015.

The Program is mainly regulated by Statutory Instrument No. 47, 2021. The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations, 2021 which came into effect on 13th August 2021 and provide for protection mechanisms against exploitation of migrant workers to a bigger extent through streamlining the recruitment processes and procedures of migrant workers through the provision of the establishment, licensing, administration and operationalization of recruiting agencies, the government-to-government placement, the accreditation of foreign recruitment agencies and projects among others.

Labour externalization has been provided for under the National Development Plan III (NDP III hereafter) aimed at addressing the low Labour productivity and human Capital development among other Labour related shortfalls. With more than 300,000 employment opportunities at an average wage of UGX 1,000,000 created so far under the Externalization of Labour program, this gives hope to drafting a pathway to youth unemployment. Whereas a significant number of Ugandans have secured employment opportunities abroad, effective employment governance still remains critical towards the realization of national employment objectives as set out in the NDP III and the Employment Governance of the National Employment Strategy (NES) to effectively tackle the quality of job opportunities, repetitive unemployment patterns amongst the returnees and the returnees' engagements to foster employment and development.

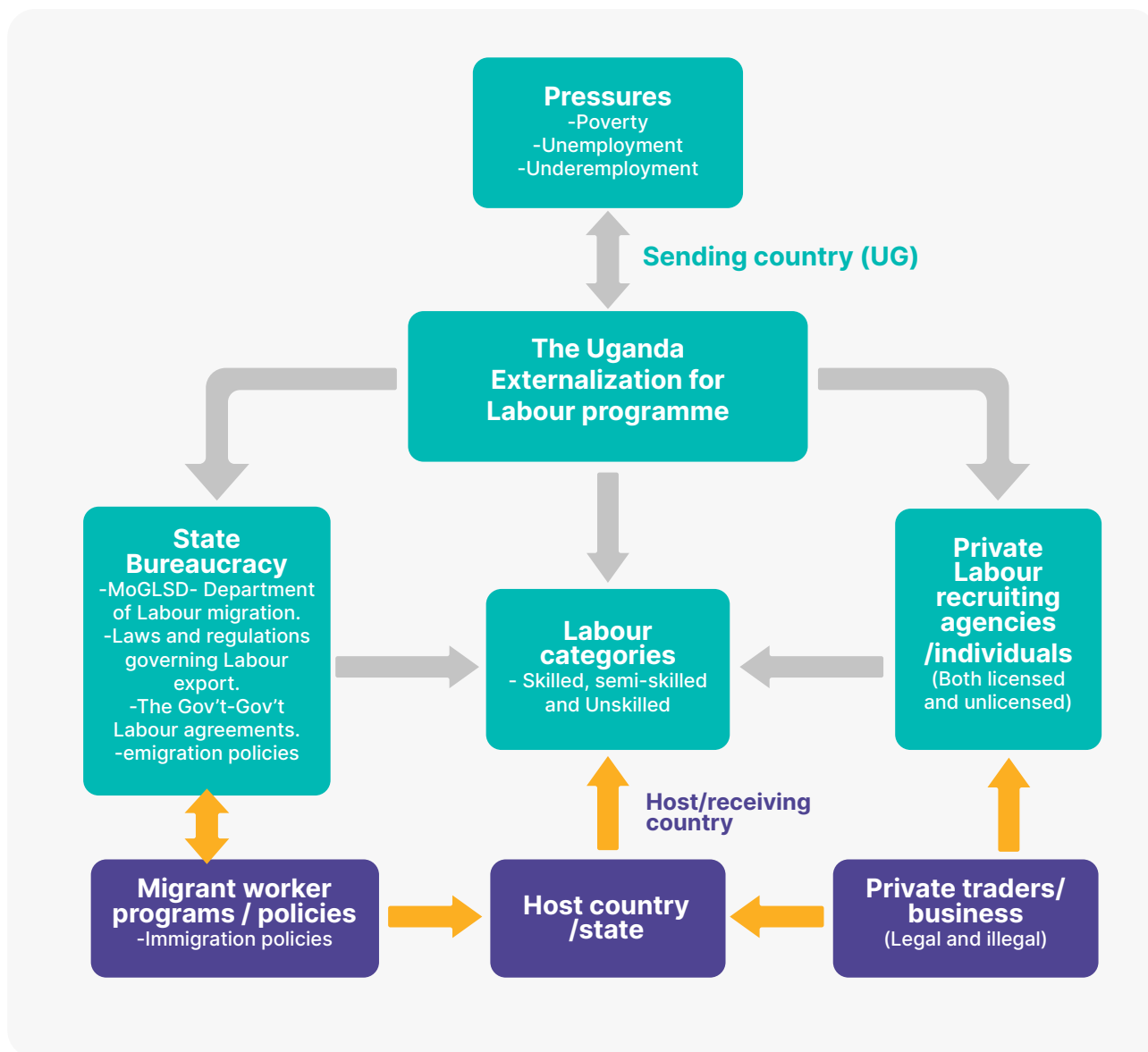
Remittances of up to UGX 4.2 trillion have been earned by Ugandan migrant workers world over and channeled to the Uganda economy a year to July 2022. It's imperative to note that the composition of the remittances contribution from the beneficiaries of the Externalization of Labour Program remains significantly low compared to Uganda's total diaspora remittances contribution mainly due to migrant labour program in the Gulf countries which accommodate majorly domestic workers who earn relatively low compared to counterparts doing other jobs under different migrant programs. In other countries, considering the migrants' decision of how much to send back home is mostly based on how much they earn. Uganda's remittances collections remain low compared to the other countries in the region and the steadfast increase in the remittances flow from the Gulf as a result of the growing Uganda migrant workers in that region. Nevertheless, little is being done towards the adoption of transformative initiatives to effectively collect more as well as utilization of the remittances by the migrant workers to avoid the vicious cycle of unemployment that affects most returning youth diaspora.

The government of Uganda also collects Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) from license application fees, license fees, foreign job attestation fees, local job order fees, fines for late renewal of a license and training Centre accreditation fees among others fees. For instance, the government collected up to UGX 11.9 billion in NTR between December 2021 to 30th June 2022. With MGLSD projecting an increase of up to UGX 25 Billion in NTR in the Financial Year 2022/2023, the Externalization of Labour program bears the potential of bringing in more revenue to foster development in the long run.

The value addition on the domestic skills and knowledge acquired by returnees remains limited as a result of the limited pathways to enable skills and knowledge transfer to the local population by returning migrants. The exposure to new cultures, different work environments and norms exposes the migrant workers to a wide range of skill sets and knowledge that would be beneficial and transformative in nature towards the domestic population and the returnees themselves. Whereas some returnees are able to establish businesses at a small scale, the biggest percentage of these are unable to establish sustainable means of survival and thus easily become unemployed on return. There is therefore a gap in the government programs towards returnees and the mechanisms of tapping into the skills and knowledge they attain while working abroad.

There has been responsive interventions towards the outcries of Ugandan migrant workers mostly in the Middle East by the Uganda government over the human right abuses and massive arrests and deportations; for instance the suspension of licenses for several recruiting companies, threats to suspend the Labour export business in its entirety in the past, the increase of the bank guarantee requirement on recruitment agencies and there remains gaps in creation of progressive and lasting solutions to the challenges facing migrant workers and the labour externalization intervention in its entirety. Most of the responses adopted thus have been reactionary and impulsive since they have always targeted the problems in the moment. There remains quest to look at the broader picture of the labour export intervention to maximize benefits that accrue to externalization of labour as well as going a long way to addressing the challenges at hand with in the existing regulatory and institutional frameworks as well providing solutions for the gaps with in those frameworks governing the Labour migration in the country.

Illustration of the externalization of labour programme

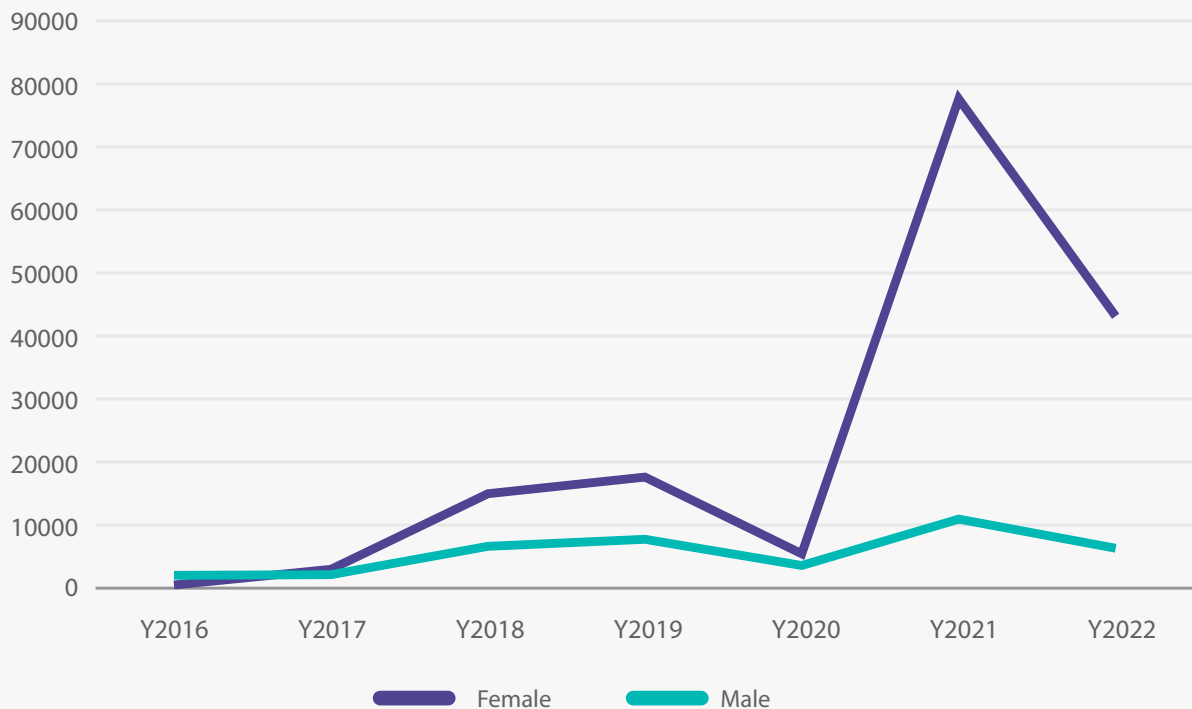


Findings

The continued exodus of many Ugandan youths to the Gulf Corporation Countries (GCC hereafter) amidst the public outcries of the increasing cases of trafficking in persons among other vices most especially with domestic workers and females has been attributed to the pressures resulting from the high levels of poverty, unemployment and underemployment of the youth in Uganda among other reasons. Because of these pressures, many migrant workers are leaving the country for the GCC countries without going through the legal and institutional frameworks established by the government for citizens intending to seek employment in other parts of the world. And because of this, many migrant workers in the GCC countries have been deemed irregular/illegal due to overstaying whenever they visit, having travelled for purposes of employment on visiting visas that are usually for a short period usually three months.

The inhumane treatment and human rights abuses on domestic workers are mostly attributed to the Migrant worker program in the GCC which provides for migrant worker sponsorship by their principals (employers). The Migrant Workers System is commonly known as the Kafala sponsorship system which provides for Migrant workers sponsorship where the migrant worker's visa and the general migrant's stay are tagged to a specific individual (sponsor), which leaves the migrant worker- sponsor relationship skewed in favor of the sponsor and migrant worker vulnerable to exploitation. The Lack of bilateral labour agreements with several destination countries such as Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait as well as the suspension on those that had been signed such as one with the Kingdom of Jordan and the government of Uganda goes a long way in enabling the unfair conditions of work and delayed justice for the Ugandan migrant workers when acts of abuse, no payment or little pay, failure to meet contractual obligations among other issues occur. There is a continuous growing trend of more female migrant workers moving away from unpaid household work in Uganda to paid for household work (domestic work) in the destination countries. Whereas this is observed as feminization of odd domestic Labour by the sending country and facilitating better jobs for the female counterparts in the receiving countries, a significant percentage of respondents observe the trend as a form of empowerment and thus recognizes the contribution of the female migrant workers towards the economy in form of remittances as well as societal transformation. The remittances earned by the female migrant workers, contrary to the male migrant workers, are believed to have gone a long way in transforming the household incomes of those they leave behind, support the education of their children and siblings among other.

Number of externalized migrant workers by sex from 2016 to June 2022



Source: External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS), MGLSD.

Whereas the data from the MGLSD reflects the number of migrant workers registered under the licensed agencies and registered individual migrants, many individuals continue to leave the country in search of employment in the same countries without necessarily registering with the ministry. This is equally observed from the remittances flow from the other regions of world other than the Middle East which hosts the largest share of registered Ugandan migrant workers at 99.9% with a remittances contribution share of the GCC at 39.13% of the total remittances received from the Uganda diaspora.

The current staffing under the structure of the Department of Employment Services-MGLSD is too low to effectively monitor and supervise the growing number of recruitment agencies and pre-departure orientation training centres in the country, a role provided for in the Regulations governing the externalization of Labour. Equally, the understaffing at the Uganda missions and embassies abroad is affecting the quality and efficiency of consular services rendered to those in distress in the form of legal advice, representation in courts of law, effective verification of the job orders placed with the missions abroad.

Related to the above, despite the externalization of Labour program generating Non-Tax Revenue of over UGX 12.9 Billion between December 2021 and June 2022, the Department of Employment Services- MGLSD was for the entire financial year 2022/23 allocated UGX 39.2 million for externalization of labour activities. The funds allocated for an entire financial year are deemed insufficient to finance the monitoring and the supervisory roles mandated to the same department. The understaffing and underfunding equally limit the capacity of the department to respond effectively to the growing number of migrant workers, recruitment agencies and pre-departure training institutions.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

There is need for the government through the Department of Employment Services-MGLSD and the Diaspora Department together with Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish a comprehensive government led monitoring and supervisory mechanism of the entire labour migration cycle.

The well-established monitoring framework, monitoring and supervising tools, government-led welfare initiatives, placement of sufficient manpower as Labour attaches at the missions and creation of overseas Labour offices will go a long way to effectively keep track of the its citizens working abroad from the start of the recruitment, to job placement abroad, welfare of the migrant workers up to the point of returning after contract. Effective monitoring of the sector will require an upgraded and integrated External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS) currently used majorly by MGLSD to provide user interfaces accessibility by several other stakeholders such as recruitment companies handling recruitment, government ministries, departments and Authorities (MDAs) managing Labour movements to effectively facilitate and ensure ethical recruitment practices to deal with trafficking in persons and human trafficking, exploitation and human abuses. The need to know the skill set levels of the migrants, where the migrant workers are, the length of their employment contracts, the types of visas held by the migrants at all times, the form of employment they are engaged among others is key information for government (Diaspora department-MOFA) to render the consular services to the Uganda migrant workers, as well as to maximally utilize the same population on return to enable the transfer of skills and knowledge to the domestic population through the skilling programs. Lack of an integrated database about the migrant workers leaves gaps in knowing who has returned, who is due to return, who has changed their line of employment, to enable effective recruitment into the skilling programs under Ministry of Education and sports and in other MDAs.

The need to review the existing and signing more bilateral government-to-government Labour agreements to deliberately tackle the receiving country's immigration policies and migrant Labour programs to enable protection of the migrant workers' welfare and wellbeing. Currently, only the Uganda -Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Labour agreement is running and expires in December 2022.

The signing of new Government-government Labour agreements will equally widen the spectrum of the Labour categories for export based on their skill sets (unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled manpower), enable access to the judicial services by the migrant workers, establish conflict resolution pathways between the migrant workers and the employers other than making arrests and deportation among other deliberate engagements.

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Policy Options to Improve Public Communication for Effective Service Delivery to Refugees in Uganda

By Ojok James Onono

List of Acronyms

DSC:	District Service Commission
ECDs:	Early Childhood Development Centers
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
UACE:	Uganda Advance Certificate of Examination
UNEB:	Uganda National Examination Board
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UCE:	Uganda Certificate of Examination
RWCs:	Refugee Welfare Councils
WTI:	Windle Trust

Abstract

This study argues that Public Communication in Refugee Settlements when managed professionally and structurally with deliberate open feed-back mechanism from the end-users who are the refugees, could be a great tool in the evaluation of public services in Refugee Settlements. Taking a qualitative research methodology approach with the case study of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, the study found out that the Uganda Refugees Act (2006) which authorizes service provision by government to the refugees has no specific public communication strategy or policy clearly spelt as a communication frame-work to support service provision feedback. Therefore, the study recommends direct public engagement communication strategy involving refugees and relevant stakeholders in the public service provision with the ultimate goal of improving service delivery in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Introduction

Effective public communication can play a role in improving governance and the delivery of services to the vulnerable including; improving efficiency, accountability and transparency, and reducing bribery. Mtange, M. (2022), contends that in Africa, investing in internal communication strategy is important in assisting the government institutions to accomplish each objective smoothly and effectively. But the role of communication in organizations has been undervalued in many entities and government fares worst as regards to this vice despite the massive scope of benefits associated with good communication practices and strategies (Cornelissen, J. P. (2020). Unless communication is managed strategically and professionally, there will be serious interruption between the refugee community and the public servants working in public refugee institutions like office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and this may affect the delivery of public services and goods. (Mbogo, C. M, 2011).

In this context, the Uganda Refugee Act (2006) under section ,8,29,32, empowers government of Uganda to provide services like public education, health, security and identity among others to the refugee communities. It is only through effective public communication that government would be able to audit its service delivery to refugees since a number of studies recognizes the potential benefits of effective public relations (Kauzya J.M.2007).

There is a relevant administration to deal with the Refugees, but there are no deliberate efforts to get honest, transparent feedback from the refugee community on services being delivered to them (The Uganda Refugee Act,2006).

In 2018, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the government of Uganda launched a communication system for refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda that was first piloted in Kiryandongo and Nakivale settlements known as the inter-agency toll free lines which allows individual refugees to call the Office of the Prime Minister or development agency to address specific challenges they are facing.

This model is not inclusive and would not benefit a large refugee community for wider service delivery coverage audit. The Telephone toll free line model does not comprehensively handle the issues of language barrier on the side of the receivers of the call and very ineffective in case of health emergencies.

With descriptive qualitative approach, this study investigated how effective public communication can enhance government service delivery especially on health and education at Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and recommended a better communication strategy to support service delivery to the refugee community in the country.

The research deployed qualitative methods in the case of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement found in Kiryandongo District. The study used an in-depth key informant interview, Focus group discussion and observations. Key informant interviews were conducted with officials from Office of the Prime

Minister, public service providers in health and education sectors within the Settlement areas. Two Focus group discussions were held with the refugee community with research questions regarding the communication channels that the government and its development partners use to communicate its services to the refugee community in Kiryandongo Refugee settlement, Challenges that refugees face while accessing government services like Education and Health in the Refugee Settlement.

Using purposive sampling, data was collected from 25 refugees during focus group and personal interviews. One senior staff from office of the Prime-Minister and four health workers and four teaching staff were strategically selected at headship and operational level consecutively in both health and education service sector.

The study also included desk research on communication as a strategy in service delivery enhancement to a population in the refugee community in Uganda.

Effective Communication to Strengthen Education Service Provision

Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement has 14 Early Childhood Development Centers (ECD) and 9 primary schools where 7 are Governmental; namely Bidong, Can-rom, Panyadoli Hill, Victoria, Ematong, Saint Bakhita, Arnold and two others supported by partners and community members while most of the primary schools concurrently run the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD).

The Refugee Settlement also has two secondary schools where one of the two is government owned. (Panyadoli Self- Help Secondary School). These schools serve both the refugee communities and the host communities (Ugandan nationals) because all of them before Government through Ministry of Education and Sports took them by coding had all started as community schools by the Refugees or the host communities in their formation background.

Findings, Challenges Analysis in the Education Service Provision

The study found out that there are inadequate classroom blocks compared to the number of pupils in the primary schools in the settlement area. This also apply to Panyadoli Self Help Secondary school, the only public secondary school in the settlement area. The study revealed that many of the teachers are supported by development agencies like Windle Trust (WT), UNHCR and others are teachers on the government payroll who are not many. In-depth interviews with some of the teaching staff revealed that there has been laxity to recruit more teachers on government payroll due to ceiling issues and rhetoric that majority of the learners are refugees capable of receiving support from development partners hence posting teachers in other schools out of the settlement area with more nationals that has been prioritized.

Taking an example of Arnold primary school, one of the biggest government schools as of 21st October 2022. The enrollment was at 3,685 pupils with only 59 teachers in total. 7 teachers are on government payroll, 3 are supported by UNHCR, 49 by Windle Trust International Uganda. Education sector data provided by OPM revealed that the pupil's teacher's ratio stands at 1:53 while more 308 teachers need to be recruited for the primary school and 17 for the secondary school with over 369 class-rooms needed for both primary and secondary schools.

The schools remain the property of the government of Uganda and there is a need for ownership hence government should do so through Kiryandongo District Service Commission (DSC) to invest in adding more teachers as a government contribution directly to the education sector. The nationals also study in these schools and for better feedback the parents feel they could communicate directly with the education service providers on how their children suffer trying to listen and understand lessons with inadequate classrooms.

The study also found out that refugee students have to pay for Uganda Certificate of Examination (UCE) and Uganda Advance Certificate of Examination (UACE) fees when the Ugandan students (nationals) don't pay any examination fees because the school is benefitting from Universal Secondary Education (USE) scholarship from Government of Uganda.

The study validated the assertion from the school authority who said they have long alerted the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) about the challenges although it is not yet rectified. The refugee's students will have to pay **UGX 164,000 for UCE and UGX 186,000 for UACE** since the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) system only recognizes nationals as the ones from schools benefitting from Universal Secondary Education.

This becomes a communication challenge because the refugee's parents have since 2018 when the government took the school under USE never gotten any feedback on why their children are discriminated against at Panyadoli Self Help Secondary school during UCE and UACE.

"This is very unfair, we hope that the Government addresses this educational discrimination because now we are under them and deserve the same treatment as Ugandan citizens". (Key-informant interview, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, October 2022).

This contravenes Article 29 and 32 of the Refugee Act, about the same rights to education as Ugandans but with engaging public communication strategy like open refugee community dialogue directly with the Ministry of Education officials, this problem could have been long addressed.

Effective Communication to strengthen Health Service Provision

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement has three health units which are all Government health centers. Two are health Centers IIIs and one is Health Center IV, this is due to the Ministry of Health Policy that supported the elevation of Health Centre IIs to Health Centre IIIs and in July 2022 the Health Centre III was upgraded to Health Centre IV to provide services to the Refugees and the host Communities in Kiryandongo District. The Settlement also has five ambulances on standby for referrals and emergency.

Analysis of the Communication and Health Services Provision Nexus

The study found rapid drug stock as a big challenge to the refugee community and focus group discussions revealed that refugees experience slow patients handling while expectant mothers expressed concern that getting a midwife to attend to them also is not easy in the Panyadoli Health Center IV.

The study found that Panyadoli Health Centre IV serves both the nationals and refugees and according to the findings, the number of national at times outweighs the refugee visiting the health units. For instance, in the month of August 2022, the Health Center IV had 219 deliveries, 74 were from refugees and 145 were of Ugandan nationals with total 8 daily average deliveries according to the interview with senior clinicians at the health unit.

The Health Centre officials also revealed that they have 330 average daily Out-patient visits to the Health Center IV who come to get health services. This was an extract from one of the senior clinicians during an in-depth interview in following up the slow service for refugees at the health unit. *'Imagine in the month of July, August and September 2022, we had a total of 1,053 child deliveries with 16 enrolled midwives and a clinician attend to about 64 patients per day for consultation, so you can see the heavy patient burden we have and slow services is inevitable'* **(Key-informant interview, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, October 2022).**

Another senior medical officer raised the issues of staffing as to this extract.

"We also hope Kiryandongo District officials and Ministry of Health support us to recruit more health workers who would be in government payroll because we currently only have 16 staff on government payroll out of the total 131 staff, the others of course are being paid by development partners but a busy health center IV like this should have 48 health workers fully accommodated and on government payroll for sustainability and hope of real growth" **(Key-informant interview, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, October 2022).**

The study also found out that the settlement has an estimate of 72,000 planned for refugees as to the interview by an official from the OPM as far as public services in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement is concerned because registration in the settlement was stopped five years ago. The study validated even from the refugees that there are over 20,000 not registered at the settlements as some had followed their spouses, relatives, parents at the Settlement when registration was stopped. This has led to a heavy burden on services offered at the settlement for refugees

This is an extract from a participant reacting to issues of the unregistered Refugees in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

"OPM said that if they want to be registered, they should go to Lamwo in the Refugee Settlement, but why would they want to separate me with my wife and children during service provision, I want to stay with them here, can't they just register them from here?" **(FGD, October 2022, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement)**

These Health provision service challenges demonstrate poor communication engagement between the stakeholders and refugee community hence having a communication desk with professional communication officers with all this information pertaining service delivery challenges and what is being done could help to cure some of these worries.

Strengthening Existing Communication Channels

Radio Communication: the refugees revealed that the Office of the Prime-Minister and other development partners normally use the local Radios within Kiryandongo district to communicate to the refugee community because they are within the area and these include Kibanda FM, VCC FM and Kiryandongo FM.

An extract from one of the respondents noted that the use of Radio has been very effective

"The Radio Stations use has been effective in communicating messages to do with immunization of children and sensitizing people on health matters within the settlement here". **(Key informant interview, October 2022, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement)**

Radio is a good channel but needs to be supplemented with a refugee communication desk at the settlement for referrals and provision of feed-back mechanism missing in the communication set up at Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. Having no communication desk could also be a danger to press management.

" Because we have no in-house professional communication reference desks even for services here, when journalists come during any function, we just end up speaking anything that at times annoys other partners and the consequences is that you might be left out next time". (FGD, October 2022, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement)

Refugee Welfare Council: The Kiryandongo refugee settlement also has the Refugee Welfare Council leaders who are the leaders of refugees and they are the biggest communication intermediaries between the refugees and the public stakeholders at the settlements. The settlement has 17 clusters and each leader per cluster.

Most of the communications within the settlements are passed through these leaders and many respondents to the study assert that in most cases the leaders are ineffective and don't communicate back to zone members.

"In most cases they just enjoy workshops and rarely communicate to us even we don't know if they really present our issues in those meetings because the problems are still the same" (FGD Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, October ,2022).

The communication desk is the remedy to this gap as all workshops and meetings in relation to refugees' issues that would be recorded and could be accessed by refugees from the communication desk as the core alternatives to the Refugee Welfare Council members.

The study also noted that the recruitment of most language speakers at strategic service points in the settlement area should be encouraged as a cure to language barriers for access to services such as health and education among others.

However, any system that values communication to enhance service delivery should ensure there is open communication platforms for the public on the services being offered for proper review and improvement on the services as to the complaints by the users (Verčič et al., 1996).

Conclusions

The Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Disaster and Preparedness and Refugees, have obligatory mandate enshrined in the Refugees Act, (2006) in relation to public service provision to the refugee communities in Uganda. The Act has no specific public communication strategy or policy that's clearly spelt to support the service provision feedback from refugees for continuous improvement.

Although from the practice at Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, this study found that the traditional press agency, public information model or strategy is largely used at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. This is one way communication characterized by unidentified flow of information from the Government and its development partners to the refugees which could highly be hazardous in cases of crisis in communication at the settlement area and worst of all has no strategic communication feedback mechanism for review of services to deliver as promised in the refugee law.

Recommendation

Develop Refugee Communication Policy: The Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Disaster and Preparedness and Refugees should develop a clear framework showing communication flow between government, its development partners and the refugees with an empowerment of a communication desk.

This could address the uncoordinated flow of information and secure proper press-management at the settlement areas.

Develop biannual Public Information Accountability Forums: Public information accountability forum brings all the service providers before the community and refugees would engage with the top officers who could act faster to supplement reports from the refugee settlement commandant that could take months to reach a Minister or a Permanent Secretary. This forum would also help Government at a high level to evaluate the services they are offering to refugees and see where to improve including creating awareness of the Uganda Refugee Act (2006) to Government Ministries that might have not embedded the Act in to its programming, like UNEB system not recognizing refugee's students to benefit from USE contravenes article 29 and 32 of the Refugee Act.

Periodic Mandatory training for the Refugee Welfare Council (RWCs): This study recommends that every cluster leader in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement needs to be taken for engaging public communication training focusing deeper on the feed-back mechanism as the best tool of communication. This would empower them to begin initiating internal open dialogues on service provision as gateway to the public information accountability forums. This would create interactive and free information sharing within the clusters limiting doubt and feeling of despair among the refugees.

Finally, this study recommends that further communication research on enhancement of service delivery should be sampled in three or more Refugee Settlements in Uganda to get a countrywide overview for concrete planning of communication as a tool to enhance service delivery in Refugee Settlements in the country.

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Policy Options for Better Management of Internally Displaced Karamojong in Uganda

By Nancy Atyang

List of Acronyms

DLG:	District Local Government
KCCA:	Kampala Capital City Authority
KDF:	Karamoja Development Forum
IAC:	Inter Agency Committee
ICRC:	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD:	Inter Government Authority on Development
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WFP:	World Food Program

Abstract

Karamoja is one of the poverty-stricken regions in Uganda that has for so long been faced with push factors such as ardent insecurity, poor infrastructure that have seen thousands of Karamojong displaced in various towns across the country. This situation has been persistent and poses questions of how workable the policies in place are in the context of Karamoja. This research seeks to assess the existing national internally displaced people's policy in the four aspects of prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnerships geared towards addressing the current and persistent IDP situation in Karamoja. This study also seeks to identify crucial challenges faced by the stakeholders and brainstorm possible solutions to these challenges. Above all the research seeks to inform effective and efficient policy reforms in managing IDPs from Karamoja.

Introduction

The 2021 Global Report on Internal Displacement indicated that the total number of people living in internal displacement reached a record 55 million globally. The report stated that the factors leading to this number include conflict, climate-related factors, and famine. According to the report, 98% of internal displacement was caused by weather related occurrences such as floods and drought. The report also states that the number of displaced persons has been rising steadily in the last decade. In December 2020 there were twice as many internally displaced persons compared to refugees. The internal displacement monitoring center 2022 15th September states that Uganda in the 2000s experienced an internal displacement of 1.8 million people because of the war in Northern Uganda, all of whom have now returned home. The data though does not account for the displaced people from Karamoja which has been persistent.

Karamoja region found in north eastern Uganda is one that's characterized by a very high rate of insecurity, banditry, poverty and poor infrastructure as opposed to the rest of the country (Kaduuli, 2008). These factors and so much more have left the region and its population vulnerable for so long. This has seen an increase in forced migration in the region over the years to date. In fact, Karamoja makes up one of the highest numbers of forced immigrants and internally displaced people in the country, but this is undocumented. The region has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of street and homeless people living in the worst living conditions possible in major cities across the country and in neighboring countries over the years with barely any reduction in the numbers. This is ironic because the country receives so much funding to support refugees and spends much of state resources as well on maintaining the influx of refugees in the country. At the same time very little is clearly apportioned to deal with the forcefully displaced Karamojong. The big question is, whose interests does the Uganda IDP Policy serve?

The Uganda National IDP Policy formulated in 2004 whose sole purpose is to "create awareness of the needs and rights of IDPs, mobilizing support within the country and from the development and humanitarian community". The policy also recognizes that internally displaced persons shall enjoy in full equality the same rights and freedoms under the constitution and all other laws. The national IDP policy notes that one of the major factors of Internal displacement is cattle rustling which occurs in Karamoja region and has contributed to internal displacement since 1979. The policy also notes that civil conflict such as the dictatorial rule of Amin 1971-79, the war in Luwero triangle 1981-85, the Uganda people's army insurgency in Northeast Uganda in 1987 and the LRA war in northern Uganda from 2003 are some of the major civil conflicts that have significantly led to internal displacement overtime. As of the time of the launch of the policy in 2004, approximately 7million internally displaced persons were highlighted. Today the total number of internally displaced persons from Karamoja is not indicated, however the total number of internally displaced persons in Uganda is estimated at 76,000 by the internal displacement monitoring center as of 2021.

Overtime however, regions like Northern Uganda that for so long faced rebel activities have seen drastic recovery for the better over the years as compared to Karamoja. Policy makers ought to investigate how much effort is put into dealing with the situation in Karamoja. This is exactly what this study investigates as well as suggest possible strategies through which the state can efficiently and effectively manage Karamoja IDPs.

Karamojong IDPs in Uganda: An Overview

Karamoja region has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of street and homeless people living in the worst living conditions possible in major cities across the country and in neighboring countries over the years with barely any reduction in the numbers. The high numbers of people leaving the region to resettle in cities and other parts of the country due to insecurity, poverty and harsh climate conditions is alarming. However, these numbers are not documented. As a result, the region has been left handicapped in all aspects of life. Daily monitoring according to the Internal displacement monitoring center states that as of September 2022, “700 Karamojong herders from Napak district fled to neighboring Katakwi district to escape from cattle raiders” These figures do not factor the various street children, women, and men from Karamoja in the various towns across the country.

Today Karamoja is the poorest and most remote region in the country with barely any track record of improvement or growth. According to the multidimensional poverty index report 2022 by Uganda bureau of statistics, Karamoja region has the highest level of multi-dimensional poverty (85%), poverty intensity (68%). These statistics contribute highly to the internal displacement of its natives. The national IDP policy notes that one of the major factors of Internal displacement is cattle rustling which occurs in Karamoja region and has contributed to internal displacement since 1979. Majority of these people mostly children, women and men can be seen scattered homeless across cities. Children and women are living and begging on the streets exposed to harsh conditions and predators. Several of these people are victims of abuse and are subject to inhumane acts for survival, (Sundal, 2010).

An article by Judith Oputu of the International committee of the red cross entitled (ICRC); ‘Displacement diplomacy; Five ways to improve policy and practice on internal displacement in Africa’ paints a picture of the Karamojong IDPs. The article articulates the politics of internal displacement where often countries reiterate issues of refugees they host and often fail to acknowledge their internal displacement status for fear of tarnishing their image. This in a similar way explains why there are no clear statistics on any government data of the Karamojong IDPs over the years to date. This is problematic because the lack of statistics has not given various partners working in the IDP sector a clear justification for investing in projects geared towards managing Karamojong IDPs and also lack of data means lack of evidence.

(Tshimba, 2022) historicizes racism in the refugee and migration sector. He depicts that refugee interventions are racially biased from way back to the days of the post-world wars. He narrates the energy and vigor expressed by donors from the global north in funding interventions geared towards refugees from the global south. The most recent war in Ukraine which has displaced millions of Ukrainians across the world speaks to the gist of the matter that Tshimba portrays. The global north has presented a united front especially in terms of resources injected towards managing Ukrainian refugees without any procrastinations. These efforts in comparisons to the efforts put by the global north in managing refugees in the global South over the years paint a picture of racism. In a similar way, the same can be related to the situation of the IDPs from Karamoja that has persistently experienced famine and insecurity over the years. These are some of the major factors accounting for internal displacement among the Karamojong. These persistent push factors which have not often been accorded the significance that they deserve have forced people to leave the region. A most recent example is the 2022 famine crisis

in Karamoja where the prime minister's office was reluctant to respond until social media reiterated the need for response. But in the process the victims of floods in Mbale received immediate response. This kind of variation in the significance accorded to similar situations from different regions is one that (Tshimba, 2022) reiterates. When looking at the case of IDPs in Karamoja it would be an injustice not to discuss it in relation to the racism in the refugee intervention between global south and north. There is need therefore to establish how respective stakeholders are intervening to protect the Karamojong IDPs.

Current Policies on IDP Management and Gaps In National IDP Policy

Protection

The National internal displacement policy designates prime ministers' office department of disaster preparedness and refugees as a lead agency in the protection and assistance for the internally displaced persons. This department is mandated to coordinate all efforts aimed at managing internally displaced persons by ministries, humanitarian and development agencies such as the United Nations high commission for refugees (UNHCR) at national, district and subcounty levels. Under the department for disaster preparedness and refugees chaired by the minister, several committees such as the Inter-ministerial policy committee, Inter-Agency technical committee (IAC), the human rights promotion and protection sub-committee, District disaster management committee and sub-county disaster management committee are charged with the task of managing internal displacement. In as much as this policy is well structured and should therefore yield a significant impact in managing internally displaced persons, the impact is minimal especially for the case of Karamojong IDPs. More emphasis is required in the implementation aspect of the policy for the policy to achieve its intended goal.

Partnerships

The UNHCR, an international development agency that has the mandate to ensure the welfare of refugees and internally displaced persons notes that overtime the number of internally displaced persons in Uganda has drastically reduced and in 2012 it closed one of the biggest IDP operations in Northern Uganda after more than 1.8million people returned to their homes. Given the persistent numbers of internally displaced persons from Karamoja there is need for the UNHCR to resurrect its operations directed towards supporting efforts to prevent and protect IDPs from Karamoja.

African network for the prevention and protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, Co-operation and development and Caritas Uganda are some of the prominent organizations that work in Karamoja to support returnees. These organizations focus on providing alternative survival livelihoods for returnees through skilling.

World food program (WFP), Samaritan purse, government of Uganda through prime ministers' office department for disaster and preparedness, Welthungerhilfe and mercy corps are some among many organizations that are working in the region to end famine through various approaches like modern agricultural techniques, skilling, food relief during emergency contexts. Despite efforts by these organizations and many others to curb famine, it is still an issue that is forcing natives to move to other regions searching for better livelihoods.

Karamoja development forum (KDF), Intergovernmental Authority on development (IGAD), Mercy Corps (Ekisil project) and ANARDE peace program in collaboration with the district local government (DLG) and security agencies (Army and Police) are also working tirelessly to prevent the insecurity problem in the region. It should be noted though that despite these efforts, the insecurity situation in Karamoja region is still a threat to the natives and foreigners.

Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in partnership with government is also working on the resettlement of street children and people living on the streets of Kampala. These people also consist of karimojongs. However, this resettlement program has also received backlash from the intended target group.

Uganda ratified the convention for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa (Kampala convention) and the protocol on the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons (IDP protocol) of the international conference on the great lakes' region. The Kampala convention is also the only legally binding treaty on the protection and assistance of IDPs in the world. An article by ICRC entitled; 'Displacement diplomacy; five ways to improve policy and practice on internal displacement in Africa' on one of its five policy recommendations prioritizes bilateral dialogue to reiterate key issues in the sector as opposed to high level conferences and summits because bilateral dialogue enables the provision for contextualized concrete solutions. There is need for the various stakeholders working the IDP sector to emphasize the use of bilateral dialogue with the Karamojong in their interventions geared towards managing IDPs from the region.

Prosecution

Sundal (2010) ,highlights the Karamoja displacement crisis since the 2000s to date because of violence and poor living conditions. The study also noted that the government approach of resettling mothers and children who are homeless and slums of major cities is inconsiderate of the push factors in the region such as violence and poor living conditions. The study also highlights the gaps in the methods used in the resettlement process and called it, "dehumanizing". The study also notes that the scheme is lacking in areas of programme design, resources, and infrastructure. In 2022, the government of Uganda passed a law prohibiting the public from giving money to street children who are mostly IDPS from Karamoja. This law is part of the strategies explored by government to manage IDPs especially street children as they resettle them back home.

The resettlement scheme is spearheaded by Kampala city authority, on the 7th of June 2022, the leadership of Napak district where most of the Karamojong IDPs especially children and women come from held a strategic meeting with the Kampala capital city authority regarding the current state of the Karamojong Street children in Kampala. They highlighted the major push factor as being insecurity which has forced children and women to move to cities. They also noted that there are various gaps in the management of street children such as sexual abuse in shelters in slums where they settle on arrival, child trafficking is also rampant, and children are being used for economic benefit (street begging) by unknown individuals. They resolved to push for the rescue and resettlement of street children. However, the challenge with resettlement is that often the street children tend to move back to cities as push factors are not yet addressed fully, hence undermining the approach. The policy should also emphasize the need to further investigate child traffickers, sexual offenders and economic exploiters who are getting in the way of successful IDP management as per the policy(Sundal, 2010).

Challenges in Policy Implementation

Persistent push factors such as insecurity and food insecurity. In July 2022 there was a social media outburst on the Karamoja famine situation which saw approximately 321,300 people dead and more unreported cases on the verge of dying as stated by the Minister for Disaster Preparedness, Esther Anyakun. Gruesome pictures of almost lifeless bodies of children, elderly, men, and women laying down in Karamoja circulated all over social media. The media outburst brought to the attention several stakeholders the severity of the famine situation in Karamoja. Many stakeholders such as Politician Nobert Mao and Dr. Patrick Ojok on one of the media discussions on NBS television reiterated that

the famine situation in Karamoja is not new and has been going on long enough and therefore needs a deeper assessment into the root causes rather than emergency handouts every other time it occurs. This brief note about the current situation in Karamoja and many other push factors such as ardent insecurity and poor infrastructure has for long seen thousands of Karamojongs displaced in various towns across the country. The situation has for so long been persistent and is undermining policy strategies like resettlement in managing internally displaced persons from the region.

According to the refugee law project working paper 2012, Uganda's IDP policy has failed to live up to its expectations in dealing with IDPs from other contexts other than those from the previously war-torn northern Uganda. The paper states that the policy fails to put into consideration other contexts such as IDPs displaced because of disasters like the mudslides in Bududa. This is a major gap that has discredited the policy in the management of IDPS from other regions in Uganda. The paper also highlights that the policy and the inconsistencies in the Policy regarding comprehension and unclear scope. The policy also notes a lack of political will on the side of government to comply with the policy parameters. These shortcomings have undermined the capacity of the national IDP policy to address key IDP problems in Uganda.

Recommendations (Policy Considerations)

- Emphasis on curbing push factors as a sustainable approach to manage internal displacement by all partners by the district local government, Prime ministers' office, and development partners like United nations high commission for refugees and both local and international non-government organizations working in the forced migration sector. Local government and prime minister's office can apportion a reasonable amount of money to skill youth to make them self-sustainable hence able to live in the region reliably. Government organizations should design programs and projects aimed at promoting peacebuilding, livelihood development and literacy in the region. These programs will improve attitudes and behaviors of the natives who participate in cattle rustling hence causing insecurity in the region. A peaceful region will enable peaceful living hence significantly reducing displacement and forced migration. At the village level, the leadership must take charge of the security by ensuring that culprits of cattle rustling are handed over to the courts of law and convicted. Everyone must be on board when dealing with push factors from village level to global partners.
- Legal considerations: Prosecution of traffickers, sexual offenders, and economic exploiters to ensure the safety and welfare of IDPs in resettlement camps and rehabilitation centers. This should be implemented by security agencies especially the Uganda Police and the courts of law. A strict policy on perpetrators and offenders of cattle rustling, child traffickers, sexual offenders and economic exploiters ought to be designed in collaboration with all security agencies from village to global agencies. This will ease the process of ensuring that the offenders are punished to set as an example to the rest. This will also curb push factors and ensure that IDPs are properly integrated in host communities without becoming prone to such hideous crimes. Local councils, Uganda Police and Interpol should be brought on board when implementing this policy option to ensure efficiency.
- Village committees should be created by the prime minister's office department of disaster preparedness and refugees. Prime Minister's office should create a committee at village level with the mandate to monitor household movements and factors forcing them to move. This committee will provide firsthand evidence in form of statistics of how many people are displaced and reasons for this displacement. This information is key for strategic planning and policy design to better manage IDPs. This committee brings on board the grassroot to ensure inclusivity.

- There is need for the department of disaster preparedness and refugees as well as KCCA to curb corruption among officials who are handling matters of street children from Karamoja. A committee on Karamojong displacement should be formed to champion accountability of funds for the management of Karamojongs displaced such as street children. This will ensure that the funds are used for the rightful purpose.
- Prime minister's office should also conduct consistent and regular follow ups to check the progress and effectiveness of the policy. These follow ups help in establishing the efficacy of the policy and assessing if there is a change in context that requires customization hence policy review and change.

Conclusion

This paper reviewed the National IDP policy to evaluate the extent to which it has managed Karamojong IDPs and found out that, Uganda's National IDP policy is well written regarding achieving its intended goals, however its ability to put into practice what is on paper is insufficient. The refugee law project reiterates this aspect of the policy. After considerable research, the paper suggests that the solution to proper management of the Karamojong internally displaced persons is contextualization of the policy to suit the needs of the Karamojong. In general, a review of the Uganda national IDP policy to suit varying contexts is highly recommended.

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Migrant Citizens and Native Aliens: Policy Alternatives for Reimagining Citizenship in Uganda

By Edgar Mwine

List of Acronyms

DBVN:	Decentralised Borderless Voluntary Nations (DBVN)
N.A:	National Aliens
NIC:	National Intelligence Council (NIC)
NCICA:	National Citizenship and Immigration Control Act

Abstract

Citizenship establishes a legal relationship between an individual and a state. It entitles and enables an individual to the enjoyment of rights, protection and privileges following from that relationship. The criteria therefore, by which citizenship is decided represents one of the most important defining decisions for a state.

Ugandan citizenship was first legally established under the 1962 (Independence) Constitution but has been constantly evolving, adding new complexities at each turn. Whereas Primal Citizenship has remained tied to belonging to one of the indigenous ethnic groups of Uganda, new forms of citizenship have been allowed, granting migrants and refugees greater opportunities for integration.

However, being a basis for enjoyment of a wide range of rights, citizenship has remained a legal tool for political exclusion, cultural assimilation and is seemingly a tradeable status available to those who can afford it. In turn, natives have been alienated while migrants enjoy rights of citizenship.

This study highlights the merits of Ugandan citizenship, the biases in its attainment and suggests amendments to the Citizenship laws of Uganda, with a view of ending long-term statelessness and allowing greater integration of refugees.

Introduction

The contemporary definition of a migrant refers to a person who has moved from a place of his or her habitual residence to another. Whereas this ties migration to movement as the definitive quality, the colonial constitutional order based on territorial boundaries, citizenship and political rights, presented us with an opposing situation; “migrants without migration”. When communities were divided by colonially determined borders, natives stood across the borders, feeling as rootless, uncertain, atomized, disempowered and *alienated within their places of nativity*.

In contrast-colonial African societies always migrated from places they originally inhabited and were able to reconstruct and reconstitute new places (through art and artefacts, architecture, social norms and traditional hierarchy, language and customs) in direct negotiation with others inhabiting those same places. In this case, there were “migrations without migrants”.

Citizenship, as established in the post-colonial constitutions, is a legal status, that is merited, granted and revocable; but despite its arbitrariness, it is the standard for enjoyment of wide range of rights. Right from the Independence constitution of 1962, Citizenship by birth (Primal Citizenship) was restricted to those who were born of Ugandan parents and one of whose grandparents was also born in Uganda. The 1995 constitution further restricted citizenship by birth to a group requirement of having to belong to one of the indigenous groups of Uganda as listed in the third schedule of the same constitution. This meant that the right to primal citizenship is exclusively a preserve of natives.

Contested however, is how a section of these indigenous people, born and living in Uganda do not constitute Ugandan citizenship and have suffered life-long statelessness (Native Aliens) owing to the constitutional provisions of determining citizenship yet migrants who crossed oceans and seas have merited Ugandan citizenship (migrant citizens) and all the benefits and political rights that accrue.

The Case of Pre-Colonial Migrations

Pre-colonial native African institutions were structured with significant ethnic heterogeneity, but centralised powers with the ability to provide leadership, public goods, carry out arbitration, protect, and expand their territories without hurting native identities.

The greatest strength of the African society was the ability to absorb immigrants. This is because immigrants did not just add to the population of these communities but also contributed labour, leading to increased production and the possibility of territorial expansion. The Kingdom of Buganda for instance is said to have begun with only four clans in the 14th century and only covered an area that currently makes up just three of the current counties of Buganda (Busiro, Mawokota and Kyadondo). Over years they absorbed immigrants and those they conquered, without strict distinction between the indigenous and the non-indigenous people of Buganda. The Kingdom is now the largest monarchy in the East African region with over forty clans and across eighteen counties.

Migrating to far away places did not create a deep sense of loss or alienation to these moving hominids, instead, they directly manipulated resources available to them in the new areas and imbued the surrounding landscape with meaning so as to render the strange, familiar. In other words, they aimed to inhabit the new places and to directly constitute them. Even when it is likely that they experienced broken connections to people and place, alienation was not the precondition of their daily life.

They were never subjected to the imperialism of borders, lengthy visa procedures and the criminalisation of migrations. They also didn't suffer the state-mediated exploitation of migrant labour or the class-based acceptance, as is the case with modern-day migrations.

Native Aliens

The population census, conducted in 1959 in the British Protected area of Uganda, listed the Banyarwanda as the sixth biggest ethnic group after the Baganda, Iteso, Banyankole, Basoga and Bakiga. Earlier in 1948, the population census carried out in the area of Buganda Kingdom alone, showed that about 64 % of the population of the province were Ganda and the rest were largely Banyarwanda immigrants. In 1959 the proportion of ethnic Banyarwanda was even higher, constituting 42% of the population in Buganda.

Between November 1959 and 1961, over 300,000 ethnic Banyarwanda were displaced following violent clashes in what was called the Rwanda Revolution. Almost half of these fled and settled in Uganda. By 1962, there was a significant population of Banyarwanda who were settled especially in the province of Buganda, that some of the Chiefs in counties of Busiro, Kyaggwe and Buddu were ethnic Banyarwanda¹.

When in 1962, Uganda attained her independence, a constitutional order was put in place and it defined both the territory and citizens of Uganda. This was the very first time Citizenship in Uganda was defined.

Whereas Chapter II Clause 7 of the 1962 Uganda Constitution recognised all persons born or living in Uganda on the 8th of October 1962 (the night of independence) as Ugandan Citizens, Clause 9 further provided that every person born within the territory of Uganda after the 8th of October 1962, would also be a citizen of Uganda as at the day of their birth.

With the 1995 Uganda Constitution, citizenship by birth was restricted to only those persons whose either of their parents or grandparents belonged to one of the indigenous groups, but also must have been resident within the state of Uganda as at the 1st of February 1926 (The day when the last boundary demarcation of Uganda was done). This provision means that citizenship in Uganda is defined by nativity (belonging to an indigenous group as listed in the Third Schedule of the Constitution) but the qualifier is that one must have lived within the territory of Uganda, before the demarcation of the territorial boundaries.

In reality, this is an annulment of the 1962 clauses on citizenship and whereas Banyarwanda are listed among the indigenous groups, many of them settled in Uganda after 1926 or do not have documented proof of their grandparents' residence in Uganda and thus have since lost their citizenship. Their children and grandchildren, despite being born in Uganda, are stateless.

To be granted Ugandan citizenship, they have to undergo a lengthy and hefty process of naturalisation including the requirement that one must have lived in Uganda continuously for twenty years. This is to say that one must bear the conditions of statelessness for two decades, while living in Uganda, before they can be granted citizenship.

The alternative to naturalisation is Citizenship by registration which, on top of other legal requirements has a huge financial requirement of over USD 5,000. Comparatively, this cost of Citizenship is the highest in the East Africa, beating Kenya at \$1,680, Tanzania at \$1,500, Ethiopia at \$500, South Sudan at \$135 and Rwanda at \$5.

This even begs the question as to whether this cost of citizenship encompasses the quality of life that a migrant expects to enjoy and whether inequality in the quality of life that government ensures for migrant citizens on one hand and native citizens on the other, owes to this price and if this should therefore be tolerable. In any case, should the extent of socio-economic engagement and political participation available to the different categories of citizens be defined by the cost of citizenship?

Migrant Citizens

Citizenship in Uganda is defined by Article 11 of the Uganda Constitution, 1995 and is applied and enforced through the provisions of the National Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (NCICA), Cap 66. The Act provides for the attainment of Ugandan citizenship by migrants, through registration (Section 14), naturalisation (Section 16) and duality/Dual Citizenship (Section 19).

Owing to these multiple avenues for migrants to acquire citizenship, Uganda has been hailed for having inclusive immigration, integration, and citizenship policies. However, some argue that citizenship requirements have remained legally inclusive but socially exclusive. For instance, requiring migrants to undergo “culturalized” citizenship tests such as fluency in at least one of the native languages, or knowledge of “traditional values”, crystallizes the failure of multiculturalism and shows a move towards a more *assimilationist model of citizenship*”.

(The notion of belonging has become salient in citizenship determination, that it is now both justified in political discourse and implemented in practice. It is against the background that even if the legal hurdles for migrant citizenship are cleared, successful applicants may still not achieve emotional and symbolic acceptance of their new status and thus must be held down to certain traditional disciplines like language and values. In fact, gaining citizenship in the legal sense sometimes does not make one a citizen in a comprehensive substantive sense)

The counterargument is that, whereas migrant citizenship in Uganda tends to be assimilationist, it is inherently exclusionary, because the political rights it confers are not absolute. For instance, a dual citizen is ineligible for election as President or for appointment to any of the positions in the Executive and other service positions in the Military and Police, among others. It is also limiting that the off-springs of registered citizens do not automatically assume Ugandan citizenship, unless the other parent is a Ugandan by birth.

Notwithstanding, the argument about political rights for migrant citizens is however incomplete without looking at the economic benefits they enjoy. Often portrayed as “investors”, the political elite in Uganda have handed many of the migrant citizens a great deal of economic rights, including tax holidays, and free land while sternly locking them out of political participation. They are bearers of property, with neither political rights nor obligations. *They are a prototype of a mercenary community*. Over time, these migrants have, even in their minority, emerged as a powerful economic class, with unlimited, state-enabled access to economic and natural resources of the country while exploiting the natives for labour.

It is inked in the history of Uganda that the political outcome of the economic domination of natives by migrants led to the August, 4th 1972 Presidential decree dubbed “*The Economic War*”, in which President Idi Amin Dada expelled all Asians from Uganda. The possibility of a similar situation re-occurring, albeit with different conditions, cannot be underestimated.

The Politics of Citizenship

At the advent of colonialism, native institutions were ruthlessly destroyed leaving Africa with a bifurcated political power that mediated racial domination through ethnically organized local authorities, reproducing racial identity amongst citizens and tribal identity amongst subjects. The post-colonies were then left with a constitutional order that introduced the concept of citizenship as a legal status establishing a relationship between the state and an individual and diminished the birth right of ethnic identity. In turn, nations were divided, as states were created.

The normative aspiration for self-determination of these new states, leading to independence was therefore primarily based on citizenship - that flattering pride of belonging, liberation, dignity and nationhood. The African political elite used citizenship as a political tool, through exclusion, to forge an ephemeral public of their liking, with political rights as a definitive feature. Notwithstanding whether these political rights were exercised or not, there was greater regard for other citizenry obligations like doing military service, paying taxes, abiding by the laws and so on. The arbitrariness of citizenship provided the most effective mechanism for rulers to hypocritically pursue their political interests and blunt domination all dressed as the pursuit for common good. The politics of citizenship in Uganda is thus not about who citizens are, but so much on what political rights they hold and how or when they exercise these rights.

It is commonplace in Uganda today that persons who are duly registered and hold Uganda National Identity Cards often fail the Citizenship verification process when they apply for passports. Ironically, being on the national registry, it implies that these persons are also on the voters' register and have perhaps even voted in national elections but on the other hand, they find themselves ineligible for a Ugandan travel document.

Citizenship, Multinationalism and the Digital Age

Citizenship is an exclusive, involuntary contractual relationship with a single state. States determine whom they recognize as their citizens through their citizenship laws. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the exercise of citizenship is best pursued at the state level. However, in a globalised world, the space for humans and human interactions is no longer defined, nor restricted by a form of identity assigned to them by birth.

The advancement of the internet and the readily available digital tools, have enabled new ways in which individuals go about their lives outside the purview of state-provided infrastructure be it physical (roads, railways etc) or theoretical (laws). The internet has produced new forms of agency and widened the extent to which one can participate in or influence the political processes of a polity in which they don't belong or a territory they don't inhabit. In Estonia, for instance, e-Residency – a government-issued digital identity and status provides access for people across the world to remotely access Estonian government services, register and run businesses across Europe, conduct banking online, gain access to international payment service providers, digitally sign documents, encrypt and transmit documents securely, to and from any location, declare and pay taxes online, verify the authenticity of signed documents and importantly, have political representation to Estonian decision makers.

The internet has also enabled the emergence of Decentralised Borderless Voluntary Nations (DBVN). Bit-Nation is blockchain powered, voluntary, virtual nation created by a network of individuals who can transact, enter contracts and resolve disputes without knowing who is on the other side. Bit-nation has had ground-breaking, transformational work in solving the migrant crisis by allowing a peer-to-peer voluntary governance system and the first refugee emergency ID which allows anyone to use the service for the purpose of demonstrating and confirming family links, for instance for parents who are trying to reunite with their children during forced migrations.

Election interference using content curation (algorithms) and micro-targeting is a new way in which political outcomes are influenced by parties without any political rights that citizenship confers. The report by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) details the extent of influence operations, using the internet by a several outsiders in the 2020 U.S Federal election. The report states that there were persistent cyber efforts to gain access to election infrastructure and to influence perceptions of U.S voters. These undermined public confidence in the electoral process, and exacerbated socio-political divisions in the US.

All these internet-enabled avenues for exercising citizenship roles put to question the relationship of citizenship to territory and nationality in a globalised world. Similarly, when citizens leave their territorial community to reside elsewhere but still retain their political rights to vote, they determine how those they left at home are governed while not being subject to the same laws and living conditions.

Policy Recommendation

Whereas the 1962 Constitution recognised all persons born of Ugandans and residing in Uganda on the night of Independence as Citizens by birth, the 1995 Constitution repeals this provision, rendering many people who had obtained citizenship under the 1962 terms, stateless, if their parents were not resident in Uganda thirty-six years earlier in 1926.

Notwithstanding this legal provision, it is illogical that it is up to an individual to prove to the state that their great-grandparent was a Ugandan and lived in Uganda before 1926. With very low levels of literacy at the time and given that there was no proper documentation of citizens in 1926, there is little that one can adduce as evidence of their great grandparents being Ugandan or residing in Uganda.

Furthermore, for those who were citizens of Uganda under the 1962 provisions and lived in Uganda as such, but lost their citizenship because of the 1995 amendment, there ought to have been better alternatives for them to regain their citizenship rather than subject them to a lengthy and tedious process of naturalisation. Requiring one to adduce proof that their forefathers lived in Uganda close to a hundred years earlier would today not seem to be a legal requirement but rather, a deliberate hinderance.

Naturalisation is the most suitable avenue for acquiring citizenship, available to natives who cannot, for various reasons prove their descent and are therefore ineligible as citizens by birth. It is also the only available option for refugees and their children to acquire Uganda's citizenship in case, the possibility of returning to their countries remains indefinitely unclear. However, the requirements for naturalisation are cumbersome, prohibitive and largely unattainable. For instance, requiring one to have lived in Uganda continuously for twenty years without status perpetuates statelessness and hinders the integration of refugees.

Comparatively, Kenya requires an applicant for Naturalisation to have stayed in Kenya for a period or an aggregate of periods amounting to four years in the seven years immediately preceding the application. Tanzania requires the applicant for Naturalisation to have resided in Tanzania for an aggregate of seven years within the ten years immediately preceding the application.

Additionally, in the Constitutional Petition No. 34 of 2010, the petitioners sought orders of Court to the effect that the relevant government departments process applications for citizenship by naturalisation for refugees who satisfy the requirements for naturalisation under the relevant legislations and regulations. Whereas the constitutional court contended that refugees are eligible for naturalisation, it declined to issue the orders sought by the petitioners as it was found to be outside the Court's jurisdiction. The effect of this Constitutional ruling is that no refugee in Uganda has been naturalised.

To this end, I recommend that Parliament amends Chapter three, Article 10 of the constitution by deleting the requirement for one to prove that their parents of up to the third generation were living in Uganda in 1926. Further, Article 13 of the Constitution be amended and the requirement for twenty years of continuous residence in Uganda before naturalisation be revised downwards to utmost five years so as to reduce the length of statelessness and allow greater integration

Finally, the National Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, Cap 66 should also be reviewed with a view of expressly granting registered refugees a right to naturalise.

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Policy Alternatives for Addressing Barriers to Economic Participation of Female Youth Refugees in Uganda

By Nakirijja Judith Flavia

List of Acronyms

DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
FHI:	Family Health Initiative
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
OECD:	Organization for Economic Development
PWC:	Price Waterhouse Coopers
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Executive Summary

Despite the fact that the government of Uganda as a refugee host provides freedom for refugees to participate in economic activities, economic participation of female youth employees is reported to be inadequate due to a number of factors that limit their participation. Some of the barriers include disparity in payment on the basis of gender, sexual harassment, highly priced financing and lack of opportunities tailored specifically for female youth refugees. On the basis of the determined challenges, this policy brief recommends that female youth refugees are made more employable and that the government can enact policies to support flexible working terms, conducive investment and working environment as well as ensure that female youth refugees can access decent work with decent pay.

Introduction

Uganda is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and the third in the entire world with over 1.5 million refugees mainly from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi (UNHCR, 2018). The refugee influx to Uganda is supported by the country's liberal refugee policy which allows refugees to live freely and engage with host communities even economically.

Allowing refugee participation in host community economic engagements benefits the country through income generation from the various skills of refugees but also minimizes the pressure on the meagre resources. There is faster growth when more people are contributing to GDP through paying taxes, spending wages on consumption and job creation. Besides economic benefits, economic inclusion of refugees builds social unity, reduces inequalities and supports the peace and stability agenda of the country.

Despite the benefits of refugee participation in host community engagements, the large number of refugees in Uganda distorts the economic conditions especially in the host communities and puts a strain on the available resources. The presence of refugees changes the nature of economics markets in the settlement areas, create opportunities like higher consumption levels, greater labor supply but also come with challenges like social and economic inequalities and resource constraint gaps. To address the resource constraint gaps, refugees and host communities take advantage of the numbers to boost their economic stance through refugee economic participation. A good example of economic participation of refugees is with the Kyangwali and Nakivale IDP settlements where refugees work with host communities in strengthening the economic structures of their communities.

Economic participation is synonymous to the labor force participation rate. It is about involvement of individuals in the active work force of the economy, looks at all the individuals actively partaking in economic activities as part of the labor force as well as persons who are actively seeking employment (OECD, 2017). Economic participation is harnessed by factors such as preparedness of persons to engage in economic activities through access to information, acquisition of skills and building networks. These factors allow people (refugees) to be more productive, strengthen value chains and to be more efficient in whatever aspect of the economy that they take part in (FHI 360, 2019).

Why Female Youth Refugees?

Refugees in Uganda are a significant group that cannot be ignored in all aspects let alone economic participation. Even though there is evidence of participation of refugees in economic activities in refugee settlements, refugees still experience limitations to economic participation which are worsened by resource scarcity, infrastructure problems, weak markets, segregation by the host communities and weak regulatory structures. According to the International Crisis Group (2018), economic participation

by refugees especially in the informal sector creates labor surplus that translates into lower wages, less favorable work conditions and limited participation chances for the low skilled labor especially if the refugees have more skills and competences. Notably, female refugees are more vulnerable to the occurrences and thus experience greater barriers to labor force participation. Even though female refugees face similar challenges as the male refugees, they also experience challenges that uniquely manifest among the female gender. This is why fewer female refugees are seen participating in economic activities across refugee settlements compared to the male refugees yet according to UNHCR (2019), females constitute more than 50% of the total refugees.

Female refugees by virtue of their gender are time constrained because of gender disproportionate child rearing responsibilities together with the associated domestic chores responsibilities (Amrayaf et al, 2022). These render refugee women unable to participate freely in economic activities because available economic opportunities are not flexible in terms of time and also place of engagement. There are assertions that when refugees move from their mother countries to new destination countries, focus is directed to male refugees or refugees in terms of preparing them for work in the host countries. The female refugees' gender specific issues are often not put in consideration leaving them unprepared for economic integration (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). In some instances, female refugees fail to engage in economic activities due to their own state of minds that are mostly fostered by their local traditions and culture (Buehren et al (2015).

According to Mori (2014) because of cultural limitations, women and refugee status may not be self-empowered, trained, yet these are key qualities for enabling them to be successful components of the workforce. If they are not individually empowered, it is difficult for other entities to come to their aid in terms of inspiring their economic engagements.

Female youth refugees' economic participation is crucial as leaving them out can create a significant negative effect on the economy (Quak,2019). Inclusion of female youth refugees in the development agenda of the country helps the country to make use of their skills, strength and knowledge. At the same time, the economy is able to profit from the economic multiplier outcomes as employed refugees will definitely spend their income, pay taxes and possibly create employment for others (Jaumotte et al, 2016; Manole et al 2017). Economic participation of the female youth refugees can go beyond economic benefits. It is key in supporting the reduction of inequalities among different categories of people, it uplifts social cohesion and most importantly reduces the likelihood of potential instability and peace disturbance as the female youth will be engaged in economically productive activities and may thus have little incentive to engage in peace disturbing activities.

Case Study and Methodology

This study targeted female youth refugees in Uganda and aimed to avail analytical evidence and individual experiences on the barriers of economic integration experienced by female youth refugees in Uganda. The factors are categorized into refugee specific barriers and structural barriers. The study took keen interest in identifying the unique needs of female youth refugees in regard to engagement in economic activities and thus suggests policy interventions that can create sustainable ways through which female youth refugees can participate in labor markets and achieve economic sustainability.

Of the 11 refugee settlements in Uganda, one settlement, Kyangwali in Kikuube District was selected for the study. Kyangwali Refugee Settlement spans an approximate area of 90 square kilometers and is home to about 125,039 refugees (UNHCR, 2021). Due to its proximity to the Democratic Republic of Congo, over 80% of the refugee population is of Congolese origin. However, the settlement hosts refugees from Rwanda, Southern Sudan and Kenya as well.

The study used a collective case study approach to cater for an understanding of the state of affairs from multiple perspectives. It capitalized on focus group discussions and walking interviews with female youth refugees and key informant interviews for persons involved in refugee policy design and implementation (humanitarian workers and local leaders) for data collection. The FGDs and interviews were supported by refugee policy document analysis. The multiple data collection tools were employed because they provide more consistent and dependable research output. We conducted 3 focus group discussions (2 with 8 respondents each and one with 9 respondents), 5 mobile interviews and 4 key informant interviews with 2 humanitarian workers and 2 local leaders. Apart from a male humanitarian worker and a male local leader, all the other respondents were female youth between the ages of 18 and 35.

Findings

The study focused on barriers to economic participation as experienced by female youth refugees in Uganda. From the data collection exercise, barriers that have a bearing on both male and female refugees for example language barrier, lack of information, transition and assimilation challenges, discrimination, trauma were presented. The findings discussed below were found to be the issues that impact female youth refugees and they are presented as refugee specific barriers and structural barriers.

Female Youth Refugee Specific Barriers

Home care responsibilities and child rearing

Home care activities in the refugee settlements include preparing meals, cleaning, washing clothes among others. In the refugee settlements like in many African settings, homecare is a primary responsibility of females and therefore takes a large portion of time yet it is unpaid work. In addition to household chores, majority of the female youth refugees are mothers who have to devote time to taking care of their children. Household chores are often strenuous and take a whole lot of time. Female youth refugees require a lot of time and effort to accomplish household tasks especially because the chores are not assisted with modern domestic technology. The time and effort used in the accomplishment of household tasks impedes female youth refugees from participating in economic engagements. Without time, one cannot take on available opportunities to engage in economically productive activities as the home care and child bearing responsibilities cannot be done away with.

I have three children all below the age of 10. I have to cook for them and at the same time cater for their other needs and also do the household work like washing and cleaning. I cannot leave them home alone because of work. (FGD 2 discussant).

Education and qualification issues

Usually, economic opportunities are dependent on the level of education and qualification of the person who seeks the opportunity. It is common that most refugees especially those from areas of instability have low levels of education and thus no specified qualification. Low levels of education and qualification in most developing countries tends to affect females more due to social constructions. The fact that there are gender disparities in education in developing countries is a barrier as the respondents revealed that they had not attained basic education even before they fled their home countries and thus cannot qualify to work in desirable positions.

Some of the respondents revealed that they have the required education levels for employment but because they had to flee conflict and violence, they did not have the luxury to carry along their education and professional qualification documents and hence cannot offer proof of qualification

to potential employers. To prove qualification, refugees have to go through long, costly and complex processes which diminish their level of confidence as well as self-esteem that are necessary for economic participation.

Participants of the focus group discussions revealed that they have limited opportunities to further their education so as to gain desirable qualifications. They revealed that the available opportunities are in primary and secondary schools yet they feel they have come of age and cannot fit in the said levels but also have competing demands for their time. Another concern is that the education systems in Uganda differ from the systems in the home country making it hard to proceed with previous education.

Back home, I studied up to the level of Primary 5 but when I came here I did not proceed. I feel I am now big and there is no way I can go back to primary school. I do not have any qualifications and cannot get a decent job. (FGD 3 discussant).

Sexual harassment and violence

The female youth refugees who participated in the study revealed that it is not uncommon for them to experience sexual harassment and violence as they seek employment and during employment. They explained that sexual harassment is very common especially where the potential employer or the broker to the economic opportunity is male as they seek sexual relations either casually or forcefully before they offer them a job. Before furnishing you with information about an opportunity or during the tenure of work. The respondents reported that there are laws against sexual harassment but these laws are not accompanied by strong enforcement. For fear of being harassed, the female refugee youth would rather avoid employment overall than possibly face sexual violence.

When we are looking for jobs, men usually want to take advantage of us as they demand for sex in exchange for jobs. I cannot sleep with anyone in exchange for a job and would rather continue depending on the handouts until the right job comes my way (FGD 1 discussant).

Structural Barriers

Limited economic opportunities and lack of access to financial services

Uganda is a developing country meaning that it may not have the capacity to provide sufficient economic opportunities to its citizens and much less to refugees. This means that in the event of an economic issue, refugees especially female youth refugees will be most affected given the nature of the mostly informal economic services that they offer. The respondents revealed that the nature of their economic engagements for example providing assistance in businesses, providing home care services and other forms of casual labor are easy to do away with compared to those engagements where the male youth refugees take part.

The lack of economic opportunities becomes even more complex because there are no financial institutions with services tailored to serve the unique needs of female youth refugees. According to the respondents, the financial products that the female refugees have access to are marred by information gaps, high-cost credit and low levels of financial literacy among the female youth refugees. The limited financial services constrain female youth refugees from engaging in entrepreneurial activities, an avenue that they would adopt to remain economically engaged.

Even if Uganda is peaceful, it is a poor country just like my own country. There are few jobs and yet priority is given to the citizens whenever there are any openings. (FGD 2 discussant).

We cannot borrow money to start our own businesses because we lack the necessary documentation and collateral that financial institutions require for loan advancement. (FGD 1 discussant).

Geographical seclusion of refugee settlements

The female youth refugees who participated in the study revealed that they cannot participate in economic activities because the refugee settlement is isolated from areas that are economically active and can offer them opportunities to engage economically. This affects them because it is difficult and expensive to move from the settlement to places of opportunity and it is also difficult to juggle between economically productive activities and household responsibilities especially when the distance between the home and the workplace is very long. It should also be noted that in some circumstances refugees are restricted from moving to areas beyond the settlement boundaries which limits their access to economic opportunities. Under these circumstances, female refugees are left with no option but alienate from economic engagements.

This place is very far from major booming towns like Hoima where economic opportunities are many. There are restrictions of moving out of the settlement yet there is nothing much you can do here since the people are few and are also constrained with no employment or sufficient income to provide market for would be output. (FGD 1 discussant).

Lack of Economic Opportunities Tailored for Female Youth Refugees

The study participants mentioned that their needs as refugee women are not catered for in the systems of their host country. They agree that there exists information, programs and arrangements to support them to assimilate into their host environments but the arrangements do not suit their needs. They face challenges with the programs like trainings, workshops and tools put in place to prepare them for economic assimilation because they do not contribute to their formulation. The biggest challenge is that the areas of focus in the programs differ greatly from the economic engagements that the female refugees previously engaged in before in their home countries. Further, the refugees revealed that in some instances it was difficult to get physical access to the training opportunities due to distance and limitation in who is allowed to attend and in other cases, some female refugees cannot attend due to language challenges. *I wish the training they give to us could be more in line with present job opportunities or with previously acquired skills. It may not make sense to learn a new skill now unless its applicable to an available income generating scheme. (FGD 3 discussant).*

Payment Disparity on the Basis of Gender

It was revealed in the discussion with the respondents that employers within their environment tend to pay male refugee workers higher wages compared to the female refugee workers. This was revealed to be common among persons who offer casual employment without formal payment structures. The discriminatory pay on the basis of gender is in addition to the discrimination in pay that all refugees experience in general hence creating a very low wage advanced to the female youth refugees. The disparity in payment leads female refugee workers to abandon the notion of working since there is no reason they should be paid less compared to a male counterpart with whom they execute similar duties.

Employers think women have no use for money. At one time I worked at place with some female as well as male colleagues. We later on discovered that our male friends got more money than what we got yet we had done exactly the same work. (FGD 3 discussant).

Stringent Business Start-Up Processes

Female youth refugees are faced with barriers when it comes to establishing own business entities. The rightful process of opening up a business in Uganda is complicated and lengthy but also requires documentation of business owners. The requirements for establishing business entities have a disproportionate negative effect on the female refugees making it very difficult and most of the times impossible to start up.

The long time-consuming process of establishing business for economic gain causes female youth refugees to abandon the idea of engaging in business. The female refugees remain economically constrained since they cannot avail documentation for business start-up.

In case you go to open up a business, the officers ask for so many things (documents) that we do not have. After moving back and forth, you eventually give up on the process lest all the money you have on you gets wasted with no success (*FGD 2 discussant*).

Conclusion

Sustainable economic growth and development of countries depends on the collective engagement of all persons of working age in economically productive activities. This calls for deliberate inclusion of female youth refugees in income generating activities. As Uganda continues to grow, engagement of refugees and more so female youth refugees is needed as their skills, knowledge and manpower can go a long way in contributing to economic growth and development. Female youth refugee economic participation will reduce the incidence of dependence of female youth refugees on refugee support from the host country (Uganda) and other national and international bodies and will contribute greatly to general economic advancement.

Female youth refugees continue to face barriers to economic participation. The most pressing barriers as advanced by majority of the respondents are lack of access to fairly priced financing, disparity in payment on the basis of gender, sexual harassment and lack of opportunities tailored for female youth refugees. Considerable attention should be drawn to the fact that the identified barriers have been in place for a considerable time period and thus efforts must be exercised to ensure that the barriers are eliminated so that female youth refugees may participate fully in income generating activities.

Policy Recommendations

Making female youth refugees more employable

Female youth refugees can be made more suited to engage in economic activities by streamlining opportunities for them to attain quality education. Education should not be limited to the conventional primary, secondary school up to university education but can be expanded to facilitate financial literacy and skill imparting from vocational training especially in areas that the female youth refugees feel comfortable to engage in. The training should be in line with what the refugees deem useful to them preferably in line with previous trainings in the home country. Vocational training for skills is especially convenient for the female youth refugees given the fact that most female youth feel they have grown beyond secondary school going age but also do not qualify for university education due to lack of basic education. Additionally, besides increasing employability, skills attainment supports the entrepreneurship ambitions of some of the female youth refugees.

Promote a conducive policy environment for investment and economic engagement.

The Government alongside its institutions should avail an improved economic engagement environment that is guided by fair regulations and less bureaucratic tendencies. The policy environment should provide fair grounds to the large, medium and small businesses as well as to the female youth refugees who intend to seek employment. Government policies should ease attainment of relevant documentation and remove unnecessary barriers to business and employment formalization for female youth refugees hence making it easy for the female youth refugees to attain financial support for economic engagement in case need arises.

Ensuring that female youth refugees access decent work with decent pay

This can be done by placing emphasis on creating jobs for refugees in sectors of the economy that are non-discriminative and aware and respectful of the rights of all employees including female youth refugees. The government can engage sector players and female youth refugees attached to the sectors during policy formulation and can do a follow up by inspecting labor conditions in terms of work safety and decent pay for all workers.

For control and management, there should be free flow of information concerning economic engagement of female youth refugees as well as an accountability system that enables female youth refugees to report unfair treatment in case of illegalities like sexual harassment, pay discrepancies and non-payment.

Conducive working terms

Policies should consider the fact that majority of the female youth refugees have home and child care responsibilities besides economic engagements. Government can provide potential employers of female youth refugees with incentives so that they can in turn put up with flexible working hours and provision of child care incentives for female youth refugees who are interested in economic engagement but are limited by domestic responsibilities.

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Addressing Human Trafficking in Karamoja

By Lomilo Lucius

List of Acronyms

CBOs:	Community Based Organisations
ECO:	Ecological Christian Organisation
NGOs:	Non-Government Organizations
TV:	Television
UGX:	Uganda Shillings
UN:	United Nations
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund

Executive Summary

Human and child trafficking in Karamoja has been regarded as one of the impediments to the development of the region and also, a major factor that has contributed to low food production as energetic men and women are trafficked outside leaving the young and old in the villages.

Recent studies provide snapshots of human trafficking in Karamoja that have highlighted the need to identify salient features that are facilitating the smooth working of traffickers in the region and forces that govern their operation. In this study, we show that the socio-economic situation of Karamoja is putting its people at a great risk of trafficking. We show that the remoteness of the region, limited education among its inhabitants, and significant marginalisation especially for females are shaping a new order of human trafficking ring. For example, we observed that females are not empowered to own various family assets and they often want to have control of their own property, which they believe can be acquired by moving out of Karamoja to work.

Overall, we show that within the social construct, human traffickers have exploited the lack of cooperation in Government administrative bodies, and the weakness in cultural systems to trade on human beings for their personal enrichment. This research therefore provides a window in which policy makers can use to tickle government to provide comprehensive support to protection and prevention mechanisms in the region.

Introduction

Karamoja is classified as one of the poorest areas with highest rates of malnutrition and a disproportionate number (61%) of its 1.2 million people, living in absolute poverty. Hunger, stunted and lack of access to food are prevalent.

The journey to economic survival in Uganda has driven thousands of Karamojong youth especially young girls and boys to major towns in East Africa and even to the Middle East to search for better chances of survival to make ends meet at home. Young girls from the age of 8 years and above are trafficked from Karamoja to go and work in households both in Kampala and Nairobi. Many have landed on better opportunities, but others have been unlucky and have been exposed to vulnerable conditions including harsh treatment and sexual exploitation. In Kenya, it is estimated that in 2020 alone, 853 victims of human trafficking were recorded and 275 among them were girls, while 207 being boys. This is a sharp increase from the 2019 report where 400 victims were reported to have been rescued. In Uganda, it is estimated that 90% of children living on the streets or in other vulnerable conditions in Kampala are from Karamoja. Children are exploited in forced begging, domestic work and commercial sex brothels.

Therefore, human and child trafficking is a major and ongoing issue, and has driven thousands of men, women and children to suffering, and at the same time, ridding the region of its productive workforce.

In recent years, there have been several reports from the media and humanitarian organisations about the rising trends of street children in Kampala, and also transportation of women and children to Nairobi to work as house maids and sex workers. It is said that children from Karamoja are being sold in cattle markets for 20,000 – 50,000 (\$ 5.48 - \$ 13.70) for instance in February 2019, Canary Mugume, a veteran TV journalist posed as a child trafficker, and bought a girl from Arapai cattle market at a cost of 50,000 UGX.

In other instances, several Karamojong girls have been intercepted or even arrested by several law enforcement personnel while enroute to several destinations such as Nairobi and Kampala, while others have fallen prey for recruiting young Karamojong girls and boys as casual labourers in Nairobi but

however, much has remained undone in the fight against child and human trafficking in Karamoja. This situation has been exacerbated by weak prevention and protection mechanisms that exist in Karamoja, and even in areas of destination.

In an attempt to counter the vice, AWO International in partnership with Ecological Christian Organisation (ECO) is implementing a food security and livelihoods activity in Napak and Nabilatuk districts targeting vulnerable small holder farmers at risk of being trafficked by establishing farmers and savers groups and distributing drought resistant seeds and agro inputs. Previously in 2013, the International Organisation for Migration with the Government of Uganda and civil society partners returned 21 trafficked girls from Karamoja who were taken to beg from Kampala streets.

Despite lack of minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, the Government of Uganda has made a great progress towards the fight against human and child trafficking several intervention measures have been put in place to make sure human and child trafficking is no more in Karamoja. The Government of Uganda has stepped up in identifying more victims, and increased prosecution of suspected traffickers and increased training to law enforcement personnel, investigated allegations of complicity in trafficking crimes, and created human trafficking officer positions within the Uganda Police Force.

Approaches and Results

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research methods consisting of key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The interview guides contained questions related to the current situation of Karamoja and its people, that is making them vulnerable to human trafficking, and current interventions with existing gaps. Data from key informants from Karamoja provided policy related recommendations that policy makers can take up in order to contribute to re-integration and adaptation to the Karamoja environment.

The study faced several limitations such as limited access to key stakeholders for key informant interviews and the ongoing insecurity in Karamoja that made access to respondents and their locations very difficult.

Research Findings

The findings of the study revealed that:

1. Most Karamojong youth and children live in remote and underserved areas in Napak and lack exposure to modern day lifestyles. They consider any opportunity to step out of Karamoja as a golden chance to success, notwithstanding the bad experiences existing outside. This is making it very easy for traffickers to navigate through easily, and prey on their victims.
2. The findings also showed that most youth have lifelong dreams, life aspirations and role models that have shaped their desire to move out of Karamoja. Despite their level of exposure, they hope to be like community figures, and most of their counterparts who are living outside Karamoja.
3. The largest percentage of youth have no formal education and children are not attending school, attributing to poverty and recent hunger crisis in the region. Most parents argue that they can't afford to pay for primary education but rather send children to look for casual labour and provide for family support than wasting time attending classes with hunger.

4. Female youth experience significant marginalisation and exclusion especially during asset ownership. Most parents prefer entrusting cattle to males than females, hence forcing females to seek for their own means of survival outside the region.
5. Family referrals in all study locations facilitated the trafficking of most girls than boys. It is said that most parents established strong relationships of trust and exchange with some of their relatives living in urban centres, and therefore sent their children to work as housemaids. Children later found connections even further and traveled far and wide in search for better opportunities to remit money back home at least annually.

Other Factors:

- Early and forced marriage, and also inability of females to manage family institutions. In Karamoja, most females still experience forced marriage and those who are married are often divorced by their male counterparts. They often seek financial and psychological support outside Karamoja. It is this that later leads them to the hands of traffickers.
- The findings also point to the fact that poverty and food insecurity are intertwined in the search for answers leading to human trafficking in Karamoja. Most areas visited for data collection presented high levels of poverty and hunger, with children having one meal per day, while others trekking long distances to have the same.

Implications and Recommendations

- Sustained engagement of cultural leaders for regular community education, outreach services, on human trafficking prevention and protection of women, men and children. The Karamojong have a lot of trust in their traditional leaders than any other external agent and using cultural leaders will be the greatest achievement.
- Government through its line ministries should strengthen partnerships with Community Based Organisations (CBOs), cultural institutions, civil and religious leaders to ensure sustained participation in protection of youth and prevention of child and human trafficking. For example, Dwelling Places NGO in Napak is leading on sensitizing communities on human trafficking and its dangers. Several informants have indicated this sensitization have reduced on the number of children leaving Napak. Therefore, if this is maintained across the region, they have a strong effect in building knowledge on how to avoid being lured to work outside Karamoja.
- Government and donor agencies should adopt a multi sectoral approach taking Karamojong socio economic circumstances into consideration to enhance their socio-economic status. This can be achieved through the promotion of entrepreneurship especially in livestock mineral resources, that are currently the back bone of Karamoja.

Further Research

Government and donor agencies should focus on collecting comprehensive statistical data to guide programming and advocacy in Karamoja. The study pointed out the gap in the absence of data of trafficked people, and their whereabouts. Several key informants decried lack of this information especially in the prevention of human trafficking and protection youth.

Conclusion

Overall, it was found that although the socio-economic situation of Karamoja is to a greater extent contributing to child and human trafficking, it is not fully capable for escalating the problem. Other factors came directly from the macro-environment, interpersonal factors, individual factors, service delivery factors, and the uptake of services.

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An Analysis of the Impact of Forced Migration on the Environment: A Focus on Rhino Refugee Settlement

By Patricia Namakula

List of Acronyms

MDAs:	Ministries Departments and Agencies
NDP III:	National Development Plan Three
NEMA:	National Environmental Management Authority
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
STA:	Settlement Transformation Agenda
UNESCO:	United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Abstract

Recent research by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirms that Uganda lacks a comprehensive migration policy framework that addresses the impact of forced migration on the environment. The current migration frameworks are fragmented and do not mainstream climate change in the management of refugees. There is still need for Uganda to strengthen incorporating climate adaptation in the comprehensive migration policy framework to inform actions for migration as an adaptation strategy. Therefore, this study based on STA objective 5 and analyzed the impact refugees have on the environment, identified the discrepancies between policy and practice and made policy recommendations for mainstreaming adaptation strategies into migration management and migration policy framework. The migration-environment nexus in Uganda is of great concern today and involves over 1.5 million refugees, about 90% of whom live in what was until their arrival a mosaic of grassland, woody savannah, open and closed woodland and forests. They have cleared vast expanses of the land for homesteads and cultivation, and their very survival hinges on the ability to utilize trees for firewood, construction, fruit and other non-timber products. For water, they depend on boreholes and rivers, the sustainability of which also relies on healthy tree cover. The pressure on the environment is immense. Trees species have vanished in many areas because of deforestation, with trees cut for charcoal burning by both the refugees and nationals.

Introduction

Rhino Refugee Settlement is located in the North-West Nile Region of Uganda. The settlement covers an area of approximately 225 km² and stretches over parts of Odupi, Omugo, and Uriama sub-counties (Terego District) and extends into Rigbo sub-county in Madi-Okollo District. The settlement is divided into ten zones and has 42 villages. The host community constitutes of the population of the four sub-counties in which the settlement pockets are located. As a result, it is estimated that this refugee settlement has a total population of 275,333, of which around 44% are refugees, and 56% are non-refugee host communities.

Refugee settlements in least developed countries like Uganda, are situated in rural areas where livelihoods and socio-economic development are largely dependent on the environment and natural resources. Land and natural resources remain Uganda's prime capital assets available to the population and for development, accounting for 54% of the country's total assets, which are mainly used for crop production, pasture lands, protected areas, forests and wetlands. This high nature-dependency makes environmental and natural resource degradation a major concern.

Uganda as a country is being highly exposed and vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and climate change, while at the same time facing widespread environmental degradation. The major climate hazards and disasters being experienced in the country are drought, floods, landslides and erratic or intense rainfall patterns. At the same time, Uganda is facing widespread environmental degradation most especially desertification, deforestation and forest degradation, encroachment on wetlands and riverbanks, soil erosion and declining soil fertility.

A significant portion of Uganda's population still depends on agrarian and nature dependent livelihoods, it remains susceptible to climatic and environmental changes. Refugees are primarily living in rural settlements and are dependent on environment and natural resources across 11 refugee-hosting districts (92%) as well as in Kampala. This has inordinate pressure and overwhelming demands on already stretched capacities and resources of the state and host communities. Quite often, in vulnerable conflict-prone contexts where resources are limited, the lack of alternatives results in increased environmental degradation that leads to higher levels of poverty and risk, thus reducing

livelihood options and food availability. The resultant impacts are increased household and community conflicts as individuals compete for declining resources. This can lead to large-scale displacement, with further suffering and environmental damage which results in forced migration. Over the long term, further degradation or depletion of natural resources such as water, farmland, pastureland, wetlands and forests puts vulnerable populations at risk.

Although in a humanitarian crisis, efforts to address environmental management and sustainability may seem at odds with saving lives, failure to consider the environment when providing relief aid reflects a flawed understanding of an emerging crisis and produces relief efforts that lead to environmental damage. Indeed, the demands on ecosystem services from rapid refugee influxes outpace planning and implementation of remedial measures. This study used qualitative research methods to take stock of the impact of refugees on the environment in Rhino refugee settlement, analyzed the environmental protection guidelines within the refugee policy framework and provided policy recommendations.

The Gaps in the Existing Policy Frameworks

Uganda has a unique and progressive strategy of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers. Two major policy instruments underlie this - The 2006 Refugees Act and the 2010 Refugees Regulations. These instruments grant protection and freedoms to refugees including property rights, freedom of movement, the right to work, and the provision of services. Refugees can integrate within host communities and have access to the same public services as citizens as well as freedom of movement and freedom to pursue livelihood opportunities, including accessing the labour market and establishing businesses.

The government of Uganda formally introduced the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) in 2015, which operationalizes the national legal framework and aims to achieve self-reliance for refugees and bring social development to Ugandan nationals in refugee hosting areas through six main objectives: 1) Land management, 2) Sustainable Livelihoods, 3) Governance and rule of law, 4) Peaceful co-existence, 5) Environmental protection, 6) Community infrastructure. The STA has been incorporated into the National Development Plan III (NDPIII), thus integrating refugees into national development planning. This study's focus is on objective (5) on environmental protection.

The National Environmental Act, 2019 repealed, replaced and reformed the law relating to environmental management in Uganda to provide for the management of the environment for sustainable development. The Act provides for the continuation of the National Environment Management Authority as a coordinating, monitoring, regulatory and supervisory body for all activities relating to environment. Among its objectives is to provide for emerging environmental issues including climate change, to provide for strategic environmental assessment, to provide for the management of plastics and plastic products, to provide for enhanced penalties for offences under the Act. However, section 113 of the Act exempts government projects such as refugee resettlement from an environmental impact assessment.

The Constitution of Uganda is the country's supreme law and provides that it is the duty of Parliament to enact laws that protect and preserve the environment from abuse, pollution and degradation and also to promote measures intended to manage the environment for sustainable development and to promote environmental awareness. The Constitution further provides that the state has the duty to protect important resources, including land, water, wetlands, oil, minerals, fauna and flora on behalf of the people of Uganda. However, in relation to the resettlement and the overall management of refugees, environmental protection has not been given the attention as stipulated in the constitution which has resulted into massive destruction of the environment in refugee settlements.

The National Environmental Management Statute was also enacted, establishing the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) as well as providing for a broad range of issues pertaining to the functions of NEMA and measures for environmental protection. Therefore, Uganda has moved a great distance towards providing a sound policy and legislative framework for environmental protection. The issue however, is whether these policy and legal claims are well integrated in Uganda's refugee management framework which is debatable because in Uganda, the resettlement of refugees begins with the destruction of vegetation and cutting of trees in areas identified for resettlement. This act in itself is destructive to the environment.

It is important to note that paying attention to the environment in a humanitarian response can make a pivotal difference in the success of that response. Environmental protection during humanitarian action reduces conflict drivers and increases resilience. In Uganda, the government prioritizes environmental protection and mitigation measures in refugee-hosting areas. However, even in this order of things and despite this recognition, challenges in implementation abound and persist. Humanitarian efforts still largely focus on saving lives in an emergency context at the expense of protecting the environment. More planning and systems thinking, identification of key needs and issues, and cross-sectoral integration of environmental issues before and during humanitarian action can help narrow this gap.

Environmentally Degrading Activities by Refugees in Rhino Refugee Settlement

The situation in Arua is an illustrative case of land use change and loss of vegetative cover upon the arrival of refugees. When a refugee community settles, they need to build residential accommodation, cook food, access water for drinking and washing, and obtain wood to make their farm implements and household utensils. These urgencies put intense pressure on the natural environment as highlighted by the local leaders interviewed. Refugees that were settled in Rhino refugee settlement only received a plastic tarpaulin from UNHCR for shelter. They began building houses from wood. Since the refugee settlements are located in a mix of open and closed woodland (environments with extensive but finite woody biomass), the extraction of wood for construction led to complete clearance of the woodlands in some areas.

Uncontrolled use of natural resources as a direct means of income generation and livelihood support for example, charcoal-burning by both refugees and host communities. The degradation of renewable natural resources such as forests, soils and water dominate the environmental problems associated with refugees in Rhino refugee settlement. Depletion of these resources has been accompanied by their biological impoverishment. Although some measures have been taken to preserve some tree species by coloring them red as an indication that cutting them down is criminal, that has not stopped refugees and host communities from cutting down such tree species in an effort to survive. The monthly cash round of 20,000 Ush is not enough given the ever-increasing cost of living. As such, refugees are left with no option but to cut down trees and make charcoal for sell to make ends meet.

Deforestation and bush burning are also rampant in the savanna woodlands both in and outside of community forest resources. The drivers are mainly illegal charcoal burning. In Uganda, soil erosion is widespread but extreme in highland areas, cattle corridors and the northeastern regions (NEMA 2019). Wood is also an income generating resource for refugees and host communities. In most cases, refugees and host communities have encroached on protected areas to extract forest resources for their livelihoods. For example, the Ocea Forest Reserve in northern Uganda was originally well protected but is now rapidly being degraded by refugees for supply of wood-fuel and construction materials. In Rhino refugee settlement, soil erosion has been generally fueled by uncontrolled cutting down of trees and wetland degradation.

Refugee-hosting areas experience widespread forest and wetland degradation as the refugees and host communities invade ecosystems to get wood for shelter building and domestic cooking energy and encroach on forests and wetlands for farmland. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Uganda's refugees consume at least 1.1 million tons of firewood every year, as fuel wood is the primary source of energy security. Each individual in the refugee community is estimated to consume up to 1.6 kg of firewood per day, compared with host community members who consume up to 2.1 kg per day. This has put a strain on the availability of wood, grass and other resources in refugee-hosting districts. It is worth noting that the rate at which trees are cut is higher than the rate at which trees are being planted, and in some instances, the fruit tree seeds given to the refugees to plant dry up because the ground is rocky and dry.

Degradation of land and water bodies as a result of poor disposal of polythene bags and plastics, the problem with plastics is that they are not degradable, which adds to the pollution of the environment whenever they are not disposed well. The continuous littering of plastics in the long run has affected soil quality. As a result, the soil in refugee hosting communities has lost the attribute of rich soil due to microplastics which intensely affect plant growth. In addition, underground water when polluted with plastics and consumed by domestic animals can be fatal. Therefore, with the already declining rate of environmental replenishments, poor disposal of plastic bags has been an additional hazard to all ecosystems in both the refugee settlements and hosting communities.

Conclusion

Refugee activities such as uncontrolled firewood collection, poaching and over use of limited land and water supplies, have placed serious strains on the ecosystems in many regions, including some unique areas set aside by local governments as parks or reserves or even sites recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. In Rhino refugee settlement, these activities have resulted in irreversible losses of productivity, the extinction of species of plants and displacement of animals, the destruction of unique ecosystems, the long-term pollution of land. Therefore, refugee policies in Uganda will be more effective if they strongly incorporate environmental elements into the interventions made right from the beginning. This will require modifying refugee assistance operations to make them environmentally more benign.

Policy Recommendations

There is need for the government through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to increase resource mobilization campaigns on sustainable interventions that address energy needs of both refugees and host communities. For example, making sustainable cooking alternatives such as biodigesters and charcoal briquettes available for households to curb on the cutting down of trees. In addition, the monthly cash rounds or the food rations given to refugees in settlements need to be increased to reasonable amounts since many refugees are forced to leave their countries with nothing and while in settlements the need to survive is the main reason they encroach on the environment. At the moment, each refugee receives 20,000 Ugandan shillings and 2 kilograms of dry foods distributed per month. The situation is worsened by corruption where smaller families bribe officials and receive money and food rations for bigger families yet some families receive less food. Therefore, there is need to strengthen accountability measures and focusing on improving refugees' wellbeing through the restoration of people's livelihoods following resettlement.

The OPM together with Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and relevant partners such as UNHCR and International Organization for Migration need to lay the basis for incorporating environmental factors into specific refugee management guidelines. Environmental issues are cross-sectoral by nature and environmental considerations have to be introduced in a consistent and coordinated manner into all relevant sectoral activities to ensure that the environment is protected from the arrival, resettlement and integration of refugees. While environmental impacts are an inevitable by-product of human existence and of human beings' interaction with the physical world, their mitigation is a reasonable policy objective and it requires a collaborative effort. This can be guided by results of a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of refugees at both macro and micro levels.

Implementing policies on environmental and climate protection to close the gap between policy-making and implementation such as the banning of polythene bags. Preventive and mitigation measures should be the norm rather than the exception. This widely accepted rule of prudent conduct applies particularly to decisions relating to the environment, including refugee-related environmental interventions. In some cases, environmental impacts (such as certain types of health impacts or destruction of biodiversity) are irreversible and preventive measures therefore represent the only real solution to these problems. In addition, preventive and mitigation measures are usually less expensive than curative ones. One of the preventive and mitigation measures government can embark on is awareness campaigns to concretize the impact of poor plastics disposal on the environment and people's well-being in the refugee hosting districts. Most of the refugees and locals interviewed admitted to being unaware of the grave danger of polythene and plastics to the ecosystem.

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Policy Options for Considerations for Addressing the Mental Health of Urban Refugees in Kampala

By Linda Asaba Awebwa

List of Acronyms

IRP:	Integrated Response Plan
MOH:	Ministry of Health
PHC:	Primary Health Care
WHO:	World Health Organization

Abstract

An interview guide and observation were used to collect data from the field. We engaged 80 participants from the areas of Kisenyi, Old Kampala, Rubaga road, and Kiseka (communities common with Urban refugees mainly from Somalia and Congo). Among the people whom we interacted with were local leaders, youth and youth leaders, religious leaders, health workers and the security operatives in the area. In these areas, the most common drugs and substances abused are; Njaga (Omugo, Kush), Alcohol, petrol, Kuber, and Quacher. These are very common, especially among young people and have been found to be very affordable. For instance, a stick of weed was as low as 500Ugx. The problem of drug abuse has been identified as a major contributor to the increased insecurities and decline in mental health especially around the central region and particularly the urban areas. This paper provides an analysis on the need to pay attention to the drug and substance abuse that is impacting the mental health of the young people and the refugees in the urban areas of Kampala. To provide glean more insights to the study, qualitative research techniques were employed. These included interviews, observations and focus group discussions. These were all guided with structured guide questions. The findings from the study indicated a very high level of drug and substance abuse which is increasing on the mental health and insecurities in these areas. The findings also suggested the following recommendations; Improve access to and utilization of mental health and psychosocial services for urban refugees by strengthening the capacity of lower community structures to identify and refer individuals, Local councils to revive local ordinances (bylaws against selling harmful substances such as drugs and alcohol) and make operational funds available for effective monitoring of such legislative bylaws.

Introduction

Uganda is an important case study to understand issues of mental health among refugees and other forcibly displaced people since up to 1.5M refugees are being hosted in the country to date. In line with the government of Uganda's refugee policies which consider refugees only as those resettled at the rural resettlement sites, urban refugees are presumed to be more self-reliant and do not receive regular humanitarian assistance. This sometimes means that urban refugees face challenges when it comes to affording food and housing. Whilst most refugees in Uganda are resettled at the rurally based resettlement sites. It should be noted that globally, 60% of the world's refugees and 80% of internally displaced persons live in urban settings. In Uganda, the central business district of Kampala hosts both refugee and displaced persons and people seeking asylum. Demographically, more than one-quarter of Kampala's urban refugee and displaced persons are youth aged 15–24.

Most refugee and displaced persons in Kampala live in informal settlements, also known as slums. Social and environmental stressors in slums such as elevated exposure to violence and poverty may contribute to mental health challenges and yet are underexplored with urban refugee and displaced youth. This has a great impact on the security levels in the country since these persons will be out and ready to do anything to be able to survive.

Over the years it has been noted that there is a high usage of drugs in urban centres and this also included the refugee settlement areas. This has led to a high rate of mental issues in urban centres and hence resulted into several security issues. These are also characteristic to refugee host communities in Kampala, for instance, Kisenyi and Kamwokya among others. This is the point where the different concerned players and stakeholders need to join effort with the MOH so that this issue is handled before it totally goes out of hand.

The Ministry of Health is finalizing Uganda's Health Sector Integrated Response Plan (IRP), endorsed by the highest levels of the Ministry, to include refugees into the larger development service delivery on

health in refugee-hosting districts. However, the issues of mental health do not come out well in this plan. This is an area that needs a lot of attention if we are to ensure that the security of our country is stabilized especially our communities.

Mental health in slums is understudied at large and this is also true in Uganda among both refugee/displaced and non-refugee/displaced persons. Studies of health issues, including mental health among refugees and displaced persons in Uganda have focused mainly on persons living in refugee settlements. For instance, in a study with refugee adolescents in Northern Ugandan settlements, one-quarter reported high rates of emotional symptoms and stress and one-fifth of anxiety exposure to violence was associated with both stress and anxiety. Facing numerous adversities, from war trauma to daily stressors during migration, urban refugees in low-resource settings are likely to develop health and mental health issues, such as major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, somatic symptoms, substance use disorders and many others.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act as we cope with life. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood and aging. This is the very main reason why we need to ensure that the migrants and refugees have a good stand in their mental health. There are many factors that lead to mental health issues but one that stands out the most is substance abuse. Substance abuse is very common and has in addition also led to an increase in insecurities in and around the city as the culprits try to get easy access to resources so that they can keep up with the addiction. Such mental health burdens are affected by the inauspicious conditions of the host country that create additional difficulties in stability and psychosocial care, furthering the risks of poor health and mental health status of refugees. Urban refugees, mostly self-settled in overcrowded settings, live in fear of detainment, encampment or deportation which increases invisibility of this population.

This study will enable us explore the impact of mental health among the urban refugees and make policy recommendations on how to curb these so that we can have secure and peaceful coexistence among the refugees and the host communities and the country at large.

Why There is Urgent Need to Curb Drug Abuse in Urban Refugee Host Communities

There is a significant link between mental health, increased insecurities and drug and substance abuse. Interacting with the different stakeholders, we noticed that there is need to have the local governments and community leaders to increase their presence on the ground. Of late there is an increase in theft and several other insecurities. This has directly been related to the increase in drug and substance abuse which has resulted in addictions which in the long run turn into mental health issues.

1. To examine the extent of the mental health burden in host communities among urban refugees.
2. To generate background information to help improve and set up Mental health-friendly policies for Urban refugees.
3. To understand the causes of increased mental health issues among Urban refugees in Kampala
4. To evaluate the role and contributions of drug abuse to mental health issues among urban refugees

To evaluate the role and contributions of drug abuse to mental health issues among urban refugees.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to seek solutions and offer recommendations to put under consideration to ensure mental health for urban refugees, especially through the reduction of drug abuse in Uganda. The study reveals that there are several measures that can be put in place to ensure that the urban refugees have healthy mental well-being and there is limited use of drugs in their communities.

The problem of drug abuse and poor mental health are some of the issues that are causing high insecurity in the urban areas. These are in addition to the rampant unemployment and are negatively impacting the socio-economic welfare of the population. The level of access to drugs and their effects on mental health is very high in urban areas.

Policy Recommendations

Addressing the mental health needs of urban refugees in Kampala requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that addresses both the immediate and long-term needs of this vulnerable population. Here are some policy options to consider:

1. **Increase Access to Mental Health Services;** A key policy option is to increase access to mental health services for urban refugees. This could involve investing in mental health clinics and facilities that are specifically designed to serve refugees. Additionally, mental health care should be integrated into existing PHC services
2. **Sensitize health workers;** Training for healthcare workers is essential in order to sensitize them to the unique health needs of refugees. Healthcare providers should be trained on how to identify and treat mental health issues among refugees as well as how to provide culturally appropriate care
3. **Community-based interventions:** Community-based interventions such as support groups, psychosocial counseling and other community-based activities can be effective in addressing mental health issues among urban refugees. Such interventions can be delivered through community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and other local groups.
4. **Addressing the root causes:** Addressing the root causes of mental health problems among urban refugees is another policy option. This could involve improving living conditions, providing access to education and employment opportunities, and addressing issues of discrimination and xenophobia
5. **Advocacy:** Advocacy for the rights of refugees and for the provision of adequate mental health care services is critical. This could involve advocacy at local, national, and international levels to raise awareness about the mental health needs of urban refugees and to mobilize resources to address these needs
6. **Research:** Research into the specific mental health issues of urban refugees in Kampala is also important. This could involve studies to identify the prevalence of mental health issues among urban refugees as well as studies to evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions.

Overall, addressing the mental health needs of urban refugees in Kampala requires a multi-faceted approach that involves a range of policy options. It is essential that policies are developed and implemented in collaboration with urban refugees themselves, in order to ensure that their voices and experiences are taken into account.

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Policy Options for Strengthening Access to Information for Refugees

By Muhindo Innocent Samuel

Abstract

Access to information is a key component of societies and is often protected by laws and policies that guarantee citizens' right to information. This concept also relates to the freedom of speech and press as well as access to education and diverse range of sources that could be used to increase knowledge, make informed decisions, and participate effectively in society. Whereas Uganda has made considerable effort in refugee integration processes, refugees still face challenges in accessing, transmitting and utilizing information. This study found out that refugees in Kiryandongo refugee settlement, by large, rely on non-formal, unstructured channels for information such as through their Refugee Welfare Committees and drive throughs. Whereas urban refugees in areas of Kampala largely rely on cell phones to access information, purchasing and registering a sim card takes to them up to seven weeks. The study therefore notes that there are a number of barriers to access to information for majority refugees residing in Uganda which in turn derails refugees' access to other essential services, hence negating the progress that the country has attained in integrating refugees. To that end, the study recommends a revision of the policy on sim-card registration for refugees, developing multi-lingual resources and designating airtime on radio, specific to addressing refugee concerns.

Introduction

Although Uganda enjoys international acclaim for its open door and integration of refugees into the host communities, these refugees struggle to access the necessary information from different media platforms.

Access to information is the right to seek, receive and impart information held by public bodies (UNESCO, 2021). Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes access to information as an integral part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression. Article 41 of Uganda's constitution emphasizes a citizen's right of access to information in the possession of the state or any other organ or agency of the state except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the state or interfere with the right to the privacy of any other person.

All these definitions are short on strengthening the individual liberties to access any forms of information necessary for the day-to-day lives of refugees like news, edutainment etc. This information can be channelled through different media like radios, TVs, cell phones, etc. The ²Norwegian Refugee Council (2018) noted that although 128 countries including Uganda had ratified access to information-related laws, lack of information about asylum, refugee rights, and available services remained among the top ten challenges faced by refugee youth.

This paper proposes policy options through which refugees can access information through platforms like radio, television, refugee welfare communities, communication audio towers, road drive-throughs and cell phone technologies.

A 2018 refugee status determination by the Norwegian refugee council identified south Sudanese refugees to qualify for prim-facie status in Uganda - when the circumstances in the country that lead to people fleeing are indicative of conditions for refugee status. When these refugees arrive at the reception centre, they are issued with a refugee attestation document after a short interview has been conducted with them. The attestation document is expected to work for two weeks and then the refugees are issued refugee cards. The cards become a pass for refugees to access public services offered in Uganda. The same study confirmed the delayed issuance of refugee identification cards

¹ UNESCO (2021). *Access to Information Laws*. [online] UNESCO. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/access-information-laws> [Accessed 14 Jul. 2022].

² NRC. (2018). *10 challenges of refugee youth*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/august/10-challenges-of-refugee-youth/> [Accessed 5 Aug. 2022].

affects the refugees. Without the ID card, refugees can't own simcards owing to the stringent laws set by Uganda Communications Commission³(UCC) on simcard registration⁴(NRC, 2018).

Section 7 (1) of the guidelines requires a refugee to produce his/her valid identification card or attestation letter from the Office of the Prime Minister before getting a simcard. In cases where the attestation card and refugee id card have been misplaced, no specified time is allocated for refugees to get copies of these documents from OPM. It is after the bureaucratic hustle that refugees can eventually apply for a simcard to be able to make calls, use the internet, etc. In such a situation(s), the refugees are unable to communicate with their relatives promptly.

A 2016⁵ UNHCR report noted that access to stable and fast internet remained a challenge in most rural refugee communities. From the study, 20 percent of the global refugee population can not access the internet because of absent/poor internet connectivity in their settlements. Most refugees spent 1/3 of their disposable income on staying connected to the internet.

Internet penetration in Uganda remains lackluster despite the country hosting large refugee numbers. According to⁶Data Report (2022), Uganda had the most expensive internet per gigabyte (GB) in East Africa at \$2.67. Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda stood at \$2.8863, \$2.18, and \$2.18 for a GB respectively.

Despite these challenges when using cellphone technologies, partners like World Vision and the International Red Cross Society have provided alternative measures to combat limited access to information within the refugee communities.

World Vision runs a⁷mobile journalism (mojo) training aimed at empowering refugee children with mobile journalism skills. The 'MoJos' (mobile journalists) are skilled to gather stories and produce them for newscasts streamed live on Facebook on World Refugee Day 2020 (June 20). Launched in 2019, the program helps refugee children tell their stories using a smartphone. Though innovative, the programme is unreliable because operating a smartphone needs data/internet and reliable connectivity. For this information to be accessed would target an elitist audience with a reliable source of income.

The Uganda Red Cross Society also runs a program dubbed "restoring family links for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda". Under the program, Uganda Red Cross Society volunteers provide phones loaded with airtime to help refugees get in touch with relatives back home or relatives in other settlements⁸(ICRC, 2017).

Although it could be an alternative for refugees without phones to communicate, the large numbers/lines of refugees wishing to communicate through the same phone is challenging because these opportunities to make a call are time bound. There's no flexibility in keeping in touch with a relative or a family member for the refugees to communicate at any time they would wish to.

Partner organizations have also leveraged refugee structures like the refugee welfare councils (RWC). These are local council institutions established with the aid of the government of Uganda and the UNHCR⁹(Sara de Simone, 2022). Before information is passed to the last end consumer, partners

3 UCC. (2020). *Communications Commission Operational Guidelines On Sim Card Registration In Uganda*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ucc.co.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/All-Telecoms.Operational-Guidelines-on-simcard-registration..pdf>.

4 REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION A Study of the Process in Uganda. (n.d.). [online] Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/refugee-status-determination/refugee-status-determination---a-study-of-the-process-in-uganda.pdf> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2022].

5 UNHCR. (2016). Uganda. [online] UNHCR. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uganda.html> [Accessed 14 Jul. 2022].

6 Digital 2022: Uganda — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights (2022). *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*. [online] DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. Available at: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-uganda> [Accessed 20 Jul. 2022].

7 Wvi.org. (2020). *World Vision empowers refugee children with mobile journalism skills*. [online] Available at: <https://www.wvi.org/stories/uganda/world-vision-empowers-refugee-children-mobile-journalism-skills> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2022].

8 ICRC. (2017). *Helping South Sudanese refugees in Uganda find their families*. [online] International Committee of the Red Cross. Available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/uganda-south-sudan-refugees-family-reunite-conflict-help> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2022].

9 Sara de Simone. (2022). *Refugee Welfare Councils as Spaces of Local Citizenship Production: The Case of Adjumani District, Uganda*. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, [online] 22(1), pp.33–52. Available at: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/854341#:~:text=The%20Refugee%20Welfare%20Councils,Sudanese%20refugees%20crossed%20the%20border.> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2022].

engage the RWCs who then disseminate the information by word of mouth and use of megaphones, road drives, and communication audio towers (CATs).

In most cases, megaphones, and communication audio towers are used to announce food distribution, communicate about campaigns, etc. To communicate with members of the settlements, English, Dinka, Nuer, Juba-Arabic, and other local languages are used.

However, accessing information is also complicated because those within the proximity of the CATs are uncomfortable with the noise from the blaring sound speakers; while the restricted evening and afternoon broadcasts make them an unreliable source of information.

¹⁰I can south Sudan uses radios like NTC radio in Nimule south Sudan to broadcast to some sections of the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement. The organization majorly uses the radio for advocacy and sensitization about the new programs being implemented. If there was a radio located in the west Nile region, the hardship of flying or travelling by Road to south Sudan would be addressed. In Kiryandongo, partners pay for sponsored programmes on Kibanda FM to get to the refugees. When the sponsorship expires, no refugee-tailored broadcasts are made yet radio remains the most reliable source of information in Uganda.

¹¹ According to the Uganda Media Landscape Report 2019, radio in Uganda enjoys a 78 percent penetration despite a meager below 50 percent of the radio listeners becoming actual radio owners. With the deep-rooted cases of patriarchy, 98 percent of the men listened to radio against 68 percent of the women. This could be blamed on the characteristic of the African woman who is the 'unsung head' of most African homes. Radio enjoys a good place as a reliable media tool because it is portable, affordable, and easy to sustain.

Radio stations in refugee-hosting districts serve the interests of the host communities without incorporating the interests of the refugees. Most broadcasts are in Uganda local languages yet the refugees form a good number of the current population. If the receiver can not understand messages broadcast over the different radios, the actualization of dreams becomes an improbable dream in their 'new home'. Limited access to information is a major barrier to innovation and transformative change in humanitarian action. The challenges of language used in communication eventually frustrate employment, access to medication, and also socialization among refugee communities ¹²(Ugah, 2007).

Although the digital revolution is over 25 years old, a connected refugee population would unleash innovation in areas such as communicating with displaced persons, responding to their security needs, and getting humanitarian services to them. It would improve their lives and transform humanitarian operations (UNHCR, 2016).

Information to both refugees and humanitarian agencies is the most crucial guide to informed decision-making. Refugees with information can stay clear of any possibilities of self-repatriation without sufficient information on the state of affairs in their home countries. Accessing information facilitates refugees' human right to information and, by extension, assists them in adapting to and better understanding unfamiliar information landscapes, building information and personal resilience, forging social trust, and transitioning into new communities¹³ (Kosciejew, 2019).

¹⁰ I Can. (2021). *I CAN SOUTH SUDAN*. [online] I CAN SOUTH SUDAN. Available at: <https://www.icansouthsudan.com/> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2022].

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¹³ Kosciejew, M. (2019). *Information's Importance for Refugees: Information Technologies, Public Libraries, and the Current Refugee Crisis*. *The Library Quarterly*, 89(2), pp.79–98. doi:10.1086/702193.

Findings

Data collection was carried out from refugees residing in both the rural settlements -Kiryandongo refugee settlement and those in urban areas like Kampala.

Sources of information for rural & urban refugees

What is your most reliable source of information

15 responses

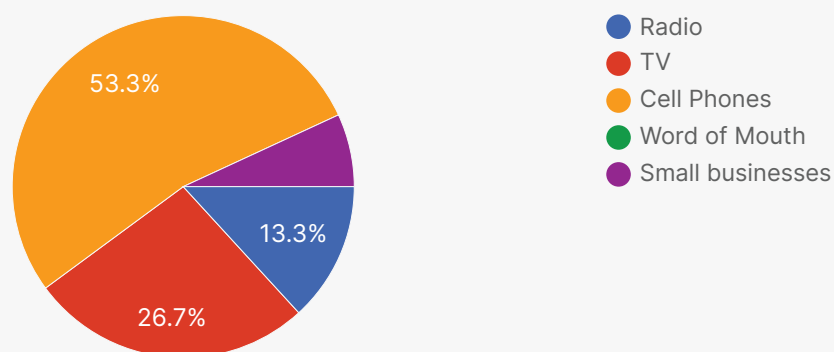


Figure 1 Source of information for urban refugees

Community structures drive Through RADIO

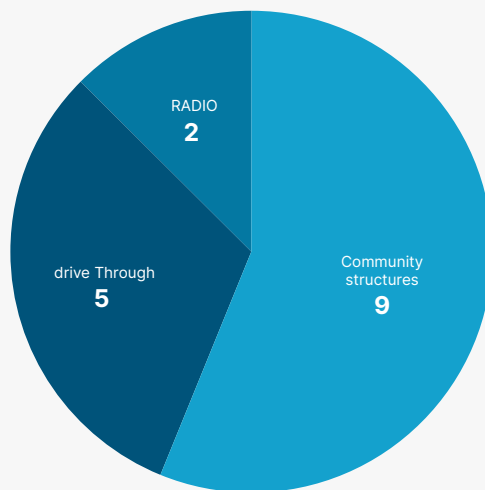


Figure 2 Source of information for Refugees in rural areas

From figures 1 and 2, there was a clear disparity in the most reliable sources of information used by the rural and urban refugees. The refugees in Kiryandongo refugees settlement relied on community structures (Refugee Welfare Communities) as the major source of information and reliable channel for communication.

Through interviews, it was established that information in most cases was transmitted from the Refugee Welfare Communities (RWCs) at level 3 down to level 1 at the grassroots. The RWCs are a replica of the local community leadership used in Uganda.

It was established that any form of information received, is shared by word of mouth, especially through the women representatives in the 17 different clusters of the settlement. The argument was that the women had a neat connection with the communities, and also because they kept in close contact with the other local community structures. Though reliable, oral communication has limitations like poor retention, time consumption when talking to large numbers, it is imprecise, high probable chances of misunderstanding information etc.¹⁴ (Geektonight.com, 2022)

However, for partners that have money to fuel a van to make drive-throughs, more people could be reached through this means of communication. Drive-throughs are used during the validation of refugees in the settlements and the distribution of assistance to the refugees. For a reliable and consistent information source, drive-throughs become expensive due to the cost associated with powering the vehicle and the cost of hiring speakers to broadcast the information.

Although radio is highly acclaimed as the most reliable means of communication in Uganda, it is highly ineffective in refugee-hosting communities. Most programming on Kibanda radio and VCC FM in Kiryandongo is in the local languages of Runyoro, Acholi etc. Any refugee-serving programmes are paid for programmes. Without radio access, it means most of the information relied upon by refugees comes through second or third parties most especially by word of mouth whose limitations to the quality of information have been highlighted. With the majority of the radios privately owned, media liberalization as argued by¹⁵ (baugkinjal2000, 2020) has caused media practices to shift from public service to business enterprise.

Although these can argue to be private institutions, private radio owners have a social responsibility to maintain relaying necessary information to a certain section of society like refugees. Radio proprietors and managers have the obligation to proper custody, care and safekeeping of their audience. Social responsibility entails the necessity for the media to keep society's interest as a top priority.¹⁶ (Middleton, 2009).

Cellphone Technologies, Radio and TVs

As seen in Figure 2, urban refugees relied on phones as their main sources of information at 53.3 percent through connection to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. This could be attributed to the increased internet coverage and increased penetration of affordable smartphones in urban areas. From the data, it is easy to notice the preference for TV over the radio as a more reliable source of information for urban refugees. This is because most urban refugees are in gainful employment and can afford to eke a living to pay for data, Pay-TV and also service electricity bills. This is unlike their counterparts in rural settlements like Kiryandongo.

¹⁴ Geektonight.com. (2022). [online] Available at: <https://www.geektonight.com/oral-communication/> [Accessed 26 Nov. 2022].

¹⁵ baugkinjal2000 (2020). *Effects of Liberalization on Media*. [online] *Legal Desire*. Available at: <https://legaldesire.com/effects-of-liberalization-on-media/> [Accessed 12 Nov. 2022].

¹⁶ Middleton, M. (2009). *Social Responsibility in the Media*. [online] Available at: http://www.mediafutureweek.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/SR_media1.pdf.

How long did it take for you obtain a Simcard?

16 responses

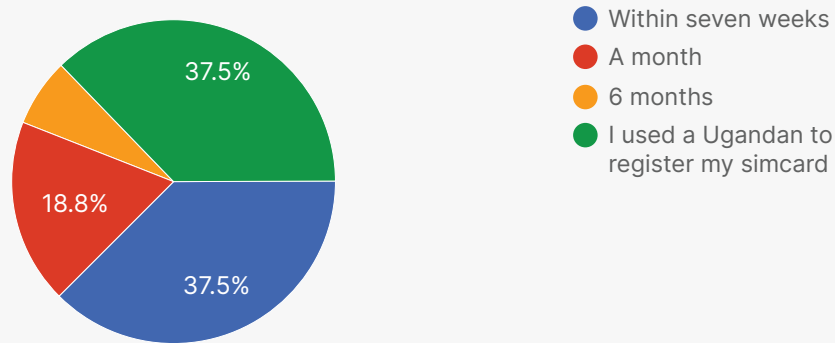


Figure 3 Period to acquire a simcard

Although cell phones were considered the most reliable sources of information for urban refugees, most refugees faced challenges acquiring simcards. For a process expected to take less than 30 minutes, refugees waited for as long as 7 weeks to own a Simcard. The majority agreed that the unwinding and tedious simcard acquisition process had pushed them to get a Ugandan with a national ID to register the Simcard under their names (names of a Ugandan).

What is the most convenient network for communication

15 responses



Figure 4 The most convenient network service provider

Several respondents claimed that they chose to enrol the services of a Ugandan to register their simcard because simcards registered with a refugee identification card would then be blocked by the network operator after a certain period without prior communication of the reasons for the simcards to be blocked. Network Operator, Airtel Uganda Limited was accused of constantly blocking simcards registered under the Refugee Identification card. This pushed the refugees to mostly rely on MTN as the only network service provider.

In a duopolized market in the context of Uganda, users need to be protected from the excesses of network operators like Airtel. Although Lycamobile could have formed a necessary alternative as a network operator, the cost of their simcards for refugees is exorbitant. “Although lycamobile simcards

cost approximately Shs 15,000, refugees are charged an extra Shs 5,000 for the same card. The vendors cite the very long procedure for the OPM systems to validate a refugee identification card during registration for a simcard”.

The complicated simcard acquisition regime denies refugees the right to communicate with families back home, access the internet; access mobile money services yet financial assistance is now shared via mobile money replacing food and material handouts.

Recommendations

Uganda Communications Commission should direct all radio operators in Kiryandongo and other designated refugee hosting districts to have specific programming dedicated to refugees. This would be in tandem with function (C) of the commission which is to allocate, license, standardize and manage the use of the radio frequency spectrum resources in a manner that ensures the widest variety of programming and optimal utilization of spectrum resource ¹⁷(UCC,2019).

Under programming, the commission could then task the radio operators to have these broadcasts made in the local languages of the refugees like Dinka, Nuer etc. This would ensure that refugees just like the host communities have timely and adequate access to information. Although This would be in fulfillment of the media’s social responsibility role to society. Sponsored coverage of information that is a public good becomes financially unsustainable in both the short and long run. Information is a public good.

UCC should advocate for the establishment of a centralized interconnected database between the commission, ministry of internal affairs, the office of the Prime Minister and ¹⁸NIRA. This shall weed out the bureaucracies that delay the issuance of simcards to refugees. It shall save refugees from exorbitant charges before acquiring a simcard. A centralized simcard acquisition database shall enable refugees to communicate seamlessly without compromising national security.

All partners involved in the management of refugees in Uganda should commit to ensuring that refugee settlement areas have community radios with a limited frequency within the confines of the settlement area. Humanitarian community radio stations have been very effective in transmitting information to the different refugee communities spread around south Sudan. For refugees to rely on these community radios as the prime source of information, broadcasts should be made in local languages with all the information tailored to satisfy the desires of the refugees from a media house. The successful operations of Nile FM (Internews radio) in South Sudan have proven that community radio can be an incredibly valuable tool to support a community in crisis into the recovery and re-development phase ¹⁹(Internews, 2021).

¹⁷ Ucc.co.ug. (2019). *Policies and Regulations – UCC: Uganda Communications Commission*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ucc.co.ug/policies-and-regulations/> [Accessed 27 Nov. 2022].

¹⁸ Nira.go.ug. (2022). *NIRA | National Identification & Registration Authority*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nira.go.ug/home> [Accessed 27 Nov. 2022].

¹⁹ *Information Saves Lives | Internews*. (2021). *Humanitarian Community Radio Stations - Information Saves Lives | Internews*. [online] Available at: <https://internews.org/areas-of-expertise/humanitarian/approaches/humanitarian-community-radio-stations/> [Accessed 27 Nov. 2022].

Minorities Among the Minority: Understanding the Trajectories Towards the Social Integration of People with Disabilities Among Refugees in Uganda

By Nakazibwe Clare

Uganda Technology and Management University Abstract

List of Acronyms

CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
CRRF:	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
NGOs:	Non-governmental Organizations
PWD:	People with Disabilities
PWB:	Psychological Well-being
PTS:	Posttraumatic Diagnostic Stress
PSO:	Public Service Standing Orders
REHOPE:	Refuge and Host Population Empowerment Framework
SPANES:	Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences
SRS:	Self-Reliance Strategy
VHTs:	Village Health Teams

Abstract

This paper seeks to understand the status of people with disabilities (PWD) among refugees, and the trajectories surrounding their social integration. The paper thoroughly analyzes the challenges faced by PWD among refugees from a developing country's point of view. An investigation is done to thoroughly understand the social integration process of PWD among refugees, while looking deeply into the determinants of discrimination/exclusion for these minorities within the minority. This study is done on the premise that there is currently no study known that investigates this casualty. The study applies a qualitative approach, under which six (06) focus group discussions are held involving a total of fifty-six (56) participants randomly selected from two refugee settlement camps; Palorinya and Nakivale. The data collected is analyzed using a thematic analysis. The results of this study indicate that minority groups among refugees face more challenges during the integration process compared to the rest of the refugee population. The study uncovers the significance of the local community leaders towards zero discrimination of the minority within the minorities. The study further uncovers the significance of awareness creation, sensitization, and whistle blower protection for the successful integration in the refugee communities.

Keywords: Minorities, Refugees, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Exclusion, Uganda

Introduction

Refugees with disabilities are among the most socially and economically marginalized groups in society today, they are often denied civil rights, equal access and protection. People with disabilities are categorized into two; those with visible disabilities such as Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, stroke, Tourette syndrome and those with invisible disabilities such as; hearing impairments, visual impairments, pain and psychosocial disability (Goodley, 2017). Besides the hardships faced as People with Disabilities (PWD), refugees with disabilities still experience all the other hitches confronted by all refugees. Traversing life as a disabled refugee requires bravery and resilience especially in developing countries where either less or totally no attention is given to them. There are many government programs and non-government organizations aimed at the rehabilitation and empowerment of People with Disabilities, but very few of them integrate disabled refugees into their work, and this makes them a fundamentally forgotten group. Refugees in Uganda are formally settled in the eleven refugee settlement camps, whilst many of them are spread across the different host communities, some of which are located in the urban slums.

As Uganda continues to carry the region's refugee burden, as the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and in the third position globally after Turkey and Colombia (UNHCR, 2021), the country has recently come under scrutiny over the continuous exclusion of minority groups among refugees. While the country hosts refugees from across the region, over the years the highest influx has been from the neighboring countries like South Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Uganda is party to most of the main refugee protection international legal instrument such as; the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 Organization of the African Union Refugee Convention (Betts, 2021).

Uganda has over the years focused on making refugees a development issue which the international community has continued to applaud through three closely related initiatives reframed under different abbreviations; Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) 1999 - 2003, Refuge and Host Population Empowerment Framework (ReHOPE) 2015, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) 2017. Despite all these initiatives, the marginalization of specific minority groups among refugees is making this development unachievable. As per the UN Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, development can only be achieved where there is inclusivity. While the government of Uganda is

scoring in all areas of refugee work, the exclusion of specific minority groups among refugees at the policy formulation stage is more likely to stagnate the refugee self-reliance model and the overall integration process.

In 2016, the government of Uganda embarked on implementing a new policy 'self-reliance' which offers an alternative to refugee settlements and supports the economic independence of refugees, thereby empowering them to live without aid. Under this policy, refugees in Uganda have the right to work and move freely. It was partly because of this policy that Uganda was ranked as one of the best countries to be a refugee. The positivity associated with this policy has been; improved mobility, reduced transaction costs for economic activities, increased refugee income for self-sustenance and reduced over dependence on AID. A question still remains about the conditions under which this policy works and for whom?

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that Uganda has continued to be applauded for its open-door refugee policy (UN, 2019), a lot still lies underneath, such as; the marginalization of the disabled and other minority groups among refugees which affects their integration process, the recurring conflicts between refugees and the host communities, the limited international Aid and the prolonged refugee situations due to the continuous high influx fueled by conflicts in the African Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

In Uganda, refugees with disabilities live at the margins of life, disabled women are often at risk of sexual exploitation, the aged disabled are at a risk of dying from manageable chronic illnesses while disabled children are at a risk of being injured/harmed due to neglect and abuse.

This study seeks to understand the challenges surrounding the successful integration of refugee with disabilities alongside other minority groups among refugees in two Uganda's refugee settlement camps; Palorinya and Nakivale in Moyo and Rwamwanja districts respectively.

Research Objective

This study sought to understand the challenges encountered by People with Disabilities (PWD) among refugees in Uganda and how this affects their integration process.

Research Question

What are the challenges faced by PWD among refugees in Uganda, and how do these challenges affect their integration process?

Literature Review

Wagley and Harris (1958) cite out five characteristics that distinguish minority groups; involuntary group membership, subordination awareness, unequal treatment, distinguished physical traits and increased rates of in-group marriages. As refugees in Uganda, gender and sexual minorities tend to face extreme violation of their rights and continuous social exclusion from the communities in which they seek refuge. Gender and sexual minorities among refugees are one of the minority groups that have faced the wrath of Covid-19 in Africa in the recent years. Besides the continuous exclusion and marginalization, these groups of people have continued to be intensified, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Nyanzi, 2013; Camminga, 2021). It is however worse for refugees with multiple vulnerabilities, such as a sexual minority with a disability.

The citizenship approach has created a lot of pressure in liberal democracies between concerns for equality and the accommodation of both cultural and religious diversity. In the recent years, there has been a growing concern about the integration of migrants and refugees into; (i) settlement camps, (ii) host communities, (iii) among fellow refugees; especially the minority groups among refugees. In Nordic countries, issues surrounding the exclusion and inclusion of specific individuals due to the social group they belong to, have to a larger extent been addressed. In developing countries however, the question of who is included and who is excluded significantly remains, there is still a big debate about who decides upon which group of individuals is to be 'inside' the national communities and which group is to be left 'outside' (Siim, 2013; Kraus & Kivisto, 2015; Frank, 2019). Disabled refugees have continued to face a huge barrier to resettlement, a number of countries have continued to decline asylum to refugees with disabilities despite the continuous intervention by Civil Society Organizations. In Australia, a question of how much the country is likely to spend on a disabled person is cited as a cause for rejection (Soldatic et al., 2017).

On settling in Uganda, refugees decide to join several communities and associations most of which are nationality based, for instance Congolese Community in Uganda, Somali Community in Uganda, as a form of social protection by the group membership. The significance of these communities diverges according to refugees' stay duration, employment, and the reasons for flight. Under these umbrella groups, there are shared leisure activities, shared local space and an overall interaction. It is unfortunate however, that different minorities are still widely discriminated against, among these communities. This causes them lack of affiliation and in the long run emotional distress (Sinclair & Sinatti, 2022). There is thick trust within specific minority groups among refugees yet on the other hand, the majority and minority refugees remain largely divided. It is this that has given way to social exclusion and horizontal inequalities within refugee communities making it hard for the marginalized groups to access the same level social support as the rest of the refugees (Lippert-Rasmussen & Laegaard, 2020).

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach, under which in-depth phone interviews were conducted involving a total of sixty-five (65) participants randomly selected from two settlement camps (Palorinya and Nakivale). The study with the help of the refugee service desk officers only recruited participants who had held refugee status in Uganda for no less than three years. New entrants were excluded because they had not lived in the settlements long enough to share their life experiences.

Forty-four (44) refugees with at least one (visible or invisible) disability, and twelve (12) refugees without any disability were randomly selected from the two settlements, whilst nine (09) refugee service providers and stakeholders were also selected for in-depth interviews. These included; Officials from the district local government (Moyo and Isingiro), OPM refugee desk officers, a UNHCR official and individuals from Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The data collected was analyzed using a thematic analysis.

Findings

The study found out that PWD who at the same time fall under other minority groups (disabled and a sexual minority, disabled and elderly, disabled and living with a chronic disease) are more at risk of being socially and economically excluded, compared to those with only a disability as their only vulnerability. This exclusion originates from fellow refugees, the host communities and some humanitarian service providers.

The study further found out that the magnitude of exclusion/discrimination differs according to the specific minority group a PWD identifies with. PWD who identify as sexual minorities were identified as the most at-risk population in the two settlement camps (Palorinya and Nakivale) in focus. This was largely attributed to the discriminative government policies, the limited awareness in the communities, and lack of data about specific minority groups in the refugee settings, upon which to inform policy. The government of Uganda, under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), periodically compiles and update data about refugees in the country (their numbers, age group, education level, and many more) but data intentionally excludes any information about sexual and gender minorities.

Among the barriers hindering PWD among refugees from achieving their full potential is; the inadequate/inappropriate health care services and the continuous disparities between demand and supply of service. During the observation, the sanitation facilities in Palorinya were found to be very poor and unfavorable to PWD, especially those who lack wheel chairs and have to use their hands for mobility. It was due to this that diseases arising from the use of poor sanitation facilities are more prevalent among PWD compared to the rest of the refugee population. Such diseases included; intestinal worm infections as reported by the Nurses at Ibakwe Health Centre II in Palorinya refugee settlement camp and candidiasis, recurring diarrhea and typhoid as reported by the Village Health Teams (VHTs) in Nakivale settlement camp.

Refugee women with disabilities were also found to be more at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, compared to the rest of the population, and this was largely attributed to rape on transit prior to arrival and in the communities in which they are settled upon arrival. The research findings further show that under age (below 18 years) refugee girls with at least a disability were more prone to being sexually molested than their counter parts within the same age group but without a disability. This is largely attributed to the low bargaining power, low self-esteem and the fact that many of them are rejected by their families due to the disability and therefore left to fend for themselves hence the vulnerability.

The research findings further show that PWD who are also sexual minorities are the least group of minorities in Uganda's refugee communities. This is attributed to two factors; (i) the extreme marginalization from all angles towards this particular category of minorities which forces them opt out of the camps and spread into the different host communities, while others opt for onward migration to countries with better (inclusive) policies where they can be protected; (ii) they opt not to come out due to discrimination. The discrimination associated with being an LGBTI in Uganda and the criminalization of the act makes it worse for a PWD who also identifies as an LGBTI, this has forced many to keep in the closet or flee the settlements, hence their low numbers in the two settlement camps in focus.

In order to understand the psychiatric wellbeing of the minorities among refugees, the study applied the use of different psychometric scales, in order to understand minority group's selfperceived functioning focusing on three main areas; relationships, self-esteem and purpose in order to understand their psychological well-being. Three psychometric scales were adapted; Psychological Well-being (PWB), Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPAN) and Posttraumatic Diagnostic Stress (PTS). The measurements were made basing on; feelings (positive and negative), self-acceptance, optimism, competence, relationships, contributing to the well-being of others and being respected.

The study identified that PWD alongside other minority groups among refugees are more prone to psychiatric disorders than the rest of the refugee population. The most prevalent psychiatric disorders in Palorinya and Nakivale were; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder among many others, this is majorly attributed to the trauma associated with the different stages of the migration process, and the several post migration challenges which press the minorities more, than the rest of the refugee population. The study findings highlight the fact that Pre-migration

Trauma Exposure and Post-migration Stressors as the main causes of invisible disabilities are most common among refugees in Palorinya who mainly migrate from South Sudan, whilst physical disabilities are more common among refugees in Nakivale who migrate mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). If not dealt with, such feelings lead to self-rejection and rejection of others, self-harm and harming others, physical violence as well as suicidal thoughts. Despite the fact that there are healthcare professionals in every health Centre attached to a settlement camp, this study discovered that none of these has at least a psychiatrist nurse. This poses a big havoc to refugees in need of psychiatric attention.

Recommendations

In order to overcome the exclusion, marginalization and victimization of PWD among refugees, there is need to sensitize and create awareness among the communities in which these minorities dwell. With the involvement of all key stakeholders, such as the District Local Governments, International NGOs and Local CBOs, advocacy for awareness and socio-economic inclusion of all minorities should be prioritized. During this study, it was identified that most communities reject/discriminate the minority among refugees because of the myths surrounding their existence.

Given the fact that most of the refugee settlements in Uganda are located in rural settings, where the local population has had very little exposure to people different from them, and have very strong beliefs (myths) rooted deep in culture about specific minority groups, rejection due to the fear of the unknown, cannot be ruled out as one of the main causes of discrimination of the minority within refugees, and a prolonged integration process.

This study therefore suggests awareness creation and sensitization in Uganda's refugee host communities as a way of overcoming discrimination/marginalization of minority groups among refugees (of which PWD) are inclusive in order to ease the integration process and create harmony within these communities.

This study further highlights the need for all stakeholders and refugee service providers in Uganda to establish a specialized approach to service delivery, considering the fact that different groups of people have different needs. Basing on the study findings, PWD have got different need depending on the type and extent of the disability (such as the aged refugees with at least one physical disability, disabled women with underlying chronic illnesses, disabled persons who are also sexual minorities, among many others) hence different needs, which calls for specialized approach of service delivery, in accordance with the type and extent of the disability hence overcoming service misappropriation.

In order to overcome the recurring threats surrounding PWD among refugees, there is need to impose strict penalties against those who abuse and violate human rights. For instance; those who sexually molest/rape women with disabilities, those that discriminate against the disabled and at the same time elderly, as well as those who are discriminative of PWD and living with chronic diseases like HIV.

One of the identified key obstacles to minority groups' protection in refugee communities was delayed justice, yet for some crimes the longer it takes for justice to prevail, the less likely it may be served 'Justice Delayed is Justice Denied'. Some of the delayed but overly sensitive cases identified by this study were; rape, physical violence, and verbal abuse towards PWD. This however can be overcome by establishing a constant monitoring structure in the refugee communities in order to identify cases committed against minorities and taking immediate action.

The study proposes the need to protect Whistle-blowers in refugee communities. This can be done by establishing channels through which people can report any forms of violence committed against them

or anyone else anonymously. Alternatively, measures can be established through which people who report perpetrators in communities can be protected. By doing this, there will be a reduction in crime rates, hence improved security.

There is need to create Human Rights awareness among refugees and the host communities as a way of ensuring human rights restoration and reducing crime rates in the settlements.

There is need for health service providers working in refugee settings to adhere to the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders (PSO) code of ethics which advocates for confidentiality and secrecy. Penalties should be put in place to inflict any health service care professional who goes against the PSO and the set patient confidentiality rule. This will tackle the problem of the low turn up some minorities at health centers in refugee settlements due to discrimination and mistrust.

There is need to remove attitudinal, systemic, physical and communication barriers for all minority groups among refugees, especially PWD as a way of giving them an equal ground upon which to showcase their ability. There is need for the Ministry of Health to recruit at least one psychiatric nurse at every Health Centre II located within the refugee settings. This will help to cater for the huge psychiatric care demands in the refugee camps. The current prevailing health iniquities will be reduced through addressing the refugees' most common health needs.

Access to information should be categorized as a basic need for all people residing and working in the host communities and the settlement camps, because it is through information that people become aware of the existence of people that differ from them (minorities) and how they can amicably live together.

Community leaders can periodically organize leisure and recreation activities through which refugees can interact with the local people from the host community as a way of creating unity, togetherness and bonding for successful integration. This can possibly be done through music, drama and dance competitions or games and sports.

Conclusion

In summary, social and economic inclusion/integration of minority groups among refugees in Uganda is achievable. While more attention ought to be drawn onto community leaders as key players towards the attainment of zero tolerance to minority groups' discrimination; sensitization and awareness creation within the host population should not be ignored.

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Reception of Asylum Seekers and Relocation of Refugees in Uganda: Processes and Challenges

By Sarah Aharimpisya

List of Acronyms

BIMS:	Biometric Identity Management System
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
OAU:	Organization of African Unity
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
CRRF:	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and
GCR:	Global Compact on Refugees
MI:	Malteser International
MSF:	Medecins Sans Frontieres
MTI:	Medical Teams International (MTI),
NRC:	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC),
TNRC:	Netherlands Red Cross,
TPO:	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Executive Summary

This policy brief explores the processes involved in the Reception of Asylum seekers and the Relocation of Refugees in Uganda, the challenges associated and lessons learned. This study was motivated by the increased refugee influx from DRC in the past months and was conducted at Nyakabande Transit Centre in Kisoro District. The researcher used qualitative methodology consisting of key informant interviews and literature review. Data was collected from Key informants at the Transit Centre and within the district.

Two key findings emerged from this study. First, there are a number of processes asylum seekers go through to attain a refugee status right from reception at the border. New arrivals are taken through biometric registration to filter out recyclers from the new arrivals and this is done using Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS). The new arrivals/asylum seekers proceed to the security screening committee where there are hard copy forms that OPM interpreters fill and sign the form on behalf of asylum seekers. Secondly, there are many challenges that humanitarian workers are facing in refugee operations at transit centres such as relocation resistance which is a new norm that has grown among new arrivals, pendulum movements from DRC which are a security threat to the country. In an attempt to address the challenges associated with reception of asylum seekers and the relocation of refugees at the Transit centre, this policy brief recommends, i) Extensive sensitization of new arrivals to bridge the misinformation gap that is in existence about Settlements. ii) Giving new arrivals settlement options to choose from backed with information and experiences from their own people that have lived in settlements and those that are urban refugees.

Introduction

Uganda is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and one of the top five refugee hosting countries in the world. This has been attributed to its longstanding open-door refugee policy. As of 30th November 2021, Uganda hosts over 1.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia.

Uganda is signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol which protects refugees from being returned to countries where they risk being persecuted and to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Uganda has proactively pursued and nationally implemented these laws. The rights of refugees are enshrined in Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulations. Article 44, (1) (a & b) of the 2006 Refugee Act allows the establishment of Transit centres and refugee settlements on public land in Uganda where refugees are integrated in settlements within host communities and have access to basic and social services on par with Ugandan nationals. According to the Uganda Refugee Act of 2006, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Department of Refugees is the government Ministry responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees such as protection and access to territory and asylum procedures in Uganda in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Refugees entering Uganda are received at the entry border points and are taken to transit centres and later to settlements. Transit centres are used as temporary shelters for new arrivals to provide short-term temporary accommodation for displaced populations pending transfer to a more suitable, safe and longer-term settlement.

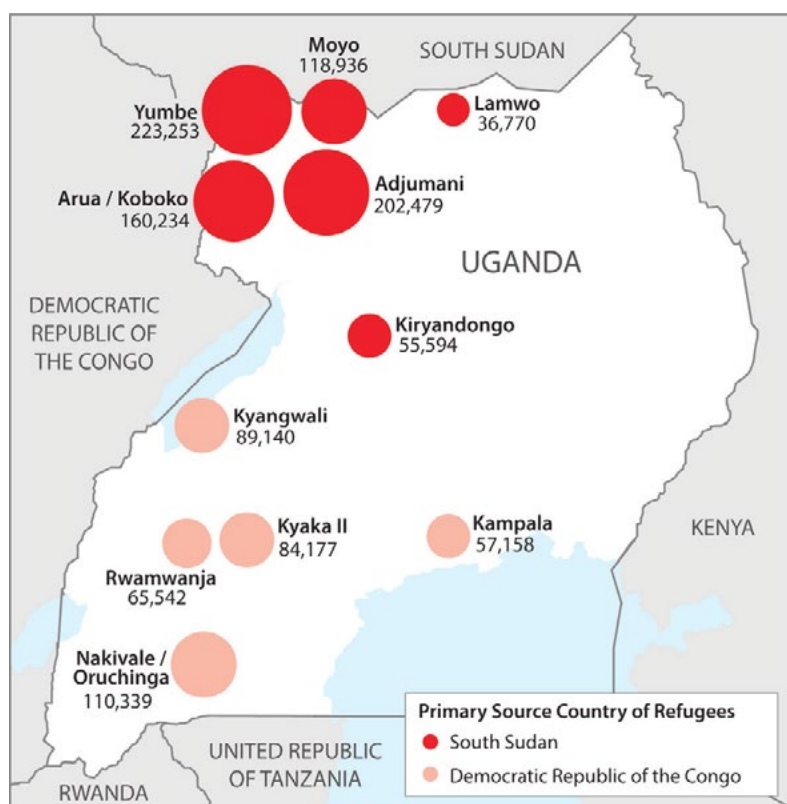
Uganda has a number of transit centres that were established in different years and collection points. In South Western Uganda, refugees pass through Nyakabande TC (1994), Matanda (2008) and Bubukwanga (2013). Refugees arriving in Uganda through the West Nile region pass through Dzaipi TC (2014), Palabak

TC (2017), Nyumanzi TC (2014), Pagirinya TC and Ocea TC. There are a number of collection and border points which include; Ngom Oromo, AwenoOlwiyo, Madi Opei, Waligo Entry points, Elegu Collection Point, Kuluba Collection Point, Oraba, Busia border point Refugees arriving at the Transit Centre (unless they have been involved directly in fighting or do not qualify for asylum for other reasons) are granted prima facie refugee status by the Government of Uganda.

With regard to the obligation to register and document all refugees and asylum seekers within its borders, the Government launched the Refugee Information Management System (RIMS). This was mainly in compliance to the requirements of the Registration of Persons Act, which was passed by Parliament in February 2015

Over 80% of refugees are hosted in districts in the North and South-Western regions in 13 settlements that were established in different years (Adjumani(1994), Bidibidi (2016), Imvepi (2017), Kiryandongo (1990), Kyaka II (2015), Kyangwali (1960s), Lobule (2013), Nakivale (1960), Oruchinga (1961), Palabek (2017), Palorinya (2016), Rhino Camp (1980) and Rwamwanja (1964), in addition to the urban refugees in the capital Kampala. The Nakivale refugee settlement formed and established in 1960 in Southwestern Uganda is the oldest refugee camp in Africa.

Map of Uganda Showing Refugee Settlements in Uganda



Source: ResearchGate

Refugees live in villages known as settlements, where they co-exist with communities that host them. This approach, combined with progressive refugee laws and freedoms, provide refugees in Uganda with significant prospects for dignity and self-reliance. Uganda implements the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), emphasizing the inclusion of refugees into national systems, particularly in the education, health and livelihoods sectors.

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains unpredictable due to the intensified armed conflicts between the Congolese army and the revived M23 rebel movement in the North-Kivu province, coupled with increased insecurity that has resulted in an unprecedented number of Congolese citizens seeking protection in Uganda through the Bunagana border in Kisoro District. Thus, Nyakabande Transit Centre in Kisoro District is the busiest transit centre in Uganda at the moment. Nyakabande has acted as a transit centre for both returning and arriving refugees since its opening in 1994 for Rwandese fleeing due to genocide.

As of August 2022, out of the estimated 42,723 new arrivals received in Kisoro since 28th March, 13,923 individuals have been relocated to settlements, 11,696 are spontaneous departures from the holding area and transit centre, while 16,697 are still living in the two locations. The holding capacity at Nyakabande transit centre, Kisoro district, is overstretched by over 100 per cent. Its initial capacity is 7,200 but the center currently hosts 16,697 individuals. Currently the refugees arriving at Nyakabande TC are taken to Nakivale refugee settlement for long term assistance. According to UNHCR as of 31st October 2022, a total of 24,584 people had been relocated to Nakivale Refugee Settlement since fighting broke out in eastern DRC on 28th March 2022.

There are many humanitarian organizations offering support through different services to the asylum seekers at Nyakabande Transit Centre. Care and Assistance for Forced Migrants (CAFOMI) is the major implementing partner that is managing the general operations of Nyakabande TC. However there are many other organizations offering humanitarian support and these include, OPM, UNHCR, ACORD, CO-ACT, AIRD, ALIGHT, CARE, Child Fund International, Friends of Kisoro, Humanity and Inclusion, ICRC, JAM, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Malteser International, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Medical Teams International (MTI), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Reach Initiative of Impact, Save the Children International, The Netherlands Red Cross, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), Uganda 2040, Uganda Red Cross Society, UN Women, UNFPA, War Child and WFP. Each of these has a different role that it plays at the transit center.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research methodology consisting of in-depth interviews and observation. The interview guide consisted of questions relating to the process of receiving asylum seekers and relocation of refugees, challenges faced by humanitarian workers lessons they have learned in refugee operations. Data from key informants at the transit Centre and within the district was obtained and analyzed using thematic content analysis which allowed the researcher to identify common themes such as topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly.

The study was limited by a number of factors such as limited access to all key stakeholders as some were not willing to share information because of the data policies of the organizations they are working with and it also being a transit Centre and collecting data during an influx, some humanitarian workers were extremely busy and we could not have face to face interviews but had them on phone. There is inadequate literature about the process of receiving asylum seekers and relocating refugees in Uganda.

Research Findings

Reception at the border

Brett Moore (2017), asserts that factors for a refugee settlement to thrive, rather than merely to exist, are rarely explicit and easily determined, nor are they stable, but a resilient refugee community will

invest in a settlement if enabling factors such as their legal status, security of tenure and economic opportunity exist. With this, the reception of asylum seekers in Uganda starts at the border where they cross over in quest for a refugee status. They are received by security personnel when there is an influx or they are received by immigration officers if the numbers are not so many, who do security screening. Medical Teams International (MTI) takes them through hand washing, temperature testing and other partners like CAFOMI and URCS sensitize asylum seekers on where they are to be taken. They are then loaded in buses and trucks that are provided by AIRD/UNHCR to Nyakabande Transit Centre that is approximately 20kilometers from Bunagana border where they are supposed to spend 3 days only. But sometimes the process of registration takes more than 3 days but cannot go on for more than 2 weeks. The refugee Act of 2006, states that no refugee, asylum seeker is allowed to remain within 50kms of the border of a country they are purportedly fleeing from.

Reception at the Transit Centre

Upon arrival at the transit Centre, asylum seekers are head counted by the major implementing partners to ascertain the number of new arrivals received. They are sensitized about the services offered at the transit Centre and how they are supposed to peacefully co-exist with fellow refugees and the host community members among others. They are then taken through manual/level 1 registration where they are given a coupon/meal card that will enable them access other services offered by various partners but also that card helps them access biometric registration which is done by OPM and UNHCR. After registration, personnel from MTI ask the refugees to wash their hands, check their temperature, test them for COVID 19 and do nutrition screening for children below 5 years, pregnant mothers and breastfeeding mothers. The asylum seekers are also vaccinated against tetanus (which is compulsory for all women between 15-49 years), measles (for children below 5 years), polio (children less than 15 years) and deworming.

CAFOMI gives the asylum seekers Non-Food Items such as plates, cups, mats, blankets, buckets, soap, sanitary kits and mosquito nets and are settled into the sleeping shelters. They are given 3 hot meals each day (breakfast, lunch and supper). They prepare for them posho, rice, beans, peas, vegetables such as cabbages, tomatoes and onions, oil and salt are also added in their food. All people who come as asylum seekers receive these services. During manual registration, unaccompanied minors, the elderly, the sick, the pregnant mothers, single women are identified and further sensitized to make use of the services offered various by partners. Services such as psychosocial support, counseling, phone call services and initiation of family reunification.

OPM and UNHCR takes new arrivals through biometric registration to filter out recyclers from the new arrivals. This is done using Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) and the asylum seekers present all their ten fingerprints or iris to check whether they have been registered before as refugees or it's their first time. If one is found to be a recycler, they are given a blue card by UNHCR and transported back to the settlement they had been relocated to. The new arrivals/asylum seekers proceed to the security screening committee where there are hard copy forms that OPM interpreters fill on behalf of asylum seekers. The asylum seekers are asked for bio data details such as name, date of birth, sex, nationality, ethnicity, place of origin, province, profession, marital status, name of spouse, parent's names, telephone number, level of education and disability if any. They are further asked about their entry point, details about their travel, whether they have been in Uganda before, when, for how long and whether they had been registered. They are asked about their family members details who are accompanying the principal applicant. The members of the security screening committee append their signatures on the form and principal applicant and members of his or her family are granted a refugee status. These forms are kept safely by OPM for reference incase anything does not go right during the settlement phase.

Relocation of refugees

Names of the registered refugees are put on the manifest list for relocation to the settlement. A day before relocation, they screen the refugees for Covid 19 for those that are 5 years and above. They are wrist banded for easy identification where they verify numbers, names, family size to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of loading buses and up to the time when they reach their destination. Transport by road in buses is provided by AIRD/UNHCR. They also provide the refugees with biscuits snacks while they are travelling and are given packed lunch when they reach Mbarara district. After having lunch, they continue their journey till they reach Nakivale Refugee Settlement where they are handed over to OPM and UNHCR for settlement.

Challenges

Relocation Resistance

Asylum seekers resisting relocation to settlements is currently the major challenge at the transit Centre. Forcing them to go to settlements or back to the country they are fleeing from is an infringement on their rights according to Article 31 of the 1951 Convention. Most asylum seekers have declined relocation because of the misinformation about the living conditions in settlements. They want to remain at the transit Centre yet there is limited space for accommodation. This also puts a strain on meals and other services offered because of the huge numbers. Some have opted to stay within host communities and this has caused pressure on the environment, competition for meagre resources and destruction of crops while fending for themselves which is a bad idea because asylum seekers/refugees are supposed to be in gazetted refugee settlements because they are best supported while in those areas. However, despite the misinformation about life being hard in Ugandan settlements, there is some information that is factual that was collected during the study. For example, giving refugees thirteen thousand Uganda shillings per head for a month is way too little to sustain someone in Uganda with the hiked prices of commodities on the market. Providing a 50 by 50 plot of land for one to construct a house and pit latrine and also remain with some land to agriculture for self-reliance is unrealistic. And the more refugees raise these concerns and action for better self-reliance is done, there are more asylum seekers that will continue to resist relocation to refugee settlements in Uganda.

Pendulum movements

Pendulum movements going to and from DRC can bring potential criminals. Some go in the morning to work in their gardens and return to Uganda to sleep at night. This was another challenge that was brought up by humanitarian workers and leaders in Kisoro district and also a number of news agencies have reported about the same where asylum seekers that have become a security threat in Kisoro district. Some of the criminal activities they are involved in are attributed to redundancy, hunger especially for those that remain in the areas surrounding the border and also anger arising from the situation they are in. But also, there are recyclers that have been relocated to settlements who move back to DRC and when fighting resumes, they return to the transit Centre. These recyclers share resources with the new arrivals and it is not cost effective to keep them around till they get funds to transport themselves back to the settlements they had been relocated to before. Therefore AIRD/UNHCR incurs more costs in having to transport recyclers back to settlements most of whom are coming from Nakivale, Rwamwanja, Kyaka II and Kyangwali refugee settlements and transport from Nyakabande TC to those settlements' ranges between 30,000-60,000 Uganda shillings. This clearly puts a strain on the humanitarian agency's budget.

Policy Recommendations

OPM and UNHCR should consider giving new arrivals settlement options to choose from backed with information and experiences from their own people that have lived in settlements and those that are urban refugees and they choose where they prefer to be relocated to because clearly those in settlements have access to more humanitarian services than the urban refugees. When consent is sought on where one is comfortable living, issues of recyclers will be done away with because they move to their preferred destination fulfilled that they were involved in making that decision. That also in a way will also solve the misinformation challenge about settlements because they will be getting information from reliable sources and not just hear say. Article 26 of the 1951 Convention on Freedom of movement states that “Each contracting state shall accord to refugees lawfully in its territory the right to choose their place of residence and to move freely within its territory subject to any regulations applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstance” Clearly, this article is not being implemented because of the assumption that most refugees will choose to settle in urban centres and compete for meagre resources with the citizens

There is need for massive sensitization of new arrivals to close the misinformation gap about refugee settlements in Uganda by OPM, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners. There are many misconceptions about life in settlements, where as some refugees are tarnishing the image of settlements with all sorts of negativity towards them, there are those that praise and appreciate them. New arrivals need to be given as much information as they can absorb to allow be relocated to settlements where they can be better served instead of staying within host communities in border districts.

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Tracking the Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in Uganda

By Balyebuga Kelvin

List of acronyms

CRRF:	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
EACMP:	East African Common Market Protocol
GC:	Global Compact
GCM:	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly Migration
GOU:	Government of Uganda
PHE:	Population Health and Environment
IMRF:	International Migration Review Forum
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
NIRA:	NATIONAL Identification Registration Authority
UNGA:	United Nations General Assembly

Abstract

The international community met in 2016 to discuss the growing number of tragedies that were occurring as a result of movement of refugees and migrants crossing borders. The outcome of this meeting was an agreement to negotiate two agreements, the Global compact on migration and the Global Compact on refugees with the aim of facilitating ‘orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people. This article explores the progress Uganda has made towards achieving the objectives laid down in the Global Compact in its attempts towards managing migration. The article further advances the argument that the Global Compact rather than wholly address the question of migration, it focuses on states that are signatories to the 1951 convention and its protocol, thus suffering from “convention-centrism” and excludes major parts of the world. It is contended that the GRC works to improve the status quo but does little to shift the containment paradigm of managing displacement in regions of the Global south and as such countries like Uganda that enforce its provisions are doing little to fully address the real problem. It is recommended that notwithstanding the shortfalls in the normative nature of the GC, a better understanding of migration, its complexities, benefits, together with increased international cooperation, will contribute to improved and informed migration governance.

Introduction

On 19th September, 2016 Heads of State and Government came together for the first time ever at the global level within the UN General Assembly to discuss issues related to migration and refugees. This sent a powerful political message that migration and refugee matters had become major issues squarely in the international agenda. In adopting the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the 193 UN Member States recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to human mobility and enhanced cooperation at the global level.

The Global Compact is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It is a non-binding document that respects states’ sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in their territory and demonstrates commitment to international cooperation on migration. It presents a significant opportunity to improve the governance of migration, to address the challenges associated with today’s migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

It was intended to address all aspects of international migration, including the humanitarian, developmental, human rights-related and other aspects; make an important contribution to global governance and enhance coordination on international migration; present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility; set out a range of actionable commitments, means of implementation and a framework for follow-up and review among Member States regarding international migration in all its dimensions; be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and be informed by the Declaration of the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

Considering that Uganda is a country of origin, transit and destination, the Global Compact is a very resourceful tool in managing migration. The compact demonstrates that no country can address migration issues on its own due to the transnational nature of the phenomena.

Overview of the International Migration Review Forum

In the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), Member States decided that the International Migration Review Forum will serve as the primary intergovernmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the Global Compact, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

The international Migration Review Forum (IMRF) is formally enshrined under Paragraph 49 of the GCM as the “Primary intergovernmental global platform for Member states to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the GCM.” The Forum takes place every four years and begun early this year. This year’s IMRF concluded with the adoption of a Progress Declaration, reaffirming the GCM as the only comprehensive framework for international migration governance. The resolution was adopted on the 7th of June, 2022.

The first of these quadrennial reviews took place from May 16 – 20, 2022 in New York. Over the course of an informal multistakeholder hearing, four roundtables, a policy debate, and a plenary session, Member States and relevant stakeholders discussed GCM implementation at the local, national, regional, and global levels; assessed challenges faced by countries of origin, transit, and destination and identified opportunities for cooperation.

At the first review of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and Regular migration, Uganda submitted its report towards assessing the progress it had made towards fulfilling the obligations under the GCM. Uganda’s methodology in reviewing its progress involved tabling its GCM review before the National Coordination for migration where key government stakeholders are represented and the general objectives in the compact are discussed. The National Coordination for Migration is chaired by the office of the Prime Minister. In total, the Global Compact espouses 21 objectives. Of the 21 Uganda has decided implement only 10.

Identifying the Root Causes of Migration

Member states acknowledge protracted violence, conflict and inequality as driving forces, particularly for developing countries who may face any combination of these as causes for migration. Other member states also pointed to the increased impact and prevalence of climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters spurring human development.

a). Data collection and Evidence Based Policies

Addressing concerns of safe and orderly migration requires sound and evidence-based policies to create a conducive environment for migrants. Objective 1 on collecting and utilizing accurate and disintegrated data as a basis for evidence-based policies, the Government of Uganda (GOU) demonstrated its commitment to strategic partnerships with development partners and universities to conduct research on forced displacements and the environment. An example was Makerere university which is conducting a project on Developing an integrated framework for addressing Population, Health and Environment for Uganda’s refugee and host communities by investigating livelihood, environment and health interactions in refugee and host communities in Ugandan with a view of developing an integrated PHE framework for addressing population, health and environment issues of Uganda’s refugee and host communities. Four of Uganda’s refugee settlements are involved namely Bidibidi, Nakivale, Kyangwali and Kiryadongo. Roles performed by ministries like Internal affairs in collecting data and disaggregating and linking it to other ministries, departments and agencies portals like the

National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). Collection of data related to foreigners at different entry and exit points for migrants. Conducting targeted surveys for example the 2018 survey on migrants and host communities. There are also ongoing efforts to create a Ugandan diaspora data base.

b). Recognition and Protection of Human Rights of Migrants

The rights of each and every individual be it a migrant are universal and are meant to be protected, respected and recognized. Human beings are at the heart of the GCM, which maintains that human rights and fundamental freedoms apply to all migrants, regardless of their status and whether their migration is forced or displaced. In upholding this principle, the GCM outlines several objectives aimed at protecting, respecting and fulfilling migrants' rights throughout the migration cycle. Of those the GOU has implemented objective 6 concerning recruitment and work conditions. Generally, member states reported several ongoing challenges facing migrants, such as the prevalence of the informal or domestic market, restrictions on labor market mobility and a lack of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Uganda specifically highlighted its efforts in adopting various frameworks that were already existing to address these issues like The East African Common Market Protocol (EACMP), the Employment Act, The Refugee Act, MOUs and Bilateral agreements with various countries where large numbers of Ugandans are working and Pre departure trainings for labour externalization by labour recruitment companies formally accredited by the Government of Uganda. GOU also recognized ongoing efforts to address the ever-changing migration trends like the recently created Anti trafficking task force, the Joint border management committee under the EAC, National consultations on the EAC labour migration policy and discussions on the minimum wage for all categories of workers in Uganda.

On migrants' access to services as enshrined under objective 15. GOU in March, 2017 launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and put in place a steering group chaired by the Minister for Refugees and the minister for local government. The CRRF has since developed action plans and has developed sectoral plans on education, livelihood, health and environment. The office of the Prime Minister Department for Refugees has also launched an online monitoring system which is used in respect of the various humanitarian partners and development partners in the Refugee Response to fast track the efforts and progress made by Development partners in addressing the phenomena migration. A further step has been taken to incorporate Refugees into the National Development Plan III as of 2020. Other countries like Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe regularly kept their migrant populations aware of COVID-19 measures via brochures and radio programs. Ireland implemented measures that enabled undocumented migrants to access services without fear of immigration enforcement.

Just like any other guaranteed right, the protection of migrants from all forms of discrimination is vital. Objective 17 accordingly confers obligations on states to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration. Although not many countries reported implementation of objective 17, a few took proactive efforts to change the narrative surrounding migration. Uganda reported that it had an open-door refugee policy which grants refugees and asylum seekers protection regardless of age, gender and nationality, existing laws on hate speech. They also noted the existence of communities which discriminate like the Indian, Somali and Chinese communities. The government committed to training law enforcement officers to empower them to avoid discriminating migrants.

c). Mitigating Vulnerabilities for Migrants

For many migrants, the journey from their countries of origin to countries of destination is fraught with peril. The missing migrants project under the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded the deaths of almost 50,000 migrants since 2014. Considering these dangers, the GCM has set

out several objectives that protect vulnerable migrants at all phases of their journey Objective 7 confers obligations on states to address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration. Uganda has an existing National Child protection working group, led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development, an open-door refugee policy and a National coalition on human trafficking.

With regard to objective 9 on strengthening the transnational response to smuggling of migrants, member states generally observed an increased reliance on smugglers owing to pandemic-related boarder closures and job losses. The government of Uganda however noted that through the Ministry of internal affairs and the National Task Force on the prevention of trafficking of persons in July 2020 and also launched the National referral guidelines on the same. GOU continues to work through strategic partnerships with development partners such as IOM, GIZ, IGAD.

On a whole it has been argued that the compact performs a kind of “legal orientalism” that uses the 1997 Convention relating to Refugees and 1967 Protocol to frame its Plan of Action and comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. To the extent that the GC focuses on states that are signatories to the 1995 convention and its protocol. It suffers from “convention-centrism” and excludes major parts of the world. It is contended that the GRC works to improve the status quo but does little to shift the containment paradigm of managing displacement in regions of the Global south.

Accordingly, it is safe to say that while Uganda expresses willingness to address and commit to the objectives enshrined in the GC, its actions are those in vain as they sustain rather than eradicate root causes of unsafe and disorderly migration.

d). Enhancing Regular Pathways to Reduce Irregular Migration

Regular migration helps to reduce situations of vulnerability for migrants, protect their human rights and contribute to sustainable development among other advantages. To this end, GCM objective 5 calls upon member states to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration. Other complementary objectives, which also help to reduce the incidence and negative impact of irregular migration, include ensuring proof of legal identity and adequate documentation for migrants. Uganda has through the ministry of internal affairs opened up regional branches and offices in Gulu, Mbarara and Jinja for Ugandans and other migrants to easily access passports, work permits and other necessary information. In order to promote safe orderly and humane migration, the government of Uganda has signed bilateral agreements with several countries where Ugandan migrant workers travel to obtain employment. Notable examples are United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. These agreements have mandatory provisions for the protection of the basic human rights of Ugandan Migrant workers. Work permits granted to foreigners who work in Uganda have a provision for information relating to the family members or dependants of all the applicants regardless of whether those family members or dependants are in the country or not.

A question however lingers, how do we balance the tension between providing protection to refugee-migrants and denying access to the same category of people. The notion of protection in itself has been considered fraught. Who is protecting whom? Who authorizes protection? And what power relations shape its terms?

Integral to the GCM's vision is enabling migrants to enrich communities and creating conducive conditions for them to do so. Be that as it may, Uganda has to consider differences in national capacities while setting standards for sending and receiving countries. For instance, most laws to which it is a state party like the 1970 convention on the protection of Rights of All Migrants has 51 parties all representing the global south. As such, it could be argued that Uganda's balance of power in signing several bilateral agreements which seek to offer “protection” of the basic rights of Ugandan migrant workers is unbalanced as such those efforts may not yield much a positive result.

e). Facilitating Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion

The decision to migrate is often accompanied by several preconceived expectations, especially that of acceptance by hosts, but with forced migration, the decision is often abrupt, to escape death, famine, and many other fatal conditions. The duration it takes a migrant to adapt to the new environment determines how soon to realize integration with the society. Some migrants tend to adjust sooner than others, through social interaction and engagement in economic activities. However, not all migrants are warmly received by the host communities or are allowed to enjoy similar privileges with members of the host communities. In such instances, migrants become segregated amongst host population or marginalized from economic activities, especially if they are refugees.

Under objective 16, member states commit to empowering migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion. Member states voiced concerns about growing discrimination, racism, xenophobia and inequalities, as well as language barriers, that hinder migrant inclusion in host communities. However, several countries have made considerable efforts to promote inclusion and social cohesion.

With regard to the implementation of objective 18, Uganda noted that through the Ministry of Education and Sports, it had created provision to allow for qualifications and skills for persons educated abroad and seeking to work here to be assessed and equated to our grading system. There was however an acknowledgement from the government that there was a knowledge gap on whether migrants benefit from better pay and more career growth due to this service. It was also recommended that there was need to strengthen private sector partnerships in this area.

The above notwithstanding, the cultural orientation of migrants is different from the orientation of host communities by virtue of the differences in their countries. Therefore, when contact is established, they initially generate perceptions of each other, as well as confirm previous knowledge of each other. The similarities and the differences confirmed often form the basis of future communication and relationship. This also determines their peaceful co-existence or conflict between them. It is desired that any efforts towards facilitating migrant integration and social cohesion embrace a full dimension approach which considers the social and cultural orientations between migrants and host communities.

Recommendations

- a). To accelerate action and cooperation on expanding and diversifying regular pathways to migration, the Progress Declaration recommends that migrants are provided with the proof of identity and adequate documentation, including strengthening identification procedures and documentation systems and improving consular capacities.
- b). A better understanding of migration, its complexities, its benefits, together with increased international cooperation, will contribute to improved and informed migration governance. To that end, the calls on member states to collect and utilize data as the basis for evidence-based policies (objective 1) and commit to enhanced international cooperation and global partnership (objective 23) are verily welcome.
- c). Uganda should comprehensively and progressively set out to fulfill all obligations as set out in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly Migration. Human Rights are inter-related and inter-connected. As such setting out to fulfill some obligations to the exclusion of others may not serve the purpose for which the GCM was established but in effect infringes on the enjoyment of the other rights.

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Access to Justice for Refugees in Uganda: A Case Study of Refugees in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe District

By Kirungi Ritah

List of Acronyms

DPP:	Directorate of Public Prosecutions
NDP:	National Development Plan
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
RWCS:	Refugee Welfare Committees
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Abstract

The aspect of access to justice should be treated with principal reputation in the quest to achieve promotion of human rights because it aims at equality of all persons and non-discrimination. Access to justice pre-supposes that people should be able to obtain remedies and/or redresses through the established laws, irrespective of the circumstances surrounding them.

Under the Refugees Act, 2006 and the Refugee Regulations, 2010, refugees in Uganda have a right to fair and just treatment and free access to courts of law, including legal assistance under applicable laws of Uganda. However, despite having several forms of legal protection, rights and privileges, refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement face a number of peculiar barriers in accessing protection and assistance while in asylum or peaceful resettlement.

These range from language barrier, long distances to Courts, ignorance of the laws of Uganda and societal attitudes towards refugees, to governmental and institutional operational gaps. This study assesses both the formal and informal justice systems available to refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement, highlights the challenges faced in accessing justice and makes policy suggestions to clear the barriers refugees face in accessing justice.

Background

The United Nations defines access to justice as a process which enables people to claim and obtain justice remedies through formal or informal institutions of justice in conformity with human rights standards. Whereas Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development by providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; domestically, target 16.3 of the third National Development Plan provides for promotion of the rule of law at the national and international level and ensure equal access to justice for all.

Access to justice is a fundamental prerequisite to upholding the Rule of Law. In the context of migrations, the principle of equal treatment under the law means that all categories of migrants have an equal right to be treated fairly and in accordance with the law. For the Rule of Law to equally apply to refugees, as with nationals, they must have access to justice. However, in the case of refugees, accessing justice has been undermined by both their preference for traditional justice mechanisms and the host Government's lack of resources to extend judicial services to refugee settlement yet refugees often have most to lose when access to administrative and judicial decision-making is either denied, poor, or if they are not able to effectively challenge it.

With over 1.5 million refugees, Uganda is the third-largest refugee-hosting country in the world and the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. The Bidibidi refugee settlement in Yumbe District is the second largest settlement in the world and the biggest in Uganda covering an area of 234 square kilometers and hosts up to 227,996 South Sudanese refugees.

Refugees face a number of vulnerabilities and are susceptible to many forms of violence, abuse and injustices both within their community and from the host communities. In Bidibidi refugee settlement, there are social conflicts amongst refugees arising from the mismatch in cultural beliefs and ethnic practices. There are also conflicts between host and refugee communities concerned with competition over natural and other resources like water sources, firewood among others.

In addition, there are no formal land rights granted to the refugees, and this has resulted into violent confrontation between the host community and refugees over access to, and use of the land. In other cases, the local communities extort from the refugees promising them rights over the use of their land.

Cases of domestic abuse also abound. Sexual Gender Based Violence, adultery, child neglect and child marriages are very predominant.

There are different mechanisms of dispute resolution in Bidibidi refugee settlement. Prevalently, these are customary based, but there has been an effort by refugee agencies to support refugees to access informal justice through community-based paralegals, especially for civil cases such as debt claims and land wrangles on plot boundaries among others.

Whereas the Uganda Refugee Act, 2006 and Refugee Regulations, 2010, provides for the enjoyment of a number of freedoms and rights including; freedom of movement, right to fair and just treatment, free access to courts of law including legal assistance under applicable laws of Uganda; access to formal judicial remedies still elude refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement. Some of the challenges of access to justice are occasioned by the structure of the justice system in Uganda, while some are a direct result of the vulnerability of the refugees themselves, for instance; language barrier, long distances between the courts of law and refugee settlements, ignorance of the law and of their rights. Additionally, refugees are often met by a new justice system and laws unlike those in their countries, they tend to prefer their traditional justice systems to formal courts of law.

Recognising that refugees are particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable is a crucial first step towards achieving access to justice for them. Its actual realisation is, however, much more difficult as it requires not just a change in the rules but also in practice, as well as the provision of resources. This can be particularly difficult to attain given that refugees find difficulties in negotiating the requirements of legal processes that they either do not comprehend or cannot cope with because of trauma or emotional distress.

To remedy the challenges that refugees face in accessing justice, it has been recommended that Uganda embraces, streamlines and supports traditional justice systems in order to be aligned with national laws. Also suggested is the need for more legal aid service providers targeting refugees, embracing mobile court sessions in the refugee settlements, sensitization, training of community interpreters and humanitarian lawyers.

This study will assess the various forms of justice available to refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement, the challenges refugees face in accessing justice and suggest policy alternatives to ease access to justice for refugees.

The Role of Policy Actors in Helping Refugees to Access Justice

The management of refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda falls under the docket of the Ministry for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees with oversight by the OPM which has an office in every refugee settlement base camp. The office is headed by the Camp Commandant whose other duties are receiving and granting asylum to refugees, settling them; coordinating, and monitoring refugee agencies and providing physical protection to them.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), maintains a grass root approach of involving the refugees in their own protection by setting up administrative structures equivalent to the Local Council system of the nationals through organising elections of local authorities called Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs). The OPM also guides and arbitrates on other matters referred to them by the RWCs if they are deemed to require informal justice administration.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) works in coordination with the OPM, to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Uganda, and supports efforts towards a

comprehensive refugee response. Under its protection department, UNHCR legal officers' prime duty among others is to aid the administration of justice in the refugee settlements. For Bidibidi refugee settlement in particular, UNHCR works with (International Rescue Committee) IRC as an implementing partner.

IRC has legal officers in each zone of the settlement who work as first responders regarding conflict matters in the camps and report to the various authorities. They identify cases that need the appropriate response through either formal or informal justice systems and guide on the referral pathways to justice. They also organise legal awareness sessions and trainings for the refugees and the RWCs. They do all these in close collaboration with the RWCs.

A Refugee Welfare Committee (RWC) is a refugee-led administrative system that links the refugee community to partner organisations. It is an executive of community elected leaders who understand and speak the language of the community and are easily accessible. The RWCs operate at three levels of administration in the settlement. RWC 1 operates at the Block level, RWC 2 operates at the Village level and RWC 3 operates at the Zone level. They handle informal justice matters especially those that are not criminal in nature and/or petty offences and matters that need ADR.

There are also Paralegals within the Bidibidi refugee settlement. These are individual members of the refugee community who are educated enough to comprehend, write and speak English and are then given legal training for them to discern minor legal matters in the communities and help refer or resolve through ADR. Within the community, they are also referred to as Community Legal Volunteers, Human Rights Advocates and Community Activists.

Forms of Justice System

There are two forms of judicial administration available to refugees in the Bidibidi settlement – the informal and formal justice systems. Formal justice system includes the Police, Office of the (Directorate of Public Prosecutions) ODPP and the Judiciary while the Informal System includes RWCs, Paralegals and OPM.

The formal justice system refers to the justice process as established under the Constitution of Uganda. The Judiciary is the only institution mandated to arrive at, and dispense justice under the constitution, with help from other Government departments like the Office of the Director of Prosecutions (DPP), Uganda Police Force and enrolled Advocates in private practice and those employed by other justice schemes and projects.

Refugees under the Refugees Act, 2006 are entitled to enjoy the same rights in Uganda as those accorded or enjoyed by nationals. In particular, Section 29(c) of the Act provides that “Refugees are entitled to fair and just treatment without discrimination on grounds of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”. Further, Section 29(d) provides that “refugees shall receive at least the same treatment as is generally accorded to aliens under the Constitution and any other law in force in Uganda; and be entitled to privileges that may be granted under the laws of Uganda by any administrative agency or organ of the Government”

This by all accounts obliges refugees to obey the laws of Uganda but also entitles them to protections under the law including access to justice in Ugandan courts, to protect their rights and correct their grievances.

In Bidibidi resettlement, the most prevalent legal issues are criminal in nature, with the most common being Defilement (due to the legal age discrepancy between the two countries and old culture), theft, assault, offences under Gender Based Violence (also due to cultural differences between the two countries), Attempted suicide (due to trauma) among other offences.

There are also cases that are civil in nature for example where refugees rent land from host communities but breaches in the agreements emerge thereafter. In many cases this happens to the detriment of the refugee.

The Bidibidi refugee settlement is served by the Chief Magistrates Court of Yumbe District. The Chief Magistrate of Arua City oversees this Court and makes travels to the court to hear cases. In addition, mobile court sessions where judicial officers are asked to move the court to the base camp to hear cases of refugees are organised from time to time. This arrangement helps the refugees to witness or take part in the justice process in Uganda through the hearings and also as witnesses. Such hearings are concluded expeditiously since witnesses can easily come to court.

The delivery of justice for refugees through the formal means faces a number of challenges including interference from non-judicial actors who prefer mediation even in capital offences instead of trial. Civil suits also tend to be procedurally tedious.

The long and odious distance on murrum roads between the Magistrate's Court in Yumbe and to the Base Camp for Mobile court sessions are also a derailing factor. Whereas Mobile Courts seem to be more favourable, they are usually held in the base camp which is in zone 1 yet there are four other zones which are a great distance apart. For instance, zone 5 is 59kms from base camp and despite IRC's effort to transport witnesses, such distances mean court has to start late and have matters heard in part and adjourned which equally defeats the purpose of the mobile court session. Mobile courts also come with heavy financial ramifications including transporting Judicial officers, Prosecutors, persons on remand and defence counsel all the way to the base camp where the sessions are held.

Bidibidi refugee settlement suffers understaffing and under equipment for players in the Justice, Law and Order sector. For instance, Zone 1 has 14 villages with only 1 police post so some crimes go undetected unless the community brings it to the Police's attention. The settlement relies on only two Police vehicles serving the entire Yumbe District. This slows down response to crimes, derails investigations and leads to abuse of individual rights where they have to be detained beyond 48 hours as they have to wait for the available vehicle to transport them to Yumbe Central Police Station for processing before going to court.

In addition, the Chief Magistrates' court of Yumbe is staffed with only one Grade 1 Magistrate that has to handle all matters. He has to divide his days in a week between the two jurisdictions and hear both civil and criminal cases which is a tedious work and brings in slow progress of cases.

The settlement is made up of refugees from different ethnicities, who speak different languages that are native to South Sudan. On the other hand, all Police and Court Officers are Uganda nationals who do not speak or understand the refugees' native languages which complicates interviews, interrogations and court proceedings. With these Language differences, some information is lost or distorted in translation, sometimes leading to unfair hearings and ultimately miscarriage of justice.

Faced with these challenges in accessing justice through the formal justice system, refugees often seek remedies through informal systems. Elected community leaders with the help of Paralegals usually carry out arbitration and mediation roles. After all, these are members of the same community, faced with the same circumstances and have a better understanding of their traditional norms and values.

These structures are preferred because unlike in formal Courts, proceedings are conducted in their native languages and they aim at peaceful resolution of disputes and continuous community harmony, as opposed to punishment and strict enforcement of laws.

The proceedings are that: - A complainant/pleader reports a case to the RWC and the RWC summons the other party (usually orally) informing him or her of the complaint and then schedules a day for the sitting together with the committee which involves a women's representative, an elder member and youth representative. Sometimes a paralegal or a partner legal officer who takes the role of *amicus curiae*.

Both parties are heard and judgement is made or as is in most cases, the matter is mediated and the parties reconcile. In the event of dissatisfaction, usually the matter ends up in the formal justice system.

This system is also laden with challenges, including lack of trust in the informal processes. There are numerous allegations of bribery and tribalism especially in the settlements with more than two ethnic groups. Relatedly, RWCs being an elected authority, there are also complaints of bias against former political rivals and their supporters in the course of dispensing justice.

These systems are safe haven for criminals trying to avoid a highly punitive formal system of justice administration. This is met with RWCs' ignorance of the criminal jurisdiction of their informal courts. In a few instances there are attempts by RWCs to try and handle cases that are outside their jurisdiction. Most Defilement cases have been mediated by RWCs, resulting into forced marriages.

The informal justice structures are also faced with conflicts over roles of different actors. whereas paralegals are supposed to give legal insights to conflicts, RWCs see that as their quasi-judicial powers being usurped and end up making decisions on their own whims.

Recommendations

I recommend that the Judiciary establishes a substantive court in Bidibidi refugee Settlement to enable better and timely access to formal justice for refugees and the host community.

I also recommend to the Office of the Prime Minister to put in place a checks and balance system to ensure RWC courts are operated on the principle of fairness and apparent justice. Key to this, is instituting an independent oversight body above the RWCs that acts as an appellant body but also to check the integrity of the RWCs. More so, since the RWC system operates like the LC system of Uganda, there is need to legalize their operations and prescribe offences and punishments for the cases that they handle to avoid abuse of discretion.

OPM should also increase and continuously conduct legal awareness sessions for the RWCs and Paralegals to enhance their understanding of Ugandan laws and the parameters of their work. Refugees should equally be sensitized on the formal justice system and the need to follow it. This can be done at the point of food distribution and validation centres.

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