

RIGHTS AWARENESS AND THE LIVELIHOOD OF REFUGEES IN KYAKA II REFUGEE CAMP IN KYEGEGWA DISTRICT-UGANDA, A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Page | 1 **Abstract**

Introduction

The study looked at the relationship between refugee rights awareness and their livelihood in Uganda using Kyaka II Refugee Camp in Kyegegwa district. The study was conducted with three specific objectives; that is; to find out whether awareness of the right to work has a bearing on the livelihood of refugees in Kyaka II Refugee Camp. The study reviewed literature according to themes that were delivered from the objectives.

Methodology

The study adopted both descriptive and cross-sectional research on a sample size of 402 and using questionnaires.

Findings

Findings on awareness of the right to work revealed that majority 58.6% of the respondents are not aware of that right as an entitlement, while 41.4% were aware. Findings on awareness of the right to own land property revealed that majority 63.6% of the respondents were not aware that owning land was a right while 36.4% were aware.

Recommendation

The government, with the support of donors and international actors, should establish a better conjuncture between rights, law, and economic interests related to refugees' rights to work and access to labor markets, and also better align law and policy to give effect to the right to work there by improving the livelihood of refugees.

Keywords: *Refugee rights, Refugee Livelihood, Kyaka II Refugee Camp.*

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Introduction

Globally, according to the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, nearly nine million of the fourteen million refugees worldwide have been confined for at least ten years in refugee camps or settlements, often with limited access to basic rights (Dr. Naohiko Omata and Dr. Josiah Kaplan, 2013). What is worse, as refugee situations become protracted, levels of international relief are normally reduced or entirely cut off after the emergency period (Jacobsen, 2016)

In Africa, the observation of World Refugee Day began in 2001; the tradition of raising awareness of the refugee cause through commemoration far precedes the twenty-first century, as highlighted on this 1980s poster from African Refugee Day, the precursor to World Refugee Day (Geneve Internationale, 2023). One of the earliest of this recognition came in 1914 when Pope Pius X instituted the World Day for Migrants and Refugees. Since then, the observance of the

refugee cause has entered the political arena at the national and regional levels (Joe McCarthy, 2017).

Clements et al. (2016) argue that, amongst other things, it is the policies of host governments, and national and regional security, which prevent refugees from contributing to the societies where they are living. UNHCR (2010) also finds that the laws, policies, and administrative requirements in several countries worldwide have presented obstacles to sustainable livelihoods for refugees. These include restrictions on freedom of movement, free choice of residence, and the right to work (Brigitte Rohwerder, 2016). Governments across the globe may also be deterred from providing refugees with access to employment and education opportunities as a result of high rates of unemployment (UNHCR, 2016).

Jacobsen and Fratzke's (2016) research of past lessons found that programs to support the development of refugee livelihoods through building skills or the entrepreneurship capacity of refugees struggle to succeed in a restrictive

policy environment for refugee access to work within developed economies like America, Canada and Japan (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2018). Refugees in situations where policies have banned them from working, or made it very hard for them to work through strict encampment policies and exorbitant permit fees (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2018) have 'little access to sustainable employment and are dependent on the willingness of local authorities and host population to turn a blind eye to informal work' (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2018).

Uganda is a signatory to the main international legal instruments for refugee protection, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Refugee Convention (Naohiko Omata, 2020). Uganda has also adopted two pieces of legislation, the 2006 Refugees Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulations, which reflect the government's commitment to current international standards of refugee protection (Naohiko Omata, 2020).

According to the UNHCR's annual Global Trends report, by the end of 2015, Uganda was hosting more than 512,968 refugees and asylum-seekers, the highest number in the country's history (Frank Ahimbisibwe, 2016). Uganda has now become the 8th-largest refugee-hosting country in the world and the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa (Frank Ahimbisibwe, 2016).

Kyaka II refugee settlement was established in 2005 2003 to receive the remaining population of Kyaka I following the mass repatriation of Rwandan refugees the same year (Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, 2023). After this movement, Kyaka I was closed. Around mid-December 2017, renewed violence in DRC – the Democratic Republic of Congo led to a new refugee influx into Uganda, with an estimated 17,000 new refugee arrivals in Kyaka II (Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, 2023). Since December 2017, Kyaka II's refugee population has quadrupled, following the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees from DRC fleeing conflict and inter-ethnic violence in North Kivu and Ituri (Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, 2023). There are more than 113,000 refugees already living in the settlement (Kyaka II Refugee

Settlement, 2023). Kyaka II is managed by the UNHCR and the Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister's Department of Refugees (OPM) (Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, 2023).

Purpose of the study

To determine whether awareness of the right to work affects the livelihood of refugees in Kyaka II Refugee Camp.

Methodology

Research Design

A research design is an overall plan showing the process of carrying out research (Amin, 2005). This study adopted both descriptive and correlational research designs based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A descriptive research design was used to answer questions on scenarios such as what and how whereas a correlational research design was used to determine the presence and degree of a relationship between two factors that is the independent and dependent variables based on quantitative data. The correlational research design enables to establishment of whether the independent variables and dependent variables co-vide and if so, indicates the directions, magnitudes, and forms of the observed relationships.

The study adopted a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach involved the collection of data using a questionnaire survey. Data was numerically analyzed with statistical procedures (Amin, 2005). The quantitative approach helped in making statistical inferences for generalization and provided explanations to them.

Sampling design, sampling procedure, and sample size

This study used both stratified and simple random sampling designs. Stratified sampling helped the researcher to group the respondents into their specific categories while simple random sampling techniques helped respondents to have equal chances of being represented in the study (Cresswell, 2003).

The sample size of this study was derived from refugees within Kyaka II Refugee Camp using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) technique of determining sample size from the study population from the above population a sample size of 402 refugees. The samples were categorized as; Refugees and opinion leaders 384, NGO Managers 10, and Camp Leaders 8 as shown in Table 1;

Table 1 shows the Population, sample size, and sampling techniques

| Category of Respondents | Target Population | Sample size | Sampling technique | Data collection method |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Refugees and opinion leaders | 100,000 | 384 | Simple Random Sampling | Questionnaires |
| NGO Managers | 12 | 10 | Purposive Sampling | Interview guide |
| Camp Leaders | 10 | 8 | Purposive Sampling | Interview guide |
| Total | 100,022 | 402 | | |

Source: Primary data, 2021

Data Quality Control

Validity

Validity is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure (David Mugabo, 2019). The researcher made use of expert judgment to confirm the validity of the instruments. The relevance of each item in the research instruments to the research objectives was evaluated. In particular, the reviewers rated each item as either relevant or not relevant. Using the test-retest method of triangulation validity of the tools was done by issuing a sample of questionnaires to a few respondents in Kyaka II Refugee Camp to establish whether the questions in the questionnaire were properly constituted.

Reliability

The reliability of an instrument is the ability of the instrument to collect the same data consistently under the same conditions (Amin, 2005). To ensure the reliability of quantitative data, the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for Likert-Type Scales test was performed. It is commonly used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for a sample of examinees. Amin, (2005) contends with a reliability level of 0.7 and above for the research to be recommended for analysis and presentation.

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Table 2 showing reliability statistics

| Variables | Number of items | Cronbach's alpha |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Right to work | 7 | 0.943 |

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.943 was above 0.7 implying that the data under analysis was reliable following Amin, (2005)

Data Processing and analysis

After collecting data from respondents, it was sorted, edited, coded, and entered into a computer database, coded, and analyzed. Data was analyzed at two levels. First, it was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, and percentages used to describe the item-by-item results.

Quantitative data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics in the Excel datasheet. Descriptive statistics entailed the determination and measure of frequency distributions and percentages. Data was processed by editing, coding, entering, and then presented in comprehensive tables showing the responses of each

category of variables in frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data analysis involved both thematic and content analysis and was based on how the findings related to the research questions. Content analysis was used to edit qualitative data and reorganize it into meaningful shorter sentences.

Presentation of the Findings

Inferential statistics on the relationship between the right to work and refugee livelihood, the researcher carried out a correlation test

The results are presented in the tables 3;

Table 3 shows the Correlations between the right to work and refugee livelihood

| Right to work | Refugee livelihood | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Right to work | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .844** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 360 | 360 |
| Refugee livelihood | Pearson Correlation | .844** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 360 | 360 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Findings in Table 3 reveal that the relationship between rights to work and refugees' livelihood within the Kyaka camp was very strong at $r=0.844$ Sig at 0.000. This implied that as more awareness and participation towards the right

to work improves, the further the improvement in refugees' level of livelihood within the camp. This further shows that a unit improvement in livelihood is a result of a unit improvement in rights to work.

Table 4 shows the model summary on the right to work and refugee livelihood

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .844a | .712 | .711 | .29153 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Right to work

The model summary confirms the relationship between the independent and dependent. The adjusted R-square of 0.711 implied that the right to work contributes 71.1%

improvement in refugees' livelihood within Kyaka camp and the remaining 28.9% is caused by other factors that needed to be investigated and these included; the immigration act, the constitution of Uganda and the social and cultural factors among the host communities.

Table 5 shows ANOVAb values on the right to work and refugee livelihood

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|---------|-------------|--------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 75.107 | 1 | 75.107 | 883.706 |
| | Residual | 30.427 | 358 | .085 | |
| | Total | 105.534 | 359 | | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Right to work

b. Dependent Variable: Refugee livelihood

The analysis of variance represents a regression value of 75.107 higher than the residual value of 30.427. Therefore, the regression value confirms a smooth movement between the variables while the residual value shows that some inconsistencies needed to be addressed.

Table 6 shows the Coefficients of the right to work and refugee livelihood

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------|--------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .446 | .051 | 8.697 |
| | Right to work | 1.078 | .036 | 29.727 |

a. Dependent Variable: Refugee livelihood

The beta value of 0.844 implied that an increase in rights awareness to work among refugees leads to a .0844-unit improvement in refugees' livelihood. Further, a t-value of 29.727 higher than 1.96 confirms that there exists a significant relationship between rights awareness to work and refugees' livelihood within Kyaka camp.

Discussion on awareness of the right to work has on the livelihoods of Refugees in Kyaka II camp;

A restrictive approach to awareness of the right to work prevails, and there is a reluctance to ease these restrictions. According to Heloise Ruadel, these conditions are closely allied to restrictive status determination and access to protection, and weak legal and institutional capacity for enacting these basic provisions is often replicated in procedures (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016) governing the right to work. According to Roger Zetter, in countries that accede to the relevant Articles of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the legal entitlement to work for refugees is rarely unconditional, and there is little

consistency in implementation (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016). The right to work is also conditioned by the wider framework of labor and employment law (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016)

According to Heloise Ruadel, employment rights are usually contingent on refugee status, the low levels, slow duration, and complex processes of status determination are major constraints on access to employment; these constraints are compounded by bureaucratic and administrative hurdles and by situations of mass displacement (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016). Employers' attitudes and perceptions significantly affect refugees' access to employment (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016). Evidence is widespread that refugees work under much less satisfactory conditions of decent work compared with nationals (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016). Refugees often lack the means or the willingness to pursue their legal entitlements to work or protection in the workplace (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016). Their vulnerability is compounded by the lack of knowledge of refugee law and rights by the judiciary and the police (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruadel, 2016).

While there may be greater opportunities for employment in non-camp and urban settings, actual access to work can be more limited and may be exploitative (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Movement restrictions limit refugees' access to employment; relaxation of restrictions is reflected in positive gains for rights to work and livelihoods (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Opportunities to access education, language training, skills development, and accreditation of prior skills and qualifications, significantly enhance access to employment for refugees (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Emerging though patchy evidence indicates that governments, international organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are tackling these constraints (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Positive results for refugees are generally produced by policies that proactively assist refugees in accessing employment within the camp, for example, by making it easier to obtain work permits and providing incentives for refugees to find employment (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

In countries with fragile economies which also often host large numbers of refugees' awareness of the right to work and access to labor markets is usually heavily constrained (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Countries with proportionately fewer refugees, stronger economies, and potential labor supply gaps provide better entitlements (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Regardless of legislation on the right to work, refugee status, and location, seeking work is vital for most refugees, and the overwhelming majority were employed in the informal sector.

In general, the more favorable employment situation of urban refugees is tempered by less favorable overall socioeconomic conditions (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). More to that, restrictions on freedom of movement and encampment increase difficulties of access to employment. Yet, despite restrictions, movement from camp and rural settings to urban centers to access work is widespread and increasing.

Refugees face multiple challenges in awareness of the right to work and the lack of decent work and protection where they are employed. Lack of rights to work may precipitate secondary migration (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Refugees cannot accumulate sufficient capital or skills either to finance their legitimate pathway to self-reliance or to support their return and reintegration to their home countries (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Even if they are legally allowed to work, refugees are often not able to find jobs in countries with small formal sectors

(Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Informal labor markets, characteristic of many large-scale refugee-hosting countries, present both opportunities and disadvantages for refugees seeking employment. According to Roger Zetter, pronounced labor market pressures from refugee impacts and rapid domestic labor force growth from demographic increase create labor market conditions that generate competition between refugees and between refugees and host communities (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Negative gender stereotypes, gender-based social discrimination, disadvantageous working conditions, and violence against refugee women are prevalent in labor markets. Youth and child labor is widespread and is increasing in some refugee contexts (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Xenophobia and stigmatization have a significant though difficult-to-detect impact on refugees' getting work (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Social capital and networking play an important role in access to labor markets and type of work a lack of social capital tends to increase vulnerability (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Skilled refugees and those with professional certification often face substantial negative impacts in accessing labor markets. Refugees with limited education and few transferable skills struggle to find employment (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016). Integration into local communities, through a common language, similar culture, or marriage, eases refugees' access to work (Roger Zetter and Héloïse Ruaudel, 2016).

Recommendations

Governments, international organizations, and NGOs should tackle some of these constraints, e.g. by easing processes for obtaining work permits, providing incentives for refugees to find employment, recognizing qualifications, and improving skills training.

Governments should pursue labor market policies that lead to more sustainable livelihoods and better economic conditions for refugees and host communities.

Governments, with the support of donors and international actors, should hype the awareness campaign on the right to work and access to labor markets, and also better align law and policy to give effect to the right to work.

Better coordination between ministries involved with refugees' affairs and those responsible for labor rights would enhance the implementation of refugees' awareness of the right to work and labor market inclusion.

Labor market policies that lead to more sustainable livelihoods and economic conditions for refugees (and their hosts) are advocated.

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Conflict of interest

Page | 6 The author declares no conflict of interest

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