



Refugees and Higher Education Accessibility: Issues of Policy and Law

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Authors' contributions

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ABSTRACT

Immigration is the movement of persons through national borders for various reasons. Some studies on the immigration phenomenon have focused on curriculum development and delivery issues as well as cross-cultural adjustment issues; other researches focus on barriers that disenfranchise immigrants from accessing postsecondary schools. However, most of these efforts are in developed nations which can afford providing welfare to unauthorised or unregistered immigrants to access some services. This study is more specific on refugee immigrants in a developing nation where such benefits are not availed to recognised or unrecognised refugees. The study aims at equitable treatment of refugees in accessing Higher Education in Uganda. The objective is to study how policy and law impact on refugee status in accessing Higher Education in Uganda. Through empirical research, the study finds emotional disorder and systemic constraints as indirect but key challenges to Higher Education access by refugees. It recommends loosening refugee policy and law, accelerating refugee application process, and re-orienting live-by-the-day attitude as ways of minimising the challenges.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Immigration is the movement of persons through national borders for various reasons. This broad term does not specifically cater for the reason for immigration. This calls for a specific approach to dealing with a particular type of immigration. Considerable research effort has been spent on immigrants, uncategoryed, and with dedicated interest to curriculum development and delivery issues as well as cross-cultural adjustment issues. Other researches focus on barriers that disenfranchise immigrants from accessing postsecondary schools. However, most of these efforts are in developed nations which can afford providing welfare to unauthorised or unregistered immigrants to access some services. This study is more specific on refugee immigrants in a developing nation where such benefits are not availed to recognised or unrecognised refugees. The study aims at equitable treatment of refugees in accessing Higher Education in Uganda. The objective is to study how policy and law impact on refugee status in accessing Higher Education in Uganda. The researchers analyse empirical data vis-à-vis immigration profile, and policy and laws on refugees in Uganda and underline systemic constraint and emotional disorder as indirect but key issues that need close attention to minimise the challenge of refugee access to HE. The study recommends loosening refugee policy and law, accelerating refugee application process, and re-orienting live-by-the-day attitude as ways of minimising the challenges.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rising immigrant population in Uganda has transformed the demographic profile of the nation in recent decades [1]. Educating immigrant origin students is now of the utmost national importance (Capps et al. [2]; Lee and Suarez, [3]). Immigration refers to movement of persons through national borders. The movement could be through formal or informal immigration points. The formal immigration points are airport, water and land. Some studies (e.g. Baum and Flores, [4]; Zota, [5]) that have picked interest in the immigration phenomenon focus on curriculum development and delivery issues as well as cross-cultural adjustment issues and on barriers to immigrants in accessing postsecondary schools. However, these studies have been done in the developed United States where some

States provide welfare to unauthorised or unregistered immigrants and others do not (Zota, *ibid.*) [5]. Precisely, immigrants benefit from basic needs and periodic pocket money for their sustenance. This study is more specific on refugee immigrants in Uganda where such benefits are not availed to recognised or unrecognised refugees. Although some have been recognised and given refugee identity cards, this does not automatically make them citizens or grant them a right to access Higher Education (HE) the way it is accessed by citizens.

HE is the postsecondary level whereby one pursues a certifiable course with diploma or degree award. HE comprises of universities, national teachers' colleges, colleges of commerce and technology and many others [6]. HE plays a central role in the economic development of a nation. The private benefits of HE can be monetary in terms of enabling the graduate employee earn higher wages, and non-monetary by having broader career choices as well as preparing their children for better education opportunities [4]. The public benefit is that the higher an educated person earns the more tax revenue levied from their income for the country, and the less that person depends on government finances. Education brings more awareness to the person in adjusting to as well as creating new technological tools and skills [6].

2.1 Immigration Profile

The available data on formal immigration as per reason of visit given by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (2012) [7] is indicated in Table 1.

In the purpose of visit, unless implied in 'others', no record of involuntary immigration is given. Even a refugee seeking abode would need travel documents to ascertain where they are from before being admitted through the immigration border control. The formal border crossing is mostly by immigrants with valid travel documents.

Table 2 provides figures on arrivals and departures by Residence (Resident and Non-Resident) between 2007 and 2011. The figures reflect a steady annual increase of non-resident immigrants who stay.

The informal is the border crossing in areas where there is no immigration control. Informal border crossing is mainly by immigrants with no travel documents, mass movement of refugees, etc. For a number of decades Uganda has hosted refugees from Sudan, Congo, Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Nigeria, Pakistan, and other countries [1]. And according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Uganda today hosts refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and 'various' countries as shown in Table 3.

UNHCR in conjunction with the Government of Uganda allocate "land for refugee settlements to use for housing and farming, for those refugees willing to grow their own food and sell their surplus produce." However, refugees are not restricted to these settlements since the Government's refugee policy "permits freedom of movement as long as refugees living outside settlements can support themselves" [8]; Mulumba and Olema, [9].

2.2 Refugee: Law and Policy Perspective

The 1951 United Nations Convention regards a refugee as "someone who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it" (Article 1(2)). The Organisation for African Union (1969) adopted the UN description and applied the term "refugee" to every person "who owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to live his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in any other place outside his country of origin or nationality". These were reiterated in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) that "everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution ... in accordance with laws of those countries and international conventions ..."

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda [10] Chapter 3, Article 12(2) on the persons that shall,

"upon application be registered as citizens of Uganda", states in (b) that, "every person who has legally and voluntarily migrated to and has been living in Uganda for at least ten years or such other period prescribed by Parliament"; and in (c) that, "every person who, on the commencement of this Constitution, has lived in Uganda for at least twenty years." This is inconsistent with Chapter 3 Article 12(1)(a)(ii) that one is eligible for Ugandan citizenship if one is born in Uganda when "neither of his or her parents and none of his or her grandparents was a refugee in Uganda;" and (b) "who has lived continuously in Uganda since the ninth day of October, 1962."

The 2006 Refugee Act (21) (1) states that "a recognized refugee in Uganda shall, subject to this Act, the OAU and the Geneva Convention, be issued with the identity card stating the refugee status for purposes of identification and protection. Such a refugee should be permitted to remain in Uganda, be entitled to fair and just treatment without discrimination on ground of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity or political opinion shall receive at least the same treatment accorded to aliens under the Constitution and to be entitled to privileges that may be granted under the laws of Uganda by any administrative agency or organ of government." In this regard, UNHCR states that, "the Government receives, registers and issues civil documents to refugees and decides on asylum applications and appeals with the support of UNHCR." To harmonise the Refugee Act, the refugees arriving in Uganda "have access to existing public services and facilities such as water, sanitation, health centres and schools, as well as natural resources such as firewood, which are shared with the local community. In addition, the Government deploys civil servants, health workers and teachers to refugee settlements, and the national medical stores contribute medical supplies and associated staff to UNHCR's refugee operations" [9].

The Refugee Act fits well with The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda [10] Chapter 4, Article 21 (1) which states that, "All persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect, and shall enjoy equal protection of the law". And in clause (2) that, "a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability."

2.3 Analysing Policy and Law

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda defines 'persons' as all people in Uganda because they are bound by the promulgations therein. Obviously, refugees are part of the 'all persons' as long as they are in Uganda and bound by the Constitution of the land where they are. In addition the 2006 Refugee Act emphasises that a refugee be issued with a refugee identity card for purposes of identification and protection. The Act does not mention that the identity card indicates a naturalised status. One retains the refugee status. And emphatically, UNHCR notes that, "opportunities for refugees' transition to legal residency status in Uganda are restricted."

Therefore, although the Constitutional clauses emphasise non-discrimination and equal access to all privileges by all persons, refugees implied, including guaranteeing their right to education, inequalities exist in accessing some privileges.

The Constitution of Uganda (1995) Chapter 3, Article 12 (2) (c) further states that one is eligible for being naturalised on application if "on the commencement of this Constitution, has lived in Uganda for at least twenty years." This qualifies all refugees before and including 1975. However, stating the non-eligibility of children born to parents already refugees in Uganda (Chapter 3, article 12(1)(ii)) obviously registers children born to refugees already in Uganda more than 20 years by 1995 to be perpetually refugees.

Although formal immigration may be deliberate, voluntary, and legal, the informal is commonly involuntary and illegal because many immigrants may lack legal documentation. The informal movement is prompted by an impending danger that may not allow prior preparation for legal travel documents. Therefore, stating in the 1995 Constitution, Chapter 3, article 13(2) that "every person who has legally and voluntarily migrated ..." is eligible for registration on application, leaves out many who have involuntarily and illegally crossed the border to Uganda.

Table 1. Non-resident arrivals by purpose of visit ('000s), 2007 - 2011

Purpose	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Leisure, recreation, holidays	140	144	126	149	76
Business and professional	110	163	167	184	160
Visiting friends and relatives	272	347	406	357	603
Others	120	190	107	256	312
Total	642	844	806	946	1151

Source: 2012 statistical abstract, UBOS

Table 2. Arrivals and departures by residence ('000s), 2007 – 2011

Year	Arrivals			Departures		
	Resident	Non-resident	Total	Resident	Non-resident	Total
2007	241	642	883	272	607	879
2008	320	844	1,163	337	806	1,143
2009	288	807	1,095	311	761	1,072
2010	329	946	1,275	324	860	1,184
2011	379	1,151	1,530	367	1,004	1,371

Source: Ministry of internal affairs and UBOS

Table 3. UNHCR December 2013 refugee figures for Uganda

	Origin	Total in country
Total		286,590
Refugees	Democratic Republic of Congo	181,070
	Somalia	31,160
	South Sudan	16,980
	Eritrea	4,460
	Various	52,920

Source: 2014 UNHCR country operations profile -Uganda

This analysis indicates that the statutory rights of people living in Uganda may appear to be protected by the Refugee Act and Constitutional law, yet in the strict sense some are not. In the context of this paper, while in the 1995 Constitution Chapter 4, article 30 government commits itself to recognise that “all persons have a right to education”, it falls short of this commitment as regards refugees in Uganda.

2.4 Factors in Accessing HE

Researchers (e.g. Baum and Flores, [4]; Lew, [11]; Louie, [12,13]) argue that one’s family socio-economic background, as measured by parental income, education, and occupation, has a powerful effect on that student’s academic ability, educational outcomes, and occupation. Many voluntary immigrants enter the country to work as professionals, business people, or as students who are able to bear international tuition levied by HE institutions [4]. These appeal to a high social class. Professional workers and business people are looked at as economically able and international students too are socially regarded as hailing from rich and elite background. Highly educated professional immigrants in spite of providing their children with the resources needed to achieve academic success they can also mentor them in seeking better institutions, more marketable courses, and provide knowledge and advice on how to navigate the educational system [14]. In Uganda, many students, including refugees, from low socio-economic backgrounds attend free primary and secondary education (UPE and USE respectively). However, in line with researchers (e.g. Lopez, [15]; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al. [16]; Suárez-Orozco et al. [17]), these schools are overcrowded and ill-equipped to meet students’ needs; they are staffed with inexperienced or disinterested teachers, and plagued by high dropout rates. Therefore, children from low socio-economic background who succeed to complete the cycles simply enrol on short duration courses due to low grades. Short duration courses fetch lower level certification.

Financial aid is crucial for students from low income background so as to access HE [18]. Due to the sharp declines in revenues and reduced government funding for higher education, the rising cost of higher education has shifted the burden of paying for higher education from taxpayers to students and their families [19]. Many financial aid programmes could be navigated but most students and parents from

low economic backgrounds learn about them late; others do not have equal access to financial support guidance offered in some HE centres [20]. Therefore, many face significant barriers to accessing HE due to inadequate information about university opportunities and how to access them [4].

The decision to attend university is a complex process involving not only students who prepare for, apply to, and choose a school, but also parents, families, communities, and school personnel. Examining factors associated with students’ higher education goals and enrolment choices reveal that parental expectations and involvement are positively related to children’s higher education aspirations and academic preparation (Baum and Flores, [4]; Cabrera and La Nasa, [21]; Hossler et al. [22]; Perna, [23]; Perna and Titus, [24]; Kenyon et al. [25]). Parents seek to enrol their children in HE and in courses that will make them employable. The dream is that obtaining relevant skills serves them to a competitive employability advantage with the rest of job seekers; this means either getting employed or using acquired skills to be self-employed e.g. through creating small and large-scale industries, business enterprises, etc. Better employment and obviously better earnings translate into domestic improvement. Therefore, student aspirations and parental expectations are vital to student access to higher education and have a direct relationship to academic performance (Fuligni and Witkow, [26]; Kao and Tienda, [27]; Zhou and Bankston, [28]). As Mau [29,30] discusses, parental expectations and involvement may differ across groups due to background, social and family challenges and demands, and other interests.

3. THEORETICAL BASIS

Equity theory by John Stacey Adams (1963) is one of the justice theories. It explains the relational satisfaction in terms of perceptions of fair/unfair distributions of resources within interpersonal relationships. People seek to see the ratio between their input and output to be in proportion to others around them. This motivates them to be fair to others and the organisation [31]. Like other Ugandans, refugees have stayed in Uganda for various considerable periods and thus adapted to the Ugandan situation. In the settlements or wherever they are, they work hard like any Ugandan to make ends meet. Like other Ugandans refugees are committed to using their abilities and skills to develop the national

economy through their work products. They not only pledge but also owe loyalty to the nation as citizens do. These are some of the refugee inputs that match them equally with nationals. They would feel treated fairly if the system allowed the meritorious ones to access high calibre employment like the rest of Ugandans; if it allowed refugees to have job security, high salary and other employment benefits; to be recognised as the rest of citizens in accessing various benefits; and to be treated as reputable people. These outputs motivate the way they interact among themselves and with others.

4. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The issues of social status, financial ability and parental involvement in deciding on the future of their children are pertinent in understanding the deep-seated feelings and perceptions of refugees on their immigration status and its impact on accessing HE in Uganda. Therefore, refugees at HE or refugee HE graduates were not deemed more suitable than the household heads who strive to support their household members, reason being that the financial, moral, and emotional strength of a household is a strong enabler to offspring' access to HE.

The researchers chose to focus on refugee communities indicated in the 2014 UNHCR country operations profile – Uganda (Table 3). Ethically, we committed ourselves to anonymity and confidentiality as regards their real names and sensitive data that may reveal their identity. Therefore, although their countries of origin have been named, we have avoided using participants' names and instead ascribed a letter to each of them.

The study initially used quantitative survey method. A cross section of 100 refugee households, 25 in every settlement by origin, was randomly visited. The collected data, as reported in Table 4, are mainly used to describe the refugees period of stay in Uganda, size of family, range of income, number of children at HE going age, children at HE, and type of HE. By period of stay, save the Eritreans, other settlement by origin presented a relatively large number of refugees who have stayed between 4 and 6 years and few who have stayed beyond. Eritreans have stayed longer due political instabilities that existed in their country a number of years ago. Apart from the Somalis with a large number of household members between 1 and 3, the rest indicated relatively large number of

family members between 4 and 6, and a few even beyond to 7 and more. This raises a question on household sustenance and support at HE. While more Congolese indicated their monthly income in the range of 10,000-99,999 Uganda Shilling (UGX), Somalis, South Sudanese, and Eritreans indicated a higher income in the range of 100,000-199,999 UGX, and still more Somalis and South Sudanese earning beyond 200,000 UGX. This too points to their ability to support children at HE in Uganda. Due to the Ugandan education structure of 7-6-3, children above 18 years should be at postsecondary institutions. While most refugee households indicated having children above 18 years, few indicated that their children are in HE institutions. More so, there are very few are in universities; some in business schools, and in technical schools. Lack of any figures in category 'other' which stands for various unmentioned HE institutions indicates that the rest of refugee of HE going age have not accessed the HE level.

In order to understand why there are few refugees accessing HE, qualitative approach had to be used by way of open ended interviews. 12 household heads, three in every settlement by origin were interviewed to seek their views about the influence of their status, financial ability, and parental involvement on their children's access to HE in Uganda.

How do you feel about being a refugee in Uganda?

How does this status affect actions and choices for your household?

The data on qualitative responses is tabulated in Table 5.

5. FINDINGS

The empirical research carried out among the refugee immigrants, indicated emotional disorder as a key factor in their status, impacting on their actions and choices. Many expressed feelings of being social rejects, being looked down upon, minimised, and not trusted and their actions suspected. These feelings have made grave impact on their emotions which has translated into desperate actions and choices. Refugees lack peace of mind which they claim is important in undertaking other tasks and choices. They feel that being a refugee for a long time is an extended psychological torture and agonising situation.

Secondly, the systemic constraint also strongly stood out. Although the Ugandan refugee policy and the Ugandan laws are hailed as welcoming and generous to refugees, they are more of a lullaby to their refugee status. The policies and laws operate in a slow motion or shadow state. This was reflected in what many claimed as delayed response to their applications. Although the system allows them to work, and to freely interact in community, this freedom is curtailed to the fact that there are businesses they cannot get involved in; their current businesses are limited by the fact that they cannot be registered as belonging to indigenous people to access services like loans, microfinances, etc. Despite their free movement in Uganda, they are hindered from travelling beyond the border.

6. DISCUSSION

Many refugees have a rich potential to develop their families and the nation. However, the restrictive refugee policy checks on their ability to utilise their potential. As discussed by researchers (Baum and Flores) [4] refugees have the ability to benefit the economic growth of a country. Many are experts in different areas, and others have skills that are relevantly needed in some sectors. Therefore, lessening the systemic constraint opens opportunities for refugees to equitably access many services accessed by the nationals. This has strong policy and law implications in that refugee freedom of participation and involvement need to be increased and duration of stay in refugee status lessened. It motivates their feeling of fair treatment and impacts on their actions and choices. When refugees gain more freedom to interact with the rest of the citizens in all spheres of life, many eventually get financially empowered. Researchers (e.g. Baum and Flores, *ibid.* [4]; Perna, [23]; Perna and Titus, [24]; Kenyon, et al. [25]) indicate that parents make a major involvement in deciding on their children's educational aspirations. This may not be realised among refugees unless they gain ability to finance their children's tuition. In a healthy economy, financial empowerment is the key that triggers off growth and development. Therefore, granting refugee families more freedom of interaction in all spheres of life opens easy refugee access to available resources; equally compete for benefits including Higher Education.

Financial aid positively influences access to higher education [32]. As Vargas [33] indicated, there are many opportunities of financing HE accessible on internet. But registering for them may be cumbersome for a refugee who lacks a citizen status. Therefore, the affordability of higher education remains a critical issue for many, but particularly for low-income students and families from immigrant backgrounds. For many students, it is becoming more difficult to pay for higher education because of the gap between increasing tuition prices and financial assistance. In consideration of low and middle income students, in July 2013 government of Uganda introduced the Students' Higher Education Financing Scheme (SHEFS) in order to provide financing to Ugandan students who have qualified for higher education in recognized institutions of higher learning but are unable to support themselves financially [34]. It is apparent that the SHEFS discriminates against any persons that do not by law qualify to be Ugandan citizens. UNHCR [9] notes that despite the good refugee policy in Uganda, "Opportunities for refugees to transition to legal residency status in Uganda are restricted." Therefore, accessing HE becomes problematic because they are not recognised as Ugandans to benefit from the tuition fees paid by citizens of Uganda or the East African Community. Neither can they qualify for SHEFS meant for needy students. The SHEFS insists on authentic details of the applicant's ethnic background, background of parents, the details of birth, etc. which are not possible for a refugee to provide. The only option is to join university as a foreign student, an implication of paying fees at the rate of international students. Although, "compared to camps, which are not found in Uganda, settlements such as the ones in Uganda and provide greater livelihood opportunities for refugee families to achieve socio-economic security, reducing their dependency on food and other assistance" [9], their income remains limited for them to afford foreign student fees at HE. It is important to recognise that refugee access to HE is for the benefit of Uganda where they stay. Many are potentially highly skilled in areas relevant for national growth. Therefore, "providing adequate funding through some form of low tuition and grant aid" may assist many in accessing HE [4]. In addition, a quicker process of their naturalisation ushers many refugee immigrants into easy access to such financial programmes.

Table 4. Refugee response by settlement

Origin	Period (years)			Household members			Range of income per month			Children above 18 years		Children at HE		Type of HE				
	0-3	4-6	7- more	1-3	4-6	7- more	10,000-99,999	100,000-199,999	200,000-more	Yes	No	Yes	No	University	Business school	Health school	Technical school	Other
Congolese	07	15	03	--	17	08	20	03	02	20	05	05	20	--	--	--	05	--
Somalia	05	20	--	13	12	--	02	07	16	18	07	07	18	02	05	--	--	--
South Sudanese	05	18	02	02	20	03	03	10	12	20	05	04	21	02	01	01	--	--
Eritreans	--	01	24	05	15	05	02	20	03	17	08	02	23	--	02	--	--	--

Table 5. Refugee feelings about their status, and its impact on their actions and choices

Origin	Participant	How do you feel about being a refugee in Uganda?	How does this affect actions and choices for your household?
Congo	A	You can never feel good when you are in a country as a foreigner. We were granted asylum a long time ago, but they have delayed accepting us as citizens. I feel discriminated, looked down upon in society.	I cannot fully get involved in things that can benefit my family. I am limited a lot. Even my family members feel limited in accessing services the way they are accessed by citizens.
	B	It is awful being a refugee in a country that cannot support us fully. We are allowed to work, but limited on the type of work. Back home I had a good job, but I cannot seek that kind of job here because I am not a citizen.	I have to live within the means availed to me. I cannot be free to maximise my potential. You see a lot of things done wrongly, but you lack the freedom to offer advice.
	C	It pains being in a foreign land. You are limited in many things. They monitor you as if you are in prison. You are controlled like a kid in whatever you do.	The choices of a refugee have to fit in the limits provided in the policy. Even my actions are limited because I am not sure of how tomorrow will be.
Somalia	D	I feel safe in Uganda. You know it is terrible living in a war zone. The al-shabab militants could not enable us do anything. Here I can work for my family.	Having peace of mind is very important in personal growth and development. Despite the many limitations on refugees, I can still do other things for my family.
	E	It is not good to be a Moslem in a non-Islamic country. There are many things I do which are suspected by those who do not understand my religion. They think I collaborate with the terror group in Somalia.	It is like psychological torture. I cannot freely choose or act the way I would wish to for fear of being misunderstood. My refugee status limits my freedom of speech, action and participation.
	F	I feel alright staying in Uganda. There are many opportunities to have a better life. Only I feel rejected by those who look at me as a foreigner. It takes ages to become a citizen here.	Being a refugee limits a lot. The nature of work, the cooperatives you belong too, even banks limit the amount of money you wish to borrow.
South Sudan	G	We feel safe in Uganda. We escaped from the rampant ethnic clashes in Sudan. Although we are not yet citizens, at least we are allowed to get involved in some income generating activities.	The main hindrance is that my status cannot enable me to boost my business. I do lack proper papers to register it as indigenous or foreign. I have to fit in the limits of refugees.
	H	We left Sudan before the creation of South Sudan. We were granted asylum but our application for naturalisation has not been granted yet. We do not wish to go back. But again it is agonising being a refugee for a long time.	We are not sure of what the outcome of the application will be. This uncertainty affects our choices and actions. We cannot make long term plans.
	I	I feel Ugandans are welcoming, the refugee policy is moderate, not as	The limitations put on us stop us from accessing services fully the

Origin	Participant	How do you feel about being a refugee in Uganda?	How does this affect actions and choices for your household?
		harsh as in other countries where you are not even allowed to work. Here we do not have to depend on hand-outs. However, they should let us get fully involved in everything.	way they are accessed by nationals. Yet some of us have a lot to add to the economic growth of Uganda and if let freely to act as Ugandans.
Eritrea	J	We have lived in Uganda long enough but our applications for citizenship have not yet been accepted. We know the local languages, some cultural practices, etc. Ugandans are generally good.	The time we have stayed here makes us feel as Ugandans and we go about our daily chores normally. Only that we are limited as far as making choices and doing some activities is concerned. We have to respect the refugee limits.
	K	Uganda has become my home. I have nothing to go back to. May be our relatives are no longer there. We have family here. We only ask to be made pure Ugandans.	Being in the refugee status for a long time has denied us many opportunities to develop. Wherever you go for job interview or loan they first ask for identification. No one wishes to employ a refugee.
	L	I feel fine. There are moments when we are identified as foreigners. That makes me feel bad. I have stayed here for a long time. I should be made citizen.	It is important that I am made a citizen to overcome the ordeal of rejection. Being stable in mind can enable me to reach higher horizons.

While considerable research has suggested the course of regularising refugee immigrants in order for them to better their social status and benefit national economy, no interest has focused on healing their emotional disorder. A negative impact on the emotions may take long or never be healed by mere lessening of regulatory system or granting of citizenship. The ordeal of being refugee begins from the country of origin created by the threatening danger, and it is carried on by the social perceptions and attitudes in the environment where they settle. It gradually worsens by their long stay in that status. This calls for counselling services to re-orient their emotions. Even after granting permanent stay, it may become a persistent phobia for some ex-refugees to make long term decisions or choices or getting involved in long term actions. For example, anecdotal information from countries which give periodic refugee benefits indicates ex-refugees who fail to appreciate their new status of naturalisation. They instead resort to joblessness in order to receive benefits for jobless citizens. Therefore, a policy that emotionally prepares an ex-refugee to fully integrate in society is relevant.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research on refugees in Uganda their access to HE underlines the importance of revisiting the refugee policy and Ugandan laws on refugees to make them more welcoming. Refugees need to have more freedom of involvement in all spheres of life and to access national benefits as citizens. Government intervention is necessary in encouraging institutions e.g. banks, donor and money lending agencies, employers, etc. accept their refugee identification status. This may require setting up mechanisms to track and control those who may misuse their status identification to default. More freedom of involvement opens refugees to equal competition with citizens in all spheres where they can earn income to meet the costs of HE for their children.

Government needs to speed up refugee applications, but with necessary scrutiny, not only to clear the backlog but also to make aware those who succeed and the unsuccessful. This helps to clear the uncertainty about the future. It enables those to stay make longer term plans that benefit them and society. The naturalisation helps the beneficiaries equally access HE benefits like the nationals. For example, one

pays HE tuition paid by citizens instead of international students also payable by refugee students. In addition, some grant aid and/or low tuition should be availed to refugees whose applications have not yet been decided on in order to ease their access to HE.

The ordeal begins with the nasty experience in the country of origin which leads many to involuntarily migrate to other countries. If one meets with another ordeal of neglect, rejection and discrimination, one can easily degenerate psychologically. Therefore, the duty of making counselling and other programmes that assist refugees overcome their ordeal is incumbent on the host government. The ability to welcome and not only amicably stay with, but also accept strangers as part of society has eroded with traditions. Thus coupled with programmes that assist refugees, government has, through local council leaders, to sensitise the community on how to live with refugees. Reorienting the mind-set of society may help create a welcome environment for refugees. Having peace of mind may assist some refugees to make long term decisions which may benefit their children's higher education aspirations.

8. CONCLUSION

The argument in this article has centred on refugees immigrants in a developing country who are not given social benefits but allowed to stay and make a living in their settlements. The study has analysed their policy granted status and their ability to act and to make choices, which in turn may influence their own or their dependants' access to HE. Although other researches have indicated socio-economic status, financial ability, and parental expectations and involvement as direct and positive factors in accessing HE, this study goes further to explore systemic constraints and emotional disorder as indirect and negative factors that need attention among refugee communities so as to enable them to access HE.

The Ugandan refugee policy and law are on the surface regarded as accommodating but in the actual sense they are not. The study participants indicated lots of limitations which disenfranchise their desire to pursue higher horizons academically, economically, socially, politically and so on. When one is limited to a type of work and limited in its execution, it can be hard to earn enough to support children's pursuance of HE. The long and uncertain stay in refugee status

also makes it hard for them to make long term plans that could benefit their children's academic aspirations. At times the ordeal initiated in their countries of origin and prolonged by unwelcome environment also makes a strong impact on their actions and choices, they feel unwanted and develop a live-by-the-day attitude.

Therefore, making the immigration policy and law more relaxed as regards involvement in spheres of life may place many refugees on a competitive advantage with the nationals for the sake of personal and social growth. Speeding up decisions on applications for naturalisation may also be beneficial to many of them in determining their actions and choices. Providing funding and lowering HE fees for refugees, is also an enabling advantage to refugees' access to HE. Availing counselling programmes to the traumatised and sensitising societies on living with refugees may also provide peace of mind they desire in a foreign land.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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