

Full Length Research Paper

Refugee education: Refugees' perceptions of educational challenges in Uganda

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This brief report article presents the current educational challenges refugees face in Uganda based on their perceptions. The perceptions of the refugees were collected through an approach that ensured that refugee leaders, students, and non-students commented on the education of refugees in Uganda. 15 individual interviews with refugee students in Kampala in 2021 were complemented by data collected from 2 Focus Group discussions in 2020. The individual interview participants included 3 secondary school students, 10 university students, and 2 Vocational Education and Training (VET) students. Focus Group one was a group of refugee leaders in Rhino Refugee settlement area, and Focus Group two was for urban refugee youths in Arua City. This brief report article contributes to understanding the educational challenges of the refugees in Uganda through a broader focus that includes post-secondary education than concentrating on access to primary and secondary education, which are the main focus of research and policy interventions. Furthermore, the challenges presented, such as tuition fees at institutions of higher learning, the stigmatisation of refugee students, the lack of educational advice and career guidance for refugee students, and the COVID-19 effects, show that there is need to expand policy interventions to address educational challenges faced by the refugees.

Key words: Refugees, refugee challenges, educational response, refugee perceptions, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Africa has faced a refugee crisis for several decades. Uganda is one of the leading refugee host countries globally, with over one million refugees living in the country (Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019; World Bank, 2019). With the enactment of the Uganda Refugee Act 2006, Uganda has been lauded for promoting the integration of refugees in the country; refugees in Uganda have the right to work, freedom of movement, freedom to establish businesses, and are given small plots of land in

the refugee settlement areas (Adepoju, 2019; Betts, 2018; Betts et al., 2019). This has made Uganda a model in addressing the refugee crisis, which aligns with the international focus that currently encourages the inclusion and integration of refugees (Betts et al., 2019; Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019; Crisp, 2018). In responding to the refugee crisis in Uganda, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the government of Uganda, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and

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the host communities have worked towards solving the challenges that the refugees face in their living and integration in Uganda. An educational response is one of the vital responses to the integration of refugees in different countries (van Dijk, 2021). However, refugee educational challenges remain some of the major challenges for refugees in Uganda (Dryden-Peterson, 2010; Tulibaleka et al., 2022). Bohnetand Schmitz-Pranghe (2019) reported that refugees in Uganda have limited opportunities for secondary education. Vemuru et al. (2016) stated that refugees in Uganda with secondary education are about 0.8 per cent. Kasirye-Büllesbach (2019) explained that of the estimated 1.3 million refugees residing in Uganda, 61% of refugees are minors who require education. However, data collected in eight refugee-hosting districts in Uganda showed that out of 616,000 refugee children, 57% had no access to education (Kasirye-Büllesbach, 2019). This shows how access to education is a challenge to refugees. This brief report article highlights some of the current educational challenges refugees in Uganda face based on their perceptions. This report contributes to understanding the educational challenges of the refugees in Uganda through a broader focus that includes post-secondary education than concentrating on access to primary and secondary education, which have been the main focus of research and policy interventions.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this brief report article is to present some of the persisting challenges that refugees are experiencing in access to education in Uganda. The refugees, like the nationals, have education ambitions and requires access to quality education. This article is based on the views and perceptions of the refugees. The article reports the challenges and recommendations that are a panacea to improving the refugee educational response by the government, UNHCR, and the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected through 15 individual interviews with refugee students in Kampala city in 2021 and complemented by data collected from two Focus Group discussions in 2020. The individual interviews participants included 3 secondary school students, 10 university students, and 2 students in Vocational Education and Training (VET). Focus Group one was a group of refugee leaders in Rhino Refugee settlement area, and Focus Group two was for urban refugee youths in Arua City. There are several zones, clusters, and villages in Rhino settlement area. A village is headed by a Refugee Welfare Committee 1 (RWC1), a cluster is run by a Refugee Welfare Committee 2 (RWC2), the RWC 2 reports to the Refugee Welfare Committee 3 (RWC3), which is the overall leadership committee of the settlement. A village can consist of up to 1000 or more refugees. The leaders in the focus group discussion were members of RWC 1 in Ofua Zone 3 of the

settlement area; they included the Chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary of education, secretary of persons with special needs, the officer in charge of security, secretary of the environment, women's leader, and the youth leader (8 members in total). The refugee leaders were South Sudanese refugees since Ofua zone is a South Sudanese settlement area. In Arua City, the focus group of urban refugee youths was diverse as it included both South Sudanese and Congolese refugees. The refugees in Arua City were recruited through snowball sampling with the help of a research assistant from Arua City. He contacted some urban refugees who recommended other participants to take part in the focus group. These urban refugee youths included self-employed workers, students and the unemployed. In total, this focus group was also made of 8 participants. Participants in the individual interviews in Kampala (students) were recruited through snowball sampling method, a student from the Kyambogo University was the initial contact, and the first interviewee who recommended other students and the chain of referral continued until the total number of 15 students was interviewed during the data collection period. The data collected was analysed with the help of NVivo software, coding and thematic analysis were used to develop the educational challenges and recommendations presented in this article.

Justification of the methodology

Data was collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions. These were used to ensure that perceptions and experiences of the refugees were captured and understood. The Focus Group of refugee leaders and the Focus Group of urban refugee youths (a mixture of refugees working as self-employed workers, students, and unemployed) allowed the refugee leaders and the urban refugee youths to their views on the educational challenges of the refugees just as the students in the individual interviews. In other words, students and non-students (youths and elders/leaders) had the opportunity to participate in the research, which ensured that although the sample size was not big, the refugee perceptions and views were collected from a diversity of refugees within the refugee cohort.

FINDINGS

Refugee educational challenges

The government of Uganda, the UNHCR, and Non-Government Organizations are actively involved in addressing the educational challenges experienced by the refugees in Uganda. However, as presented in this section of the article, several challenges persist or have not been adequately addressed. Besides challenges like the lack of educational materials, the lack of sanitary pads for girls, the language barrier for some refugees, there are challenges that the refugees described as emerging or major problems that are hindering their access to education in Uganda which include the high tuition fees in the universities and other institutions of higher learning, the award of scholarships, stigmatisation, and discrimination, the lack of educational advice and career guidance, the effect of COVID-19, the distance of schools and the few available secondary schools in the settlement areas.

Tuition fees in the universities and other institutions of higher learning

Generally, international students pay higher tuition fees than local students in Uganda, notably in private institutions of higher learning. The refugees are affected by this trend whereby the universities hike school fees for international students (Mande, 2015). Refugees are treated like other international students in institutions where international students pay higher tuition fees than Ugandan students. This affects the ability of refugees to access higher education. In the interviews with students:

Participant #7 pointed out that “In Uganda, we are treated as international students; we pay more tuition fees than the local students, especially at the universities.”

In the leaders' focus group discussion, the chairperson explained the challenge of accessing higher education due to the lack of tuition fees by the refugees. He explained that:

“When our children complete primary and secondary education, [.....], it would be better to push them further the education ladder because they get the same grades as the nationals, but the education ambitions of most refugees are cut short. If refugee students were given scholarships annually, it would create a difference”.

Studies on refugees' education have pointed out that higher education for refugees has been ignored globally, which affects refugees in different countries (Dryden-Peterson, 2010; 2017). According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (2019), as of 2016, less than 1% of refugee youth had access to higher education. Without support to attain higher education, the number of refugees enrolled at higher learning institutions will remain low in Uganda despite the progressive policy promoting their integration. A previous study pointed out that the refugees in Uganda are limited in access to higher education in Uganda (Hakami, 2016). Limited access to higher education affects the ability to participate in the labour market even though the refugees have the right to work in Uganda. Acquiring skills through education lays the foundation for refugees to participate in the labour market.

The award of scholarships

In Uganda, the government does not award scholarships to refugees to pursue education at universities and other institutions of higher learning. This can be partly attributed to the high number of refugees in the country (Vemuru et al., 2016). Although the refugees give credit to several NGOs such as Windle International, the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative), and CORNERSTONE that are providing scholarships to

the refugees, especially scholarships to attain university or higher education (post-secondary school education) in Uganda and outside Uganda; there is widespread discontent among the refugee students and the refugee leaders that the process of selection and award in several instances is not merit-based and is marred with unfairness and favouritism from the officials of some NGOs. These allegations were not verified, nor did the refugees point out specific organisations that practice such unfairness in selecting and awarding the scholarships. The discontent was expressed by a number of the refugee students, for example:

Participant #5 explained that “There is corruption among officials in the camps and the organisations when it comes to scholarships; many students have been denied scholarships due to the officials' interests”.

The refugees blame the limited number of scholarships as one of the primary reasons the awarding and selection of refugee students for scholarship opportunities is marred with bribery and unfairness. Unfairness in the award and selection process deprives capable students of attaining education scholarships.

Stigmatisation and discrimination of refugee pupils and students in schools

The refugee leaders and students reported cases of stigmatisation and discrimination of the refugees. The stigmatisation results from being called refugees in schools, especially secondary schools and universities. There are primary schools near or within the settlement areas, but there are very few secondary schools and post-secondary education institutions of learning near the settlements. In search of secondary school education and post-secondary education, the refugees have to study in distant places away from the settlement areas. For the urban self-settled refugees, schools and institutions of higher learning are close to them, but like the refugee students from settlement areas, they experience stigmatisation while in schools. In the interview individuals, the participants explained the effects of stigmatisation, such as the loss of self-confidence and the sense of belonging to the community and the schools. These have impacts on the education and educational performance of refugee students.

Participant #1 explained that “We face stigmatisation as refugee students; we are living in hardships. The communities and in the schools, they take as different and isolated from them. They talk ill about us in this country. This causes insecurity and makes us lose self-confidence”.

Some studies have explained that stigmatising refugee students affect their learning and performance in class (Morrice, 2013; Pejic et al., 2016). This requires the

stakeholders to promote inclusive learning environments and multiculturalism in the schools and communities. Uganda is a culturally diverse country, and the influx of refugees has added to the cultural diversity of the country (Tulibaleka et al., 2021B). Therefore, promoting multiculturalism and co-existence is necessary for the communities, urban areas, and even in schools.

The lack of educational advice and career guidance

The refugee students decried the lack of career guidance, counselling, and educational advice. The students reported limited knowledge and understanding of the courses in Ugandan universities and institutions of higher learning. Others reported relying on friends and acquaintances to make decisions regarding courses to pursue and the institutions to attend. In the Focus group of the refugee leaders, they noted the need for career guidance and advice on education in Uganda for the refugee students. They delineated the fact that despite being leaders, their guidance is limited, and the students need proper career guidance and educational advice. In the Focus Group of urban refugee youths, a participant explained the impact of the lack of career guidance and educational advice on the refugee students who study in the settlement areas. He explained that:

“The schools in the settlement areas do not get the chance to be visited by professionals to talk to them about career guidance, meaning that in the long run, students make wrong career choices because they do not get the chance to be informed about careers they are supposed to pursue in higher institutions of learning”.

The majority of the students interviewed had lived in Uganda for over 5 years, while some were even born in Uganda. These refugee students require proper educational advice and career guidance. However, the need for career guidance is not peculiar to refugee students alone; in Uganda, career guidance and job search assistance need to be strengthened. This is because even native Ugandan students rely on informal networks such as family members for career guidance and job search assistance (Tulibaleka et al., 2021A). Educational advice and career guidance for refugees need to be strengthened for their integration in Uganda and future re-integration in their home countries.

The effect of COVID-19 on refugee students

On 20th March 2020, due to the presidential directive to contain the spread of COVID-19, schools right from primary schools to universities were closed. The government later opened up schools for candidate classes before another wave of COVID-19 led to another

lockdown in the country. Some institutions and universities came up with strategies to facilitate the learning process, such as online classes (Nabukeera, 2020). COVID-19 has inflicted socio-economic, and psychosocial impacts on refugees (Bukuluki et al., 2020), which has affected their education and made them more vulnerable. The refugee students emphasized that it is hard to cope with the impact of COVID-19 because of requirements such as laptops to facilitate online learning for the students. The students pointed out that it is very difficult for refugee students to study online due to challenges like the lack of electricity in the settlement areas and overcrowding in the settlement areas, which does not offer a good study environment. The self-settled urban refugees mainly live in the slums in the urban areas (Bukuluki et al., 2020), which the students described as not conducive to attend online classes. The other effects of the COVID-19 pandemic include school dropout and unwanted pregnancies or early pregnancies due to students being idle in the slums and the congested settlement areas during the lockdown. These effects were pointed out during the interviews; for example, Participant #10 explained that:

“The effects of COVID-19 on refugee students have been devastating. When schools were closed in Uganda for almost two years, the settlement areas became more congested with idle students out of school. This resulted in unwanted and early pregnancies for the girls, and some refugee students gave up on studying”.

The impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations cannot be underestimated. Vulnerable people such as slums dwellers in Uganda have been reported to face severe unintended socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19, such as disruptions in education and teenage pregnancies (Nuwematsiko et al., 2022). In Uganda, it was reported that Covid-19 induced lockdowns led to a high increase in teenage pregnancies, especially in the poorer rural areas (Ojulu, 2021). Refugees are among the vulnerable population because the urban self-settled refugees mainly live in the slums and in rural areas for those live in the settlement areas.

The distance of the schools and the number of secondary schools in the settlement areas

A study on girls' education in Rhino refugee settlement area pointed out the hardships in accessing education, such as long distances (Larsson, 2019). The distance that pupils and secondary school students have to travel is still a serious issue of concern for the refugees. The refugee leaders, the urban refugees in the focus group discussions, and the students during the individual interviews delineated the ordeal of long-distance travel undertaken by the refugees in accessing schools,

especially secondary schools. During the interviews, Participant#6, a student at YMCA comprehensive institute in Kampala, expressed disappointment noting that:

“Refugees face a lot of problems in the area of education; for example, refugees who are settled at Rhino Camp in West Nile region are in dire need. The places of education are very far for the children. They walk for several kilometres to be at school, yet even lunch is not provided. This has made it hard for the children to be committed to education. Another challenge that is also very serious is the inadequate number of secondary schools; for instance, there are only two secondary schools in the whole Rhino settlement, which consists of about seven clusters: one in Odubu and the other in Ocea. Students take 2 -3 hours walking to the schools”.

As already explained in the methodology, a cluster contains several villages, and each village can have put to over 1000 refugees living it. The clusters make up the zones that make up the settlement area. Rhino camp, which the participant mentioned, has over 3 zones, and it is one of the oldest refugee settlement areas in Uganda. There are very few schools near or in the settlement areas, which means that students have to move longer distances in search of education, especially secondary education. With the level of refugees with secondary school education in Uganda at 0.8 per cent (Vemuru et al., 2016), increasing the number of secondary schools near or in the settlement areas is necessary for improving access to secondary school education.

DISCUSSION

Refugee education remains one of the essential needs that refugees require in their stay in the host countries in the world (Dryden-Peterson, 2016, 2017). This means that inclusive education is important for the refugees during their stay in host countries (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). Since many refugees in Uganda can be classified as refugees living in protracted refugee situations, access to education is one of the challenges that they face (Tulibaleka et al., 2022). The tuition policy in some Ugandan universities and other institutions of higher learning (especially private institutions) requires international students to pay tuition fees higher than local students. This affects the refugees who are treated as international students and subjected to paying higher tuition fees. There is no differentiation between international students seeking education in Uganda and the refugees seeking higher education. Tuition fees limit access to higher education for refugees in Uganda. Access to higher education remains one of the major challenges to address in response to the refugee crisis in several countries (Crea, 2016; Ramsay and Baker, 2019). Affirmative action for the refugees can be a motivation

and a panacea to improve refugee enrolment in higher learning institutions and their access to education in Uganda. Subsidizing and reducing the tuition fees for refugee students in Uganda can contribute towards inclusive education that considers the presence of refugees in Uganda.

Education scholarships are important and necessary to improve access to education for the refugees, especially post-secondary education. The current scholarships provided by the NGOs are insufficient and do not offer a number of refugee students the opportunity to enrol in higher education or post-secondary school education. Uganda is struggling with the protracted refugee crisis (Tulibaleka et al., 2022), which makes it hard to provide for the refugee needs adequately. Although Scholarships by the NGOs are limited in number with allegations of bribery and unfairness in the selection and award of scholarships, the scholarships are necessary to support the refugees to attain education. Most refugees in Uganda are poor with low income (Vemuru et al., 2016); thus, acquiring education by refugee students is a challenge without scholarships and other forms of assistance. The government of Uganda does not provide scholarships to refugees to attain higher education which can be attributed to the fact that Uganda is a low-income country that cannot sufficiently handle the refugee crisis without the assistance of other countries or international Non-Government organisations.

Several previous studies in other countries have presented the effects of stigma on refugees in higher education and vocational education and training (Baranik et al., 2018; Morrice, 2013). Stigma among refugee students is also associated with exclusion both in and outside the schools (Baranik et al., 2018). Stigma affects the refugee students' confidence in class and outside the class. Integrating refugee students in the education system in Uganda should not only target enrolment in the schools but should further ensure that multiculturalism in education is promoted. Inclusive education should encourage and support multiculturalism in education (Makwinja, 2020; Tomlinson, 2009). There have been efforts to integrate refugees into the host communities (Betts et al., 2019; Vemuru et al., 2016). However, the integration into the host communities should be expanded to include integration in schools, including those that are far away from the settlement areas. Integration of refugees and nationals in schools promotes stability for refugee children (Dryden-Peterson, 2003). Multiculturalism and the teaching of multiculturalism need to be promoted in the schools or institutions of learning where there are refugee students. Awareness of multiculturalism can reduce tendencies of discrimination and stigmatisation in schools.

Career guidance and job search assistance are important for the youths to transition into the labour market from school or during the school-to-work transition. In Uganda, even local university graduates

heavily rely on informal networks such as family members for career guidance and job search assistance (Tulibaleka et al., 2021A). Informal networks such as family members and friends cannot offer sufficient career guidance and job search assistance required for the integration and transition into the labour market. Even in developed countries like Canada, with highly formal labour markets, refugees and asylum seekers are confronted with job search challenges and heavily rely on pre-existing family networks (Akkaymak, 2017). The refugees in Uganda have the right to work or search for jobs in the country (Betts et al., 2019; Davis, 2019). However, without proper career guidance and job search assistance, the refugee students are vulnerable during their transition to the labour from school as lack of career guidance and job search assistance possess challenges in navigating the labour market to seek employment or transition from school to the labour market. Therefore, a holistic approach to refugee education should cover primary education, secondary education, post-secondary education, career guidance, and job search assistance for successful entry and integration into the labour market. This can ensure that the refugees benefit from the right to work as guaranteed under the 2006 Refugee Act in Uganda.

Globally, the education of refugees has been heavily impacted because of the COVID-19 pandemic; this is because the refugees, in general, are a vulnerable group (Fujii et al., 2020). At the beginning of 2022, the government of Uganda announced the end of the world's longest disruption of schools in which, for more than 83 weeks, schools were partially or fully shut down, affecting more than 10 million learners in the country (Muhumuza, 2022). During this period, some schools and institutions switched to online teaching methods. However, such arrangements were not put in place by schools in refugee settlement areas due to the lack of the required equipment by the schools and students. In Schools or institutions where online teaching methods were used, refugee students' access and usage of computers are still limited due to factors like the low-income level of refugees. To ensure inclusive access to education, the challenges that refugee students are experiencing as a result of COVID-19 need to be addressed.

Long-distance to schools is a threat to the access of education by Ugandan refugees in the settlement areas (Larsson, 2019). Education is a basic right for refugees, and the government of Uganda and UNHCR have had a long history of supporting education for the refugees in Uganda, including the establishment of schools (Dryden-Peterson, 2003). However, the distance of schools is still a major challenge that needs to be addressed for the refugees. With the protracted refugee situations of refugees in Uganda (Tulibaleka et al., 2022), the number of refugee students or children of schooling age will keep growing, which requires the establishment of more schools and equipping the schools, shortening the

distances to the schools also requires the establishment of more schools to boost refugee students' enrolment and stay in the schools.

Recommendations

Tuition policy

There is a justifiable outcry by the refugee students that they are treated as international students, especially at the universities where they pay higher tuition than Ugandan students. To promote refugees' access to education, the refugees recommended that a policy be implemented that compels universities to charge reduced tuition fees for the refugees and for the refugees to be differentiated from other international students. The latter students move to Uganda in search of education, unlike the refugees who seek asylum but desire to study like the natives. Uganda has many international students studying in Ugandan universities and serves as an educational hub for East African nations.

Providing scholarships

Although refugees in Uganda have the right to work or establish businesses, there are few employed refugees or business owners in Uganda, according to the World Bank (Vemuru et al., 2016). This undermines the ability of refugees to afford education for the children, especially university education or education at institutions of higher learning. The award of scholarships specifically for post-secondary school studies is important for refugee students. The NGOs should increase scholarships for refugee students, but there is a need to ensure fairness and transparency in the awarding process due to the allegations of bribery and unfairness.

Stakeholders collaboration to fight refugee stigmatisation

Fighting stigmatisation of the refugees, especially in schools, needs combined effort by the government and other stakeholders, for example, the schools or institutions of higher learning and NGOs. Sensitising the students about multiculturalism and appreciating that Uganda is a multicultural country is important. The presence of over one million refugees adds to the cultural diversity in Uganda (Tulibaleka et al., 2021B). Community sensitisation, sensitisation of the local students, the teachers, university lecturers, and staff members is important for creating inclusive learning environments where the refugees feel a sense of belonging. The stigmatisation of refugees affects their ability to learn due to the feeling of being excluded in the schools and

classes.

Establishing more schools in the settlement areas

The stakeholders need to establish more schools for the refugees in the settlement areas. Overcrowding and long distances to the schools are major challenges that need urgent remedies. The long distances to the schools discourage many learners from moving to the schools. The construction and equipping of schools with learning materials in the settlement areas are necessary to improve access to education and encourage children of school-going age to attend classes. The schools in the settlement areas are overcrowded, which strains the teaching staff and the infrastructure in place. The government of Uganda needs the support of other partners such as international organisations in building more schools.

The provision of cheaper hostels or boarding facilities for refugee students

Several refugee students, mostly those who are not self-settled urban refugees, move far away from the refugee settlement areas to access education, especially secondary and post-secondary education. The boarding facilities and hostels are expensive for the refugees. Most refugees do not have stable sources of income in Uganda to support the education of refugee students. In assisting refugees' education, organisations such as CORNERSTONE provide cheaper hostels for the students they sponsor. The initiative of offering cheaper hostels should be expanded for refugee students.

Educational advice and career guidance for refugee students

Earlier career guidance and educational advice are necessary for the refugee students to orient them with the education system of Uganda, the courses at universities, the different types of institutions that they can attend after secondary school education. The schools, NGOs, and government should spearhead the provision of this vital information to the refugee students.

Coping strategies to facilitate refugees' studies in the current COVID-19 situation

COVID-19 is likely to stay for a longer time. Therefore, actors and the stakeholders should assist the refugee students in coping with studies and the strategies in place; for example, refugee students in higher learning institutions need computers and laptops to facilitate their

studies under the current situation. Schools in the settlement areas also need support in the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic; school dropouts and the victims of teenage pregnancies need strategies for re-integration into school and or other forms of assistance.

Conclusion

This brief report highlights some of the pronounced challenges that the refugees are facing in accessing education in Uganda. Although the refugees believe that education is vital for their integration in Uganda and their home countries upon return, the challenges that the refugee students face hinder their educational dreams and careers. The recommendations are important for improving refugees' access to education and their inclusion and integration. The self-reliance strategy promoted by the government can be achieved or be sustainable through promoting refugees' education. Uganda as a host country is a developing country that cannot sufficiently handle the country's refugee crisis. More assistance from UNHCR and other international actors such as the International Non-Government Organizations is necessary for improving the educational response strategy to the refugee crisis in Uganda. Prioritising the education of refugees is a long-term strategy that can assist the refugees even when they return to their home countries. For sustainability and self-reliance of refugees, there is a need to focus on their education besides the rights such as the freedom of movement and the right to work. The majority of refugees in Uganda are young men and women who need education for a sustainable future. In addressing the refugee educational challenges in Uganda, there is a need for combined effort and co-working between the different actors such as the Ugandan government, UNHCR, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, institutions of higher learning, and host communities.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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