



Refugee Opportunity Index

Uganda

Uganda performed slightly better on the ROI than its regional counterparts but still has notable room for improvement across all three categories of the ROI. The country is rolling out progressive policies, but refugees and other displaced persons still face significant challenges in accessing economic opportunity.

Country environment

Refugees	1,529,903
Asylum seekers	43,388
Internally displaced people (IDPs)	25,700
Stateless people	67,000
Total people of concern	1,665,991
Nominal GDP (PPP\$ bn)	102
GDP per head (US\$ PPP)	2,160
Population (m)	47

Overall score on
Refugee Opportunity Index **45.7/100**

Source: UNHCR, IDMC

Overview

Out of the three East African countries in the ROI, Uganda performed the best on basic rights and access to services, where it scores 59.7 out of 100, compared to a regional average of 45.8. While the country scores well in some areas, there is still room for improvement across the board.

Uganda's approach toward refugee integration and education provides an illustrative example on areas that need improvement which have started to be addressed. Uganda has support for integration education programs directed at adult refugees, but this does not extend to other displaced people. Most other educational programs solely target children. There have been efforts to address language barriers faced by refugees, but the problem has been seen as too complex to be solved in the short term. In light of this situation, a 4-year Education Response Plan for refugees and host communities was launched in 2018, which aims to tackle language barriers among other things, but its results are yet to be seen.

Other areas, such as financial inclusion and support for entrepreneurship, have supportive regulation but could have stronger enforcement. Refugees can open a bank account and own a business without a local partner, but other displaced persons have to apply to be awarded the same rights. However, to open such an account, refugees usually face requirements that can be

difficult to comply with, creating de facto hurdles to financial inclusion. There are no rules against discrimination in financial services to address these challenges. Given low access to banking, cash transfer programs are often delivered to mobile accounts. Refugees are not required to partner with locals to open a business but there is also no support to financing MSME as nationals.

Strengths

Uganda outperformed its regional counterparts in the basic rights and access to services—its best score across the three ROI categories. This can be attributed to the freedom of movement and right to a national ID afforded to refugees and other displaced persons. However, some rights, such as access to healthcare, are limited to those with official refugee status, creating access challenges to basic services for other displaced persons. A 2019-2023 Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan has been developed to strengthen the health system to cope with the unpredicted flow of displaced persons, but its impact is yet to be seen.

Policies focused on refugees are implemented by the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugee Management. The data used to monitor and evaluate such policies is collected and published by the UNHCR and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Some relevant data on the economic status of refugees is available and disaggregated by sex and geography.

Challenges

Despite having a clearly articulated policy regarding refugee resettlement, no efforts to integrate refugees by matching their skills to the needs of the host community were identified. There is insufficient evidence that the reunification scheme available is implemented in practice or that it includes other displaced persons beyond refugees. Refugees have no clear pathway to citizenship, which limits their long term access to economic opportunity in the country.

Despite having legal right to work, many refugees struggle to find employment in Uganda. The de facto hurdles relate to poor communication on refugees' rights, which results in a different understanding of the situation among government officials, employers and refugees. While refugees are required to have a job permit and other asylum seekers may apply for this right, refugees often do not have the necessary documents to obtain a permit, which are often not permanent or long term in nature. There are additional limitations, such as quotas for foreign workers, burdensome compliance and unfamiliarity with refugee employment procedures that further restrict access to economic opportunity in the country.

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Category	Score
1 Admissions, integration and resettlement	49.3
2 Basic rights and access to services	59.7
3 Employment conditions	28.2
Sub-category	Score
1.1 Admissions policies	72.2
1.2 Refugee resettlement and integration programs	25.0
1.3 Assistance for new arrivals	16.7
1.4 Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	83.3
2.1 Freedom of movement	46.7
2.2 Right to hold a national identification document	100.0
2.3 Property rights and access to housing	16.7
2.4 Access to education and healthcare	50.0
2.5 Financial inclusion	55.6
2.6 Equality between women and men	89.3
3.1 Employment policies and laws	16.0
3.2 Job-seeking support	16.7
3.3 Support for entrepreneurship	51.9

Strengths of Uganda's enabling environment

- 1.2.1) National policy on refugee resettlement
- 1.4.2) Disaggregated data
- 2.1.1) Right to move freely within host country
- 3.2.3) NGO information on hiring disadvantaged groups
- 3.3.2) Lack of requirement for a local partner

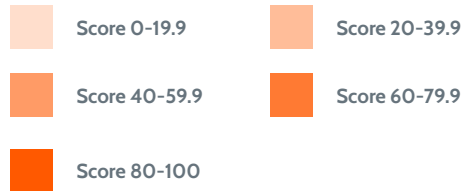
Focus areas

- 1.2.3) Family reunification
- 1.2.4) Pathway to citizenship
- 2.3.1) Property ownership rights
- 3.1.1) Right to employment
- 3.1.5) Local job market distortions



Uganda

Opportunity Index (overall score)		45.7/100
1	Admissions, integration and resettlement	49.3
1.1	Admissions policies	72.2
1.1.1	Participation in international agreements	100
1.1.2	Existence of a national policy on admissions	66.7
1.1.3	Recognition of climate change and disaster-related displacement	0
1.1.4	Existence of national refugee agency	100
1.2	Refugee resettlement and integration programs	25
1.2.1	National policy on refugee resettlement	100
1.2.2	Matched resettlement	0
1.2.3	Family reunification	0
1.2.4	Pathway to citizenship	0
1.3	Assistance for new arrivals	16.7
1.3.1	Language education	0
1.3.2	Legal assistance	0
1.3.3	Integration education	33.3
1.3.4	Cash assistance	33.3
1.4	Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	83.3
1.4.1	Collecting and publishing data	66.7
1.4.2	Disaggregated data	100
2	Basic rights and access to services	59.7
2.1	Freedom of movement	46.7
2.1.1	Right to move freely within host country	100
2.1.2	Residence restrictions	33.3
2.1.3	Work location restrictions	33.3
2.2	Right to hold a national identification document	100
2.2.1	Right to a national identity document	100
2.3	Property rights and access to housing	16.7
2.3.1	Property ownership rights	0
2.3.2	Access to housing	25
2.4	Access to education and healthcare	50
2.4.1	Access to education	50
2.4.2	Recognition of foreign qualifications	50
2.4.3	Access to healthcare	50
2.5	Financial inclusion	55.6
2.5.1	Requirements for opening bank and mobile money accounts	33.3
2.5.2	Stringency of ID requirements	100
2.5.3	Non-discrimination provision	0
2.5.4	Digital cash assistance payments	100
2.6	Equality between men and women	89.3
2.6.1	Equal requirements obtain a national identity document	100
2.6.2	Equal property rights	100
2.6.3	Equal requirements for a bank account	100
2.6.4	Equal business ownership	100
2.6.5	Gender equality	46.5
3	Employment conditions	28.2
3.1	Employment policies and laws	16
3.1.1	Right to employment	0
3.1.2	Job permit requirement	0
3.1.3	Restrictive work permits	100
3.1.4	Work permit renewal	0
3.1.5	Local job market distortions	0
3.2	Job-seeking support	16.7
3.2.1	Inclusive labor rights and protections	0
3.2.2	Government Information on hiring disadvantaged groups	0
3.2.3	NGO information on hiring disadvantaged groups	100
3.3	Support for entrepreneurship	51.9
3.3.1	Refugee right to own a business	33.3
3.3.2	Lack of requirement for a local partner	100
3.3.3	Access to finance for businesses	0





About the Refugee Opportunity Index

Refugees' self-reliance depends on unfettered access to economic opportunity in their host communities, yet unequal and inconsistent policies often create unintended barriers and constraints to refugee employment and entrepreneurship.

Recognizing the immense economic potential of refugees, the Refugee Opportunity Index (ROI) seeks to measure the extent to which a country's policy environment enables access to economic opportunity for refugees within their host communities. The ROI includes 43 qualitative and quantitative indicators organized into 13 sub-categories and 3 categories.

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