


# UGANDA: SUMMARY OF LEARNING FROM RECENT RESEARCH

Significant efforts have been made in recent years to expand the amount of high-quality and policy-relevant socioeconomic data and research on forced displacement. In Uganda, comparable datasets include the [UBOS-World Bank 2018 Refugee and Host Communities Household Survey](#), 2020/21 High Frequency Phone Survey Monitoring Covid Impacts ([First Round](#), [Second Round](#), [Third Round](#)) and 2022 Demographic and Health Survey (forthcoming). [Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement](#), a research partnership between the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Bank, has also contributed global and country specific studies on relevant topics.

Findings from recent relevant research from **Uganda** are highlighted below.

## A growing body of research shows that inclusive refugee-hosting in Uganda improves local development and prevents public backlash

<p><a href="#">Inclusive refugee-hosting can improve local development and prevent public backlash</a></p> <p>Zhou, Y-Y, G. Grossman &amp; S. Ge (World Development, 2023)</p> 	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large arrivals of refugees raise concerns about potential tensions with host communities, particularly if refugees are viewed as competing for limited material resources and crowding out public services.</li> <li>➤ This study empirically <b>tests whether the presence of refugees in Uganda has improved public service delivery</b>, and consequently, <b>dampened potential social conflict</b>.</li> <li>➤ The data combines <b>geospatial information on refugee settlements</b> with <b>unique longitudinal data</b> on primary and secondary schools, road density, health clinics, and health utilization.</li> </ul> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This study reports two key findings. First, particularly after the 2014 arrival of over 1 million South Sudanese refugees, <b>host communities with greater levels of refugee presence experienced substantial improvements in access to basic services</b>. This includes schooling, health access and roads.</li> <li>➤ Second, using <b>public opinion data</b>, we find <b>no evidence that refugee presence</b> is associated with <b>more negative (or positive) attitudes towards migrants or migration policy</b>.</li> </ul>
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## The presence of refugees benefits many Ugandan households, including those who have shifted from subsistence agriculture into commercial farming and wage employment

<p><a href="#">How to Cope with a Refugee Shock Evidence from Uganda</a></p> <p>Kadigo, M. et al. (2022)</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sub-Saharan Africa hosts a large proportion of the world's refugees, raising concerns about the consequences of hosting refugees. This paper focuses on Uganda, which is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and is praised for its progressive refugee policy. The</li> </ul>
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paper **analyzes the effects of hosting refugees**, relying on **longitudinal data** and **statistical methods**..

**Findings**

- The results indicate that **Ugandan households benefit from living close to the refugee settlements**. In contrast with the existing literature, the analysis finds that **those initially involved in subsistence agriculture benefit the most**. The effect seems to be driven by the few **households able to move from subsistence agriculture to commercial farming** and to some extent, to **wage employment**.

**Targeted aid to microentrepreneurs shows promise for reducing tensions and improving attitudes towards refugees**

[Can Aid Change Attitudes toward Refugees? Experimental Evidence from Microentrepreneurs in Urban Uganda](#)

Baseler, T., et al. (2021)




**Overview**

- How should aid for refugees be allocated to assist refugees and gain the support of host communities? While host populations often believe they are negatively affected by refugees, **little evidence exists on the potential for aid to facilitate positive relations and mitigate tension**.
- This **randomized controlled trial** investigates **two programs** for Ugandan (host) **microentrepreneurs**:
  - **Cash grants** delivered **with information** about Uganda’s inclusive refugee policies, and
  - **Mentorship** by an experienced refugee or Ugandan.


**Preliminary findings**

- **Cash grants with information** about Uganda’s inclusive approach to refugee management **significantly increased support for inclusive policies**.
- **Grants and information** separately, **mentorship** by a refugee, and mentorship by a Ugandan also **increased support for inclusion but by less** than the cash and information programs combined.
- Contact with the refugee-led organization partially drives these effects. While no impact is found on business profits for any intervention, those receiving mentorship by a Ugandan experience positive economic effects.

**At the same time, refugees face challenges securing employment, are more likely to accept jobs below their skills levels and are paid less than host community peers for similar jobs**

<p><a href="#">UNHCR Uganda Knowledge Brief on Employment (Summary)</a></p> <p>Beltramo, T; Fix, J; and Sarr, I</p> 	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Uganda, the third largest refugee-hosting nation in the world and the largest in Africa, is one of the <b>most favourable policy environments</b> in the world for refugees.</li> <li>➤ This paper <b>provides a comprehensive analysis of refugees and hosts labour market performance</b> using data from the <a href="#">UBOS-World Bank 2018 Refugee and Host Communities Household Survey</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Despite this favourable policy environment, empirical evidence shows that refugees have worse employment outcomes than nationals.</li> <li>➤ Only <b>29 percent of refugees</b> in Uganda are actively working, versus <b>64 percent among host communities</b>. Despite some convergence over time, this trend <b>persists for decades</b> after arrival.</li> <li>➤ <b>More than one-third of working refugees</b> are shown to be <b>overeducated</b> for their current occupation, versus <b>21 percent</b> of the working population nationally.</li> <li>➤ On average, <b>refugees earn 32 percent less than Ugandan nationals with similar levels of education</b>.</li> </ul>
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**Refugee children are three times more likely than adults to be poor – with more than half of those living in non-poor households – putting them at greater risk of being left behind**

<p><a href="#">Child Poverty Among Refugees</a></p> <p>Beltramo, T; Calvi, R; De Giorgi, G ; Sarr, I (CEPR, 2023)</p> 	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Globally four out of every 10 refugees are children. In the East, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes region, it is even higher – as <b>two out of three refugees in Kenya and Uganda are below the age of 18</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ For the first time, UNHCR and partners estimate poverty rates that account for inequality within households, <b>finding that refugee children can be up to three times more likely to be poor than adults and almost half of the extremely poor children live in households that are considered non-poor</b>.</li> <li>➤ Estimates show that if <b>all countries share the cost burden – regardless of whether they host refugees – it is possible to eliminate poverty among refugee children</b>. The authors estimate it would take an estimated US\$732 per day to eliminate child poverty among refugees in Kenya and US\$379 per day in the host community. In South West Uganda, it would require US\$1,783 per day for each refugee child and \$377 per day for a non-refugee child.</li> </ul>
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