CANDIRU GERTRUDE SALLY (2014-M092-20020)

Socio-economic Empowerment and Enhancing Livelihoods: A Case Study of Urban Refugee Women in Kampala, Uganda.

The number of refugees and asylum seekers across all the countries in the world has been increasing over the recent years. Several studies conducted on the subject of refugees, migration and asylum seeking, revealed that refugees and asylum seekers become a big economic, social and political problem to the host countries. As people are forced to leave their countries of origin to seek refuge in another country for various reasons, they arrive in the host countries with very little or no resources at all to sustain their lives. In addition, they end up being heavily dependent on the external support from the host government, None Governmental Organisations (NGOs), church institutions and friends and relatives for survival. Despite the fact that support is given to refugees, however, it is not clear how much it contributes to improvement of their livelihoods. Also, most support initiatives are provided to refugees as a general programming rather than being sector specific. This study set out to examine the role of socio-economic empowerment initiatives in enhancing urban refugee women‟s livelihoods with specific objectives of finding the livelihoods state, the support initiatives and how they have improved the livelihoods of urban refugee women in Kampala, and the challenges faced in the implementation of such support initiatives. The study employed a qualitative case study design taking Kampala city as an urban area. Purposive sampling technique was used to select study participants. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed as qualitative methodology to collect qualitative data. Under these methods, interview guides and focus group discussion guides were the instruments used to collect data. These were carefully designed set of question guides that took account of the key themes and sub-themes in the study objectives. Data was later on analysed by editing, transcribing, typing and re-editing. Themes and sub-themes about refugee livelihoods, support initiatives, and challenges were categorised from which meanings were derived. In addition, verbatim were as well used to add value to the meanings and interpretations. From the data analysed, the researcher concluded that refugee women in Kampala just like other urban areas were living a deplorable life. The researcher was also able to conclude from the study that, refugees in general and urban refugee women in particular still had limited access to basic social services. As a result the researcher was able to draw the conclusion that the support initiatives had not greatly improved the livelihoods conditions of the refugees. The researcher noted that this was due to challenges such as discrimination, lack of implementation of refugee law, language barrier and lack of awareness on the side of the refugees. The study also notes that other challenges such as the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers, scattered nature of refugees in Kampala as opposed to settlements, negative attitude of NGO staff, limited involvement of refugees and local leaders in support programmes, and bureaucratic nature of support services stand in the way of implementing the refugee support initiatives which if not addressed will worsen the refugees‟ already bad situation. The research proposed certain remedies to address the above challenges which include establishing front offices nearer to refugees, increased sensitisation, change in attitude, involvement of refugees and local leaders in refugee affairs, proper coordination of programmes and designing programmes that target refugee women specifically. The study ends with a set of recommendations to address the above challenges to include; limiting the bureaucratic processes of service delivery, eliminating corruption, bringing services nearer to refugees and increased mobilisation of funds.

Key Words: **Socio-economic Empowerment, Livelihoods, Urban Refugee Women, Kampala**