
The new frontier for welcoming refugees: Uganda provides model for Europe

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Abstract

Uganda is providing an international model for welcoming refugees. Situated in the African region of the Great Lakes, with a population of 35 million, the nation currently hosts half a million refugees. Of which only 1% relies exclusively on humanitarian aid. For the majority of men, women and children who came as political asylum-seekers from nearby Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and South Sudan, things changed in 2006. From that year, in fact, the Ugandan authorities decided to experiment with a new system for management of refugees in their territory. The new system was based on four cornerstones: freedom of movement (with some restrictions); education; integration into a work program; the right to vote in local elections. Currently, in Uganda, refugees not only purchase essential goods, but also cars, scooters, and agricultural/industrial machinery for work purposes. In addition, the majority of new arrivals are given some land to cultivate for private use, and can rent additional land for growing a business, if desired. This model is antithetical to the one being employed in most European cities, but also in neighboring Kenya. Where, the majority of refugees are victims of and accomplices to excessive bureaucracy, and as a result, live on government hand-outs. The World bank, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre and the Norwegian Refugee Council have praised the Ugandan government's new system, which will be outlined in more detail in this present work.

Keywords: Refugee, Immigration, Integration, immigration policies

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