Challenges facing Income Generating Activities among urban refugees in Kenya: A case of Jesuit Refugee Service Mikono Project.

By:

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ABSTRACT

According to UNHCR reports Kenya is currently hosting refugees from Somali, Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda whose population is around 374,000. Considering the importance of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in contributing to wellbeing of refugees and relieving economic burden to host nation, this study geared towards ascertaining the challenges that face IGAs among urban refugees in Kenya. The study used Mikono Project of Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) in Nairobi as a case study.

The research used descriptive research design. The sample size was 40% from a population of 78 comprising of beneficiaries and coordinators. The primary data was collected through administration of a questionnaire to the respondents. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed by use of descriptive tools (SPSS and spreadsheets).

The study found that the resources available to refugees were inadequate to set up sustainable income generating activities for them and support by the government which is the biggest stakeholder, through implementation of income generating activities was relatively small. The study also found that unfair competition from local communities and corruption in urban centers was major challenges affecting implementation of income generating activities. Refugees had taken steps to overcome the challenges facing implementation of income generating activities by forming small groups which helped them to save money. The groups which were registered were given small loans by micro finances thus improving their life. The refugees also invested in education to be able to secure jobs. The study found that even though the steps being taken to overcome the challenges have not achieved much due to inadequate empowerment offered to the refugees.

The study recommends the hosting government to provide the refugees with adequate humanitarian aid and assistance in kind, financial resources and employment opportunities. The study also recommends the government to put up strategies to help the refugees to produce quality and cheap goods so as to compete with local investors. The study further recommends improvement in urban services and fight against corruption in service delivery to be intensified.

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