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NATIONAL POLICY WORKSHOP

Promoting Migrant and Refugee
Entrepreneurship in Uganda

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SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



Session V: Raising Awareness and Networking

National Capacity-Building Workshop on Promoting Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship in Uganda

**Raising Awareness and Networking for
Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship**

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Setting the Context

- Aspiring migrant and refugee entrepreneurs often lack awareness of the support initiatives available to them. Many migrants and refugees find it difficult to make new business connections outside of their own ethnic groups.
- Refugee and migrant entrepreneurs need to engage with mainstream business support services to complement the advice and guidance from members of their co-ethnic networks.
- Absence of positive socio-cultural perceptions about entrepreneurship can act as a barrier to enterprise creation and can undermine the impact of policy interventions in support of entrepreneurship.
- Therefore, fostering an entrepreneurial culture that positively values entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is a key determinant of the success of an entrepreneurship policy framework.

Situation in Uganda

- Universities in Uganda through their entrepreneurship programmes are at the centre of cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship among university students and community.
- According to the Needs Assessment Report, more than 75% of the respondents confirmed that Universities and other tertiary institutions were supporting entrepreneurship through various initiatives.
- Likewise, 80 percent of the respondents reported that their organizations participate or support initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship culture.
- Affirmation that support is provided for the promotion of entrepreneurship among business students and communities within the environs of their respective institutions.
- For example, the School of Business in the College of Business and Management Science (CoBMAS) at Makerere University, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) and Uganda Christian University (UCU), organised annual entrepreneurship exhibitions / expositions by the students

Initiatives and Good Practices in Uganda

- Since 2015, Government of Uganda has been mainstreaming refugee entrepreneurship initiatives in all Government Programmes.
- Government departments have regular interactions with refugees.
- Initiatives have been made to ensure mainstreaming of CRRF imperatives in all Government Programmes.
- Refugee entrepreneurship imperatives were included in second Uganda National Development Plan (NDP II 2015/16-2020/21) through a five-year government strategy called the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA).
- The Uganda Christian University (UCU) has launched a business incubation centre to enable students acquire practical business skills. Similarly, the Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Incubation Centre of the Makerere University, through its various programmes, facilitates and promotes entrepreneurship culture among university students, entrepreneurs and the community at large.

Initiatives and Good Practices in Uganda

- Also, the **MUBS Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Incubation Centre (MUBS-EIIC)** outreach unit has promoted an entrepreneurial culture among individuals and institutions through hands-on training, mentorship and coaching services.
- Initiatives have been undertaken by Government and other actors in Uganda's entrepreneurial system to promote entrepreneurial culture through building business confidence, priding in success, supporting and encouragement of new ideas, providing technological support, as well as encouraging inter-firm linkages and promotion of research and development.
- However, there is need for strengthening of the interface between refugees, migrants and the various stakeholders such as **the Uganda National Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector Foundation, Uganda Investment Authority**, and national entrepreneurs.

Initiatives and Good Practices in Uganda

- **Uganda Manufacturers Association**, Universities and other institutions organise annual contests, exhibitions, and similar events to publicise and recognize entrepreneurs, their products and/or services.
- **Exhibitions** are held every year where refugees showcase their products.
- Refugees also participate in **market days** in their respective host communities.

Results from Stakeholder Interviews

- Given Uganda's progressive refugee policy, refugees in Uganda enjoy the same rights and services as citizens; they have the right to work, establish a business, own property, have freedom of movement and access to social services such as education and healthcare.
- **More than 70 percent of respondents interviewed affirmed** that the GOU publishes its support for entrepreneurship in publications or speeches, and communicates the link between entrepreneurship and economic development.
- However, initiatives or programmes designed to support entrepreneurship for refugees or migrants is limited. **36% of respondents indicated that information brochures, social media channels and web sites, as well as face-to-face informational meetings and outreach activities exist locally and in multiple languages.** The GOU through publication, speeches and communications support entrepreneurship of migrants and refugees.
- In terms of supporting contests or events that publicly recognize entrepreneurs and their products or services, more than half of the respondents affirmed availability of such initiatives or programmes.

Results from Stakeholder Interviews

- **Assessment findings indicated that only 45% of respondents were aware of any public information platforms on business and trade opportunities, while more than half 54% were aware of initiatives that link the public, private and academic sectors to foster a more inclusive and technological entrepreneurship ecosystem.**
- While most of the organizations reported support for partnerships to enable entrepreneurs develop their business and raise awareness about local business opportunities through business conferences, trade fairs, workshops and other commercial linkages, **more than 80 percent of the respondents indicated absence of programmes and platforms that help entrepreneurs identify international supply chain partners**, especially among members of diaspora networks.
- This implies that whereas deliberate efforts and support are in place to support local partnership, international partnership programmes or initiatives are limited despite their important role in global business growth and development.

Recommendations on Raising Awareness and Networking (1)

- The entrepreneurship ecosystem in Uganda is rather weak most probably due to the fact that most MSMEs in the country's entrepreneurial space participate as individual sole proprietors not as partnerships.
- There are several umbrella associations such as USSIA, UMA, PSFU that offer entrepreneurs an opportunity to network but are not fully utilised by the entrepreneurs. However, refugees, migrants and other persons in far-flung locations cannot access services provided by these entities due to unsatisfactory road network and limited ICT infrastructure.
- Support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in connecting with diaspora networks and networks in countries of origin
- Encourage programs that support diaspora networks or migrants and refugees' entrepreneurs' businesses

Recommendations on Raising Awareness and Networking (2)

Create and support networking opportunities for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs

- Encourage the creation of entrepreneurship networks and support existing networks of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs
- Encourage more synergies between governmental and other stakeholders to promote dialogue and improve the support to migrants and refugees' entrepreneurs
- Engage partnerships establishing strategic entrepreneurship development and awareness about local business opportunities
- Raise awareness of entrepreneurship support and initiatives among migrants and refugees.

Recommendations on Raising Awareness and Networking (3)

- **Connecting refugee and migrant entrepreneurs with experienced mentors e.g.**
 - Experienced entrepreneurs,
 - Industry professionals,
 - Students and youth with local business knowledge,
 - Successful migrant and refugee entrepreneurs who have gone through similar experience and Support programs that link refugee and migrant entrepreneurs to diaspora networks.
- Increased dialogue between refugees, migrants and the various actors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem
- A robust communication strategy with improved communication channels to facilitate information sharing about available business opportunities

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