



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalcra.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH

International Journal of Current Research

Vol. 16, Issue, 06, pp.28939-28947, June, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.47460.06.2024>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENHANCING REGIONAL PROTECTION POLICY AND RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES AMID GLOBAL CRISIS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th March, 2024

Received in revised form

15th April, 2024

Accepted 24th May, 2024

Published online 30th June, 2024

Key words:

Cooperation, Global, Policy, Protection, Refugees and Resettlement.

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented scale of global crises, including armed conflicts, climate change, and socio-economic disruptions, has led to a significant increase in the number of refugees worldwide. This paper examines current challenges and proposes comprehensive strategies to enhance regional protection policies and effective resettlement of refugees. By analyzing case studies from various regions, the research highlights best practices and innovative approaches for managing refugee influxes. It underscores the importance of international cooperation, policy coherence, and the strengthening of regional frameworks to ensure the protection and integration of refugees. The study advocates for a shift towards more sustainable and inclusive resettlement programs, emphasizing the need for robust support systems and community involvement. These efforts aim to not only meet immediate humanitarian needs but also promote long-term stability and development within host countries. The findings provide actionable insights for policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and stakeholders committed to addressing the multifaceted challenges of refugee protection and resettlement in the modern era.

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Citation: Prof. Prosper M. Ng'andu, PhD and Dr. Wanga Haipeng. 2024. "Enhancing regional protection policy and resettlement of refugees amid global crisis." *International Journal of Current Research*, 16, (06), 28939-28947.

INTRODUCTION

The Global Risks Report (2018) indicates that the global landscape has been profoundly altered by a series of interconnected crises, including armed conflicts, environmental disasters, and economic instability. These events have conspired to increase the number of refugees worldwide to unprecedented levels. As countries grapple with these challenges, the need for robust regional protection policies and effective resettlement strategies becomes ever more crucial. Historically, the international community has relied on a combination of ad-hoc solutions and bilateral agreements to manage refugee movements. While these measures have offered temporary relief, they often fall short in providing long-term stability and protection for displaced populations (McGoldrick, 2016). The surge in refugee numbers highlights the limitations of traditional approaches and underscores the necessity for innovative, regionally tailored policies that can address both immediate and future needs (Parliamentary Assembly Report, 2023). This article aims to explore the multifaceted dimensions of refugee protection and resettlement amid global crises.

It seeks to analyze the effectiveness of current regional frameworks and propose actionable strategies that can enhance the protection and integration of refugees. By drawing on case studies from different regions, this research identifies best practices and innovative measures that can be adapted and scaled according to specific regional contexts. International cooperation and policy coherence emerge as pivotal elements in creating a sustainable and effective refugee protection regime. The study advocates for a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and comprehensive resettlement programs that are not only humane but also pragmatically designed to foster long-term stability and development in host countries. Strengthening regional protection frameworks and involving local communities in resettlement processes are emphasized as critical components for the success of these initiatives. The ensuing discussion will delve into the current status of regional protection policies and the challenges faced in their implementation. Subsequently, the paper will propose a set of strategies aimed at enhancing the efficacy of these policies, ensuring that they are equipped to meet the nuanced demands of modern refugee crises.

Through this exploration, the research strives to contribute valuable insights and practical recommendations for policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and all stakeholders dedicated to improving the lives of refugees worldwide. By situating the protection and resettlement of refugees within the broader context of global crises, this article seeks to illuminate the urgent need for adaptive, collaborative, and forward-thinking approaches to one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time.

The Current State of Protection Policies and Refugee Resettlement

Global Overview: The global refugee crisis is at an all-time high, driven by conflicts, persecution, environmental disasters, and socio-economic instability. According to the UNHCR (Data and Statistics Report, 2023) states that at the end of 2022, 108.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order. "This represents an increase of 19 million people compared to the end of 2022, which was more than the populations of Ecuador, the Netherlands (Kingdom of the) or Somalia. It is also the largest ever increase between years according to UNHCR's statistics on forced displacement" (UNHCR Report, 2023). Holzer (2012) laments that the traditional frameworks and mechanisms in place much that are foundational, but are often insufficient to meet the complex and evolving needs of displaced populations and host communities. Globally, the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the primary legal instruments providing a universal definition of who are a refugee and outlining the rights of the displaced and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. However, these frameworks face significant challenges in their implementation, particularly in regions experiencing mass influxes of refugees, where resource constraints and political factors often impede effective protection.

Regional Overview

Africa: Africa hosts a significant proportion of the world's refugees, with countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya among the largest host nations. Abebe (2010) reports that the African Union established the Kampala Convention as the first legally binding regional instrument aimed at protecting and assisting internally displaced persons (IDPs). While there has been progress in regional cooperation and policy formulation, challenges remain in implementing policies effectively due to limited resources and political instability. Refugee protection and resettlement in Africa is a complex and versatile issue involving various stakeholders including governments, international organizations, NGOs, and local communities. From the point of protection basing on legal frameworks, the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol form the cornerstone of international refugee protection. Many African countries are signatories (Adeola, 2019) to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. Meanwhile, to strengthen refugees protection, the region established the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa provides additional regional protections. To the contrary, much that Africa hosts a significant number of refugees, with countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan among the largest host (<https://www.oxfarm.org>), these countries often face challenges in resources and infrastructure to adequately

support the refugee populations. UNHCR plays a crucial role in providing protection and assistance to refugees and other PoCs. Other organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and various NGOs, also contribute significantly (Elie, 2010). Nonetheless, protection encounters a number of challenges in Africa due to inter-alia security issues and ongoing conflicts in regions like the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region exacerbate the situation. Limited resources and sometimes hostile public opinion can hinder effective refugee protection (UNECA, 2015).

Meanwhile, resettlement is one of the three durable solutions for refugees, alongside voluntary repatriation and local integration. Governments of refugee hosting countries coordinate with the UNHCR and resettlement countries (such as the USA, Canada, and some European countries) to facilitate resettlement. Solf & Rehberg (2021) Resettlement countries often have specific criteria for accepting refugees, including vulnerability assessments and security screenings. The process can be lengthy and complex, involving multiple stages of documentation, interviews, and medical checks. The number of refugees resettled from Africa is relatively small compared to the total refugee population on the continent. Limited resettlement slots, bureaucratic hurdles, and political factors in resettlement countries affect the overall process. Some refugees successfully integrate into host communities, gaining access to work, education, and residency rights. Efforts to promote local integration include legal reforms, economic support, and social cohesion programs. Many refugees opt to return to their home countries when conditions allow, often facilitated by UNHCR and host governments.

Repatriation involves coordination to ensure safety, livelihood support, and reintegration assistance. New conflicts and crises continue to displace people, adding to the existing refugee populations. Triff & Wall (2020) postulate that efforts are being made to find innovative solutions, such as community-based protection strategies, digital identification systems, and livelihood programs. There is ongoing advocacy for increased international support and burden-sharing to alleviate the pressures on host countries. Overall, while there are significant efforts to protect and resettle refugees in Africa, the scale and complexity of the issue pose continuous challenges. Collaboration among international, regional, and local actors remains crucial for improving the situation.

Middle East: Rother, et al (2016) writes that the Middle East, particularly countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, has seen a dramatic increase in refugee populations due to ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. While these countries have shown remarkable hospitality, the sheer scale of displacement has strained their social and economic capacities. Regional responses, including support from the Gulf Cooperation Council and other bodies, have been essential, but gaps in long-term integration and protection persist. Protecting and resettling refugees in the Middle East is a critical and ongoing humanitarian effort due to the numerous conflicts, political instability, and economic challenges in the region. The Middle East has several conflict zones, including Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, leading to large-scale displacement. Countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Egypt have hosted millions of refugees, mainly from Syria though some nationals like Jordan is not a signatory to either 1951 Convention or 1967 Protocols on Refugees but only signed an MoU with UNHCR in 1998 (Al Qaralleh, 2022).

Refugees often face precarious living conditions, limited access to basic services, and uncertain legal status. International legal instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol set the groundwork for refugee protection. Pakhtunkhwa (2024) writes that efforts are made to integrate refugees into local communities, though this is often challenging due to economic and social strains. Countries outside the Middle East, like the USA, Canada, and various European nations, have resettlement programs to offer refugees a chance at a new life. Refugees are selected for resettlement based on vulnerability criteria such as medical needs, survivors of violence, and those with severe protection concerns. The Middle East experience similar hiccups like African continent in term of resettlement such as Limited resettlement slots, lengthy processing times, and (Dorai, 2018) political resistance in some resettling countries remain hurdles. Collaborative efforts among Middle Eastern countries, sometimes supported by regional bodies like the Arab League, aim to address the refugee crisis.

Al Qaralleh (2022) in the Middle East, the protection of refugees' faces crucial financial and logistical support from international donors and agencies challenges in sustaining refugee assistance programs. Numerous NGOs operate in the Middle East to provide on-the-ground assistance in health, education, and livelihood support. Developing longer-term strategies for economic integration and stability and advocating for policy changes that ensure better protection and rights for refugees need to be encouraged. Efforts to protect and resettle refugees in the Middle East involve a complex matrix of local, regional, and international efforts. Continued commitment and innovative approaches are required to meet the needs of millions of displaced individuals and ensure their dignity and safety

Europe: Lehne (2016) Europe experienced a significant refugee influx during the 2015-2016 migration crises. The European Union (EU) has since implemented various measures, including the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), to manage and distribute the responsibility for asylum seekers. Despite these efforts, there are disparities in how member states receive and integrate refugees, leading to ongoing debates about burden-sharing, border security, and the rights of asylum seekers (Foti, 2019). The topic of refugee protection and resettlement in Europe is a complex and multifaceted issue, involving various legal frameworks, humanitarian policies, and international cooperation. Like other regions, in Europe the 1951 Refugee Convention is the cornerstone of international refugee protection, outlining the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states to protect them. The region has developed European Union Asylum Policy and the Dublin Regulation, which determines which EU Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application. The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) aims to harmonize asylum procedures and standards across the EU. Furthermore the region established European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) aimed at providing additional protection for refugees and asylum seekers. Individuals who can demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion can be granted asylum. The UN Refugee Agency works with European countries to resettle refugees who are particularly vulnerable and cannot return to their home country or stay in the host country.

EU Resettlement Framework coordinates the resettlement efforts of EU Member States, promoting legal and safe pathways to Europe for refugees in need of protection. Albeit, individual countries like Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands have their own resettlement programs, often in partnership with the UNHCR and other international organizations (Carrera & Cortivovis, 2019). To the contrary, many European countries struggle with the capacity to process and integrate large numbers of refugees effectively. Immigration and asylum policies can be highly politicized, influencing public opinion and policy decisions. The region also faced difficulties in achieving uniform standards and procedures across all EU Member States, leading to disparities in protection and resettlement practices. In light of that, in September 2020, the Commission (European Commission, 2024) felt it prudent to adopt a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which contains a number of solutions that have new legislative proposals and amendments to pending proposals to put in place a system that is both humane and effective, representing an important step forward in the way the Union manages migration (González-Enríquez, 2024).

Asia-Pacific: UNESCO Report (2023) indicates that the protection and resettlement of refugees in the Asia-Pacific region are topics of significant importance, given the region's diverse political, social, and economic landscapes. The Asia-Pacific region hosts millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, with major hotspots including countries like Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. Major sources of refugees in the region include Myanmar, Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the Rohingya crisis has led to massive displacement, with many fleeing to Bangladesh and other to neighboring countries (Albert et al, 2023). The ongoing conflict and instability have resulted in a significant refugee outflow into countries like Pakistan and Iran. In Sri Lanka, although the conflict ended in 2009, there are still Tamil refugees who remain displaced. Several countries in the region host large numbers of refugees, often with limited resources and international support. Bangladesh and Thailand have been hosting a large number of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and groups from Myanmar respectively. Beside, both countries have hosted millions of Afghan refugees over the decades (Bhatia et al, 2018).

Albeit, while some countries in the region are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (like the Philippines and Japan), many others are not (such as India, Bangladesh, and Thailand). This affects the legal frameworks available for refugee protection. The UNHCR plays a critical role in providing protection and assistance (Janmyr, 2020). The UNHCR works with host governments and other partners to ensure safety, basic needs, legal assistance, and more. Varying national laws affect the status and rights of refugees. Besides, most of countries have specific refugee legislation whereas; others may apply ad hoc measures or lack formal mechanisms entirely. Resettlement to third countries as indicated to other regions above is a durable solution for some refugees, particularly those who cannot return to their home countries or integrate locally. Refugees Council of Australia (2024) reports countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan have resettlement programs, though the numbers are relatively small compared to the need. Innovative approaches like community sponsorship, where local communities support the resettlement and integration of refugees, are being explored in countries like Australia.

Regional bodies such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) can play roles in fostering cooperation on refugee issues, although their impact varies (IOM, 2023). Some solutions involve bilateral agreements for the return or resettlement of refugees, though these can be contentious and complex in implementation. UNHCR (2024) report many host countries in the region face significant economic challenges, limiting their capacity to support large refugee populations. Lack of legal recognition and protection for refugees in some countries complicates efforts to ensure their safety and rights. Refugees often face challenges integrating into local communities due to cultural, language, and economic barriers. International and local NGOs, along with the UNHCR, work on building local capacities for refugee protection and assistance. Advocacy efforts aim to improve the legal frameworks and societal acceptance of refugees. Integrating refugee protection into broader development efforts can help improve both refugee and host community outcomes.

Americas: Roy (2024) laments, the United States has a long history of providing protection and resettlement for refugees from around the world. The process involves several steps and agencies to ensure that refugees find safety and a new start in America. To admit refugees America established a Refugee Act of 1980 as a formal process for refugee admissions and resettlement. The Act defined the term "refugee" consistent with the United Nations definition and created the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to oversee support services. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) which is Part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are responsible for the processing and adjudication of refugee applications. Department of State (DOS) manages the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) in collaboration with international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify and refer refugees for resettlement. In the Resettlement Process, Refugees are identified by UNHCR and other international organizations based on vulnerability and need for protection. American Immigration Council (2021) Refugee resettlement in the U.S. represents both a humanitarian commitment and a complex process involving multiple stakeholders. It's about offering a safe haven and a chance for individuals to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. In the Americas, countries like the United States, Canada, and several Latin American nations are significant players in refugee resettlement and protection. The region faces challenges related to political asylum seekers, particularly from Central America due to violence and instability. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has played a role in advocating for stronger protections, but disparities in policy and practice among nations remain a concern. The study in summary draws that regional approaches to protection and resettlement vary widely based on local contexts, resources, and political landscapes. There are international frameworks in place to guide these processes, but implementation is subject to significant regional variation as summarized in the next chapter. Before undertaking the international frameworks, the researcher had to draw regional summary aimed at synthesizing the comprehensive understanding of issue under study and how frameworks apply.

Regional concise Summary: General overview of regional protection policies and refugee resettlement practices across different regions.

The African Union (AU) plays a significant role, with key instruments including the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, which broadens the definition of who qualifies as a refugee. Many African countries have national legislation in line with the international and regional conventions, providing asylum procedures and protections. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional bodies sometimes facilitate refugee protection and integration. Resettlement opportunities are limited due to resource constraints. The focus is often on local integration or voluntary repatriation. Some refugees are resettled in third countries through UNHCR resettlement programs, though the numbers are relatively small. In Middle East region hosts millions of refugees, mainly from conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Few countries in the Middle East have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, but they often allow refugees to stay temporarily. Protection is generally provided through international organizations like UNHCR and agencies such as UNRWA for Palestinian refugees. Resettlement is primarily managed by international organizations. Countries like Jordan and Lebanon host large numbers of refugees but face significant economic and social challenges. - Resettlement to third countries is an important solution for a small percentage of the most vulnerable refugees. For Europe, the European Union has a common asylum system (CEAS) that seeks to harmonize protection standards and procedures across member states. Key components include the Dublin Regulation, the Asylum Procedures Directive, and the Reception Conditions Directive. European countries generally provide substantial social services and integration support to recognized refugees. The EU and individual countries run resettlement programs, often coordinated with UNHCR. Several initiatives exist to distribute responsibility among member states and offer support to large refugee-hosting countries outside the EU.

In the case of Asia-Pacific, few countries in the region have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention. Protection is often provided by UNHCR, with varying degrees of cooperation from host governments. Practices and policies vary widely, with some countries offering de facto protection and others not recognizing refugee status officially. Furthermore, few countries offer formal resettlement programs. Australia, New Zealand, and some countries in Southeast Asia participate in UNHCR resettlement, but spaces are limited. Voluntary repatriation and local integration are often emphasized, though challenging. Protection Policies Americas region is quite unique. The United States, Canada, and many Latin American countries have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and have national asylum systems. The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees extends protection scope in Latin America, recognizing the broader context of regional conflicts and general violence. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has also played a role in shaping refugee rights. The United States and Canada are major resettlement countries, offering large numbers of resettlement places annually. Countries in Latin America have increasingly been engaging in regional resettlement programs, coordinated with UNHCR. The Brazil Plan of Action promotes solidarity and responsibility-sharing among Latin American countries.

Gaps and Challenges to Protection Policies and Refugees Resettlement: There are several potential policy gaps and challenges in regional protection and refugee resettlement policies. Different regions and countries may have varying

legal definitions and frameworks for refugee protection, leading to inconsistencies in how refugees are treated and resettled (Guide et al, 2013). In some cases, Refugees may face significant barriers to accessing asylum procedures, including border controls, lack of legal assistance, and inadequate information about their rights. Like in the Middle East region few countries have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, but they often allow refugees to stay temporarily (Janmyr, 2023). Many regions lack the necessary funding and resources to effectively implement refugee protection and resettlement programs, leading to inadequate support services and living conditions for refugees (Patrick et al, 2016). There can be a lack of coordination among different countries and agencies involved in refugee protection and resettlement, leading to fragmented and inefficient responses. Many refugees spend extended periods in limbo without permanent resettlement prospects, often living in camps with limited rights and opportunities. Refugees often face discrimination and challenges integrating into host communities, including barriers to employment, education, and social services. The number of refugees eligible for resettlement is often far below the need, leaving many in precarious situations. Security concerns can sometimes overshadow humanitarian obligations, leading to restrictive policies that limit refugee protection (Solf, 2021).

There is often a lack of long-term solutions for refugees, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, or third-country resettlement (Silchenko, 2023). Current policies may not adequately address the growing number of people displaced by climate change-related factors. Inadequate data collection and monitoring can hinder the effective implementation and evaluation of refugee protection policies. Addressing these policy gaps requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving international cooperation, adequate funding, legal reforms, and a commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of refugees. Many host countries face economic and logistical limitations that hinder their ability to provide adequate support and integration opportunities for refugees. The commitment to refugee protection varies widely among countries, influenced by domestic politics, security concerns, and socio-economic factors (Verme, 2023). There is often a gap between the establishment of protection policies and their effective implementation on the ground. While international frameworks exist, the lack of a cohesive global strategy and burden sharing mechanism poses challenges to consistent and fair refugee protection. Insufficient training and support for staff involved in refugee protection can lead to gaps in knowledge and skills, impacting the quality of services provided to refugees. Failure to incorporate a gender perspective into refugee policies can result in inadequate support for vulnerable groups such as women, girls, and LGBTQ+ refugees (Panayotatos, 2021). Inadequate child protection measures can leave refugee children at risk of exploitation, abuse, and neglect. There are also at times where healthcare services for refugees, including mental health support are limited hence, this can exacerbate existing health disparities and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, lack of interpretation services and culturally appropriate support can hinder effective communication and integration efforts. To avoid social exclusion, Zambia has included children of refugees and all PoCs in free education from early Childhood to grade twelve (12) and those who proceed to tertiary are free to access education loans.

This in view that limited access to quality education for refugee children and youth can perpetuate cycles of poverty and social exclusion. Barriers to accessing the labor market and economic opportunities can lead to long-term dependency on aid for refugees. Insufficient consideration of environmental factors in refugee policy planning and implementation can lead to environmental degradation and resource depletion in host communities (Berry, 2008). In some hosting countries refugees are not accorded meaningful participation in decision-making processes thereby undermines their agency and empowerment. Refugees are endowed with various skills that the host countries can exploit to their advantage, therefore, they need to be involved in meaningful decisions. There are also challenges of inadequate access to legal aid and redress mechanisms can leave refugees vulnerable to rights violations and exploitation. By addressing these policy gaps and implementing holistic, rights-based approaches to refugee protection and resettlement, policymakers can strive to create more effective, inclusive, and sustainable solutions for displaced populations. The question/s still remains, how could these gaps and challenges be overcome? The author tries to explore the other mechanisms that policy protection and refugee resettlement can be enhanced amid global crisis.

Policy Enhancements for Regional Protection and Refugee Resettlement: To address the multifaceted challenges associated with regional protection and refugee resettlement, several policy enhancements and best practices can be implemented. These strategies can improve the efficiency, inclusivity, and sustainability of refugee protection systems.

Policy Enhancements

Strengthening Legal Frameworks: Djerejian (2024) stress that there was need to develop and strengthen regional agreements and conventions tailored to the specific needs and contexts of different regions, such as the Kampala Convention in Africa, which provides a framework for addressing internal displacement. Regions should endeavor to harmonize asylum laws and policies across regions to ensure uniform standards and practices, thus reducing disparities in refugee treatment. European Council of Refugees and Exiles (2017) like, in European, many countries face difficulties in achieving uniform standards and procedures across all EU Member States, leading to disparities in protection and resettlement practices. UNHCR (2024) stresses that invest in training for local authorities and stakeholders involved in refugee protection to enhance their capacity to manage and integrate refugees effectively were prudent. Improve reception facilities, healthcare, education, and housing to meet both immediate and long-term needs of refugees. Promote the inclusion of refugees in local communities through programs that encourage cultural exchange, language acquisition, and skills training. Conduct campaigns to raise awareness and combat xenophobia, fostering a more welcoming environment for refugees (Samardzic, 2017). Implement policies that allow refugees to work legally and access vocational training, thereby reducing dependency on aid and contributing to the host country's economy. Provide access to microfinance services and support for refugee entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses. Pairing newly arrived refugees with mentors from the host community or experienced refugees can provide valuable social support, guidance, and networking opportunities for successful integration.

Grouping refugees into cohorts based on common interests, backgrounds, or goals can create a sense of community and belonging, facilitating mutual support and collaboration. Creating online or in-person platforms that enable refugees to exchange cultural knowledge, language skills, and experiences with members of the host community can foster cross-cultural understanding and connections. Supporting refugee-led artistic and cultural initiatives, such as music, dance, storytelling, or visual arts, can provide a platform for self-expression, healing, and community building. Utilizing mobile service units to deliver essential services, information, and support to refugees in remote or underserved areas can improve access and inclusion. Empowering refugees with legal knowledge, rights awareness, and access to legal aid can help them navigate complex legal systems, advocate for their rights, and address protection gaps. Implementing environmentally sustainable practices in refugee camps and resettlement areas can reduce the environmental impact, create green jobs, and promote climate resilience. Kamalov et al (2023) propounded on leveraging AI technologies for language translation, job matching, skills assessment, and educational support can enhance efficiency and effectiveness in refugee resettlement programs. Supporting refugees in establishing sustainable livelihoods through agriculture, craft-making, renewable energy initiatives, or other income-generating activities can promote economic self-reliance and community development. Offering transitional housing solutions that bridge the gap between emergency shelters and permanent housing can provide stability and support to refugees during their resettlement journey. These innovative programs prioritize empowerment, community engagement, cultural exchange, sustainability, and adaptability to create more inclusive, resilient, and supportive environments for refugees.

Resettlement Programs: Increase resettlement quotas to provide more opportunities for refugees to find safety and stability in third countries. Encourage private sponsorship programs, where individuals, community groups, and NGOs can sponsor refugees, supplementing government efforts (Manicom, 2022). Establish mechanisms for sharing responsibilities among countries within a region, ensuring that no single country bears an undue burden. Enhance coordination among neighboring countries for sharing information, resources, and best practices in refugee protection and management.

Best Practices: Uganda's Refugee Policy: - Zhou (2023) Uganda has one of the most progressive refugee policies in the world, allowing refugees to work, move freely, and access public services such as education and healthcare. This approach has enabled refugees to contribute to local economies and integrate into society more effectively. Uganda has been internationally recognized for its progressive and humanitarian approach to refugee protection and resettlement. EU (2024) Uganda has maintained an open-door policy for refugees, providing asylum to individuals fleeing conflict, persecution, and disaster without discriminating based on nationality, ethnic group, or origin. Uganda allocates plots of land to refugees both for housing and for agriculture, which helps them achieve a degree of self-sufficiency. This land allocation is a cornerstone of Uganda's refugee integration strategy. Refugees in Uganda have access to public services such as healthcare, education, and water, similar to those available to Ugandan citizens. This ensures that refugees can live in dignity and have opportunities for self-improvement.

Rather than confining refugees to camps, Uganda follows a settlement approach where refugees live alongside local communities. This promotes social cohesion and integration.

The Ugandan government, in collaboration with the UNHCR and other partners, has implemented the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy (Zewdu, 2019). This aims to enhance the self-reliance of refugees and host communities through access to livelihoods and essential services. Uganda has a favorable legal environment for refugees, underpinned by the Refugees Act 2006 and the Refugee Regulations 2010. These laws ensure refugee rights and access to services. Engaging both refugees and host communities in decision-making processes helps ensure that the aid and integration efforts are effective and sustainable. Community dialogue and participation are key to minimizing tensions and fostering harmony. Effective refugee protection and resettlement require a collaborative approach. Uganda works closely with international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, and local governments to coordinate efforts for the benefit of refugees and host communities. Refugee children in Uganda have access to primary and secondary education. The inclusion of refugee children in national education systems helps promote future opportunities and integrates them with the local population from a young age. Efforts are made to integrate refugees into the local economy. Initiatives include vocational training, microfinance programs, and support for small businesses, which helps refugees become economically self-sufficient and contribute to the local economy. Providing access to legal assistance and protection services ensures that refugees' rights are upheld, and they receive the necessary support to navigate legal and administrative processes. Comprehensive health services, including mental health and psychosocial support, are crucial for addressing the trauma many refugees have experienced. Uganda ensures these services are accessible to the refugee population. These practices have helped Uganda become a leading example in refugee management, balancing humanitarian needs with community development and integration goals.

Canada's Private Sponsorship Program: Canada has a well-respected framework for refugee protection and resettlement. The best practices in this area encompass a combination of policies, programs, and community efforts designed to support refugees and their successful integration into Canadian society. Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) defines the framework for Canada's refugee protection and resettlement policies (GAC, 2024). It ensures that Canada meets its international obligations under conventions such as the 1951 Refugee Convention. An agreement between Canada and the United States where individuals must seek refugee protection in the first safe country they arrive in. In Canada, there is Government Assisted Refugees (GAR). Martani (2021) Refugees selected abroad to go to Canada and receive support from the federal government. Services include temporary accommodation, financial support, and assistance with finding employment. Additionally, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor refugees under Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR). Sponsors provide financial support and settlement assistance for the duration of the sponsorship period, usually one year.

Germany's Integration Courses: Germany offers comprehensive integration courses for refugees, including

language instruction, civic education, and vocational training. These courses are designed to facilitate smoother integration into German society and the labor market. In 2015, Germany announced an open-door policy for refugees, particularly those fleeing conflict in Syria. Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized the country's willingness to take in refugees and provide them with safety and support. Meanwhile, in response to the large influx of refugees, Germany temporarily imposed border controls to manage the flow of people arriving in the country (Mushaben, 2017). This was part of a broader effort to address the logistical challenges of processing and accommodating the incoming refugees. Moreover, Germany has implemented various integration programs to help refugees rebuild their lives in the country. This includes language courses, job training programs, and initiatives to help refugees find housing and employment. In 2016, Germany was involved in negotiating the EU-Turkey deal, which aimed to stem the flow of refugees into Europe by providing aid to Turkey in exchange for Turkey's assistance in managing the refugee crisis (Özalp, 2021). In response to the refugee crisis, Germany implemented several legal changes and policy reforms to improve the reception and integration of refugees. This included streamlining asylum procedures, increasing financial support for integration programs, and expanding access to language courses and vocational training for refugees. Germany encouraged local governments, NGOs, and civil society organizations to play an active role in supporting refugees. Local communities across the country mobilized resources and volunteers to provide housing, language support, job opportunities, and social integration for refugees arriving in their regions. Germany has demonstrated a long-term commitment to refugee protection by continuing to invest in integration programs and support services even after the initial influx of refugees in 2015.

The government has recognized the importance of sustainable integration efforts to facilitate refugees' participation in German society and economy. These additional aspects showcase the multi-faceted approach that Germany has taken to address the refugee crisis and support those seeking asylum in the country. Overall, Germany's response to the refugee crisis has been a combination of humanitarian efforts to provide support to refugees and practical measures to manage the situation effectively within its borders and in cooperation with other European countries.

Kenya's Kalobeyei Settlement: - The Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Kenya is designed to promote self-reliance among refugees through agriculture, entrepreneurship, and community integration. It aims to move beyond the traditional refugee camp model towards a more sustainable approach (Betts, 2012).

Jordan's Compact: The Jordan Compact is a partnership between the Jordanian government and international stakeholders, providing work permits for Syrian refugees and investing in infrastructure to improve services for both refugees and host communities (Kattaa, 2023).

Mansur (2023) there are several innovative resettlement programs and approaches aimed at improving the well-being and integration of refugees. Jordan Community groups or individual take up responsibility to sponsor some refugees through Community Sponsorship Programs (CSP). These programs involve community groups or individuals taking on

the responsibility of sponsoring and supporting a refugee family or individual during their resettlement process. This not only eases the burden on governments but also fosters direct community engagement and support. There are also innovative programs in terms of Employment Pathways and Skills Training that offer tailored job training, language instruction, and skills development to refugees aimed at helping them secure employment and achieve self-sufficiency faster. Entrepreneurship Support is also one of the initiatives that provide refugees with resources and training to start their own businesses or enterprises can empower them economically and help them contribute to the local economy. Cultural Exchange Programs promotes understanding between refugees and host communities can help build social cohesion and reduce xenophobia and discrimination. Youth Empowerment Programs Targeted programs that provide education, skill-building, mentorship, and psychosocial support to young refugees can help them navigate challenges and build a better future. Innovative legal programs that offer pro bono legal assistance, advocacy for refugee rights, and innovative legal pathways for protection can ensure that refugees have access to justice and protection. Programs that integrate mental health and psychosocial support services into refugee resettlement efforts can address trauma and stressors, promoting well-being and resilience. Comprehensive case management services that provide individualized support to refugees, including access to services, resources, and social connections, can enhance successful integration outcomes. These innovative approaches focus on empowerment, community engagement, holistic support, and adapting to the specific needs and strengths of refugees to ensure more sustainable and effective resettlement outcomes.

Zambia: Modernization of Refugees and Hosting Communities Settlement Approach (MORHCSA):- The model is to create self reliance among PoCs and host communities and enjoy the universe human rights. Strengthen the protection and enhance the welfare and rights of refugees as well as improve access to justice and essential services. Restructure civil registration and documentation processes (Reliefweb, 2024). Enhance livelihood opportunities and provide durable solutions for refugees and former refugees. Promote coexistence between refugees and local communities. Foster partnerships between the government, local stakeholders, and international partners in addressing forced displacement. MORHCSA is a paradigm shift in the protection and management of refugees embarked developed in November, 2022 aimed at addressing four main pillars: Digitization of the Department's operations so that PoCs can access required documentation from their homes; Harmonization of laws and policies related to refugee management in line with international, regional and domestic requirements; establish viable and suitable infrastructure like level hospital, Colleges/Universities, all weather season road, green energy, communication systems; and creation of economic activities in refugee settlements. Enable children of refugees to have access to free education, health services and form cooperatives to access empowerments like Fertilizer Input Support Program (FISP).

CONCLUSION

Enhancing regional protection policies and refugee resettlement requires a multi-faceted approach, encompassing legal, economic, social, and political dimensions.

By implementing these policy enhancements and adopting best practices, regions can create more sustainable and humane systems that address the immediate needs of refugees while fostering long-term stability and integration. These efforts should be underpinned by a commitment to international cooperation and the shared responsibility of providing refuge and hope to those in need. The current state of refugee resettlement and protection policies is marked by a blend of significant strides and persistent challenges. Effective responses require not only robust legal frameworks but also sustained international cooperation, adequate resources, and political commitment. As the global refugee crisis continues to evolve, developing adaptive, inclusive, and coordinated approaches at both regional and global levels is paramount to ensuring that refugees receive the protection and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives.

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