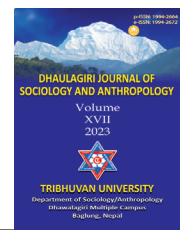


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Livelihood Precarity of Migrants: Perspectives of African Refugees in Durban, South Africa

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Migrants and refugees face numerous socioeconomic and institutional challenges in the host cities and countries. They are excluded from full participation in the labor market, which makes them vulnerable to poverty. To survive, migrants and refugees join the informal economic sector. Informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), the article examines how African refugees in Durban make and maintain their livelihoods, including their encounters with marginalization. Participants were drawn from Congolese, Rwandese, and Burundian community groups living in the inner city of Durban. The snowballing sampling method was key in identifying the participants, while face-to-face interviews were used for data collection. The findings show that African refugees in Durban pursue diverse forms of livelihood in the informal sector. They are faced with numerous challenges, such as a lack of start-up capital, weak social networks to protect themselves and their businesses, bureaucratic challenges, discrimination, and xenophobic attacks. Regardless of these challenges, migrants still forge ahead by starting their businesses and making a living under the circumstances of precarity and marginalization.

Keywords: African migrants, Durban, livelihoods, migration, refugees, South Africa

Introduction

The trends in globalization and human movement continue an upward trajectory. People's migration, searching for a better life, livelihood, or refuge in the face of natural and human-induced hazards and disasters, is greatly increasing (Ncube et al., 2019). These movements can be normal. In recent years, South Africa has seen an increase in the influx of migrants and refugees into its shores. It is becoming a preferred destination for migrants and refugees, mainly from African countries, because of its political and economic stability compared to some parts of the continent. The currents Bazirake (2017) states that as of 2021, StatsSA documented about 3.95 million official immigrants in South Africa, which accounts for

6.5% of the population of over 60 million people. A study by Bazirake (2017) indicates that 121,645 (nearly 5%) of the African immigrants in South Africa are refugees. A huge number of these refugees are a result of persistent wars, civil unrest, political instability, and economic insecurity in countries of origin (Bapolisi et al. 2021; Sadiddin et al., 2019) and these are usually referred to as push factors determining why refugees choose South Africa than anywhere else on the African continent. South Africa is also considered a choice destination because it is economically advanced compared to other African countries. South African employers are more willing to hire foreigners, including vulnerable and undocumented (i.e., illegal immigrants) (Idemudia et al., 2013).

Despite social instabilities marked by significant



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levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in many African countries, South Africa offers the opportunity for social integration to refugees and asylum seekers (Msabab, 2019). This means that refugees are not being kept in camps where conventional government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other humanitarian organizations provide food and other basic services on a humanitarian basis, as is the case in most refugee-hosting African countries (Msabab, 2019; Zihindula et al. 2016).

As a result, refugees and asylum seekers are integrated into local communities where their access to basic services, including food, is not provided. In South Africa, the Constitution guarantees socio-economic rights to all, but asylum seekers are excluded from social assistance, and many eligible refugees are unable to access social grants. This means that refugees must fend for themselves by working and earning an income to meet their basic needs (Nzabamwita & Dinbabo, 2022; Nutz, 2017). Studies have demonstrated that refugees experience socioeconomic marginalisation in South Africa (Niyigena, 2013). This marginalisation occurs in a socioeconomic environment characterized by high poverty levels among its citizens. In their effort to fend for themselves in such an environment, refugees enter direct competition with poor South Africans trying to make a living. As a result, at the grassroots level, refugees are perceived as a threat to local livelihoods, particularly in poor communities.

Such sentiments have often degenerated into xenophobic attacks against African immigrants (Niyigena, 2013). Mkanishe and Umbyeyi (2023) mention that xenophobic attacks further result in the loss of livelihoods when foreign national's properties and businesses are looted and burned by locals. Because of prejudice and xenophobia, immigrants, including refugees, have been forced to live in urban areas where they are confronted with more expensive living conditions compared to rural areas (Crush et al. 2018; Philip, 2010).

Refugees hosted in countries with social integration policies, such as Australia and Uganda, have access to income-generating activities such as agriculture and food service value chains (Harris et al. 2014; Jinnah; Nutz 2017). Although South Africa technically offers similar economic opportunities, the reality remains hostile because of the levels of poverty and unemployment. This situation not only frustrates the ideals of social integration for African migrant refugees but can also complicate their ability to make a sustainable living.

The aim of this social science study is to examine how African refugees in Durban maintain and sustain their livelihoods. It focuses on the variegated forms of livelihoods they undertake to survive. The key questions addressed by the researchers are: What are the existing forms of livelihood undertaken by African refugees in Durban? What are the challenges confronted by African refugees in making a living? Despite xenophobic

sentiments, why do they still come to South Africa? How do they develop resilience in the face of marginalization?

Theoretical Considerations

This study is informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). A sustainable livelihood entails the complex range of assets, activities, and relationships upon which poor and marginalized individuals and households depend for their livelihoods and survival (Sanderson, 2000). Researchers also look at various other factors, including available assistance provided to the most vulnerable members of society - in this case, refugees. This means that it also addresses a range of policy issues relevant to people with low incomes, such as access to health, education, finance, markets, and personal security, and how these can assist poor people in adjusting to changing living conditions (Sanderson, 2000).

The SLF has been the subject of debate and analysis and has been differently interpreted. While the concept 'livelihood' combines both capabilities and assets required to sustain a living, De Satge et al. (2002) argue that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from shocks and stresses and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both during normal times and uncertainty, whilst not undermining the natural resource base. Sanderson (2000), on the other hand, asserts that sustainable livelihoods entail capabilities, assets (both natural and social), and activities required for living. He believes that the combination of both natural and social assets can yield fruitful results, which, in turn, can assist poor households in resisting external shocks.

Ellis (2000) believes that where natural and social resources are weak, the organizational and institutional environment within which poor people draw upon assets of different types can play a critical role in strengthening the ability of people experiencing poverty to withstand external shocks. Several factors hinder the livelihoods of refugees. A study by Landau (2007) on sustainable livelihoods among refugees in Johannesburg found that they faced challenges such as inadequate documentation; systematic exclusion from employment, financial services, and income-generating opportunities; an inability to access social services such as education and healthcare; and unlawful investigations, arrest, and detention. These were the factors that exacerbated the socioeconomic exclusion of refugees, as well as hindered their ability to sustain their livelihoods. Rohwerder (2016) adds that low levels of social and human capital and poverty constrain the development of refugee livelihoods.

While SLF is critical in understanding how poor and marginalized individuals make a living in a challenging context, there are many reasons to believe that understanding refugees' livelihood strategies may be unique since they lack all social, financial, and institutional support. It is important to note that refugees, due to their

social and economic status, find themselves on the margins and afflicted by poverty and in the most vulnerable and precarious situations. This study is critical as it helps investigate different forms of livelihoods pursued by refugees and how they develop resilience in the face of marginalization in South Africa.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach. It aims to understand deeply the interpretation and experiences of participants in Durban regarding their livelihood strategies and views on different forms of livelihoods undertaken by African migrant refugees in Durban. Participants were drawn from Congolese, Rwandese, and Burundian refugee community groups living in the inner city of Durban from 18 and above. The participants share socioeconomic conditions similar to those of refugees.

The researcher was acquainted with some members of each community. Therefore, convenience sampling was key in identifying potential participants for this study. Once identified, the researcher sought their consent to participate in the study. Formal visit to request each participant to sign the consent letter, agree to participate in the study, and have an appointment day for face-to-face study interviews. There were the inclusion criteria men and women to participate in the study. [Adeoye and Olenik \(2021\)](#) thematic analysis was applied to the transcripts of 18 face-to-face interviews. The sample was between 18 and 70 years old, one is expected to be responsible enough to take care of the household, and there are fewer ethical implications related to informed consent because the age below 18 years is considered a minor.

The researcher carried out the study in the Kiswahili, French, and Kirundi or Kinyarwanda languages with the help of research assistants. Research participants were individuals with asylum seeker status, refugee status, or permanent residence status.

Participants were selected through snowball sampling. This method is relevant to the study because it is convenient for all participants within its criteria ([Bünemann, & Williams, 2008](#)).

The study was conducted under the ethical standards provided by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). It was approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). Informed consent was provided to all participants, and they were assured that their identity would be treated as confidential and only participants' pseudonyms would be used in the research reports. The quote used in this paper have the following identifiers 'first name, country of origin, gender'; the first names are pseudonyms to maintain anonymity ([Itzik & Walsh, 2023](#)).

Results

Central to this study was the ambition to document different forms of livelihoods undertaken by refugees in Durban, the challenges they face in making and maintaining livelihoods, and how they develop resilience in the face of immigration and marginalisation. The first section provides the participant's demographic information to achieve its objectives, followed by the different forms of livelihoods refugees undertook.

Demographic Information of Participants

Fifteen participants were between 30 and 40 years old, and three were younger than 30. This means that most of the participants were young. There was an equal representation of both men and women. Regarding economic activities, most participants were in the informal sector; they were self-employed, and others were employed in the informal sector that was not regulated, such as car guards. While examining the level of education, the findings show that most of the participants in this study had formal education. Some had high school qualifications, while others had university qualifications. This means that despite the level of education, it is difficult for refugees to access formal employment due to their social and legal status. During the interviews, the researchers were interested in understanding why refugees with formal qualifications could not get formal employment.

The findings from this study concurred with that of [Jaji \(2009\)](#), who argued that formal education creates economic opportunities that strengthen refugee resilience. The other key challenge raised by many of the participants in this study was that having the Asylum seeker permit did not make it easier for them to find formal employment in South Africa. For this study, formal employment refers to paid work declared to the state for tax, social security, and labor law purposes, while informal employment is wholly undeclared work where the work contract between the employer and employee is unregistered by the state for tax, social security, and/or labor law purposes (International Labour Organization, 2002).

The study also explored the legal status of participants; the findings from the study showed that they were all refugees at different stages of the refugee's legal status. The majority were asylum seekers, some with refugee status and one with a permanent residence emanating from refugee status. It is worth reminding that obtaining refugee status in South Africa takes a very long time. There were those aged 15 years who were still asylum-seekers and were expected to renew their permits on a six-month basis.

Forms of Livelihoods of African Refugees in Durban

The findings from this study show that migrants and refugees engage in various economic activities. Based on

the findings of this research, most refugees were involved in the following forms of livelihood: hairdressing, barbershops, restaurant cleaners, hairdressers/nail cosmetics, caregivers, supermarket retailers, online clothes traders, designers (outfits), and food delivery operators. It was apparent that refugees have a well-developed hairdressing sector. Walking or driving around the city of Durban, one will observe hair saloons made from tents along the street. Most tents are owned by refugees, mainly from the DRC and Burundi.

It is worth remembering that while refugees dominate the hairdressing business, the clients are largely locals. Some locals tried to operate informal hairdressing businesses but could not sustain the business and opted to close. This has raised contestations and resentment among local competitors who alleged that refugees have taken over the informal hairdressing business. This resulted in refugee businesses being exposed to vandalism, theft and attacks, mainly when there are xenophobic-related attacks.

Supermarket retailers, online clothing trading, and designer (outfits) are common businesses run by foreign nationals in South Africa and Durban. The findings show that some participants owned supermarkets and clothing designing or trading businesses. It was also apparent that some in the informal sector did not own a business but worked for fellow refugees in exchange for a salary. COronaVIrus Disease of 2019(COVID-19) came with new opportunities for refugees and immigrants. The advent of COVID-19 saw a growing number of food delivery operators among refugees. Observing motor cycling food delivery around shopping malls in Durban, it was clear that there is a growing number of migrants and refugees working as food operators in this sector. This was confirmed during the research. Some worked in the unregulated informal sector, such as carguards. While few carguards participated in the study, a few indicated that migrants and refugees dominate this sector.

In terms of participants' occupations, the findings of this study reveal that they stated that their occupations are very important in helping them to survive and meet basic needs (e.g., buying food, paying children's school fees, and healthcare). One of the participants had this to say:

Generally, this food delivery occupation is important to me because it is sustainable and covers my daily basic expenses. As a parent and a breadwinner, my three kids depend on me. It also pays my rental money where I am staying and send some money back home to my siblings. (Claude DRC, male).

Claude's narrative shows that his occupation as a food delivery person helps his family meet its basic needs and broadly look after his family. It is also clear from his statement that this occupation helps him to send remittances back home to his siblings. Another participant said:

I work as a hairdresser/nail Cosmetics - that is my everyday work, that's where we earn our daily living,

get money to pay for my two kids' school fees, pay our rent, get food and other basic needs (Aline Burundi, Female).

It is also important to note that while walking in Durban's malls, most carguards are foreign nationals, mainly from the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda. They also believe they can sustain their living based on the income from guarding cars. It is worth mentioning that the above economic activity provided refugees with an economic safety net. Most of them are well-established and support their families, sending children to schools and supporting members of their families staying in their countries of origin.

Challenges Experienced by Refugees while Making a Livelihood

The findings from the study show that refugees have unique experiences due to their socioeconomic and political situation. Examining the challenges experienced by refugees in Durban, it was apparent that their legal status was the major challenge that made it difficult for them to sustain their livelihoods and hamper their economic activities. Given that most of the participants were asylum seekers, the permit allowed the holders to seek employment and study. This is only on the paper, but in practice, this does not guarantee employment or chances to study. A refugee had this to say:

I have my own hair salon. That is the only income which sustains me and my family. Coming to your question, to get an opportunity in South Africa, It is not quite easy as you may think, one of the requirements when applying for any job in South Africa will be: the candidate must be South African or has a South African ID or is a Permanent resident. You find out that most of the job opportunities are given to South Africans and those who have Permanent residence with a South African Identity. For me to engage in self-employment only is not because I do not need a job, is due to my document status(Jacques DRC, male).

All participants from three selected countries in this study share the same experiences regarding job opportunities as asylum seekers and refugee status holders in South Africa. This is encapsulated in the following excerpt from a Burundian participant:

I am now in South Africa for nine years using an asylum seeker permit. During all this period, I have been unemployed. I am just trying to juggle here and there with small jobs to see how my family can survive. I know other refugee holders from DR Congo, and Rwanda who are unemployed for many years due their document status as asylum seekers and refugees which is preventing us to get some stable job opportunities. When I apply for a Job and I am told that my permit must have at least validation of one (1) year and asylum seeker permit is renewable in 6 months only,

consequently they could not employ me (Joseph Burundi, male).

In line with the above statements, most participants shared similar experiences. The exclusion of refugees from accessing economic opportunities is influenced by their legal status as asylum seekers and refugee status. All refugees interviewed from these three countries, DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda, confessed that they are legally given refugee and asylum seeker status, which provides little prospects for securing job opportunities. Other studies support this sentiment on migrants, which the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has added to the refugees' vulnerability because of the many irregularities related to their applications and issuance of documents (Msabah, 2016). For instance, the study adds that most asylum applications are rejected by the Refugee Status Determination Officer (RSDO) over the claim that the applicant had not left their home country because of persecution.

This exclusivist response to African refugees is confirmed in several studies (Makanishe & Umubyeyi, 2023; Crush et al., 2018; Smit & Rugunanan, 2014; Moyo, 2020). Our objective is not to provide the above listing of previous studies on exclusive experiences refugees suffer but rather to provide a foundation on which African refugees create dynamic ways in response to their socioeconomic challenges in the face of systems, processes and laws that can impede opportunity.

Legal status not only prevented refugees from accessing the formal labour market, but it has also affected the informal sector, which remains the sole source of livelihood for refugees. By law, to run any business, one must apply for a permit to operate in the inner city of Durban. Asylum seekers' status is not catered for, which means holders of asylum seeker status cannot apply for trading permits. Those who managed to operate had to arrange with a local who applied for a trading site in exchange for money or employment. This process seems to impede informal business among refugees and those intending to enter informal business. Bureaucratic processes and red tape make it challenging for refugees and affect their sources of livelihood.

It is important to remember that xenophobic attacks against African foreign nationals have become a norm in South Africa. The most targeted are vulnerable groups, mainly those who compete with poor South Africans. Refugees are at the receiving hand of xenophobic violence due to the nature of the business they have to undertake, mainly in the informal sector. During the interviews, it was apparent that while participants' informal business provided them with economic security, they all expressed concerns about the growing level of intolerance against refugees. They indicated that most of those in the informal sector were driven out of the business through the use of violence. For instance, there were those refugees selling clothes and other items on the streets of Durban. They all,

however, no longer operate due to xenophobic intolerance. Police intolerance and harassment are among the factors that affect refugees' informal business. As shown earlier, the nature of their legal status as asylum seekers denies many opportunities. Therefore, they find a way to bypass some regulations which expose them to police harassment and extortion.

Lack of start-up capital was also among the challenges faced by refugees in Durban. There are many reasons to believe that refugees from their home countries lack social and economic capital. Examining how refugees begin informal business, it was apparent from the participants' findings that one had already had someone or a relative living in Durban who would provide support before moving to South Africa. On arrival, the host provides the newcomer with the necessary support, such as accommodation, food and information to access the job. As indicated earlier, some of the participants own a supermarket, hairdressing business, etc. Newcomers are allowed to work and then acquire skills that later can allow them to begin their own business or seek employment elsewhere in the informal sector. Social capital and networks provide an important foundation for refugees' livelihood.

Making and Maintaining Livelihood in the Face of Migration and Marginalization

Despite the context of livelihood vulnerability, as we have seen in the above sections, there appears to be a trace of hope in some African refugees' minds. From their interviews, African refugees have developed mechanisms to improve and strengthen their resilience in their social spaces. Central to that is sharing information on existing opportunities and how to survive in the environment of marginalization. For instance, those working in the hairdressing business know where to get hair products at a competitive price. The exchange of information among refugees makes it easier for their businesses to become more competitive than locals.

It is also important to note that informal business is not predictable due to its nature. For instance, during COVID-19, many informal businesses were affected and had to close. Xenophobic attacks against informal businesses owned by foreign nationals and refugees have become a daily occurrence. When that happens, refugees still have what to fall back on. They rely on friends and relatives who provide them with accommodation and food until they get back on their feet. The social network also provided start-up capital. For instance, responses from all participants in this study showed how refugees are organized in the associations that bring them together. When one experiences financial challenges, the findings show that they are assisted with start-up capital in the form of loans. This process may be understood as why refugees' businesses still strive despite the informal economic challenges they face.

In the face of legal challenges, such as access to trading sites due to their permit and police harassment, refugees have developed mechanisms to overcome some of the challenges. This includes partnering with locals in exchange for employment or monetary. They also developed strategies to adapt to police harassment, be friendly with them and offer bribes. It was evident in the study that despite numerous challenges to safety and security concerns, refugees are dedicated and desire to work and continuously build sustainable livelihoods in a host country. African refugees have exhibited tenacity and resilience.

The findings also show that not all African refugees did well in their occupations. As indicated by the other participant's responses, they have difficulty getting customers due to competition.

As you can see, I am a barber this is my Job. We are more than seven people in this saloon and we all doing the same Job. So, we sit here outside waiting for the customers, it's just a competition when a customer comes, we all approach him/her. You understand that we are working under contest, to see how at the end of the day we get some money to pay the business rent and the basic needs of the family. Sometimes my family we run out of food because if I do not get customers daily, as a breadwinner, my family will stay hunger (Bizumuremyi Rwanda, male).

The findings have also shown that for participants to maintain their livelihood, they had to work long hours, extend their social network beyond immediate relatives and friends, and acquire new skills. This means that some with formal education had to upgrade their skills in the sector of their business. For instance, some hairdressers must diversify their business by including new products and services. As a result, they have to undergo some form of training. The same strategies were common in food delivery. Some of the food delivery persons had motorcycle driving licenses. Due to the competition, some upgraded their driving license to include driving cars and trucks.

Religion and faith are sources of resilience among refugees. It is important to note that most of the participants are from Christian countries. In addition, people in desperate situations turn to their belief as inspiration in times of challenges. Interestingly, all participants expressed hope of improvement in their life conditions. They believe that God planned for their lives, and they hope that God would improve their wealth in the future. This was another form of strength and inspiration from which their resilience relies. One participant claimed, "It was prepared by God for us to be in this situation, and he is the one that will take us out of it." (Gloria Congolese, Female, 2023).

The narrative showed that the participant held strong beliefs in her region. These findings concur with [Tippens \(2016\)](#) found that participants alleviated their stressors by

relying on God and establishing a strong social network that assisted them in times of need with finances. While there is limited social support to refugees, their wish and prayer is for help from public organizations or private organizations to provide the necessary tools and resources for them to manage their businesses and diversify their activities for their survival.

One participant's statement ready:

As far as I know, many refugees we do not receive any support from South African government apart of giving us this document (Asylum seeker or refugee status) which is not even allowing us to get employment opportunities. I feel like many opportunities must be created to allow those who do not have IDs or permanent residents but legally stay as asylum seekers and refugees to have some livelihood opportunities (Jane Burundi, Female).

Available Support to African Refugees in Durban

The study probed to know if there is any available support for refugees living in Durban, either from government or private institutions, to improve their living conditions. There were two responses from participants:

One response was among the majority of participants, who said they had never received any support from any institution. Most respondents argue that they try to create self-employment by working as barbers, carguards, hairdressers, and so on and by working and earning an income to meet their basic needs.

They have also indicated that access to housing for refugees is problematic since many refugees rely on informal trading and do not get subsidies for housing. Frequently, two or three families share one house to afford rent. One participant's narrative explained:

I never receive any support, because we use Asylum seekers, at least those with South African IDs they may try to apply for grants and see whether they can qualify. Because we know that the housing subsidy is afforded to South African residents does not apply to refugees, I wish that much more social assistance could be done for us the refugees. (Pascal Rwanda, male).

The second response was that a few of the participants indicated that they had received some support from the government, such as a "child social grant", which is offered to the child in the amount of R250 per month. Below is a statement supporting the above argument:

For me personally, I do not receive any support, but I can notify you that we have received "child social grant" My two kids of got paid R250 each per month. This amount would help them with their daily expenses. (Mugisha Burundi, male, 2023).
It is clear from both participants' responses that very

little support has been given to refugees living in Durban. When one looks at the life experiences of refugees, it is marked with hardship and some failure, such as lack of government support, lack of resources and assistance and support structures also are challenges. The findings revealed that the major problems that refugees in Durban face are the lack of documentation, increasing backlogs in asylum claims, lack of human and financial services, continuous delays in receiving permits, and a general lack of efficiency by the DHAs. As a result, refugees lack access to banking facilities and other financial opportunities. Furthermore, it makes it more difficult for refugees in Durban to start and/or expand businesses, which not only affects refugees' livelihood but also their ability to create jobs for others. Due to the lack of access to credit, the findings revealed that refugees have to rely on loan sharks and other forms of lending, which contribute to unregulated and potentially dangerous forms of monetary exchange.

It was apparent in participants' responses that qualifications obtained outside of South Africa must undergo an evaluation process, and that did not guarantee job opportunities even after the evaluation. It was also argued that qualifications obtained from South Africa are not given equal value regarding employment opportunities. Further to participants' responses, it was also apparent that those with South African qualifications were also available. Still, securing employment in the formal sector remained challenging because of their legal status as asylum seekers.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore and examine how refugees make and maintain livelihoods in the face of migration and marginalization. Central to this study was to document and interrogate different forms of livelihoods undertaken by refugees in Durban, the challenges they face while making and maintaining livelihoods, and how they develop resilience in the face of immigration and marginalization. It was evident that socioeconomic conditions are determined by their legal status, which makes it difficult to make and maintain livelihoods. Institutional structural challenges create a situation of uncertainty among African refugees. Social exclusion practices such as anti-refugee immigration laws, xenophobic intolerance, and policies continue to exist and impede the livelihood of refugees.

Although most of the descriptions from the participants painted a picture of vulnerability, the nature of resilience and social networks was unique. The ability of African refugees, through the assistance of their social networks, create an enabling environment to adapt to harsh conditions and, above all, still provide for their families and send remittances to their parents and siblings back to their home countries.

Recommendations

This study's findings provided valued insight into the livelihood strategies and challenges faced by African refugees in Durban, South Africa. Some practical and policy recommendations made by the participants in this study should be implemented if refugee livelihoods are sustainable in South Africa while creating better social cohesion between local and refugee communities. One of their recommendations was made to the South African government through the Department of Home Affairs that the Refugees Act should be implemented without bias and unnecessary delay for refugee rights to be protected and their livelihoods protected. The South African Refugees Act of 1998 allows refugees to study and work in the Republic. As a result, the South African government should implement the Refugee Act and timeously issue refugees with valid, recognizable, and durable documentation. This will help refugees apply for and obtain education and employment, access to opening bank accounts, credit facilities, and business loans. This also will help refugees develop and build their livelihood resilience. In addition, proper documentation will help refugees acquire formal education and find formal employment, which will help them become self-sufficient and self-reliant. Secondly, the South African government must facilitate community and national awareness campaigns through various platforms on the difficulties, experiences, rights, and responsibilities of refugees in South Africa. This will help deal with many negative stereotypes and perceptions citizens and local communities have about refugees. The authorities and companies must also be educated to identify and accept refugee documentation when they search for and access social and other activities to avoid the abuse of refugee rights.

Declarations

Ethical Conduct of Research:

This writing follows ethical values.

Ethical Approval for the Research:

This research has been approved by HSSREC; protocol number: HSSREC/00005206/2023.

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Both types of data (primary and secondary) were collected by the author, these are not currently available to share.

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