

**Topic:** Stakeholders' Interventions in Addressing the Socioeconomic Barriers to Refugee Women Access to Higher Education: A Case of Bidibidi Settlement in Northern Uganda.

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**Abstract:** Despite the great benefits of higher education, socioeconomic constraints prevent refugee women from enrolling in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (GEM report, 2019). In this study, I explored stakeholders' interventions in addressing socioeconomic barriers to refugee women's access to higher education, using the Bidibidi refugee settlement as a case study. By socioeconomic hurdles, I mean gender roles and norms, sexual violence, and financial constraints. Using the advocacy world view I rooted my research on the liberal feminism perspective through intersectionality. I employed an evaluative case study design. My study sample consisted of 49 participants classified as stakeholders and were divided into four categories. First, the refugee women chosen using snowball sampling and whose data I acquired through semi structured in-depth interviews. Second, were three purposefully chosen government officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Yumbe District Local Government, whose data I collected through interviews. Third, were four purposefully chosen humanitarian actors, one each from the UNHCR, FCA, WIU, and WUSC, whose data I collected through interviews. Fourth, were 23 community leaders, purposefully sampled and their data obtained through interviews (5) and focus group discussions (2) each disaggregated by sex. Besides interviews, I also employed observation and desk review methods to obtain data. The findings of this study revealed that there is to some extent government and political will to facilitate refugee women access to higher education, through policies and legislations and partnerships with humanitarian actors. The study also found out that career guidance and mentorship is being given to refugee women to guide in their career choices and development, particularly addressing any gender-specific barriers. Family support within refugees' households is being promoted by valuing education for women and engaging men in initiatives to challenge traditional gender roles; multi-sectoral support including coordination and advocacy was practiced; and actions seeking to economically empower women are being promoted. As a result of these efforts, the study indicates that a total of 91 refugees, specifically 41 refugee women, have been able to access higher education. This signifies a tangible outcome of the combined initiatives undertaken by the stakeholders in order to empower and provide higher educational opportunities for refugee women. Despite the presence of interventions addressing socioeconomic barriers this study found that a number of varied intersecting vectors including but not limited to age limit for scholarship, marital status, length of a programme, disciplinary field preference, length of stay in the settlement, gender, economic standing, citizenship status, disadvantaged refugee women access to higher education. Higher education stakeholders need to identify and consider intersectionality factors in the design (nature of support), implementation (selection of beneficiaries, mode of delivery), and that interventions be frequently monitored and evaluated in addressing social economic barriers. There is need to review and strengthen the already existing interventions and widen the resource base that can support refugee women access higher education. An affirmative action policy is required to widen refugee women access to higher education. The study has also helped to develop a model on higher education access for refugee women.