

Displacement and development solutions in Tanzania

Tanzania's refugee integration could serve as a blueprint for expanding the framework of durable solutions globally. In 2007, Tanzania developed a Comprehensive Solutions Strategy in coordination with UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) to create a lasting solution for the Burundian refugees still in Tanzania. This involved closing the settlements and integrating the refugees into 21 different communities around the country.

While many refugees were naturalised in the following years, the effort was halted briefly, and reopened again in late 2014. With the reopening, Tanzania shifted its focus to coincide with the current global emphasis on sustainable development within the refugee context. Tanzania decided to offer citizenship to over 162,000 Burundian refugees, placing them at the centre of their effort to create sustainable local integration alongside development. This historic decision is unique and the result of a host government working with the international community to facilitate creative solutions for refugees. The former refugees are now full-fledged citizens of Tanzania, their new status allowing them to carve out a living and a future in what is now their country.

Many challenges still lie ahead. The socio-economic integration of a sizable group of people will require significant

investments in the infrastructure of the affected areas. Local government will have to work closely with the central government in Dar es Salaam and the international community to secure adequate resources to support integration. Moreover, efforts to make improvements in local communities must ensure that all segments of the society benefit, both the newly naturalised refugees and the existing Tanzanian population.

Such processes can only happen if the new Tanzanians are incorporated into the existing development plans of their country.

To truly bring this initiative to fruition, Tanzania will need to wholeheartedly continue with its own implementation strategy. The central government will naturally take the lead, but the role of new Tanzanians, provincial and local governments, international and local humanitarian relief and development agencies, as well as the private sector, will have to be fleshed out. Tanzania must not stand alone but rather walk together with an ever more varied group of international and regional partners.

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