

POPULATION MIGRATIONS

PREDICT OCCURRENCE AND IMPACT OF POPULATION MIGRATION IN UGANDA AND OTHER PLACES BASED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF MIGRATIONS

- identify the migration types and patterns, causes, and effects.
- population migrations, their causes, and effects,
- explore measures that have been implemented or can be taken to manage or reduce different types of migration
- future trends and patterns of population migrations in Uganda.
- case studies of population migrations in Africa and other parts of the world, marking areas of high emigration and immigration, and discussing reasons behind these trends.
- identify lessons Uganda can learn from their policies and efforts.

A. TYPES OF MIGRATION

- 1. Internal Migration:** Internal migration refers to the movement of people within the same country. It is the most common type of migration in developing countries. People move mainly in search of employment, education, better health services, fertile land, or security. **Example:** Movement of people from Karamoja, Lira, or Kabale to Kampala and Wakiso in search of jobs and better living conditions.
- 2. External (International) migration:** This is the movement of people from one country to another. It may be voluntary or forced and is often influenced by differences in income levels, political stability, or job opportunities between countries. **Example:** Ugandans migrating to Kenya, South Sudan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, or the USA for employment or education.
- 3. Permanent migration:** Permanent migration occurs when people move to a new place with no intention of returning to their former home. This usually happens when migrants secure permanent jobs, land, or citizenship.

Example: A family relocating from rural Mbale to Wakiso and settling there permanently.

- 4. Temporary migration:** Temporary migration involves movement for a short period, after which migrants return to their original homes. It is common in agricultural and construction activities. **Example:** Seasonal labourers moving to tea plantations in Bushenyi or sugarcane plantations in Kakira during harvesting seasons.
- 5. Voluntary Migration:** Voluntary migration happens when people move by choice to improve their standard of living. It is usually motivated by employment, education, business opportunities, or marriage. **Example:** Students moving to Makerere University or Mbarara University for higher education.
- 6. Forced Migration:** Forced migration occurs when people are compelled to move against their will due to war, natural disasters, political instability, or persecution. **Example:** Internally displaced persons (IDPs) during the LRA conflict in Northern Uganda or refugees from South Sudan and DR Congo entering Uganda.
- 7. Rural-urban migration:** This is movement from rural areas to urban centres. It is mainly caused by rural poverty, unemployment, and lack of social services, while towns attract people with jobs, industries, and better infrastructure. **Example:** Youth moving from Iganga or Hoima to Jinja and Kampala.
- 8. Urban-Rural Migration:** Urban–rural migration refers to movement from towns back to rural areas. It may be due to high urban living costs, retirement, or loss of employment. **Example:** Retired civil servants leaving Kampala to settle in villages.

B. MIGRATION PATTERNS

(Migration patterns describe **how migration occurs or the manner in which people move.**)

- 1. Step Migration:** Step migration occurs when migration happens in stages, rather than directly from the place of origin to the final destination. Migrants move gradually as opportunities improve.
- 2. Circular Migration:** Circular migration involves regular movement between two or

more places, usually for work or trade, with migrants returning home after a period.

Example: Traders moving between Uganda and Kenya or seasonal workers moving to farms and returning home.

3. Chain Migration: Chain migration occurs when migrants follow relatives or friends who migrated earlier and help them settle. It creates strong migration networks.

Example: One family member migrates to the Middle East and later supports other relatives to migrate.

4. Return Migration: Return migration happens when migrants go back to their original homes after some time due to retirement, completion of work contracts, or failure to settle. **Example:** Ugandans returning home after working abroad to invest in farming or business.

5. Forced Mass Migration: This pattern involves the movement of large groups of people at once, usually due to wars, droughts, floods, or political instability. **Example:** Refugee movements from **South Sudan into Northern Uganda.**

Factors that influence population migrations

The factors for migration can be grouped as pull factors and push factors.

The factors are usually categorized as political, social, economic and ecological factors.

Pull factors are the favourable factors which attract people to migrate to an area such as better social services or these are the advantages /opportunities at a destination that attract to that area.

Push factors are the unfavourable factors which force people out of a given area and therefore migrate to other areas such as high level of unemployment, poor infrastructures or these are the disadvantages at the source area that make people to move to other areas.

1. Political factors

- Difference in political belief/ party. People are sometimes forced to migrate because of being threatened since they belong to a particular party /system or political thinking.

- Political insecurity in some areas / war or civil strife which make people vacate the insecure areas such as people in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, people in DRC due to rebel activities, people in southern Sudan during the struggle for power in 2013-2014, northern Uganda due to Kony rebel activities, etc. such people migrate as refugees or internally displaced people.
- The attaining of independence in some countries, which caused many migrations such as in India 1947 and people were forced to move especially non-Moslems to Pakistan. The same applied to many African countries on attaining independence when many whites went back to Europe in the mid-20th century.
- Shift in ideology (capitalism versus socialism). For example, Germany after the Second World War, East Germany became a socialist state while West Germany remained capitalistic in ideology. Thus, people who were capitalistic in ideology migrated from east to West Germany and vice versa.
- The effect of slave trade. During slave trade era people were forced to migrate i.e. were captured and carried away against their will. Slave trade affected especially African countries such as west Africa, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), east Africa etc. Today people may be abducted, kidnapped, and taken to other areas or countries to work as 'slaves'.
- Government schemes lead to forced migration of people such as settlement schemes, gazetted of national parks and wildlife reserves to displace people. Many people are displaced from the gazetted areas by law and they are taken to resettlement schemes prepared by the government or forced to go elsewhere.

Economic factors

- Economic factors are often taken as the major reasons for migration, with the search for employment being the major reason for this type of motive. Labour migration is selective in nature and may be long or short term. The major destinations of labour migrants since 1945 are Western Europe and the Gulf States. Most migrants come from the Mediterranean countries and the excolonial territories among others.

- Search for employment opportunities. South Africa is known for its reliance on migrant labour for the exploitation of its natural resources such as mineral resources. These migrants come from Britain, USA and Japan. Many workers also migrate from the neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, and Namibia.
- Shortage of land. Land in some rural areas is in short supply. The rural community heavily depends on land for production of food for home consumption and for sale. However, the available land in many areas is inadequate to produce sufficient food for the population. This causes migration to buy land from other areas and increase food supply.
- The declining productivity of land in some areas which makes people to migrate to other more productive zones agriculturally. Use of soils in some areas for long leads to exhaustion and forces farmers to look for fertile lands elsewhere.
- Uneven distribution of economic opportunities between areas especially industrial concentration in the urban areas, meaning that meaningful employment is mainly found in urban areas. Hence, the major cause of migration is the search for employment which is better paid, in a bid to improve the standards of living.

Social factors

- Social pressures also force people to migrate such as evidenced by refugees (according to the UNHCR-United Nations High Commission for Refugees). These are related to social oppression, political control, housing, health and education facilities. Today the greatest concentration of refugees are in the developing countries.
- The presence of better social services in some areas like medical facilities, schools of better standards. For example, much of the quality education can be attained in the urban areas where most of the cities always want to stay. Other social facilities include health facilities, recreation facilities, entertainment facilities which generally missing in the rural areas.

- Cultural practices also force many people to run away from the rural areas such as rituals, compulsory circumcision by some societies. They migrate and take advantage of the urban areas. There are also social obligations of marriage especially in the rural areas which may not fit in people's priorities in life.
- Population pressure in some areas causes migrations to other areas which are less populated. For example, some parts of Kigezi, Kabale are highly populated, leading to shortage of land and land fragmentation. This limits settlement and cultivation land, forcing many people to migrate other areas.
- Religious factors especially religious discrimination in particular areas. For example, in Northern Nigeria, the Muslims discriminate against Christians, in Sudan the Muslims also do not want to stay in the same areas with Christians. Many times, there is conflict/ fighting between the different religious groups and this forces many people to migrate to other safer areas.
- Racial discrimination is also common in particular areas, resulting into social conflicts and at times loss of life. This forces some people to migrate to other accommodative areas.
- Migration for leisure such as pilgrimages—journeys to certain places under religious devotion. For example, pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina by Muslims. Many people do not come back to their home countries, but find new places in other areas. In addition, tourism involves traveling of people abroad for holidays, which may be short term or long term.

However, many tourists end up becoming migrants.

- Love for adventure and prestige
- The desire for change and a better life

Ecological factors/ environmental factors

- Many people move because of environmental pressures such as drought, desertification, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, pests and diseases, earthquakes. For example, many people move to areas which receive heavy and reliable rainfall, which ensures increased food production for consumption and for

sale. They migrate away from areas which experience frequent drought or desertification.

- Landslides and earthquakes lead to great loss of life and property. Therefore, many people move away from vulnerable areas to safer zones.
- Many people move away from areas infested by pests and diseases such as tsetse flies, and epidemics outbreak. For example, the outbreak of Ebola in the West African countries in 2014 forced many people to migrate.
- Fertile soils induce people to migrate and settle in such areas especially near river valleys with alluvial soils yet the infertile soils in the semi-arid areas push people to migrate away.
- Drainage. Most people migrate and settle near water bodies especially coastal areas to access water supply, water transport and other advantages.
- Behavioural factors
- Migration also has a basis on individual perception. This explains why certain categories of people choose to migrate to new areas while other people facing the same pressures do not migrate.
- Minor issues like criminal tendencies—where criminals run away from their regions to go to other areas where their life may be a bit safe. Also misunderstandings such as between family members, law and order maintenance by authorities, AIDS scourge especially if patients are stigmatized.

IMMIGRATION IN QATAR

Qatar is one of the world's most immigrant-dominated countries, with foreign residents making up the vast majority of its population. As of the latest demographic data from 2024–2025, Qatar's population is about 3.0-3.1 million people, of which approximately 88.4 % are expatriates and only about 11.6 % are Qatari citizens. This means roughly 2.7–2.8 million people living in Qatar are immigrants from abroad, reflecting the country's heavy reliance on foreign labour for economic growth and development.

The origin of Qatar's immigrant population is highly diverse but dominated by workers from South Asia. The largest expatriate community is from India, with around 700,000 Indian nationals residing in Qatar, followed by significant numbers from Bangladesh and Nepal (each about 400,000 people). Other major groups include Egyptians, Filipinos, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Sudanese and smaller communities from across Africa, the Middle East, and other regions.

These migrants come primarily to work in construction, services, hospitality, healthcare, and domestic jobs, driven by strong demand in sectors linked to economic expansion, infrastructure projects, and rapid urban development. Many are employed under temporary contracts, reflecting Qatar's labour needs rather than long-term settlement plans.

In summary, immigration in Qatar is characterized by an overwhelming foreign-born population with origins concentrated in South and Southeast Asia and parts of Africa and the Middle East, drawn by employment opportunities in a fast-growing economy

- **Economic opportunities:** The primary cause of migration to Qatar is economic. The country has experienced rapid economic growth due to its oil and gas industry, construction boom, and hospitality sector. Migrants from countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines move to Qatar to earn higher wages than what is available at home. For example, a Nepali construction worker can earn several times more in Qatar than in Nepal, making migration a financially attractive option.
- **Employment availability:** Qatar has a high demand for labor across multiple sectors, including construction, domestic work, retail, and services. Many jobs are low- or semi-skilled, which are in short supply in Qatar's small local population. Migrants from South Asia fill these roles, as there are limited employment opportunities in their home countries. The promise of stable employment encourages temporary and long-term migration.

- **Better Living Conditions for Migrants:** Although many migrant workers live in labor camps, Qatar provides benefits such as accommodation, food, and transportation, which are not commonly available in sending countries. These improved conditions attract workers from countries where housing and living standards are lower. For instance, Bangladeshi and Indian laborers are drawn to Qatar by the provision of organized accommodation and subsidized meals.
- **Remittances and family support:** Migrants to Qatar often aim to support families back home by sending remittances. Money sent home improves household living conditions, provides for education, healthcare, and sometimes land purchases. Social motivation is therefore a strong cause of migration. Filipino domestic workers, for example, frequently send a significant portion of their earnings to families in the Philippines, creating a cycle of economic support that encourages more migration.
- **Political Stability:** Qatar's stable political environment makes it an attractive destination. Unlike some neighboring countries or migrants' home countries, Qatar has minimal internal conflict and strong law enforcement. This stability reduces risks for migrants and their families. Migrants from politically unstable areas in South Asia are more likely to choose Qatar over other destinations with potential conflicts.
- **Chain Migration:** Many migrants move to Qatar through social networks established by relatives or friends who have previously settled there. This chain migration reduces risks and logistical challenges associated with moving abroad. A Filipino domestic worker, for example, may sponsor or guide a sibling to secure employment in Qatar, ensuring a smoother transition.
- **Demographic pressures:** High population growth and limited job opportunities in home countries push people to seek work abroad. Countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, and India have large young populations, and domestic economies cannot provide enough jobs. These demographic pressures make Qatar, with its labor demand, a natural destination for temporary and long-term employment.

- **Youth unemployment:** Youth unemployment is a major push factor. Many young adults in South Asia cannot find meaningful work in their home countries, prompting them to migrate. Qatar's labor market offers employment for young men and women in construction, retail, hospitality, and domestic service. This opportunity helps reduce poverty and provides skills and experience for returning migrants.
- **Environmental push factors:** Environmental issues such as floods, land scarcity, or poor agricultural productivity also push migrants toward Qatar. For instance, farmers or rural laborers from Bangladesh or Nepal may leave their home regions due to crop failure or shrinking land availability and seek stable income opportunities abroad. Environmental pressures, combined with economic needs, reinforce migration trends.
- **Temporary and contractual work:** Most migration to Qatar is temporary or contract-based, reflecting both the migrants' desire to earn quickly and the country's need for flexible labor. Workers typically come on 2–5 year contracts, after which they may return home or renew their contracts. This pattern ensures that migration is cyclical and responds to labor demand in Qatar while providing opportunities for workers to send remittances home

HOW QATAR MANAGES ITS HIGH IMMIGRATION RATES

- **Sponsorship system (Kafala System):** Qatar manages migrant labor through the Kafala (sponsorship) system, which ties foreign workers to their employers. This allows the government to track migrant inflows, ensure legal employment, and maintain labor discipline. Employers act as sponsors, providing visas, accommodation, and work permits.
- **Work permits and visas:** All immigrants require official work permits and visas. The government controls entry by issuing permits based on labor market needs. This prevents unauthorized migration and ensures that Qatar only allows migrants for sectors with labor shortages, such as construction and domestic work.

- **Labor quotas:** Qatar sets sector-specific labor quotas, especially for construction, domestic work, and hospitality. These quotas limit the number of foreign workers in each sector, preventing overpopulation in specific industries and ensuring that labor supply matches demand.
- **Recruitment regulations:** The government monitors recruitment agencies in sending countries to reduce illegal recruitment and human trafficking. By regulating overseas recruitment, Qatar ensures that migrants are legally documented and aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- **Accommodation standards:** Qatar enforces minimum housing standards for migrant workers, particularly in labor camps. Employers must provide clean, safe, and organized accommodation, helping manage the large immigrant population and avoid social issues related to overcrowding.
- **Health screening and insurance:** All incoming migrants undergo health screening to prevent the spread of diseases. Migrants are also required to have health insurance, which ensures access to medical care and reduces public health risks associated with large immigrant populations.
- **Wage protection system:** Qatar has implemented a Wage Protection System (WPS) to ensure that migrants are paid on time. This system tracks salaries electronically and prevents exploitation, which can otherwise lead to social unrest or illegal migration.
- **Temporary and contract-based migration:** Most migration is temporary or contract-based, typically 2–5 years. This allows Qatar to manage population growth by ensuring that workers leave upon contract completion unless renewed, keeping the number of immigrants in balance with economic demand.
- **Social integration measures:** While most migrants are temporary, Qatar encourages basic social integration by providing community services, cultural orientation, and labor rights awareness. This helps prevent social tensions and ensures smoother management of a diverse population.

- **Legal framework and labor laws:** Qatar has strengthened labor laws and regulations, including protections against abuse, clear contract terms, and legal recourse for disputes. These laws help regulate the high immigrant population and maintain social order, especially given the large proportion of foreign workers in the country.

Flow maps and flow charts

Flow maps portray linear movement i.e. normally used to represent information that stresses movement of goods (direction of trade), movement of people or traffic.

Examples include:

- Movement from area of production to market places
- Exports from one country to another
- Immigrations and emigrations of people to and from other places
- Traffic flow in specific areas and directions such as along railway lines, roads, water etc

There are two (2) types:

- (a) Those flow maps that only symbolize the direction of flow by means of a line or lines usually with an arrow head
- (b) Those that show varying amounts of flow by varying the design / width of the line. This type is more informative.

Note:

When drawing flow maps note that:

- The direction of the flow is indicated by an arrow at the end of the line
- The amount of flow is indicated by the width of the arrow
- The type of the flow is indicated by the shading or coloring used

Construction procedure:

- Choose the scale to be used and to be able to choose an appropriate scale consider the lowest and highest quantities involved in addition to the complexity of the outline map (base map) available. (Work out the width of the lines showing your working).

- Draw the flow arrow proportional to the quantity being represented and avoid drawing very thick or too thin lines.
- The width of the line is the most important and therefore must be determined using a scale. It is advisable that the widest line is 1cm (or 1.5 cm depending on the data)
- In case flow lines are required to be drawn on a base map, it is not necessary to follow all the corners and twisting as they are on the base map but a generalized impression (this prevents colliding or over lapping of low lines)
- Lines may be drawn along the actual route or connecting the origin and destination using straight lines or curved lines. Arrows at the end of the are used to show the direction of movement. The lines drawn should be parallel.
- Shading of the flow diagrams creates a good visual impression. Different colours can be used to represent categories of commodities such as to distinguish imports and exports (or generally to supply further information).
- In case of different colours, a key should accompany the flow arrows in order to emphasize easy interpretation.
- The terminal or collecting point of several flow lines should be represented as a circle or square, such that total values of individual components moving towards or form the collecting centre are clearly shown.
- Factual information may be written on the flow line or alongside it.

The table below shows the number of workers from different continents to Qatar in 2024

Continent	People(000's)
Asia	100
Africa	30
Europe	10
North America	6
South America	4

Draw a flow map to represent the number of workers from the different continent to Qatar in 2024



EMMIGRATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria has become one of Africa's most significant sources of emigrants in recent years, with a rapidly growing number of its citizens living abroad. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the number of Nigerian emigrants reached around 2.1 million by 2024, up sharply from about 610,200 in 2000, an increase of over 244 % reflecting a long-term trend of people leaving the country for better opportunities abroad. When extended to include second- and third-generation Nigerians, the broader diaspora is estimated at about 17 million, making it one of the largest African-origin populations outside the continent.

Most emigrants originate from urban and economically pressured areas where youth unemployment, limited job prospects, and social unrest are especially acute. Surveys indicate that younger, educated, and urban residents are disproportionately likely to

consider emigration, with many citing better employment, education, and living conditions as reasons for leaving. Economically-motivated migration often referred to locally as “*Japa*” has become prevalent among Nigerian professionals and skilled workers seeking careers in more prosperous economies.

Nigerian emigrants are dispersed across Africa and the rest of the world. Within the continent, neighbouring countries like Cameroon and Niger host substantial numbers due to geographic proximity and regional labour mobility. Beyond Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom are among the leading destinations, with hundreds of thousands of Nigerians relocating for work, study, or family reasons, for example, UK data shows that approximately 52,000 Nigerians migrated to Britain in 2024, many on work and study visas, placing Nigeria among the top sources of non-EU+ migrants. Other important destinations include Italy, Canada, Germany, France, and Gulf states, reflecting global patterns of labour and educational migration.

The Nigerian diaspora plays a significant role in the homeland through remittances with flows estimated at around \$21 billion in 2024 supporting household incomes and national development. However, strong emigration also poses challenges, such as brain drain in key sectors like health and technology, as skilled professionals settle abroad permanently. Nonetheless, emigration remains a central feature of Nigeria’s demographic and socio-economic landscape, shaped by both domestic pressures and global opportunities.

Causes of emigration in Nigeria

Population emigration from Nigeria is driven by economic, social, political, environmental, and demographic factors, including unemployment, poverty, insecurity, poor services, environmental degradation, and family networks. Emigrants seek better living conditions, safety, career opportunities, and social stability abroad.

- A major cause of emigration is high unemployment, especially among youth. Many young Nigerians, particularly graduates, struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications. This pushes them to migrate to countries like Canada, the UK, and the USA in search of employment and better career opportunities.
- Nigeria faces economic challenges such as low wages, inflation, and poverty, making it difficult for people to maintain a decent standard of living. Many citizens emigrate to countries with stronger economies to improve their financial situation, e.g., Nigerians moving to South Africa or the UAE for work.
- Widespread political instability and corruption reduce public trust in government and limit opportunities. Citizens may emigrate to escape political uncertainty or poor governance. For instance, skilled professionals often leave Nigeria for Western countries where institutions are more transparent and reliable.
- Security challenges, including Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, banditry, and communal clashes, have forced many Nigerians to leave unsafe areas. Refugees from conflict-affected states sometimes move to neighboring countries like Niger, Cameroon, or further abroad.
- Limited access to quality healthcare and education motivates families to seek better services abroad. Parents may emigrate to countries like Canada or the UK to give their children better educational opportunities and safer, healthier living conditions.
- Environmental factors such as desertification in the North, flooding in the Niger Delta, and soil degradation push people to migrate. These conditions reduce agricultural productivity and livelihoods, prompting rural communities to seek opportunities elsewhere.
- Nigeria has a rapidly growing population, creating pressure on jobs, land, and resources. Young adults, unable to find opportunities locally, emigrate to countries with less competition for employment and better living conditions.
- Skilled professionals, such as doctors, engineers, and teachers, migrate to countries that recognize and reward their skills. This brain drain is driven by better

salaries, professional development, and improved working conditions in countries like the USA, UK, or Germany.

- Some Nigerians emigrate for lifestyle reasons, including exposure to modern infrastructure, cultural experiences, and freedom of expression. Young people often move to countries like the UK or Canada to enjoy better quality of life and social amenities.
- Many Nigerians migrate to join relatives who have previously settled abroad. This chain migration strengthens social networks and makes the transition to a new country easier. For example, children or siblings of Nigerian immigrants in the USA or UK often follow them to settle permanently.

WAYS NIGERIA MANAGES POPULATION EMIGRATION

Nigeria manages emigration through a mix of legal, economic, social, and educational measures, including strict documentation, bilateral agreements, anti-trafficking laws, job creation, skill development, diaspora engagement, public awareness campaigns, and regulation of recruitment agencies. These strategies aim to protect migrants, reduce illegal emigration, and retain human capital while benefiting from remittances and returnees.

- Nigeria controls emigration through strict passport issuance and visa requirements. Citizens must obtain valid travel documents to leave legally, which helps monitor and regulate international migration. This ensures that migration is recorded and reduces illegal emigration.
- Agencies like the National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Immigration Service (NIS) track population movements and migration trends. This allows the government to understand emigration patterns and plan policies to manage them effectively.

- Nigeria has agreements with countries like the USA, UK, and South Africa to manage labor migration. These agreements regulate the flow of migrants, protect their rights, and prevent illegal migration, ensuring citizens move safely and legally.
- The government implements policies to combat human trafficking and irregular migration. Laws such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act protect citizens from exploitation abroad and reduce unsafe emigration.
- Nigeria tries to reduce emigration by creating jobs and economic opportunities locally. Initiatives like the YouWin! Program and youth empowerment schemes aim to provide alternative livelihoods, reducing the economic push factors for emigration.
- Nigeria engages its diaspora through the Nigerian Diaspora Commission, encouraging skilled migrants abroad to invest back home. This allows the country to benefit from emigrants' skills, knowledge, and remittances, turning potential loss into gain.
- By improving education and vocational training, the government helps citizens acquire skills and qualifications that can be used locally. This reduces the need for people to migrate for better education or career development.
- Nigeria runs awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the risks of illegal migration and the opportunities available locally. Campaigns target youth in rural and urban areas to discourage unsafe emigration to Europe or the Middle East.
- Returnees from abroad are supported through reintegration programs, providing skills training, loans, or business opportunities. This encourages voluntary return migration and ensures migrants can contribute positively to the economy.
- Nigeria regulates overseas employment agencies to prevent fraud and exploitation. Licensed agencies are monitored to ensure they provide legal opportunities, accurate information, and protection for migrants moving abroad, reducing unsafe or irregular migration.

LESSONS UGANDA TO MANAGE ITS POPULATION MIGRATIONS

EMIGRATIONS

Uganda has a long-standing trend of emigration, where more people leave the country than enter it, resulting in a negative net migration rate. According to recent data, Uganda's net migration rate in 2024 was about 2.108 per 1,000 populations, meaning emigration exceeded immigration, largely due to workers seeking opportunities abroad.

Official figures show that over 100,000 Ugandans seek employment overseas annually, especially through formal labour channels. Between 2022 and 2023 alone, at least 120,459 migrant workers departed Uganda, with women making up the majority at around 77.5 %.

The main origin of emigrants is largely Uganda's working-age population, particularly those facing limited economic opportunities at home. Most migration is driven by employment seeking, with about 82 % going abroad for jobs.

When it comes to destinations, a clear pattern has emerged:

- Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia) is the leading destination, taking upwards of 107,000 Ugandan migrant workers in recent years.
- Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are also significant destinations for labour migrants.
- Other destinations include Somalia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain in the wider Gulf region.
- Smaller numbers travel to European countries such as Poland and Romania for work.

Beyond labour markets, large Ugandan communities exist in countries like Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, and the United States, reflecting longer-term settlement and diaspora populations.

Estimates of the total Ugandan diaspora vary, with some government and research sources suggesting millions of Ugandans live abroad (official estimates ranging from around 600,000 to over 3 million), while diaspora mapping initiatives indicate numbers could exceed 4 million.

This outward movement has important economic implications. Remittances from Ugandans abroad have grown significantly and now serve as a crucial source of foreign exchange, with remittance inflows reaching about \$1.4 billion in 2024, roughly 3% of GDP. These funds support households, improve access to education and healthcare, and help communities back home.

Despite the benefits, there are challenges: many workers face exploitative conditions abroad, limited social protections, and the loss of skilled labour within Uganda's domestic economy

Strict passport and visa regulations: Uganda can learn from Nigeria's system of strict passport and visa controls, which regulates who can legally leave the country. By ensuring citizens have valid travel documents, Uganda can monitor emigration, reduce illegal migration, and maintain better records of its citizens abroad. This approach helps manage population flows and prevents the risks associated with irregular migration.

Anti-Human trafficking measures: Nigeria has implemented strong anti-human trafficking laws, such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, to protect its citizens from exploitation abroad. Uganda can adopt similar legislation, coupled with enforcement mechanisms, to reduce unsafe emigration and protect young people, especially women, from falling victim to traffickers.

Regulating overseas recruitment agencies: Nigeria monitors and licenses recruitment agencies to prevent fraud and ensure safe migration. Uganda can implement stricter oversight of recruitment agencies to make sure migrants are legally employed abroad, receive fair contracts, and avoid deceptive practices. This reduces illegal emigration and builds trust in legal migration channels.

Diaspora engagement programs: Nigeria actively engages its diaspora through the Nigerian Diaspora Commission, encouraging skilled emigrants to invest, share knowledge, and contribute to national development. Uganda can create similar programs to maintain strong links with citizens abroad, turning potential brain drain into economic and social gains through remittances, investments, and knowledge transfer.

Youth employment and economic opportunities: One of the main reasons Nigerians emigrate is unemployment. Uganda can learn from Nigeria by investing in youth employment programs, skills development, and entrepreneurship schemes. By creating local opportunities, the country reduces economic push factors and makes emigration a choice rather than a necessity.

Public awareness campaigns: Nigeria runs campaigns to educate citizens about the risks of illegal emigration and opportunities available locally. Uganda can adopt similar awareness campaigns, targeting rural and urban youth, to discourage unsafe migration and inform them about legal channels, scholarships, and work opportunities abroad.

Reintegration and support for returnees: Nigeria provides reintegration support for returnees, offering training, loans, and business assistance. Uganda can implement programs that help returning migrants reintegrate, invest in businesses, and share skills learned abroad. This ensures that emigration has positive outcomes for both individuals and the national economy.

IMMIGRATION

Uganda has become one of Africa's major destination countries for immigrants, particularly for people fleeing conflict and seeking stability in the East African region. According to the 2024 National Population and Housing Census, Uganda hosted 1,022,577 immigrants of at least six months' residence, reflecting a significant international migrant presence in the country. Nearly half of these immigrants (45.2 %) come from neighbouring South Sudan, and large numbers also arrive from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, and Tanzania, while

immigrants from Europe, the Americas, and Oceania make up only about 1 % of the total.

The reasons behind immigration to Uganda are varied. A substantial share about 45.5 % of immigrants cite security-related causes, such as fleeing war and violence, especially from South Sudan and parts of the DRC. Around 28.4 % migrate for family-related reasons, including reunification and marriage, while employment, education, and land conflicts also contribute to migrant flows, though to a lesser extent.

Uganda's immigration patterns are closely tied to its refugee-friendly policies and relative political stability. The country has historically welcomed asylum seekers and refugees, especially from conflict-affected neighbors, making it a key destination in the region. In urban areas such as Kampala and Wakiso, official figures show tens of thousands of foreign residents and asylum seekers, with numbers rising in recent years due to instability in the region.

International data also indicate that Uganda's net migration rate the difference between immigrants and emigrants per population has fluctuated, with recent estimates showing a slight negative trend, partly because emigration of Ugandans abroad is also high. However, the substantial immigrant stock underscores Uganda's role as both a host and transit country for migrants in East Africa.

- ✓ Uganda can learn from Qatar's system of strict work permits and visas, which ensures that all immigrants are legally documented. By requiring proper documentation, Uganda can control who enters the country, reduce illegal migration, and track the foreign population effectively. This legal framework allows for better planning of resources and services for immigrants.
- ✓ Qatar uses the Kafala (sponsorship) system, linking foreign workers to employers. Uganda could adopt a modified system where immigrants must have a sponsor or employer who takes responsibility for their stay. This ensures that migrants are accountable and reduces the risks of illegal settlement or exploitation, while helping the government monitor migrant activities.

- ✓ Qatar carefully manages immigration by issuing permits based on labour market demand. Uganda can implement policies that align immigration with the country's economic needs, such as specific sectors experiencing labour shortages. This prevents overpopulation of foreigners in certain industries and ensures that immigration benefits the national economy.
- ✓ All immigrants in Qatar undergo health checks and must have access to healthcare. Uganda can adopt similar measures to ensure that immigrants are healthy, reducing public health risks and protecting local populations. Health screening and mandatory health insurance can help manage the social impact of immigration effectively.
- ✓ Qatar requires employers to provide adequate housing for migrant workers, which helps manage population density and prevents informal settlements. Uganda can develop housing policies for immigrants, ensuring safe and organized living arrangements, which reduces social tension and promotes peaceful coexistence with local communities.
- ✓ Qatar's Wage Protection System (WPS) ensures that migrants are paid fairly and on time. Uganda can implement similar regulations to protect foreign workers' rights and prevent exploitation. Ensuring fair treatment helps maintain social stability and reduces potential conflicts between immigrants and local citizens.
- ✓ Most migrants in Qatar come on temporary contracts, allowing the government to regulate population size and respond to economic needs. Uganda can encourage temporary work permits and seasonal immigration programs, ensuring that immigrants contribute to the economy without overwhelming local resources or creating long-term social challenges.