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The impact of refugee settlements on land use changes and vegetation degradation in West Nile Sub-region, Uganda

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Abstract

Uganda continues to experience high-refugee population influx that is beyond the established settlement capacities. Little information is available on the present and future impacts of settling refugees and host-communities on landuse changes and vegetation degradation. This study used Sentinel-2 images (20m) of 2016-2019 and Dinamica Ego-software to determine the current and future spatial areal-extent of changes in 2022. Findings revealed a rarefied increase in areas under subsistence-farming, builtups and refugee-settlements while the losses were seen in savannah-grasslands, wetlands and woodlands. In 2021, the most significant increases in the land will be experienced in builtup-areas, settlements and commercial farming. The most degraded vegetation types were savannah-grassland, woodlands and tree-plantations. These were primarily attributed to unending activities of deforestation, bush-burning, high-refugee population, land-conflicts with host-communities and wetland reclamation. Thus, unless sustainable farming and energy-saving practices are promoted and adopted, the landscape is likely to remain not even with remnants of green-cover.

Q Keywords: [Refugees](#) [land use changes](#) [vegetation degradation](#) [Dinamica Ego](#) [Uganda](#)

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