

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF REFUGEE
CAMP EDUCATION: KAKUMA AND BUDUBURAM
REFUGEE CAMP

By

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Abstract: According to recent estimates, less than half of all refugee children of primary or secondary school age currently attend school. Compare that to global figures, where 91 percent of children attend primary school and 84 percent of children attend secondary school, and that figure is vastly underwhelming. Existing refugee camp literature acknowledges that refugee camps tend to restrict the ability of children to achieve an education, but it fails to address the specific factors preventing children from gaining access to education. The goal of this research is to explore the challenges faced when educating children in a refugee camp setting from the teacher's perspective, using a qualitative, semi-structured interview approach for data collection. The original research proposal was to collect data from both Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya and Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana and compare the findings. Unfortunately, not enough interviews were collected from Buduburam to compare the findings, so while this thesis will briefly mention the research conducted in relation to Buduburam, the bulk of this thesis focuses on Kakuma.

The qualitative coding and analysis process uncovered five primary themes: (1) lacking financial support and educational resources; (2) conflict-induced hardship; (3) culture and background hindering educational efforts; (4) lacking parental guidance and resources at home; and (5) struggling with the physical environment. This thesis first provides an overview of available refugee camp literature. It then outlines the research methods employed to capture the desired data, followed by a discussion and analysis of the findings. It concludes by addressing possible solutions to the issues faced in refugee camp education settings while discussing future research considerations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to recent statistics published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 61 percent of refugee children of primary school age and 23 percent of refugee children of secondary school age attend school (2017). This means that of the 6.4 million primary and secondary school-age refugee children and adolescents, 2.7 million, or 42 percent of those children, actually attend school (UNHCR, 2017). Compare that to global figures, where 91 percent of children attend primary school and 84 percent of children attend secondary school, and that figure is vastly underwhelming.

My research seeks to understand why education in refugee camps is difficult, albeit on a small scale, by exploring the challenges when educating children in a refugee camp setting from the teacher perspective in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp. Refugees often see education as a “forward-looking livelihood strategy for both children and their parents,” (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, p. 81), emphasizing the role childhood education can play on a child’s ability to thrive in the future as an adult upon leaving the camp and resettling or returning to his or her country of origin. In fact, a few

of the participants I interviewed in my study discussed how they believe that education can change their lives, and that finding ways to educate children is paramount to helping ensure a successful, productive adulthood, further emphasizing the importance of education for refugee children.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) established 17 Goals to Transform Our World, also referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2017). Goal 4: Quality Education seeks to establish inclusive and quality education for everyone to foster a culture of lifelong learning (United Nations, 2017). Globally, the numbers for children attending school are strong, with 87.5 percent of primary and secondary school age children attending school around the world (UNHCR, 2017). When referring specifically to refugee children and adolescents, however, the numbers leave a lot to be desired. It is my hope that my research uncovering the challenges faced by teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp when educating children in a refugee camp setting will not only help motivate future research designed to understand refugee camp education challenges on a more transferable level, but I also hope that my research, and similar future research, can serve as a resource for practitioners to help improve refugee camp education programs.

Review of Literature

The premise of my research is centered around exploring the challenges experienced by teachers while educating children in both Kakuma and Buduburam Refugee Camp, as there exists a significant gap in the literature surrounding this topic. The majority of the existing literature addressing refugee camp usage tends to focus primarily on the overall positive or negative impacts refugee camps have on refugee

populations. For example, the literature indicates that refugee camp usage provides certain advantages, including ease of aid distribution and more effective tracking and monitoring of refugee populations (Kaiser, 2006; Keen, 2008, pp. 129-130). The literature also indicates, however, that the negative effects of refugee camps tend to outweigh the positives. For example, refugee camps are often overcrowded, presenting significant sanitation and hygiene concerns, providing a prime breeding ground of communicable diseases (Crea, Calvo, & Loughry, 2015; Keen, 2008, p. 128). Additionally, refugee camps typically greatly restrict the ability of refugees to pursue livelihood activities, often eliminating the possibility of earning an income (Keen, 2008; Kibreab, 2003, p. 128).

One of the primary issues faced by refugees inhabiting refugee camps, however, is the inability to effectively educate children (Keen, 2008; Kibreab, 2003). While there is a general dearth in literature surrounding this topic, there are a few studies that address the challenges faced when educating children in refugee camps. These few studies focus primarily on five main themes: (1) the limited availability of educational opportunities; (2) oversized class sizes; (3) language barriers within the classroom; (4) the abundance of underqualified teachers; and (5) gender discrimination (Ahlen, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2006, 2015; El Jack, 2010). These studies are primarily based on interview data, with one study spanning 10 years in Kenya. Yet, despite holding important implications surrounding the challenges related to refugee camp education, available research on the topic remains scant at best. For this reason, my research question hopes to help start the process of filling the gap in literature that aims to address the challenges faced when educating children in a refugee camp setting. It is my goal with this research to draw

more attention to the field of study to inspire further research on the topic. As the academic community builds a sound theoretical foundation analyzing the challenges faced by teachers when educating children in a refugee camp, it is my hope that it will serve as a resource for practitioners responsible for managing or creating education programs within refugee camps to help improve education in refugee camp settings.

Methodology

My research methodology takes a grounded theory, qualitative approach from a social constructivism perspective. This qualitative approach allowed me the freedom and flexibility needed to explore a topic that is vastly under researched, while providing me with the tools to capture the subtle nuances of experiences as teachers in a refugee camp from the emic perspective of the interviewees (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). My sample was largely based on a convenience sample, as it was challenging to find contact information for schools within each refugee camp. I chose Kakuma Refugee Camp for two reasons: (1) one of the official languages in its host country of Kenya is English (CIA, 2018), and (2) Kakuma Refugee Camp has a well-established education system, with 21 primary schools and five secondary schools, and holds a relatively high enrollment rate of 76 percent within the primary education system (Pinna, 2017). The availability of interviewees fluent in English combined with an established education system made Kakuma Refugee Camp an excellent starting place for my master's thesis research. Fluency in English helped reduce the language barrier during interviews, and the established state of the education system ensured I would be able to gather data pertinent to my research question.

My second research site was Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana. One reason I chose this site is because, again, one of Ghana's official languages is English (CIA, 2018). The second reason I chose this camp was because I have a friend who volunteered during the summers of 2010 and 2011 at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School within Buduburam Refugee Camp and had acquaintances that could help organize teacher interviews for me. Similar to Kakuma Refugee Camp, the fluency in English helped reduce the language barrier, while my acquaintance who volunteered at the camp helped provide a path to organizing teacher interviews.

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. I used Skype to interview the teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp, and I used the call feature in Facebook Messenger for the interviews at Buduburam Refugee Camp. I interviewed 10 participants at Kakuma Refugee Camp and recorded the audio and video with participant permission. In Buduburam Refugee Camp, I interviewed only two people because I was never able to illicit a response from the other eight teachers to which the Carolyn A. Miller Primary School director referred me. I recorded the audio of our phone calls with participant permission.

After I collected the interviews, I transcribed then coded the data. I began the coding process with a pre-coding exercise where I italicized any passages that seemed pertinent to my research. After the pre-coding process, I began the first cycle coding process using a lumped coding method with a Descriptive Coding approach, which helped me visually categorize the data at a macro level to make coding easier. After I finished the lumped coding process, I used Process Coding to break down the data into smaller, more specific pieces within the lumped sections. Finally, after first cycle coding, I began

second cycle coding with a Focused Coding approach to collapse similar codes into the major themes represented by the data. The themes I found during the second cycle coding process then drove my analysis, which I discuss in the Findings and Discussion chapter.

Findings

Through the coding process, five different themes emerged from the data outlining the primary challenges faced by the teachers I interviewed at Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp. These themes are: (1) lacking financial support and educational resources; (2) conflict-induced hardship; (3) culture and background hindering educational efforts; (4) lacking parental guidance and resources at home; and (5) struggling with the physical environment. Individually, each theme presents challenges specific to educating children in a refugee camp setting. A general lack of financial support and educational resources results in an inability by the refugee camp school to provide adequate learning materials for the students in the school, hindering the students' ability to learn, both in the classroom and at home. Conflict experienced by refugees in their home countries often causes mental issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), violent tendencies, or just a general lack of motivation to pursue education, hindering or even preventing progress in education. Participants also mentioned ways in which culture and background hinder education in refugee camps, citing topics such as forced marriages and girls being forced into traditional gender roles, preventing them from pursuing education.

Additionally, many of the children in the camp are without parents for various reasons. Participants tied a lack of parents at home to a few different topics, one of

which is a general lack of parental guidance at home that would serve to emphasize the importance of education. Participants also mentioned the lack of parents at home often resulted in the children having to assume the parental role, including the collection of food and taking care of younger siblings, which interferes with education. And finally, a few participants discussed the physical barriers within the camp, primarily referring to the distance students have to travel to get to school, which, when combined with rains and water, often prevents the students, and even sometimes the teachers from attending school.

Conclusion

The purpose of my research was to explore the challenges faced by teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp when educating students in the refugee camp setting, as this is a vastly under researched topic. By interviewing teachers specifically about their challenges in the educational setting, I was able to gather insightful information whose themes could be pertinent to other refugee camp educational environments. In the next chapter, I will explore the existing literature surrounding refugee camp usage in general, as well as the few studies that have explored refugee camp education challenges, while exposing the dearth in literature addressing the challenges to educating children in a refugee camp setting. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology I used to conduct my research, while Chapter 4 discusses the findings of my research. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes my thesis by briefly discussing the findings of my research and their importance, while addressing any limitations of my study as well as future research opportunities to help build upon my findings and enhance the limited research surrounding refugee camp education challenges.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

By the end of 2014, the percentage of refugees covered under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate (defined as persons not considered nationals by any State under its respective laws) housed in refugee camps had experienced a three-year decline, moving from 35.3 percent in 2012 to 29.3 percent in 2014 (UNHCR, 2015). While there is a distinct decline in refugee camp usage, by the end of 2014, refugee camps still housed just over three and a half million refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2015). To put that statistic in perspective, that number is only one million fewer people than live in Brooklyn, New York according to 2015 population estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). It is true that refugee camps offer certain benefits, such as ease of medical supply distribution and ease of food and water distribution (Keen, 2008, pp. 129-130). Additionally, the physical separation of refugees from host populations offers an ability to monitor refugee populations out of concern for the refugee population's safety and/or the host state's safety should the refugee population pose a perceived security threat (Keen, 2008, pp. 129-130). This physical separation offers an ability to address concerns regarding refugee and host community safety as well as the opportunity for the host community to manage large influxes of refugee

populations (Keen, 2008, pp. 129-130). One cannot ignore, however, that despite any conveniences formed by placing refugees in camps, refugee camp usage often serves to create significant grievances (Keen, 2008, p. 127). The following sections provide a brief overview of the literature pertaining to refugee camp usage.

Advantages to Refugee Camp Usage

Thus far, refugee camp usage has received a fair amount of attention in the research community. A refugee camp is meant to be a “temporary settlement built to receive people fleeing from civil war or conflicts” (Tanle, 2013, p. 868). Governments and organizations setup refugee camps in order to provide secure spaces when individuals and communities are most vulnerable; their intent is to be used “for the survival of those in greatest need” (Bulley, 2014). Refugee camp usage, as opposed to integrating refugees within host communities, offers some advantages when handling large populations of refugees. First, they offer the ability to easily organize and monitor refugee populations, which helps alleviate any perceived security concerns held by the host country (Kaiser, 2006; Keen, 2008, pp. 129-130). Furthermore, placing refugees in camps reduces complications with distribution of aid (food, water, vaccinations/medical supplies, etc.), as it is much easier to disperse aid in a relatively small, confined space, versus across an entire state or region (Kaiser, 2006; Keen, 2008, p. 129). In fact, some refugees find that they feel more comfortable remaining in refugee camps because the camps provide access to refugee aid and security measures at a time when refugees have very few resources that would allow them to provide these basic necessities themselves (Kaiser, 2006).

Disadvantages to Refugee Camp Usage

Despite the aforementioned advantages of using refugee camps, there are some significant concerns related to their use. First, refugee camps can potentially “deepen trauma by exacerbating feelings of loss of control” (Keen, 2008, p. 127). Placing or even sometimes forcing refugees into camps often serves to prolong the cycle of turbulent events, particularly when the precipitating event involved violence. Additionally, while refugee camps might make dispersion of medical aid easier, it also makes the spread of disease easier (Crea et al., 2015; Keen, 2008, p. 128). Poor sanitary and hygienic conditions breed communicable diseases, and the typically cramped quarters only serves to enhance the spread of such diseases and infections (Crea et al., 2015; Keen, 2008, p. 128). Furthermore, refugee camps also pose a security risk in some instances. There have been instances in the past when refugee camps actually became targets of rebel groups or government forces or became a rallying point for militant groups in other instances (Kaiser, 2006; Lebson, 2013; Lee, 2014). A few examples include Uganda when rebel groups attacked a refugee camp (Kaiser, 2006), or in Thailand when Karen refugee camps fell under attack by Burmese government forces (Lee, 2014). Additionally, in 2000, Liberian and Sierra Leonean militants conducted raids into their country of origin from within refugee camps, forcing the UNHCR to relocate the camps (Lebson, 2013).

While the aforementioned issues relating to refugee camps are significant, arguably the two paramount issues related to refugee camp usage is the notion that refugee camps restrict the inhabitants’ ability to pursue livelihood and economic activities while also making childhood education difficult (Keen, 2008, p. 128; Kibreab,

2003). One can define a livelihood as comprised of “the capabilities, assets...and activities required for a means of living...which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation” (Horst, 2006, p. 9). One of the chief requirements for creating a sustainable livelihood is mobility, which allows access to various livelihood activities (Gale, 2006; Horst, 2006; Kaiser, 2006; Werker, 2007).

Refugee camps, however, tend to restrict freedom of movement, particularly with the prevalence of security concerns, which significantly hinders economic activity (Horst, 2006; Werker, 2007). The restrictive nature of camps often prevents refugees from traveling to markets, seeking jobs outside of the camp, gaining access to land, communicating and receiving assistance from friends and family members outside of the camp, or even gaining access to credit, loans, and currency that could be used to generate a sustainable livelihood (Gale, 2006; Werker, 2007). The lack of economic opportunities in refugee camps leads to a refugee status emphasizing complete dependence on outside aid (Keen, 2008, p. 128; Kibreab, 2003), which also means that when the refugee finally leaves the camp, he or she will have little or no capital with which to initiate a sustainable livelihood.

Additionally, refugees often view childhood education as a “forward-looking livelihood strategy for both children and their parents,” (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, p. 81). If a child is unable to continue his or her education within the refugee camp, then when that individual leaves the camp and resettles or returns to his or her home country, that student will be behind the curve and at a disadvantage due to the interruption in education. This would serve to put the child in a weaker position once he or she becomes

independent and is looking to start a sustainable livelihood. Refugee children who experience inadequate or complete gaps in childhood and adolescent education suffer from significant grievances, including gaps in the skills, knowledge, and overall ability to create a livelihood (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Additionally, refugee children can experience language confusion, particularly in instances of children who have moved to more than one camp or settlement, which often results in a student attempting to learn several different languages depending on the language spoken in that location and the curriculum of that school (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

Classrooms are typically overcrowded with poor teacher-student ratios, which often results in poor learning and classroom behaviors as a result of a poor learning environment (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Finally, there often exists a high possibility that if or when a student reintegrates into a traditional school after his or her final settlement in a stable community, that student will likely be behind in development compared to his or her peers and will be forced to spend years playing catch up (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). The longer a refugee spends in quality education, the more that individual will be able to rely on his or her own endeavors while understanding and standing up for his or her own rights (UNHCR, 2017). Furthermore, classrooms can help protect refugee children from “forced recruitment into armed groups, child labour, sexual exploitation, and child marriage” (UNHCR, 2017, p. 7).

Dearth in the Literature

The literature effectively covers positive and negative aspects of refugee camp usage as a means to house refugee populations. Two areas that exhibit a dearth in the literature, however, are the types of livelihood activities available to refugees and the

challenges associated with educating children in refugee camps. The ability of a refugee to create a livelihood within the refugee camp is essential when considering the eventual goal of allowing the refugee to leave the camp permanently and setup a new life in the country of origin or in a new location. Additionally, while livelihood activities are paramount to refugee independence, so too is refugee education. Refugees view childhood education as the primary way to ensure a better future for their family, referring to it as “a forward-looking livelihood strategy for both children and their parents” (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, p. 81).

While scant literature exists on the challenges associated with educating children in refugee camps, there are a few studies that cover five primary themes related to this topic. One major theme from the few available studies is the limited availability and disrupted nature of educational opportunities. In 2009, across 92 camps, the average primary school enrollment percentage reached 76 percent, while the average secondary school enrollment percentage across the same number of camps was just 36 percent (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). The lower percentages in education enrollment, particularly related to secondary school enrollment, suggests that a high number of refugee children will either leave the camp for resettlement or return to their respective countries of origin behind in school compared to their age, or will grow into adults who lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to create a livelihood independent of foreign aid.

Another significant challenge is class size. The classroom environment typically consists of class sizes of over 100 students, with typically only one teacher, creating a student-teacher ratio that is not conducive to effective childhood education (Dryden-Peterson, 2006). This makes it extremely challenging for the teacher to create an

effective learning environment, preventing each student from receiving the type of care and support he or she needs from the teacher. Furthermore, complicating the huge class sizes is the significant language barrier often experienced within the classroom (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, 2015). It is not uncommon for students in one classroom to speak over 10 languages (Dryden-Peterson, 2006). This is compounded by the fact that the students likely originate from a country other than that to which they have fled, meaning the language of instruction, in some cases, is different than the language spoken by any of the students, or the students might know the language of instruction, but not at a level conducive to learning in a classroom setting (Dryden-Peterson, 2006, 2015). The language barrier creates a significant problem when trying to educate refugee children, particularly considering the high degree of movement often experienced by refugees.

Another theme discussed in the literature is the inadequate quality of instruction and the abundance of underqualified teachers (Ahlen, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Less than two-thirds of teachers in refugee schools have qualifications, with the percentage of trained teachers in various refugee schools ranging widely from 0 to 100 percent (Ahlen, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). This wide range indicates that some schools likely lack the ability to properly educate refugee children, hindering the progression of childhood education.

The last major theme discussed by the literature is gender discrimination (Ahlen, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2015; El Jack, 2010). Women and young girls often assumed more gendered responsibilities, such as caring for siblings or elderly family members, in addition to domestic work (Ahlen, 2006; Dryden-Peterson, 2015; El Jack, 2010). This, combined with early marriage, often prevents girls from completing secondary, and

sometimes even primary, education (Ahlen, 2006). This indicates that girls especially are at risk of remaining uneducated and completely dependent on others for livelihood activities.

Research Question

To contribute towards the improvement of existing refugee camp education programs, I conducted a study with a constructivist approach to assess the challenges associated with educating children from the teacher's perspective in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya and Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana. While I would like to explore livelihood opportunities in addition to education programs within refugee camps, the inclusion of such a task would go beyond the scope of a master's thesis and would be better suited for future research.

- Research Question: What are the perceived challenges to educating children within Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp from the teacher's perspective?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

My research question explores the difficulties and challenges from the teacher's perspective when educating refugee learners primarily in Kakuma Refugee Camp, with a brief mention of Buduburam Refugee Camp. Qualitative methodology lends itself particularly well to my research question due to its openness of inquiry (Patton, 2015, p. 11). Because the qualitative process is largely an iterative process, it allows the researcher to enter the data collection process without preconceived notions or expectations (Patton, 2015, p. 11). This leads to the collection of more accurate data that presents a true representation of the participants, because the researcher is allowing the data to form the conclusions as opposed to forcing data into preconceived assumptions. Additionally, qualitative data collection is a creative process that allows the researcher the freedom and flexibility to adjust the data collection method throughout the research process (Whittemore et al., 2001). This, in turn, allows the researcher to mold the data collection methods to the emergent data as opposed to attempting to fit the emergent data into specific data collection methods that might not be appropriate (Whittemore et al., 2001). By allowing for an iterative, creative process, qualitative methodology helps the

researcher gather accurate data that truly depicts the phenomenon under study because it allows for flexibility and adaptability based on the needs of the study.

The research question at hand is highly subjective, as it seeks to gather data from the perspective of teachers working in refugee camps, asking for their opinions on the challenges of educating learners in refugee camps. Each interviewee's unique circumstances will influence the data collected because it is from the perspective of the teacher (Crea et al., 2015). Qualitative data collection techniques are particularly suited for this research question because they aim to understand the "subtle nuances of life experiences" (Whittemore et al., 2001, p. 524); the techniques allow the researcher to get inside the phenomenon, which produces data depicting the perceptions of those involved (Patton, 2015, p. 7). The capturing of diverse perspectives provides observation in context that permits an insider understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015, p. 6). This insider's perspective is capable of illuminating issues within the system while providing the potential to uncover possible solutions to the problem (Patton, 2015, p. 8).

Ultimately, the open nature of qualitative methodology allows the researcher to adapt data collection to the needs of the study, providing flexibility to gather data that will lead to a meaningful conclusion regarding the research question. The ability to capture data from the participants' perspective will serve to enhance this open inquiry, which provides deep analysis of the phenomenon, exposing an insider perspective that is unattainable through quantitative methods. The combination of open inquiry and the insider perspective allows the researcher to collect high-quality data while accounting for bias because the researcher is telling the story from the perspective of the participant, allowing for an accurate depiction of the phenomenon. While it is impossible to

eliminate bias because it shapes everything about the design, from the questions one asks to the way we interpret findings, taking an open perspective and telling the story from the participant's point of view allows researchers to address this bias and limit its effects on the findings.

Social Constructivism

The perspective I will take for this research question is one of social constructivism, specifically geared towards program evaluation. As discussed, the research question seeks to gather data from the perspective of teachers in two different refugee camps. Social constructivism applies in this case because it views reality as being socially constructed and highly subjective based on personal experience, which translates into a variety of meanings for one phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The idea of ontological relativity, which establishes that “all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 122), meaning that no two people's perspectives are alike, provides the foundation for the constructionist philosophy. For example, one person might interpret the sun as a star that heats the earth, while another might interpret the sun as a god that provides life to all living things. The social constructivist approach is ideal for this research question, because I will be looking at one topic (challenges of educating learners in refugee camps) from the perspective of different people within different groups (teachers from two different camps with varying origin stories).

While I asked each group generally the same questions regarding the same topic, the perspectives and interpretations differed, in some cases significantly, which lends itself to the social constructivist approach. I think it is vitally important to gain the

perspective of refugee teachers, because these perspectives will provide information that could potentially improve educational programs in their specific refugee camp or other refugee camps around the world, as they are the individuals facilitating the educational opportunities in their respective camps. The teacher holds first-hand knowledge as to which strategies and methods work or do not work when attempting to create a positive learning environment for students in a refugee camp, as well as the factors that positively and negatively impact said environment.

Research Sample

Kakuma Refugee Camp. *Site selection.* For one of my research sites, I chose Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, which is also the camp where the majority of the teachers I interviewed are located. I interviewed nine teachers and one administrator at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

One reason I chose Kakuma is because one of the official languages of Kenya is English (CIA, 2018). Because of this, it was my hope that the school teachers would speak English, which is the case, eliminating the need for a translator. Using a translator would have been difficult for a couple of reasons. First, this study was not funded, which means I would have needed to find funding for a translator or pay the translator myself. Second, I conducted my interviews via Skype, as opposed to face-to-face, which I discuss at greater length below, so I would have either had to find a translator here in Oklahoma that could sit with me while interviewing the teachers, or a translator in Kenya that could sit with the teachers during the interviews. Either option would have complicated the interview process.

The other reason I chose Kakuma is because it has a well-established education system of 21 primary schools and five secondary schools (Pinna, 2017). The primary school education system has an enrollment rate of 76 percent, while the entire education system has a pass rate of 96 percent (Pinna, 2017). While there were several options around the globe, Kakuma provided a good starting point, because I knew if I could contact the school, there would be teachers with at least a moderate level of teaching experience that could provide me with the information needed for my study.

About the camp. The UN established Kakuma Refugee Camp in 1992 in response to the arrival of the ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’ (UNHCR, 2018b). As of 15 February 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported Kakuma’s population to be 147,670, with 67,737 females, 79,933 males, and 82,506 minors under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2018a). South Sudanese make up 53.5 percent of the population, Somalians account for 23.4 percent of the population, and the remaining 23.1 percent of the population originate from 16 other African states, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan, and others (UNHCR, 2018a).

Kakuma Refugee Camp is located on the outskirts of the town of Kakuma, which is in the Turkana West District of Turkana County (see figure 1) (UNHCR, 2018b). Kakuma is split into four sections titled Kakuma 1, Kakuma 2, Kakuma 3, and Kakuma 4 (see figure 2) (UNHCR, 2018b). Within the camp are 21 primary schools and five secondary schools, which are responsible for educating over 80,000 learners ("Kenya-Djibouti," 2018). These schools are organized and funded by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and employ 501 teachers, 86 percent of which are refugees ("Kenya-Djibouti," 2018). According to one of my interviewees from Kakuma, the teachers who

are Kenyan go through formal education through either Kenyan government training schools or colleges to become certified teachers. Less than 50 percent of school teachers, however, hold relevant teaching qualifications (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2015). The same interviewee stated that teachers who are refugees living inside the camp participate in “capacity building and trainings for those teachers who are from other countries” both within the refugee camp and occasionally at institutions and universities outside of the refugee camp in Kenya that are similar to the education designed for Kenyan teachers.



Figure 1: Kakuma Refugee Camp location in Kenya (Muñoz, 2017)

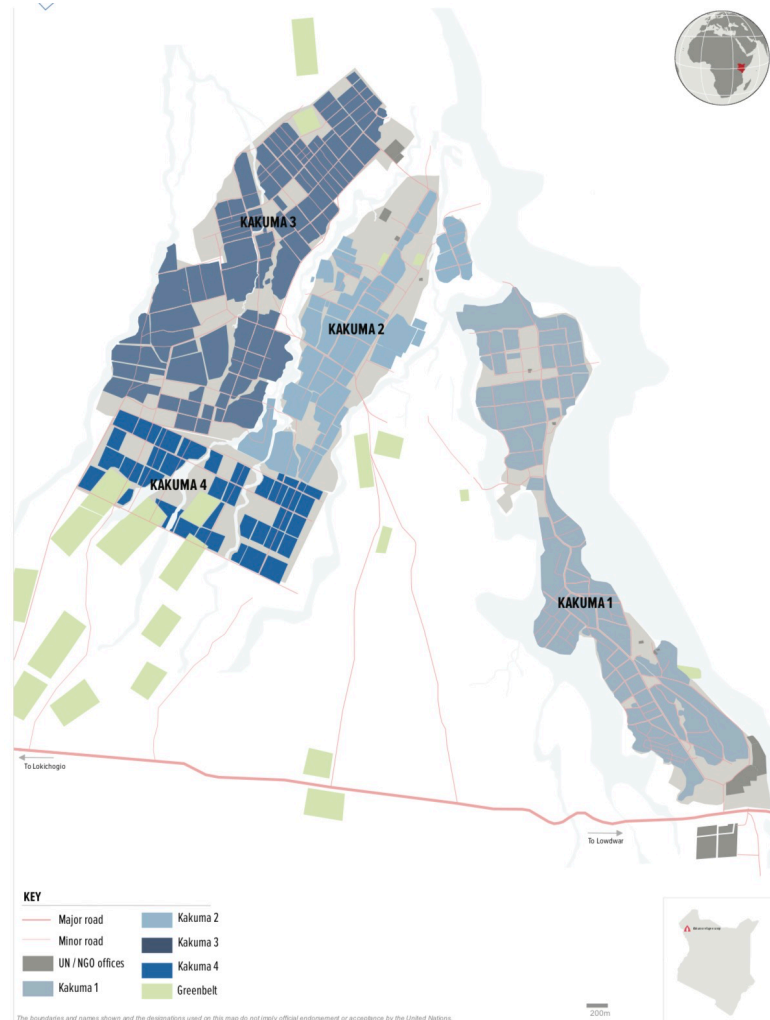


Figure 2: Kakuma Refugee Camp layout (UNHCR)

Buduburam Refugee Camp. Site selection. The research sample for Buduburam Refugee Camp was partially chosen because one of Ghana’s official languages is English, which helped eliminate the complication of organizing a translator (CIA, 2018). The primary reason I chose Buduburam Refugee Camp, however, was based on a convenience sample. I have a friend who volunteered in Ghana during the summer in both 2010 and 2011 at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School. He still has acquaintances that more recently worked at Buduburam Refugee Camp and still have ties

to the school, so he contacted his acquaintances requesting information regarding ways I could contact the school, which led to me interviewing two teachers with experience teaching at Buduburam Refugee Camp. While this is not the number of teachers I was hoping to interview at Buduburam, they provided some insightful information, even if it is not robust enough to draw meaningful conclusions.

About the camp. Ghana's National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO), in conjunction with a few non-governmental organizations (NGOs), currently runs Buduburam Refugee Camp, so information about the camp itself was difficult to find, as neither NADMO nor the NGOs keep records quite as diligently as the UNHCR (Chambel, 2017). Ghana and the UNHCR opened Buduburam Refugee Camp 35 kilometers west of Accra, Ghana's capital (see figure 3), in response to two civil wars in Liberia, the first from 1989-1996 and the second from 1999-2003 ("Buduburam: Refugees-in-need," 2017; Chambel, 2017). Sierra Leone also experienced a civil war from 1991-2001, which resulted in Buduburam Refugee Camp receiving Sierra Leonean refugees, as well ("Buduburam: Refugees-in-need," 2017). The UNHCR initially provided aid and relief to those residing in Buduburam, but in 1997, Liberia held elections that the UN determined were fair and free elections, which would allow Liberians safe repatriation conditions ("Buduburam: Refugees-in-need," 2017). This led to the UNHCR discontinuing refugee assistance to Liberians in Ghana, eliminating much of the settlement's funding, despite the fact that only 3,000 refugees returned to Liberia, with most Liberian refugees electing to remain in Buduburam Refugee Camp ("Buduburam: Refugees-in-need," 2017). Since peace came to Liberia in the late 2000s

and early 2010s, roughly 18,000-19,000 refugees have repatriated to Liberia, leaving roughly 20,000 refugees that still reside in Buduburam Refugee Camp (Chambel, 2017).

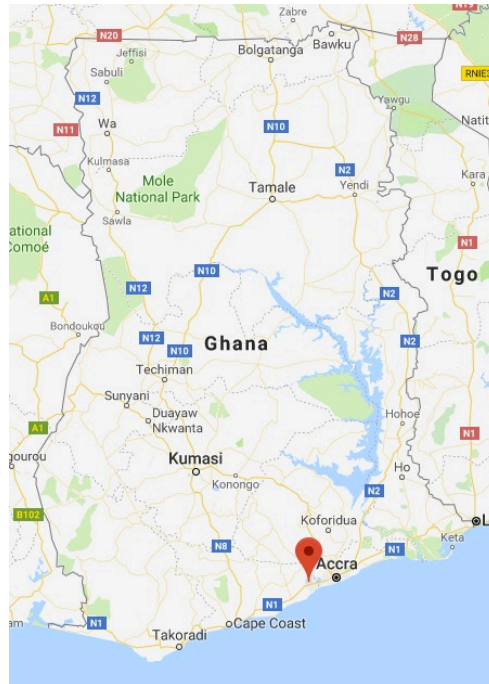


Figure 3: Buduburam Refugee Camp location (red pin) in Ghana (Google, 2018).

Data Collection Design

I have chosen the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya because of the established education system, and Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana due to the convenience of knowing an individual with experience volunteering in Buduburam. The data collection method I used for this research study was a blend of Skype and over the phone, semi-structured, qualitative interviews, which allowed me to understand the emic teacher perspective (Phillips, 2014, p. 77).

Semi-structured interviews. Because my research question addresses education challenges from the teacher’s perspective, I utilized interviews to collect my data because they gather information that “sheds light into the emic perspective, and reveals

subjective, lived experiences of those under study” (Phillips, 2014, p. 89). These qualitative interviews helped me enter that person’s worldview, allowing me to gather a unique understanding that would otherwise be unavailable to me, as I have not experienced life as an educator in a refugee camp (Patton, 2015, p. 426). The emic perspective of the teachers involved with the educational programs in both Kakuma and Buduburam Refugee Camp is vital because ultimately it helped me determine what challenges education programs face from the teacher’s perspective.

To facilitate these interviews, I used a semi-structured interview guide, shown in Appendix A, featuring primarily open-ended questions. I chose to use a semi-structured interview approach with an interview guide because it provided me with a framework to guide our conversational interview, but it gave me the freedom to choose when the appropriate time was during the interview to ask each question (Patton, 2015, p. 439). The questions are open-ended so as to illicit the full emic perspective, allowing the interviewee to tell me what he or she believes is important. Before I started each interview, I read the informed consent form to each participant, pausing at the end to ask if the participant had any questions or concerns. Before we moved on, I ensured that the participant understood and agreed to everything in the informed consent form through verbal confirmation, while gaining verbal permission to use the name and location of the camp and record the audio of our interview, and video when available.

I developed this interview guide with the assistance of a few people. One person who helped me develop the type of questions I should ask pertinent to my study is the director at a non-profit in Oklahoma City that helps refugees integrate into society through education, job training, and job placement services, as well as one of his

coworkers who has traveled to Kakuma Refugee Camp. Although these two individuals were ultimately unable to help me contract Kakuma Refugee Camp, they had important insight into the type of information I would need to know to uncover the challenges experienced by refugee teachers when educating learners in a refugee camp setting. Another individual who helped me is my friend who volunteered at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School at Buduburam Refugee Camp. Because he had experience teaching at Buduburam Refugee Camp, he also provided insight into the types of questions that might illicit interesting and important information. After finishing the interviews, I transcribed each interview using Microsoft Word for the typed transcriptions and a USB transcription pedal with the software Express Scribe to control the audio playback while transcribing. During the transcribing process, I removed the names of the participants, electing to use an alias including the camp where the participant teaches or taught, the gender of the participant, and a number based on the order in which I interviewed that teacher. For example, the male teachers from Kakuma Refugee Camp are Kakuma Male Teacher 1-5 (shortened to KM1-5). I did this with each teacher to protect his or her identity to help prevent any potential negative effects should someone dislike what the teacher said and seek retribution of some kind. I did, however, receive verbal permission from each participant to use the name and location of the camp in my study, as well as the school.

Sampling. My sampling of the teachers that I chose to interview was purely dependent on the individuals organizing the interviews in their respective refugee camps, and thus was a convenience sample.

Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. After several failed attempts to directly contact various schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp, I was able to gain entrée via e-mail to Kakuma Refugee Camp by contacting a woman who wrote a news article discussing the educational opportunities in Kakuma Refugee Camp. I found the author's contact information on the news website and sent her an e-mail explaining the purpose of my thesis research and requesting any assistance she might be able to provide in helping me contact someone who could help me setup interviews in Kakuma Refugee Camp. She e-mailed an administrator with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) that helped her organize her visit to Kakuma Refugee Camp for her news piece. This administrator, who I will refer to as Kakuma Administrator 1 (KA1), helped me setup interviews with his teachers. I interviewed a total of 10 people, which included five male teachers, four female teachers, and KA1. These teachers all taught at Cush, Kadugli, or Malakal Primary Schools. Due to schedule constraints at the schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp, I conducted all the interviews in one session via Skype over a period of six hours. With the participants' permission, I video and audio recorded each interview, while writing notes on the interview guide addressing anything during the interview that made an impression on me. Due to the poor internet connection, there were times when I had to stop the video recording, as well as times when it was difficult to understand exactly what the participant was saying in the audio recording.

There are two reasons why I stopped interviewing when we reached 10 interviews. The first is that KA1 had only scheduled 10 total people for me to interview and said it would be extremely difficult to schedule more interviews in the future due to scheduling and time constraints. The second reason I stopped interviewing after 10, is

that by the sixth or seventh interview, I realized that many of the answers to my questions were the same or similar, which meant I had reached theoretical saturation. Additionally, I had a decent mix of genders with four female teachers, five male teachers, and one male administrator.

Buduburam Refugee Camp, Ghana. As previously discussed, I used my friend who volunteered at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School in Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana to help facilitate communication with the school. My friend contacted his friend, who worked there until around 2014, who was able to provide me with the contact information for Carolyn A. Miller Primary School. After several e-mail attempts with no response, I eventually received an e-mail stating that what I requested was not possible. I discussed this with my friend, who forwarded the message to his friend. She concluded that an aide likely sent the response who might not be fluent in English and recommended contacting the previous director of Carolyn A. Miller Primary School, who I will refer to as Buduburam Director 1 (BD1), with whom she was very close, to see if he could help facilitate communication. BD1 was able to put me in contact with the current director of the school, who I will refer to as Buduburam Director 2 (BD2). BD2 requested that we communicate via Facebook and proceeded to recommend certain individuals on Facebook who currently teach or have taught previously at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School.

BD2 personally sent each person a message, which lent me credibility in the eyes of the perspective participants. Unfortunately, I was only able to interview two of the seven teachers he recommended, as five of them were unresponsive after several communication attempts. For these participants, the only option for interview was over

the phone interviews through the Facebook Messenger app. With the participants' permission, I audio recorded each interview, while writing notes on the interview guide addressing anything during the interview that made an impression on me. Due to the poor internet connection, there were times when it was difficult to understand exactly what the participant was saying in the audio recording.

Despite many attempts to contact prospective participants, as well as attempts by one of my committee advisors to use his contacts to find more teachers to interview, I was unfortunately only able to secure two interviews. While this prevented me from drawing any transferrable conclusions, it provided interesting insight about education challenges at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School.

Coding

In qualitative research, a code is typically, “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). The act of coding, then, is the process by which the researcher sorts the collected data into meaningful codes, then categories, then themes, all while relating the data to existing theories, emergent theories, or both (Lofland, A.Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 200). Coding, however, is not simply labeling passages of data; it is a link that leads the researcher “from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9). Codes capture the essence and essential elements of a research story that develop into categories in order to facilitate analysis of their connection (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9). Essentially, coding is what allows us to recognize patterns that generate the ability to analyze and understand why people do what they do.

The development of “a manageable classification or coding scheme” (Patton, 2015, p. 553) is a cyclical process and should be the initial step in analysis. For me, this process began with pre-coding, and continued with the first cycle coding methods of lumped coding using a Descriptive Coding approach, followed by Process Coding. During the second cycle coding process, I employed the Focused Coding method. Throughout the coding process, I utilized analytic memos to keep track of fleeting thoughts that might prove pertinent later in the process. I approached the coding process with a grounded theory analytic approach, allowing the codes, categories, and themes to emerge from the text, and then used these themes to create substantive and formal theories (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 782).

Analytic memos. Analytic memos are useful in that they are unstructured recordings of my own thoughts (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44). Analytic memos reflect on the coding process or code choices, how the process is taking shape, and any emergent patterns, themes, or concepts I might see in the data (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 209; Saldaña, 2016, p. 44). As I wrote these memos, I categorized them based on the contents of the memo (code memos that clarify codes and their underlying assumptions, theoretical memos about codes and their relationships, and operational/procedural memos regarding procedural issues, challenges, or strategies) (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 210). These analytic memos are vital to the writing process as it would be impossible for me to remember every single thought I had throughout the coding process. Analytic memo writing began with the pre-coding stage and continued throughout the coding process.

Pre-coding. Pre-coding is the initial review of the data and involves identifying significant quotes that appear salient (Saldaña, 2016, p. 20). During my precoding

process, I read through the data without marking at all to place myself in the setting, followed by a second read through that included italicizing salient passages and analytic memo writing. This was an important step because it not only allowed me to soak in the information with a clear mind without trying to focus on a specific task, which can lead to missed information, but it also allowed me to sift through the data and eliminate data I knew did not need to be coded. Another strategy I used to help organize the data visually was placing lines between sections of data where a clear shift in focus occurred during the interview process (Saldaña, 2016, p. 19).

First cycle coding. First cycle coding methods are those used during the initial coding of the data (Saldaña, 2016, p. 68). It is during this stage that I took the raw data and began to reduce it into codes. The coding of the data made my job easier when looking for patterns, categories, and themes to use in formatting my argument of the study because it reduced the amount of data through which I must sift. During the first cycle coding phase, I initially used a lumper coding approach, employing the Descriptive Coding method. After completing the lumper coding phase, I continued with Process Coding.

Lumper coding with Descriptive Coding approach. Lumper coding is a method where the researcher uses one code “to capture and represent the essence of” the entire excerpt (Saldaña, 2016, p. 23). During this process, I used a Descriptive Coding approach, which summarizes the basic topic of the excerpt with a single word or short phrase (Saldaña, 2016, p. 102). This allowed me to first take a macro look at the data, which then helped me better focus on a more micro look at the data during the Process

Coding process. For example, I coded all data pertaining to factors negatively influencing the education environment as ‘Challenges to Education.’”

Process Coding. Process Coding identifies action in the data by using gerunds (Saldaña, 2016, p. 111). A researcher would most often use Process Coding when conducting a research study examining “the routines and rituals of human life” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 111). This code is particularly well suited for my study because I am studying specifically refugee camp educational programs with a focus on the teacher’s perspective of the educational system’s operations and routines, as well as factors that influence those operations and routines. Process Coding allowed me to develop a dynamic account of events through the use of gerunds, denoting action as opposed to static information (Saldaña, 2016, p. 111 & 114). Thus, Process Coding allowed me to better interpret the data, leading to more accurate analysis and more effective portrayal of the data to the reader.

Second cycle coding. The main function of second cycle coding is to take the vast array of codes created during first cycle coding and condense those codes into patterns, categories, and themes in order to easier analyze and comprehend the data (Saldaña, 2016, p. 234). During the second cycle coding process, I used Focused Coding.

Focused Coding. While Focused Coding often involves collapsing similar codes, splitting codes if improperly coded, and eliminating non-salient codes, I primarily collapsed codes into categories to help focus the data into manageable sets of data (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 201; Saldaña, 2016, p. 25). For example, multiple gender-based codes emerged from the data during the Process Coding process, which included ‘being

forced into gender-based roles’ or ‘getting pregnant as a teenager’. These codes then collapsed into the category ‘discriminating against females’. This process allowed me to condense my data into a handful of categories, which helped make the analysis process much more manageable.

Coding tools. I used Microsoft Word for the pre-coding process, italicizing salient passages and using lines to denote shifts in topic. I then used ATLAS.ti for the remainder of the coding process. The advantages to using software like ATLAS.ti for coding is that the data is easily stored and backed up and the software allowed me to neatly use multiple codes for one passage while also allowing me to pull up all passages associated with specific codes (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 30-31). ATLAS.ti also has a built-in codebook that I could have open while coding. This eliminated the need to keep a second document or physical book that I could accidentally separate from the coding documents and/or lose. Additionally, the software allowed me to link codes to one another, which helped greatly in visualizing the data while categorizing it during the Focused Coding portion of the coding process.

Limitations of the Research Design

While I was able to reach a point of saturation with my data for Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, there remain a few limitations to my research design. The first limitation is the fact that I was only able to acquire two interviews from Buduburam Refugee Camp. My initial plan was to obtain an adequate number of interviews from both Kakuma and Buduburam Refugee Camp and compare the results. Obtaining only two interviews from one of the camps eliminated this possibility, despite the fact that they still provided valuable insight into Buduburam Refugee Camp’s educational

programs. Furthermore, my participant sample size, when compared to the number of teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp, was relatively small. I interviewed nine teachers and one administrator, yet the administrator I interviewed (Kakuma Administrator 1 – KA1) informed me that there are over 500 teachers working with the LWF at Kakuma Refugee Camp within the schools. A much larger sample size would provide more robust and transferrable findings.

Another limitation of my design was the limited time I was allowed to spend on Skype with the participants at Kakuma Refugee Camp. KA1, who organized the interviews, had to organize them on a school day, because many of the teachers are dependent on shuttles that only run during certain times directly to the schools. This meant I only had six or seven hours to conduct 10 interviews. By placing this time limit on the interviews, I had to be careful which avenues I explored based on our conversation. While it seems as if I was able to obtain the information I needed from the Kakuma teachers, it is possible that I failed to flesh out certain topics, missing important data.

There also existed a slight language barrier which made it difficult to communicate. The majority of the teachers spoke English well enough to communicate and understand my questions, and some spoke very clear, fluent English. There were, however, a few times where the language barrier made it difficult to illicit the specific data I was seeking, forcing me to alter the wording of my questions in the middle of the interviews. For example, with one participant, I asked, “do you think you are able to effectively educate the children in the refugee camp?”, to which he replied, “yes, because they are here for us to teach.” After rewording my question, he answered the question in

the way I desired, but it is difficult to know if the language barrier prevented me from obtaining salient data that would have been gathered had either the participants English been more refined, or had I used a translator.

Another significant limitation was the fact that I had to conduct the interviews on Skype, or even via Facebook Messenger call without the ability to see the participant, as opposed to face-to-face. While Skype allowed me to see facial expressions, I was generally unable to see overall body language, and was unable to see any visual cues with those I interviewed via Facebook Messenger call. Body language can convey a significant amount of data that might not be elicited through spoken word. Additionally, the connection would fluctuate between adequate and poor, which meant it was sometimes difficult to understand what the participant was saying, forcing me to either ask the participant to repeat him or herself several times, or even end the call and attempt the call again in hopes that the connection would improve.

Finally, another limitation I see is the fact that this was my first time conducting qualitative interviews for a research study. As I transcribed the data, I noticed certain comments that I should have pursued, but simply did not. This was partly due to the time constraints and needing to limit which avenues to pursue during the interviews to complete as many interviews as possible within the allotted time, but it was also partly due to my inexperience as an interviewer. For example, one teacher mentioned that the school needs help assisting students with disabilities. While I did ask a follow-up question requesting him to describe the types of disabilities some of the kids have, when he indicated that some of the children are missing arms or legs, I did not ask why they were missing. There were other instances of missed opportunities that an experienced

interviewer may not have missed. With more experience conducting interviews, I would expect these missed opportunities to decrease.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The scant literature discussed in Chapter 2: Review of Literature covering the topic of refugee camp challenges discusses five primary themes: (1) limited availability and disrupted nature of educational opportunities; (2) class size; (3) language barrier; (4) inadequate quality of instruction/abundance of underqualified teachers; and (5) gender discrimination. These five themes closely relate or fall into the themes I uncovered following the coding and analysis of my interviews, which are: (1) lacking financial support and educational resources; (2) conflict-induced hardship; (3) culture and background hindering educational efforts; (4) lacking parental guidance and resources at home; and (5) struggling with the physical environment. The themes are ordered from most mentioned to least mentioned and have helped me organize the data in such a way as to convey the information in a digestible manner. While the themes from the literature do not necessarily match up perfectly with the themes I uncovered, there is some overlap. For example, one theme from the literature relates to large class sizes, which falls under my theme of lacking financial support and educational resources, while the language barrier theme from the literature is also discussed in the theme from my data of culture

and background hindering educational efforts. While my themes are a bit broader there are clear parallels with some of the themes from the literature.

Key Findings – Kakuma Refugee Camp Challenges

Because I was able to interview 10 people from Kakuma Refugee Camp, and only two from Buduburam Refugee Camp, the bulk of this section will focus on Kakuma, as those results are more reliable, given the larger number of interviews.

Of the 21 schools that LWF operates, the participants of my study worked at either Cush Primary School, Kadugli Primary School, or Malakal Primary School. They taught a range of subjects, including CRE (Christian Religious Education), English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, and Science. Class sizes range from 200-250, and ages range from 14 to 50. The language of instruction at all three schools is English.

Lacking financial support and educational resources. One of the themes found in my Kakuma Refugee Camp interviews, and the theme that garnered the most attention by participants, is the idea that a lack of financial support and educational resources significantly hinders the ability of the teachers to teach and the learners to learn. Without proper financing and educational resources, many teachers voiced an inability to provide an adequate environment conducive to student learning. One of the chief concerns was the lack of physical resources required to educate individuals, including books, writings utensils, or even benches on which children can sit while learning in the classroom. Participants expressed their frustrations regarding the lack of finances for proper educational resources the following ways:

So, like, you have 200 [students], but now the benches are, like, we have one bench containing five learners, so it can be challenge...Like, one bench, two learners, it can work. (Kakuma Male Teacher 1 (KM1))

The ratio of, uh, of book to learner is a problem because we might, we might have books but now the problem is there is a lot of learners in class. Like having 200 learners in class and you have 50 books. (KM1)

Sometimes, we have so many learners and the books are few for them to handle. So, you will get a time that other learners have books and the rest don't have. (KF2)

The buildings, some were constructed long time ago, now they are not well, they are not well, constructed, and, uh, it's not suitable for study (Kakuma Female Teacher 1 (KF1))

We have so many learners, and, the buildings that we have, the classrooms are not enough for them. So, we have teachers are teaching while other learners are outside, standing outside, while listening to the, to the teacher inside, which sometimes it is very difficult for them to understand (Kakuma Female Teacher 2 (KF2))

Many teachers expressed a concern with the lack of books, including textbooks for class and review books for students to take home. Additionally, several teachers expressed a concern with a lack of classrooms, with one teacher stating that his eighth-grade class is 218 students, but only has two classrooms. Most teachers only mentioned the lack of physical resources, but a few tied this lack of resources to financial constraints, either within the refugee population or within the Lutheran World Federation (LFW). Another participant even went as far as to mention the fact that a lack of finances sometimes leads to slavery:

We don't have enough resources. You know, as refugees in the camp, if you don't have anyone who has a job, it is sometimes hard for you to be able to buy a book, a pen, a pencil, or anything for that matter. So that is a problem. And, uh, [Lutheran World Federation] has, is trying its best to make sure that they give us these things. They don't have enough funds, though. (Kakuma Male Teacher 2 (KM2))

Girls, you know, are fragile, and all of the sudden you find them, they are dropping out of school, due to lack of finance...So, all of the sudden, they end up

being traded with somebody who is rich for amount of money, and misuse their lives (KF1)

Another resource discussed by participants were teachers. Many voiced a concern with not having a favorable student to teacher ratio, discussing scenarios where teachers are vastly outnumbered, in some cases 200:1:

For example, uh, learners of 200, like, my class is 216, which sometimes it is difficult for me to handle. And, uh, while I'm dealing with those who are inside, others are outside. So, it is sometimes complicated for me to handle them. (KF2)

You know, sometimes you are teaching 200 and something learners in one classroom by one teacher is, uh, a really bad environment. (Kakuma Male Teacher 4 (KM4))

Some [teachers], they might move from, they might move to another jobs as because of low payment. They might get maybe a job from another place, from NGOs, which is pay higher, so they move to NGOs. (Kakuma Male Teacher 3 (KM3))

This issue of classes, we have, uh, 200 or something learning...It is not a good environment for learning to take place. If we don't have enough rooms for learning, that learning is not going to take place. (KM2).

(Referring to the 200 size classes) these students, they don't concentrate because this congestion leads to them not concentrating. Concentration is very low. (KF3)

You cannot tell which learner is getting what you're saying. (KM2)

Clearly, many participants are concerned with the lack of teachers. A common theme was a concern that the lack of teachers is making it difficult, or even impossible, to properly educate the learners because they simply do not have enough teachers for each class. Additionally, a few participants even voiced their concern that some teachers do not have proper teaching credentials, making them ineffective teachers:

There's also poor management of schools, so most of teachers here are not going for training, like proper education, like how to manage the class. Like, maybe discipline, how you can discipline a child. (KM3)

We have teachers that are not trained, and, therefore, many teachers doesn't have the knowledge for management, and therefore that also effect also learners. (KM3)

Many teachers expressed a wide range of concerns related to finances or resources. Among the chief concerns, lacking an adequate number of teachers to properly educate the overwhelming number of students was mentioned 25 times, and quality infrastructure, primarily referring to the physical schools and classrooms, was mentioned 11 times, while the concern that some teachers lack proper credentials was mentioned twice. Lacking enough books was mentioned six times, with lacking an adequate amount of other supplies, such as classroom benches, pencils, and pens, was mentioned once. Lacking competitive pay for teachers was mentioned once, along with lacking funds for school supplies, children being sold into slavery due to lack of income, and lacking enough quality transportation, which sometimes prevents both students and teachers from getting to school in a timely manner, or sometimes at all. Overall, lacking proper finances and resources to properly educate children was among the chief concerns mentioned by the participants.

Conflict-induced hardship. Many reasons exist explaining why a child might end up in a refugee camp, but chief reason, according to the participants, relates to conflict in their home countries:

You find that so many learners congested in a class because this is where the safety is. So, many of them, they come from, uh, where there is war. (Kakuma Male Teacher 5 (KM5))

Some of the learners we have...um, you know, their minds have been affected by war. (KM2)

Based on interviews with participants, a history of experiencing conflict and violence creates a plethora of problems for students trying to learn in Kakuma Refugee Camp. One concern among some of the participants is that some of the students fleeing from conflict lack any form of formal education prior to living in Kakuma Refugee Camp:

It is hard to teach some children because from their country, there is no education progress in countries where there is war. (KF1)

There is also issue with behavior, like a child who has grown up and who hasn't studied, so it is very hard for him to continue with learning. (KM3)

This results in a significant number of students older than the teachers, sometimes 20 years their senior, causing issues of classroom management in its own way:

Teaching this old people sometimes it is becoming harder to understand of which you are teaching others, they are not even concentrating because they have too much responsibilities at home, compared to this young ones. (KF3)

Most of them, as I said earlier, are, you know, old and then we are young, so there is that kind of point in age. So, they look at us as the youngsters and they don't follow instructions in the classes. I think that has been a major problem to us and many other schools in the camp. (KM2)

It is vitally important for these older students to gain an education, but it is clear that the teachers are having several issues while trying to educate older students. Because they tend to lack concentration due to other obligations, and because they often refuse to listen to the younger teachers, it is not difficult to imagine an environment in which these students are not learning effectively.

Another concern voiced by several participants is that conflict has caused many students to develop issues that prevent them from effectively learning. This could

include simply refusing to listen and follow instructions, or even issues of mental stability:

Most of them who have been exposed to violence and war tend to have the tendency of, you know, not following the instructions we give them as teachers. (KM2)

Some of the learners we have, or I have in my class, came from southern Sudan and, um, you know, their minds have been affected by war, and, uh, they are not that stable. (KM2)

In addition to causing mental issues for learners, conflict also has a tendency to remove the parents from the equation, creating a significant number of orphans who travel to Kakuma Refugee Camp and are forced to assume parental responsibilities while attempting to further his or her education.

You find often they don't know where their parents are. So, you find it takes you time to be able to understand psyche of learners and help them. They don't concentrate on their studies, rather they concentrate on the condition they came out from their countries. (KF1)

As you know, some of them, they have critical problems, as most of them, their parents are not available, so much of the children here, they are just orphan. So, most of their parents are, have been passed away. So, that's why most of them are not taken care. (KM3)

We have learners who, who, who don't have their parents here. So, sometime they are requesting for permission to go to collect their food or something like that, so sometimes the course has make time to, get, go back to what we have taught, so we have to repeat again for them, because they have no one to support them. (KF2)

So, you get a learner, some learners, they, they come to school, they just, they used to think of, uh, who is going to prepare for them to learn. I talk of minors. These are they, they are minor students. They don't have anybody at home to prepare for them food. (KM5)

A significant number of teachers discussed with me concerns regarding the affects conflict has on the students. Among these concerns, problems associated with orphans were mentioned six times, while issues surrounding a lack of prior education and

teaching older students were mentioned a total of four times. It is clear based on the comments of my study's participants that conflict in refugees' countries of origin create significant issues in the classroom. These issues significantly impact the students' ability to learn effectively.

Culture and background hindering educational efforts. Some of the participants mentioned various ways in which a student's culture or background can hinder the ability of the teacher to educate the learners in Kakuma Refugee Camp. These ranged from issues stemming from patriarchal cultures, largely related to gender discrimination or gender issues, to a lack of common language, and even to certain disabilities. One of the issues most mentioned related to gender discrimination was arranged marriages and teenage pregnancy. Some directly cited culture as influencing arranged marriages and teenage pregnancy, whereas others did not:

The girls we teach in our schools, you know, are into forced marriages by their parents and they're dropping out of the classes. If a girl has done well and the parents, you know, someone comes [to] their parents and, you know, declare his intention that he would like to marry that girl, the parents would force the daughter, you know, and so we have had lots of, you know, girls dropping out of our schools, and that has been a problem. (KM2)

We have arranged marriage. So, this was maybe was affecting the learners, and this mostly, it is in the communities that they believe in their culture, when the child maybe is a girl, maybe reaching of 18 years, so that child might be expect to be married. (KM3)

So, we find maybe in a year, most of the learners are dropping out of school, and girls are getting pregnant, some are getting married through arranged marriage, and it's because of they don't know the meaning of education. (Kakuma Female Teacher 4 (KM4))

You find most of the children dropping out are girls. Teenage girls. And, uh, there is a lot of teenage pregnancy. Girls are supposed to be in school to better their lives are being dropped out and that is because of different kind of people

from different backgrounds and countries, people are intermingling in the camp. (KF1)

The teachers that mentioned teenage pregnancy and arranged marriages clearly believe that both are significant hindrances to female education in Kakuma Refugee Camp. While some focused primarily on these two forms of gender related issues, one teacher went on to mention gender roles and slavery:

There are girls staying, you find in a family, or where they are staying, there's only [one] girl serving 20 gentlemen, which all the time, she has to attend to kitchen work. She has to make sure everything at home is in place, which don't give them a lot of time at home to concentrate so that they can study well. (KF1)

Girls, you know, they are fragile, and all of the sudden you find them, they are dropping out of the school, due to lack of finance, because there is no money they can cut off for themselves, bring themselves the basic needs that you know the females, uh, are supposed to have. So, all of the sudden they end up being traded with somebody who is rich for amount of money and misuse their lives. (KF1)

Of the participants who discussed culture and background as an impediment to educating children, the majority mentioned issues relating to gender, specifically females. However, there were a few mentions of other culture and background related topics, one of which was common language:

Yeah, there is a language challenges. For instance, students from different countries, maybe there was no Kiswahili in other countries. We just find Kiswahili in Kenya. (KF1)

Another challenge I think we have the language barrier. As I said, I'm a Kenyan, but, uh, not, teachers are coming from different nationalities, so with that language barrier, sometimes it gives us headache. (KF4)

It is true that language did cause some challenge for teachers in the classroom. Many participants, however, actually mentioned that most students enter Kakuma Refugee Camp with the ability to speak and understand English, which is the language of instruction. So, it appears that perhaps it is not a hugely significant challenge.

The final challenge related to culture or background mentioned by teachers is students with disabilities. Despite only one teacher mentioning this particular challenge, it clearly caused significant issues in his experiences:

The special needs these are the people with some different problems. Like some of them are disabled, they cannot be able to work, so they need to at least be given some of the materials and some of the mean of transport that you can use to come to school. Like some of the learners, they don't even have their legs. Some they cannot be able to see very well. Some, uh, some they don't even have hands for writing, so at least they need to be provide with these materials that they can use to, uh, to, to write or they can use to work from distance in school. So, those are some of the special needs that I'm talking about. (KM4)

KM4 mentioned a few different disabilities, such as missing hands or legs. I considered coding this comment with the Conflict Causing Hardship theme, because losing limbs or appendages is a common occurrence in conflict, particularly those experienced in Africa, but because the participant did not expressly mention these disabilities as related to conflict, I chose to keep it in the Culture and Background theme.

Several teachers discussed various aspects of culture and background as hindering educational efforts by the teachers. Among those mentioned were arranged spouses, which was mentioned four times, and teenage pregnancy, which was mentioned three times. Being forced into gender roles and being sold into slavery, both specifically related to female gender roles, were mentioned twice, as was lacking a common language. Finally, one participant mentioned disabilities, including missing arms or legs. It is clear that of the participants of my study who mentioned various culture and background challenges, the majority of them are concerned with gender discrimination specifically related to females. These participants, however, recognized certain aspects

of the students' culture and background as causing challenges to education that they needed to attempt to rectify in class.

Lacking parental guidance and resources at home. Several teachers discussed a general lack of parental guidance and resources at home as an issue with many of the students. These challenges ranged from losing parents to the conflict in the student's country of origin, to assuming the roles of the parent while attempting to remain a student, and even to not having enough food to eat. The primary challenge faced by students, as cited by several participants, was living without parents, resulting in the student lacking quality advice from home, which often resulted in the student losing focus on his or her education:

Maybe some of the learners might be losing, uh, might be losing their parents and some are living without parents. I know sometimes they be thinking a lot different thing. They might not make, uh, education as the key for their life. They might be forgetting. (KM4)

I understand most of the learners they don't know the reason why they are in school. They are just there because they know they, they are supposed, so they can also come to school. And because these learners, they don't have parents at home, they don't even have the parent and be able to advise them. (KM4)

Some are dropping out of school, they just drop out of school because the lack of advice from people. (KM4)

You find often they [the students] don't know where their parents are. So, you find it takes you time to be able to understand psyche of learners and help them. They don't concentrate on their studies, rather they concentrate on the condition they came out from their countries. (KF1)

Others, they end up skipping because that lack of maybe, poor caring from home. (KF3)

Living without parents often resulted in the student having to assume the primary responsibilities at home, such as collecting food or taking care of others, and at the same time attempt to continue his or her education:

Also, we have learners who, who, who don't have their parents here. So, sometime they are requesting for permission to go to collect their food or something like that, so sometimes the course has make time to, get, go back to what we have taught, so we have to repeat again for them, because they have no one to support them. (KF2)

We have a absenteeism, because, uh, maybe some of these learners that, uh, OK. They have dependents at their home like, uh, doing work at home, so they can be absent in school for around, uh, two or three days, and so it can upset the, the, the, the learning process. (KM1)

You get a learner, some learners, they, they come to school, they just, they used to think of, uh, who is going to prepare for them to learn. I talk of minors. These are they, they are minor students. They don't have anybody at home to prepare for them food, so, they just end up, sending themselves. (KM5)

The challenges that I'm getting is that maybe for teaching this old people sometimes it is becoming harder to understand of which you are teaching others, they are not even concentrating because they have too much responsibilities at home, compared to this younger ones. (KF3)

Most teachers cited students having to take time away from school to collect food and care for themselves, but one teacher mentioned specifically that students often just go without enough food for the month due to their parentless household, as opposed to emphasizing the child's need to gather food for him or herself:

So, what you normally do is you just take one meal per day, for you to reach next month, so you can be able to collect next month. So that is the problem facing the learners, so you might some of the learners they go back home for lunch, they don't get lunch. They just go to drink water and then they come back. (KM4)

In the morning, they're only taking food, one cup, and that is not enough for them just only one cup for a learner. A learner cannot stay from morning until evening with only one cup of food. (KM4)

Because at home, we don't have enough food for the learners...Some learners are only taking one meal per day. One meal per day. (KM4)

The issue is the food that we are collecting from the UNHCR is not enough. Because we are working with the ratio given, and somebody might be having food of size one, and that food of size one is not enough to get you through the whole month. (KM4)

And one teacher just simply cited problems in general that accompany a student's lack of parents as a barrier to educating some of the children:

It's possible where I teach from these learners, so they are not fit to be taught. As you know some of them they have critical problems as most of them their parents are not available, so much of the children here, they are just orphan. So, most of their parents are, have been passed away. So that's why most of them are not taken care. Especially those who have grown up, so when they come and join here, it is a big problem. (KM3)

Several teachers focused on orphans in Kakuma Refugee Camp and how disadvantaged they are when it comes to learning in the refugee camp environment. Participants mentioned lacking parental guidance or living without parents a total of 10 times, and some teachers mentioned assuming parental or adult roles as a child four times. Finally, teachers cited not having enough food as an issue for children three times. Stemming from the issues mentioned were problems involving an inability of the students to concentrate or even problems associated with past conflict causing mental instabilities preventing the child from learning. Teachers also mentioned learners dropping out of school because they either lack parents to help them understand the importance of education, or they have to assume parental or adult responsibilities, such as taking care of siblings or collecting food, which prevents them from continuing their education.

Struggling with the physical environment. The final theme extracted from the data has to do with the struggles experienced in the physical environment. One of the main focuses was the weather causing absenteeism or tardiness:

When it rains, there are laggards. There is water. When water comes, it obstruct them from coming to school, which is also a challenge. (KF1)

When it rains also it takes [the teachers] time to come and also attend to learners in the school. (KF1)

When it is a rainy day, students don't just go to school because all over there is too much water and mud so there's no way of moving. (KF3)

And also another challenge in the camp is actually, it is something natural, is if you look at the environment of the climate it is really too hot. (KM4)

As most teachers focused on the rain causing issues for students and teachers attending school, one focused on the heat of the day. A couple teachers, however, expanded on the issue of weather and added that distance often compounds the challenge of getting to school for the children and the teachers:

There is also problem distance. Distance from the school. The location of camp, it is divided into different, they call some Kakuma 1, Kakuma 2, Kakuma 3, so you find children from far distance coming to a school where they are not, their school that takes them time and in times when it rains, there are ladders. There is water. When water comes, it obstruct them from coming to school, which is also a challenge. And also, the location of teachers. Teachers are not from one camp. They come from different places. So, when it rains also it takes them time to come and also attend to learners in the school. (KF1)

At least because we have some of the learners who might be traveling for the long distance. Um. Just to cross some, uh, in here we have some of the rivers, or you know sometimes if the rain, it will interfere with the learning system. So, some of the learners who are living very far distance might not be able to make it to school because of the rain. (KM4)

Most participants cited distance from school or weather as the major physical world impediments to attending school, with a few mentioning the idea that the frequent migration from one place to another caused by conflict contributes to the challenges faced when educating students:

We have this challenges of, uh, migration and so on. Like, uh, some can come to class seven, and then they go back to their countries, so not most of them can complete. (KM1)

The syllabus, uh, is not well implemented because after class four, someone can go back to their country and come back to class eight or class seven, so. There's a, with the syllabus, I think, uh, it's not well gotten. (KM1)

And finally, one teacher mentioned the lack of quality transportation as an impediment to students and teachers attending class:

We also have some challenges like maybe the transport, this is a challenge...So a learner might be late, or maybe a teacher might be late. (KM3)

The challenges with the physical world was the least cited of the themes by teachers but cited nonetheless. Participants mentioned distance from school or weather challenges a total of nine times, with three citing frequent migration as a challenge, while one cited lacking quality transportation.

Discussion. Above I broke down the five primary findings of my research: (1) lacking financial support and education resources; (2) conflict-induced hardship; (3) culture and background hindering educational efforts; (4) lacking parental guidance and resources at home; and (5) struggling with the physical environment. All of these themes contribute towards creating a challenging environment for teachers while educating learners, and for learners while trying to gain an education. Each theme offers its own negative implications. While the above themes have clear separation, however, there are several relationships not only within each theme, but across themes as well. Below I will offer a discussion of both the implications of some of the individual themes, as well as the implications of cross-thematic relationships. While I will not necessarily discuss every challenge brought to light by the participants like I did in the Findings section, I will discuss those that were most mentioned and most salient across the board.

When addressing a lack of financial support and educational resources, several implications come to mind. It is clear from the participants' comments that financial support causes a plethora of challenges faced by both teachers and students. In the case

of the participants, their school lacked adequate financial support, resulting in an inability to provide enough school-related materials to the children. This includes not only classroom materials, but also the classrooms themselves. When a school cannot afford enough materials, such as books, pencils, paper, and other school supplies, it makes it difficult for children to learn effectively. One teacher even mentioned that it is not uncommon for classes to have 50 books for 200 students. This not only means that several children must share books between several students, but it also means that children are unable to take these books home with them to study and do homework from home. These factors severely limit the ability of the child to learn regardless of whether he or she is at school or at home, severely hindering progress.

Another implication of lacking proper financial resources is the fact that the school at which the participants of my study teach lacks enough classrooms for the number of students. Many teachers suggested that each grade has two classrooms for 200-250 students, explicitly stating that students often have to stand outside and try to listen through the windows to the teacher, who is attempting to teach the class. This not only means that the classrooms are overcrowded inside, resulting in significantly reduced focus, but it also means that the students outside of the classroom are not receiving the attention they need to progress.

Further complicating things is the fact that the participants clearly stated that the overcrowding is related to the conflict in the students' home countries. Because there is significant conflict in Sudan, which is the primary country of origin for most of the students, according to the interviewed participants, students are constantly entering Kakuma Refugee Camp, only adding to the growing number of students in the school.

As conflict continues, the class sizes will only grow larger, increasing the need for increased funding for classroom resources and classrooms themselves. Furthermore, when you combine this with the constant flow of students in and out of Kakuma Refugee Camp, it creates a poor learning environment, as some students might come to the camp without any formal education, while others might leave to go home, which might still lack formal education, only for the student to return without having progressed in his or her education.

It is true that many of the participants cited issues with financial resources related to buying classroom supplies or the physical classrooms themselves. One of the biggest issues mentioned unrelated to classroom supplies, however, was lacking enough teachers for the kids. Many mentioned that one teacher often is responsible for 200 students. This was a consistent point of emphasis, with teachers clearly stating that the student-teacher ratio was too heavily skewed, and that the learners are not able to learn properly in that environment. Some teachers simply mentioned the lack of teachers being a problem, yet others went a step further and tied it directly to an inability to either pay for an increased number of teachers or pay teachers at a competitive rate, resulting in teachers leaving for higher-paying jobs. Additionally, it is apparent that the lack of teachers and the overcrowding due to conflict influence each other. As more students enter Kakuma Refugee Camp, the low number of teachers means that the student to teacher ratio will remain too high. Conversely, without the ability to hire enough teachers, the high number of students is too much for the small cadre of teachers.

The vast amount of conflict across the region also has a heavy influence on the hardships experienced by students and teachers. The chief concern, as discussed earlier,

is the huge amount of overcrowding in the classrooms. The conflict-induced hardships theme, however, very clearly overlaps with the lacking parental guidance and resources at home theme. Most participants attributed conflict in the students' countries of origin as the primary reason most orphans are living in Kakuma Refugee Camp without parents. The lack of parental advice at home has led to several challenges, one of which is teenage pregnancy. As females get pregnant, they often drop out of school, which severely limits their ability to earn money in the future to support herself and her family. Additionally, the lack of parents at home means that the children are responsible for assuming parental responsibilities, including earning a living if possible, collecting food, and taking care of those who are younger. This often means that the student is either heavily distracted in school, thus stunting his or her ability to learn in the classroom and eliminating any chance of studying from home, or he or she drops out of school completely because the weight of pursuing an education while taking care of the adult responsibilities for the household is too much.

Another issue related to orphaned children is that often they do not have enough food to eat. This could be for a number of reasons. One is that they simply do not have time to collect food. Based on some of the comments made by participants regarding this issue, I inferred that the UNHCR disperses food at specific times of day, which often conflict with school time. This means that the child must decide between going to school or collecting food. The other issue is that sometimes an orphan living by him or herself is not allotted enough food to last the entire month. This results in the child either only getting one meal per day or running out of food before the end of the month. Without

enough food, the student is unable to properly concentrate on learning in the classroom, hindering his or her progress.

When it comes to the culture and background of the learners, many participants stated that certain cultural aspects hindered some of the learners' educational progress. The majority of these issues centered around gender discrimination, focusing primarily on females. A few participants mentioned that girls are often forced to marry an arranged spouse, often without the student finishing her education. This severely limits her future earning potential, making her reliant on her husband for most of the family's finances. Additionally, some of the participants mentioned teenage pregnancy as a hindrance to continued female education, stating that once a girl gets pregnant, she often drops out of school, which again limits her ability to provide for her family.

Another cultural barrier mentioned by a couple of teachers is the language barrier. Some students, and even some teachers, come to Kakuma Refugee Camp without knowing English or Kiswahili. It is true that most participants stated that the students and teachers typically know English entering the camp, yet there are still those that do not, or are not fluent enough in English to understand the teacher in the case of the students or communicate with the students in the case of the teachers.

The final theme of issues mentioned by teachers was the struggle with the physical environment. The most salient issues among this theme were distance lived from the school and weather-induced challenges. Distance in and of itself is not necessarily a hindrance to school attendance, although it sometimes causes tardiness. The challenge arises when rains impede the child's ability to get to school. Because

Kakuma is situated in a desert, the rains create a significant amount of mud and running water, which can block walking paths and prevent shuttles from passing through.

Compounding this issue is the fact that financial constraints often prevents the camp from providing an adequate amount of transportation, which greatly reduces the ability of students to travel to and from school during severe weather.

These issues, and others, constantly plague the Kakuma Refugee Camp education system operated by the LWF. While some are unavoidable, such as the constant conflict in some of the students' home countries, others might be reconcilable, for instance if the LWF was able to procure increased funding for supplies and teachers. Yet while the teachers did not have an issue with compiling a long list of challenges, they did manage to mention a few positive aspects of the learning environment at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Positive aspects of Cush, Kadugli, and Malakal Primary Schools. Most of our discussions were centered on factors that negatively impact the learning environment for the teachers and students at Cush, Kadugli, and Malakal Primary Schools. I did, however, ask the participants what factors at the school positively influenced the learning environment. One strategy mentioned by a few of the teachers is the use of small group discussions for remedial teachings, using demonstrations, roleplay, and other more creative methods of instruction. Another positive aspect of the learning environment is that most of the students and teachers come to Kakuma Refugee Camp already knowing and understanding English, which is the official language of instruction at the two academies discussed in my interviews. Additionally, the teachers described an environment where most of the teachers go through some type of formal training to become certified teachers, which greatly helps with not only classroom management, but

conveying the information to the students, as well. And finally, several teachers explained that the school offers some extracurricular activities, such as debate in both English and Kiswahili, as well as team sports and music classes. It is true that there are many aspects of the environment at Kakuma Refugee Camp that hinder educational progress. There are, however, certain factors and strategies that the teachers use that help counteract the negative.

Limited Findings – Buduburam Refugee Camp Challenges

Carolyn A. Miller Primary School at Buduburam Refugee Camp has roughly 250 students and serves first through ninth grade. The subjects taught by the two teachers I interviewed are creative art, English, natural science, mathematics, reading and spelling, and religious education. There are seven teachers, and class sizes are roughly 30-35 students.

Originally, my plan was to interview roughly the same number of teachers in both Buduburam and Kakuma Refugee Camp, at least to the point of saturation, which would allow me to compare the data I collected from the two camps. Unfortunately, many of the teachers to whom I was referred did not respond to my request to interview, which resulted in me only interviewing two teachers from Buduburam Refugee Camp. While this information provides interesting insight into the challenges faced by teachers at a different refugee camp, the inadequate sample size from Buduburam Refugee Camp prevents me from comparing the results of my interviews between the two camps. For this reason, I will briefly discuss the findings from my Buduburam Refugee Camp interviews while showing how the findings are similar or different from those at Kakuma Refugee Camp, but I will not make the cross comparison of the two cases the main focus

of this study, nor will I draw any meaningful conclusions by casually comparing the two cases.

Lacking financial support and educational resources. Similar to the Kakuma Refugee Camp interviews, the teachers I interviewed at Buduburam Refugee Camp also mentioned issues with lack of finances supporting education. Both Buduburam Male Teacher 1 (BM1) and Buduburam Female Teacher 1 (BF1) mentioned an inability of the school to adequately pay teachers and an inability of students to be able to purchase school supplies or even food. Additionally, the lack of financial support meant that teachers are not able to provide enough learning materials, such as textbooks, to the students, hindering the ability for the students to learn.

Conflict-induced hardship. Both BF1 and BM1 also briefly mentioned conflict-related issues in the classroom, particularly as it relates to student mental health. BF1 pointed to the trauma experienced by some of the refugee children in their home country as making them “hot headed” with a need to be counseled, while BM1 mentioned an issue with trauma experienced by both students and teachers in their respective home countries, although he did not mention the specific issues experienced by teachers due to this trauma.

Lacking parental guidance and resources at home. Another issue mentioned by both BF1 and BM1 was a lack of parental guidance at home. Again, both only addressed the issues briefly, with BF1 stating that “most of the time, the children, they don’t have the means, you know, for the parents who take care of them,” which lead into a discussion of not having enough money for food, as discussed previously. BM1

mentioned orphaned children more in the context of the child having difficulty adjusting to the new situation in the refugee camp without parental guidance and support, leading to issues in the classroom, primarily manifesting in lack of attendance or the inability to pay attention in class.

Discussion. The challenges experienced at Carolyn A. Miller Primary School in Buduburam Refugee Camp present similar issues to those mentioned by the teachers I interviewed at Kakuma Refugee Camp. Many students are unable to afford school supplies and an adequate amount of food, meaning many students are unable to learn properly in the classroom due to a lack of pencils and paper, etc. Additionally, without enough food to eat, the teachers discussed that the children often cannot concentrate properly in class, hindering their ability to learn. They also discussed that the school has trouble affording books, while taking it a step further and stating that the schools also cannot afford up-to-date books with more recent information in them. And finally, they discussed how the conflict experienced by many of the children has made them difficult to teach, and even sometimes violent, requiring a significant amount of counseling.

The two teachers I interviewed at Buduburam Refugee Camp generally spoke to the same challenges experienced by those teaching at Kakuma Refugee Camp with two exceptions: culture and background hindering educational efforts and struggling with the physical environment. Neither teacher discussed any challenges related to culture or background or the physical environment. It is possible that these themes might have been mentioned had I been able to interview an adequate number of teachers, but the two I interviewed failed to mention either theme. Furthermore, the findings related to

Buduburam Refugee Camp, while interesting, do not originate from a sample large enough to draw meaningful comparisons.

Recommended Strategies to Improve the Learning Environment

Participant recommended improvement strategies. As to be expected, several of the recommendations for ways to improve the learning environment involve increased funding. One such example was proposed by several of the teachers, where they describe a sponsorship program for girls to help them buy school supplies and food so that they will stay in school and finish their education. A few other teachers mentioned improving guidance and counseling services to help the children work through their problems and remain in school. Additionally, several teachers emphasized the need to employ more teachers, pay teachers a higher wage, and build more schools and classrooms to help reduce the number of students per class, all of which would help with the overcrowding aspect of the current school system. Furthermore, another teacher made a recommendation to split the classes up into smaller groups and try to hold multiple school sessions within the day. This means that the students might spend less time in class each day, but it also means that they might be able to learn more effectively due to the smaller class sizes.

A few other teachers suggested an increase in teacher training to not only ensure that current teachers continue to develop professionally, but to also help hire and train more teachers to help with the large class sizes. KM3 took this idea a step further and suggested that the teachers train and counsel some of the more advanced students on “negative issues”, who could then be used to help train other learners on negative issues, explaining to those students “why this action is not good” and what he or she can do to

stay on a positive path. While KM3 did not expound on the specific issues to which he was referring, it seems like it could be a way to help increase the number of people in a classroom that can help the students without having to find additional funding. KM3 also suggested that they start other educational opportunities beyond the traditional school environment. This suggestion was more along the lines of vocational school and involved teaching students skills related to professions such as carpentry or electrical.

Another suggestion made by KM4 was expanding on existing counseling services and incorporating trained counselors as opposed to teachers who have training in counseling. This counseling service could range from helping students work through issues, as many of the students have developed issues due to their experience with conflict, to simply helping students understand the importance of education while advising the student on how best to continue his or her education while working towards a profession. Many of these suggestions offer great ideas for improving the educational system run by the LWF. It is true that most of them might require a significant increase in financial resources, but if the schools can find a way to make even a few of them happen, it could lead to a drastic improvement in the educational environment.

My recommendations. Many of the aforementioned strategies for improvement would vastly increase the ability of the teachers to properly educate their students. These improvements, however, cannot be implemented unless funding increases for schools in refugee camps. In the case of the teachers I interviewed at Kakuma Refugee Camp, their schools are organized and operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). This organization is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is a “global communion of 145 churches...representing over 74 million Christians in 98 countries,” (Lutheran World

Federation, 2018). LWF's income in 2016 was 141.1 million Euros (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017). Roughly one-third of this income originated from member churches and 'related agencies,' with the UN and government funding accounting for about 28 percent of LWF's funding (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017). Augusta Victoria Hospital accounted for 29 percent of the income, with about 10 percent of the income originating from local donors or administration fees raised from bilateral grants (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017).

One can breakdown LWF expenditures into a few different categories. The largest category is Disaster Risk Response and Emergency Preparedness, accounting for about 62.8 million Euros, with Sustainable Livelihood activities accounting for about 52.2 million Euros (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017). Non-project expenditures account for 5.3 million while community-led action for justice and peace activities total in 4.8 million (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017). Geneva coordination totals roughly 4.2 million, with organizational sustainability and performance and global projects totaling two and one million, respectively (The Lutheran World Foundation, 2017).

Unfortunately, I was unable to find a hard figure on the amount of money annually invested in the school system at Kakuma Refugee Camp, but it is clear based on the responses gathered from participants that it is not enough. The LWF is maximizing the funds it has available to develop the educational system at Kakuma Refugee Camp, but it needs further assistance to help increase funding and available supplies to boost the ability of the teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp to better educate their students.

One way for the LWF to increase the availability of supplies would be to coordinate efforts between the LWF and other NGOs devoted to educational development. The LWF needs to find other like-minded NGOs to help increase the availability of food, school supplies, teachers, teacher training, etc. For example, the LWF could partner with an NGO such as Teachers Across Borders (TAB) that provides professional development to teachers in emerging countries (Teachers Across Borders, 2016). This could help not only alleviate the issue addressed by some participants of having a high number of unqualified teachers, but it could also help generate a larger number of teachers, helping to reduce the teacher-to-student ratio. Additionally, LWF could partner with another NGO called Barefoot College. This NGO provides a plethora of services, one of which is the operation of transition schools designed to help children who have never been enrolled in formal education systems to catch up to their peers and the join them in a regular classroom setting, which would tremendously help reduce issues caused by teaching a class of students with varying levels of education (Barefoot College, 2018).

Another way to increase the availability of supplies would be to tap into funding provided by organizations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation primarily works with NGOs and other organizations to develop strategies targeting areas of opportunity to improve health, education, economic growth (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018). Thus far in 2018, the Gates Foundation has awarded over \$40 million USD in grant money to various organizations (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018). The acquisition of a grant by the LWF from the Gates Foundation or

other similar organizations would help the LWF to significantly reduce the impact of the challenges experienced by teachers when educating children in the refugee camp setting.

These are just a few examples of potential options that represent a great starting point for future strategic partnerships for organizations that create and operate schools within a refugee camp setting. NGOs and host governments must think creatively and look for opportunity to work together to improve the ability of the teachers in refugee camps to educate children, otherwise the challenges discussed by the participants in my study will persist.

Conclusion

The overall themes of lacking financial support and education resources, conflict-induced hardship, culture and background hindering educational efforts, lacking parental guidance and resources at home, and struggling with the physical environment paint a clear picture of the challenges faced by teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp. While I was unable to collect a methodologically sound number of interviews from Buduburam Refugee Camp, what little data I was able to collect appeared to match the information gathered from Kakuma Refugee Camp. Additionally, the teachers provided some insightful ideas as to how they could affect positive change on the educational environment. While the majority of these ideas will require significant financial investment, they are worth considering in order to help ensure the children in both camps receive a quality education that helps set them up for success in the future.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Starting on 02 April 2018, teachers from across the state of Oklahoma gathered at the State Capitol Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in an effort to draw attention to and resolve the issues that have led to the creation of one of the most poorly funded education systems in the United States. The teachers went on strike, referred to as the Teacher Walkout, for several reasons. Since 2008, Oklahoma has experienced a reduction in funding by 28 percent, representing the largest cuts in the country (DenHoed, 2018). A lack in funding has resulted in 20 percent of the state's schools cutting the school week to four days, while the state hemorrhages qualified teachers to other states with higher pay, resulting in the creation of over 1900 emergency-certified teachers (DenHoed, 2018; Palmer, 2018). Several teachers have shared "images of worn out, crumbling books and broken classroom equipment," citing a lack in updated, quality education books and supplies, overcrowded classrooms, and low pay as the primary reasons for the teacher strike (May, 2018).

As teachers continued to strike for two weeks, parallels between the situation in Oklahoma, albeit on a much lesser scale, and Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya became apparent. According to the participants in my study, the teachers in Kakuma Refugee

Camp experience low wages, school supplies that are both outdated and insufficient in number, and overcrowded classrooms. Yet, while teachers in Oklahoma experience similar challenges to that of the participants I interviewed at Kakuma Refugee Camp that have only worsened with time, the teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp unfortunately do not have the option to walkout and strike. Those teaching in Kakuma must make the best of the resources they have available to them due to their protracted status as a refugee. This means that the LWF and other organizations that create and operate schools in refugee camps must find ways to help improve these educational environments. This is why the study I conducted is important; it provides a starting point for the discussion surrounding refugee camp education challenges and possible ways to reduce the effects of these challenges.

The Findings and their Implications

The findings of my research outline five primary challenges associated with refugee camp education in Kakuma Refugee Camp and, to a less robust extent, Buduburam Refugee Camp. These challenges are: (1) lacking financial support and educational resources; (2) conflict-induced hardship; (3) culture and background hindering educational efforts; (4) lacking parental guidance and resources at home; and (5) struggling with the physical environment. One of the most significant reasons these findings are important is because they help to explain why refugee child education is so difficult in a refugee camp setting.

UNHCR (2017) reports that 61 percent of primary school age children and 23 percent of secondary age children actually attend school. When combined, this represents less than half of the 6.4 million refugee children of primary and secondary

school age (UNHCR, 2017). This data tells us that challenges exist that hinder the ability to educate children in the refugee camp setting. What it does not tell us, however, is what challenges exist. This is why the five themes uncovered by my research are important to the field of study; they provide a small window into the challenges faced by teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp, providing a strong launching point for future research and a reference point for improving refugee camp education programs.

Each theme represents a specific barrier to refugee camp education programs. The lack of financial support and educational resources, for example, is capable of hindering educational progress, or even discouraging students from attending school. Two of the biggest issues cited by teachers I interviewed is the poor student-to-teacher ratio and the lack of adequate classroom spaces. Kakuma Refugee Camp teachers in particular voiced concerns over the 200:1 student-to-teacher ratio, poor book-to-student ratio, and the low number of classrooms for each class. They described an environment to me in which there might only be 50 books per 200 students in the class. Additionally, with only one teacher per 150 to 200 students, it would be nearly impossible for each student to receive quality instruction, especially when considering that the classrooms are so few and so inadequate in size, that some students are left standing outside of the room listening in through the windows. All of these factors serve to discourage students from pursuing education. If the student does not feel that he or she is learning, whether due to a lack of books, a lack of space to sit in the classroom, or the inability to receive attention from the teacher during class, that student may decide that there are other activities that make better use of his or her time. Or he or she might simply not see the point in

attending if learning does not occur in the classroom, all of which leads to absenteeism and low enrollment.

While the above only outlines one of the applications of the themes uncovered by my research, this serves as an example that each theme could influence a poor educational environment and low primary and secondary school attendance. For example, many participants discussed how arranged marriages and traditional gender roles force girls out of the classroom and into the home. One participant went as far as discussing that she knows of girls who have been sold by their families due to lack of finances to pay for food and basic necessities, or girls who are the only girl in her household, meaning she is forced to cook and clean for all the men that live with her, often preventing her from attending school. These themes represent real, tangible examples of the challenges faced when educating children in the refugee camp setting. While these themes are specific to Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp, the findings represent a starting point when assessing reasons for low attendance and absenteeism at schools in other refugee camps, which can then serve as actionable items to help improve refugee camp education environments, especially if researchers conduct future studies to bolster the results of my research.

Limitations of the Study

As discussed in Chapter 3: Methodology, there were a few limitations throughout my research. Because I have discussed these limitations at length in Chapter 3, this section will only be a brief overview of the limitations discussed. The first and most significant limitation relates to the number of interviews obtained from Buduburam Refugee Camp. My initial plan was to conduct enough interviews to reach a point of

saturation at both Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp, then compare the challenges reported by the participants in each camp. While I was able to interview an adequate number of teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp for the purposes of this study, I was only able to interview two teachers at Buduburam Refugee Camp, which made it impossible to effectively compare the two as equal samples in the research design. Furthermore, my sample size compared to the number of teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp was relatively small. I interviewed nine teachers and one administrator, yet the administrator told me that there are over 500 teachers working with LWF within Kakuma Refugee Camp's education system. While the 10 people I interviewed at Kakuma generally mentioned the same challenges, interviewing a greater number of teachers would result in more robust, transferrable findings. Additionally, while I was able to interview several teachers at Kakuma Refugee Camp, I was afforded a relatively short window for interviews (about six hours for 10 interviews), due to time constraints at the refugee camp. This meant I could not necessarily explore all emerging avenues of discussion throughout the interview process and had to pick and choose what I thought was important to pursue in the moment.

Another issue was the language barrier. While each teacher I interviewed spoke English, some had difficulty understanding certain questions and nuances in the English language, which sometimes made it difficult to illicit the type of information desired from the question I asked. Another factor working against us in conjunction with the language barrier was the occasionally poor connection. While the connection was good enough to communicate for the majority of the interview time, there were moments when the

connection would degrade to the point to where I could not fully understand that participant, and he or she could not understand me, making communication difficult.

My final limitation was the fact that this was my first time conducting qualitative interviews as a researcher. While I was transcribing the data, I noticed there were certain comments made by the participants that I should have pursued with follow-up questions, but I simply did not because I thought the information he or she had provided was adequate. Additionally, the initial interviews did not quite have a rhythm or flow to them and were somewhat choppy, as I was often unsure to what degree I should react to participants' statements. I was often caught between wanting to show interest in participants' comments, while not wanting to talk too much at risk of breaking the participants' train of thought. This did, however, improve as I progressed through the interviews.

Future Research Considerations

While my research provides some important findings related to challenges when educating children in a refugee camp setting, it only represents a microcosm of the research opportunities surrounding this field of study. Because my sample size was so small, both in terms of the number of interviews I conducted and the number of camps at which I conducted interviews, my findings are not robust enough to fully represent transferable information that could be applied to multiple refugee camp environments. With this in mind, it is important for researchers to not only interview a greater number of teachers at both Kakuma Refugee Camp and Buduburam Refugee Camp, but at other refugee camps, as well.

Additionally, to develop a transferable model of refugee camp challenges that academics and practitioners alike could apply to multiple refugee camp settings, researchers must conduct a much greater number of studies involving a larger number of participants across several environments, while comparing the results of these studies to other similar studies. While my research represents a starting point for these comparisons, it is limited to just that: a starting point. The findings of my research will not truly be transferable to other refugee camp environments unless future researchers conduct additional studies and reveal similar findings in a plethora of diverse refugee camp environments. Once the available research on the topic of challenges faced by refugee camp environments is expanded, academics and practitioners alike can then apply the findings of the field of research to practical applications, which could lead to an improved ability to educate children in a refugee camp setting, helping to counteract the negative impacts of refugee camp usage as a means for organizing refugee populations.

Another possibility for future research would be to look at education research in the United States, particularly research that analyzes impoverished school districts and strategies they implement to counteract their challenges, to see if the LWF and other organizations could use any strategies utilized in the United States to improve refugee camp schools. While there might not be a direct parallel between impoverished school districts in the US and Kakuma Refugee Camp, given that the student ratio in Kakuma is 1:200 and the severity of the situation surrounding the refugees, the comparison could provide enough strategies that, when combined together, could make a positive and lasting difference on refugee camp schools.

While the situation in Kakuma Refugee Camp and other refugee camp schools can appear apocalyptic at times, the interviews I conducted yielded information that created clear, actionable themes on which NGOs can improve to help reduce the effects of refugee camp education challenges. As researchers continue to analyze similar topics of study and build the existing literature related to refugee camp education challenges, NGOs and other organizations will be able to find common themes across multiple refugee camp schools that can then be used to help improve the way teachers education children in a refugee camp setting.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

REFUGEE CAMP EDUCATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEWER: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION: _____

INTERVIEWEE: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION: _____

DATE: __/__/_____

INTERVIEW START TIME: _____

INTERVIEW END TIME: _____

Research question for this interview guide: What types of educational opportunities are available in the refugee camp? Do you think they are effective? What would the ideal educational program be for this particular refugee camp?

Interviewee Information: Interview is with a refugee camp educator living in the [camp TBD]. (He/she) is ____ years old and has been living in the refugee camp for ____.

Sections: Introduction and general information about life in the refugee camp, educational opportunities in the refugee camp.

Interview Schedule

Introduction

- Thanks for time
- Explanation of project
- Assurance of confidentiality, overview of informed consent and request to start recording
- Any questions?

I would like to start with some introductory questions, so I can gain a better understanding about your life in the [camp TBD].

1. What is your experience in education prior to becoming an educator in [camp TBD]?

- a. (if applicable) Please describe the educational environment during your previous educational experiences.

- b. (if applicable) What did you consider to be an effective learning environment for students during your previous educational experiences?

Transition: Now we will discuss your school here in the refugee camp.

2. Please describe your current educational environment.

- a. (if needed) Please describe the topics you teach.

- b. (if needed) Please describe the age ranges you teach.

3. What is your opinion about your ability to help educate the refugee students in your classroom?

- a. (if needed) Describe the characteristics of your educational environment that make the learning experience a positive learning experience.

- b. (if needed) Describe the characteristics of your educational environment that make the learning experience a negative learning experience.

- c. (if needed) What camp rules or regulations positively impact the learning environment?

- d. (if needed) What camp rules or regulations negatively impact the learning environment?

e. (if needed) How do the customs of the people living in the camp impact the educational environment?

4. Please describe your ideal educational environment in this refugee camp.

a. (if needed) What tools do you need to improve the learning environment?

b. (if needed) How would you alter or change the rules and regulations of the camp to improve the educational environment

5. Is there anything I should have asked you that I did not?

6. If you were in my position, who would you interview next?

Probes for reference

- Tell me more about that.
- What did you mean by...?
- Could you clarify what you meant when you said...?
- Could you elaborate on...?

VITA

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Master of Science

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KAKUMA AND BUDUBURAM REFUGEE CAMP

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