MM41 – MA Dissertation

"Education is our weapon for the future"

Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Access to higher education for refugees is limited and under-researched. Within the context of protracted refugee situations in the Global South, the relief focus of humanitarian assistance, as well as the lack of integration policy, restricts refugees' living conditions and chances of being able to access further education. With a theoretical base in refugee studies and sociology of education, this study explores the conditions for access to higher education, by using a case study from Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Following a qualitative research approach − interviews with education officers, but mainly refugees inside and outside the educational system − serves to demonstrate opportunities for and barriers to higher education, as well as provide accounts for lived experiences of access and non-access to education. The study also focuses on the refugees' perspectives on their future and the end to their individual refugee situation, and what role higher education is perceived to have in relation to that. Findings suggest that although there in principle are no restrictions for refugees to access higher education institutions in Uganda, in practice there are structural constraints and various barriers which prevent access. In Nakivale Refugee Settlement there is a major discrepancy between educational realities and educational aspirations. Different future plans among the respondents, that challenge the dominating discourse of repatriation as the one solution to refugee situations, show how higher education is seen as having an important role in the preparation for all possible futures, and especially for an uncertain future which lies ahead for many refugees. Findings also point to how refugees have particular experiences related to being beneficiaries of humanitarian aid and having refugee status, thus being within a preserved dynamics of exclusion.

Keywords: Higher education, refugees, protracted refugee situations, Uganda

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Anna Hakami

1. INTRODUCTION

"Through education, I believe you can be anyone."

Refugee from Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda

Access to higher education for refugees is extremely limited (Dryden-Peterson 2011). Since the provision of primary education is prioritised in emergency situations, secondary and tertiary education is often overlooked (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). The same applies in academia, as there is little research done on post-primary, and especially higher education, for refugees living in host countries in the Global South. In the words of Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010/2011, p. 3) "the issue of higher education for refugees is virtually unexplored in both scholarship and policy".

The right to education is a human right which is inscribed in several conventions including the 1951 Refugee Convention. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that higher education "shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit" (UN General Assembly 10 December 1948, Art 26(1)). However, this right is denied to large numbers of refugees across the globe. Figures from 2009 show that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)[1] for refugees globally is 76% for primary school, but it plummets to 36% for secondary education (Dryden-Peterson 2011, p. 24). In comparison, the GER for primary school globally was 90% and for secondary school 67% in 2008, showing the great differences, especially at secondary level (ibid). Regarding access to higher education for refugees globally, there is no comprehensive data (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011). This shows that access to education for refugees is a great challenge, particularly on the post-primary level, and it becomes even greater because of the high frequency of long-term displacement.

By the end of 2015, 6.7 million, i.e. 41% of the refugees under UNHCR's mandate, were in protracted refugee situations and the average length of stay in such a situation was 26 years (UNHCR 2016c, p. 20). For identifying protracted refugee situations, UNHCR uses a "crude

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[1] "Gross Enrolment Ratio is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to that level of education. GERs can exceed 100% due to early or late entry into school or to repetition." (Dryden-Peterson, 2011, p. 24)

measure of refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries" (UNHCR 2004, p. 2). However, wider definitions are used among scholars: for instance, Loescher and Milner (2008) defines a protracted refugee situation as a situation where a large number of refugees remain refugees for a long time and there is no uncomplicated solution in sight. The large majority of protracted refugee situations are situated in the Global South (ibid), where a common trend is to place refugees in camps or settlements, often in remote borderlands, as a consequence of the securitization of refugees (Mogire 2009). In light of the extended periods which refugees stay in camps or settlements, the view that the establishment of such represents a temporary solution to refugee situations can no longer be seen as valid; instead, the long-term nature of many refugee situations should be acknowledged to ensure proper responses. The discourse that conceptualises refugee situations as temporary phenomena still dominates.

There is a "lack of emergency response in education" (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011, p. 3) and the provision of primary education all through higher education needs to be improved in humanitarian responses. Post-primary education is what is lagging behind most. Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011, p. 52) have argued that within the context of refugee settlements, which are donor-driven and structured to maintain a state of "permanent temporariness", higher education cannot be prioritised. The narrative of temporariness does not provide a logic for increasing opportunities for education, especially above the primary level.

Around the turn of the millennium, a global education movement gained momentum, which focused on access to primary education for all, including populations affected by disasters or conflict. Higher education, however, has not been a part of this movement (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011). Agencies and donors have justified de-prioritisation of higher education with the argument that it is expensive and only caters to a small fraction of people, which could become an elite group. Dryden-Peterson (2010/2011), with a contrasting view, has argued that there should be increased investments in higher education for refugees, since, firstly, it will bring about high-level skills that can generate economic growth and societal benefits; secondly, it has a protective role for young people; thirdly, it can be a part of rebuilding lives and realizing durable solutions for refugees; and fourthly, it can be a tool for reconstruction and contribute to a positive socio-economic development in the country of origin.

Zeus (2011) has challenged assumptions regarding conceptual and practical barriers to higher education in protracted refugee situations: that refugee situations are short-term, that higher education needs to exist within a nation state, and that refugees are victims incapable of coping with higher education. Instead, Zeus sees the provision of higher education for refugees on-site in protracted encampment as a possibility, although recognising substantial and multiple obstacles to its realisation. Her conclusion is that "Higher Education could be both a means to refugee empowerment and a form of empowerment" (ibid, p. 256) and that it could "be a way towards allowing ourselves to see refugees as agents and allowing refugees to be agents of development in having positive impacts on their self-respect and shaping their own as well as their host communities' environment" (ibid, p. 272).

The political embeddedness of refugee education has been explored by Waters and LeBlanc (2005) who have looked into the challenges around schooling in refugee camps run by the 'pseudo-state' of the international relief system. Issues such as choice of the school curriculum and language of instruction become politicised "because refugees by definition do not have their own state, there is inherent uncertainty about in which society they should socialize their children as members" (ibid, p. 130). Furthermore, "schooling is inherently embedded in broader issues of individual and economic development that for refugee populations are inherently unclear and often unimaginable" (ibid, p. 131). In other words, the future and the future residence are uncertain for refugee populations, which complicates the provision of education in different ways. Where the refugees will live in the future is not something that they can decide entirely and freely themselves, rather it is contingent on a range of external factors and actors' approaches, such as the country of origin, the host country and the international agencies with the mission of solving the refugee 'problem'. The general approach by host countries is to favour voluntary repatriation of the refugees, and thereby being unwilling to locally integrate them. A host country with such an approach to refugees on its territory would not be engaged in improving either integration policy or access to higher education for refugees since these policies imply that the refugees would stay permanently. This sheds light on how the politics around refugee situations and the geopolitical question of responsibility have a great impact on the lives of refugees and the realisation of their human rights.

There is a small body of literature that concerns higher education for refugees, and it is especially rare in relation to countries in the Global South. Generally, we can today know very little about the situation for refugees in search of higher education. Hopefully, this field

is now in the pipeline and will expand, in order for a knowledge gap to be closed and findings to be taken forward by scholars and relevant actors working in the area. Amongst the existing literature, there are only a few articles which bring forward the refugees' perspective by presenting interviews and focusing on their lived experiences. Therefore, this study has the main focus on the refugees' own stories, experiences and understandings related to higher education.

This study is an in-depth account of the conditions for access to higher education for refugees, by using a case study from Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Uganda was the 8th largest refugee-hosting country in 2015 (UNHCR 2016c, p. 15), and has a long history of receiving refugees due to its location in a conflict-ridden region (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). As Nakivale is the largest settlement in the country, it is a suitable case for investigation. With a theoretical background in refugee studies and sociology, this study sets out to examine the opportunities for, and barriers to, access to higher education for refugees from Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Furthermore, it explores how refugees who either are in search of higher education or have gained access to it, experience the non-access or access. Moreover, this study aims to analyse how the refugees themselves see their future and the end to their refugee situation, and how higher education is related to it. This serves as a commentary on the dominant discourses of ends to refugee situations, reproduced by host states and the international humanitarian community, and seldom based on the refugees' own perspectives.

Considering the restrictions that Ugandan refugee law and policy puts on the lives of refugees, the structure that is upheld limits the opportunities for access to higher education. Furthermore, resource constraints and policy priorities have resulted in a lack of quality education in the refugee settlement, making it difficult to obtain sufficient qualifications for higher education. The backgrounds of people living in Nakivale Refugee Settlement vary: some have spent their entire school-age there, and others have recently arrived, perhaps having their university studies interrupted due to the flight. A broad range of experiences shows different realities, but with a commonality: the desire to acquire higher education.

This study recognises the essential importance of equality of opportunity when it comes to education, and sees improving access to higher education for refugees as an obligation for ensuring their human rights and preventing a great loss of human potential.

1.1.   Purpose and research question

The purpose of this study is to explore the issue of access to higher education for refugees in Uganda, through a case study from Nakivale Refugee Settlement. The aim is to add to the limited existing knowledge on access to higher education for refugees living in refugee settlements in the Global South and to locate the issue within a bigger discussion regarding solutions to protracted refugee situations.

The research question aims to explore refugees' experiences and aspirations related to higher education and to link this to how they perceive their future and the end to their refugee situation, be it repatriation to the country of origin, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

The research question is:

How is access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement experienced, and how are aspirations for higher education linked to their future goals and solutions to refugee situations?

1.2.   Definitions of key terms

To begin with, it is important to define how some key terms are used in this study.

The term *refugee* is referring to any person who has been forced to flee from her/his home and is seeking refuge (Rogers et al. 2013). In this work I use refugee when speaking of a person who has crossed an internationally recognised border and been granted asylum in another country. I am not, therefore, referring to people fleeing within the borders of their own country, so-called internally displaced persons (ibid). This definition is a broad understanding of the term refugee, and it is not restricted to the definition given in the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951, which is "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion…" (UN General Assembly 28 July 1951), hence not including people fleeing war or generalised violence.

For *higher education*, the UNHCR's definition will be used: "Higher education includes all post-secondary education. It includes education at colleges and universities that leads to degrees. It also includes training that is technical, vocational, professional and/or para-professional and that leads to certificates and diplomas." (UNHCR 2012, p. 21). The focus of this study will however lie on studies at university.

When speaking of *access to education* it "involves the ability to enrol in school and to continue one's studies through to the end of a given level" (Dryden-Peterson 2011, p. 24).

The definition of *international refugee regime* or *global refugee regime* that is used is: "The regime comprises a set of norms, rules, principles, and decision-making procedures that help define states' obligations towards refugees. It includes a number of inter-state agreements and practices. The centrepiece of the regime is the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention), which provides a definition of who qualifies for refugee status and sets out the rights to which all refugees are entitled. The 1951 Convention also explicitly identifies UNHCR as having supervisory responsibility for its implementation and provides the Office with a normative framework based on international law to carry out its work and to regulate the regime. While a wider range of actors have come to play a more prominent role in the global governance of refugees, UNHCR has remained at the centre of the global refugee regime." (Loescher and Milner 2012, 2011, p. 189)

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter sets the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study, by presenting the research approach, outlining the main theories and concepts that will aid the understanding of the empirical data, and lastly, reviewing the existing literature on higher education for refugees in the Global South.

The research approach has its base in postmodernism, according to which knowledge claims and 'truth' are socially situated and constituted (Baert *et al.* 2011). Postmodernism, with its anti-essentialist critique and opposition towards 'grand narratives', "values "voice", the subjective and multiple voices of individuals and communities rather than predetermined rules for action" (Jansen 2012, p. 22). One of the fundamental elements of this paradigm (like other paradigms) is the rejection of notions of objectivity, because of the constant "influence of power or discourse" (Baert *et al.* 2011, p. 483).

Additionally, social constructionism informs the theoretical perspective of the research. Social constructionism, in simple terms, "emphasize[s] the socially created nature of social life" (Scott and Marshall 2009), and one major tenet is that the only way of understanding the meaning of concepts is by learning how people use them in their 'natural' languages (Baert *et al.* 2011). In a lot of social constructionist work, what is of interest is to understand the 'lived experiences' of social actors, and the meaning of social phenomena. Just as knowledge claims are socially situated, and socially, culturally and historically embedded, a central social constructionist thesis is that "to understand the putative legitimacy of ideas we must look to their social contexts." (ibid, p. 480). The linkage of power and knowledge within social constructionist thought is a premise for this study, and in line with that, critical theories are also adhered to. According to critical theories, "constructed lived experience/…/is mediated by power relations within social and historical contexts" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000, in Ponterotto 2005, p. 130), and experiences and realities are shaped by gender, race, class, nationality, and other dimensions which also are linked to social oppression.

This research approach serves as a theoretical lens through which to look at the issues of the study. In order to try to answer the research question, theory from both refugee studies and sociology will be drawn upon. In the next section, firstly, refugee studies will be delved into, by looking at the concept of protracted refugee situations, discussing solutions to refugee situations, and then considering the field of refugee education. Secondly, the field of

sociology of higher education is explored, as well as the concepts of social and spatial mobility, followed by an account of Bourdieu's theory of the Habitus.

The level of analysis will move between micro and macro, since empirical data on individuals' lived experiences constitute the bulk of the study but is also set in relation to discourses and practices on a macro-level, by actors involved in the global governance of refugees.

Since higher education for refugees up until today has received so little scholarly attention, setting the theoretical framework has proved a bit challenging. Adding to the challenge is that most available research is contextually located in the Global North. Although this is not the case for refugee studies, sociology of education has very seldom concerned refugees, and if so, it has been in the Global North. This is clearly noted in the title of Pinson and Arnot's (2007) article, "Sociology of education and the wasteland of refugee education research". It appears that studies in the sociology of higher education have almost exclusively taken place in the U.S.A. and other parts of the Global North. Still, this field can offer some theoretical insights to this study, bearing in mind that its context is very different from the Global South in general, and East Africa in particular.

2.1. Protracted Refugee Situations

The prevalence of protracted refugee situations in the world demands attention. The UNHCR estimates that, by the end of 2015, 6.7 million refugees were in protracted situations, which is 41% of the whole refugee population under UNHCR's mandate (UNHCR 2016c, p. 20). The average time that is spent in exile has increased over the years, and it is now estimated at about 26 years (ibid). In total 32 protracted refugee situations were recorded at the end of 2015 (ibid), and they are mostly located in poor and unstable regions of the world (Loescher and Milner 2008).

In generic terms, a protracted refugee situation is a situation in which a large number of refugees from the same country are in exile in another country for a long period of time, without any solution in sight (Loescher and Milner 2008). However, the definitions need to be considered in more detail since there are some noteworthy differences between UNHCR's definition and scholarly definitions. According to UNHCR's definition;

> "[A] protracted refugee situation is one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but

their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance./…/Protracted refugee situations stem from political impasses. They are not inevitable, but are rather the result of political action and inaction, both in the country of origin (the persecution or violence that led to flight) and in the country of asylum. They endure because of ongoing problems in the countries of origin, and stagnate and become protracted as a result of responses to refugee inflows, typically involving restrictions on refugee movement and employment possibilities, and confinement to camps. The short-term nature of planning and funding modalities is a contributing factor." (UNHCR 2004b, pp. 1–2).

UNHCR's definition thus includes the longitude of the situation, the unfulfilled human rights and dependency on humanitarian assistance, and explains the occurrence of the protracted refugee situations by factors in both the country of origin and country of asylum. Loescher and Milner (2008) are the most prominent scholars who have conducted research on protracted refugee situations, and the long-term nature of the situations and causes related to home and host countries also figure in their definition. They argue that the refugees end up in these situations because of a prolonged situation of violence, persecution and/or insecurity in their country of origin, and the unwillingness/inability of the host country to offer citizenship rights and facilitate permanent integration into the host country.

When producing statistics over protracted refugee situations, the UNHCR uses the "crude measure of refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries" (UNHCR 2004b, p. 2). Taking note of UNHCR's need for definitions which have measurability, for scholarly purposes this definition is not very useful, due to the unmotivated figures. Also for monitoring purposes, the measurement is arguably problematic because is set high: many situations where there are thousands or tens of thousands of refugees in exile for a long period of time fall outside the statistics, and thus do not get the same attention. The threshold is probably set as high in order to significantly mark the large size of the refugee population, but supposedly also to reduce the number of protracted refugee situations which lies under UNHCR's mandate.

On the other hand, what Loescher and Milner (2008, p. 23) underline in their definition is the non-static notion of many protracted refugee situations, and that they involve refugee

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populations that are "chronic or recurring". The populations in protracted refugee situations may increase and decrease, and undergo changes within the population itself. An example of a changing refugee population in a protracted refugee situation can be the Rwandese in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Rwandese refugees have been living in this settlement since the 1960s, however, the number of them, as well as the ethnicity of the majority, have shifted. As some Rwandese left Nakivale decades ago, others are still coming and seeking refuge (RLP and IRRI 2010).

Statistics on protracted refugee situations often do not include urban populations. Loescher and Milner (2008) however, specifically address the spatial dimension of a protracted refugee situation in their definition, by stating that the refugee populations are "typically, but not necessarily, concentrated in a specific geographical area, but may include camp-based and urban refugee populations, in addition to displaced populations currently not included in UNHCR's refugee statistics" (Loescher and Milner 2008, p. 23). Other aspects that they bring up are that protracted refugee situations include political and strategic dimensions, just as UNHCR also recognises, and that they are frequently overlooked by regional and international actors, other non-humanitarian actors and the global media (ibid). Further, Loescher and Milner (2008) critique the definition by UNHCR in another regard: arguing that it depicts refugees as passive and that refugees' agency when it comes to finding their own solutions is neglected.

The above definitions of protracted refugee situations include causes of such situations, but since the causes are manifold, there is a need for further elaboration. These situations stem from war and conflict, and a lack of peacebuilding efforts by peace and security actors on the national and international level (Loescher and Milner 2008). People flee persecution, conflicts and war which persist for years, and therefore populations of refugees staying long-term within the borders of another country are formed. Fragile and failed states often result in protracted refugee situations. So, essentially, protracted refugee situations have political causes, since they derive from political action and inaction in the country of origin, but also in the country of asylum. The host state's response to the refugees also causes the protractedness of refugee situations, generally because of restrictive policies concerning employment and encampment, and an unwillingness to integrate the refugees locally (ibid). Common justifications for these responses by host states are the lack of 'burden sharing' by other states (mainly in the Global North), security concerns related to the presence of refugees, and the high influx of refugees coming to areas which already are in strained economic situations

(Milner 2009). Another factor which contributes to protracted refugee situations is declining donor engagement (Loescher and Milner 2008). Reduced donations may lead to more tensions and conflicts over resources between the refugees and the host community, which in turn gives the state weight to its argument of refugees being security risks.

Crisp (2003, p. 3) attributes the prevalence of protracted refugee situations in Africa to wars with ethnic conflicts where civilians have been deliberately targeted, and in many cases "the fighting has been sustained by the fact that various actors – politicians, the military, warlords, militia groups, local entrepreneurs and international business concerns – have a vested economic interest in the continuation of armed conflict". Moreover, characteristics of African protracted refugee situations are, for example, that the refugee populations usually live in refugee settlements or camps situated in peripheral border areas where the climatic conditions often are harsh. These areas are not a priority for the government and therefore they are underdeveloped in terms of economy and infrastructure, they are insecure and poor. Usually, the refugee populations largely consist of children and adolescents, elderly people and women.

The consequences of protracted refugee situations for the refugee population are severe human rights violations. Due to encampment policies, where the refugees are assigned to live within the borders of a settlement or a camp – which has been called the 'warehousing' of refugees – their freedom of movement is often restricted (Loescher and Milner 2008). This has significant negative effects on their right to livelihood and to seek wage-earning employment. Inside refugee settlements, the chances for earning a living or getting post-primary education are usually low. Settlements are places that are insecure, especially for women and girls, since sexual and physical violence is common (ibid). High levels of physical violence and social tensions in protracted refugee situations follow from the severe material and psycho-social deprivation (Crisp 2003). Medically vulnerable refugees suffer especially in settlements because access to medical care is low (Loescher and Milner 2008). The implications for refugees' psycho-social well-being are serious since many are traumatised, and have emotional and behavioural problems (Crisp 2003), and counselling services are undoubtedly not sufficient.

Due to high numbers of people without work in refugee settlements, negative effects of the idleness appear, such as boredom and a sense of hopelessness (Crisp 2003). This may create a base for the recruitment of child soldiers (Loescher and Milner 2008). It may also lead to

substance abuse, a common phenomenon in for example Ugandan refugee settlements (Mulumba 2010). Life in refugee camps may also affect gender roles and family life: consequences such as a breakdown of family structures have been seen (Loescher and Milner 2008), as well as a notion of 'lost masculinity', referring to a situation where men no longer are able to be providers for the families (Turner 1999 in Crisp 2003). As refugees in protracted refugee situations face major restrictions in terms of employment, education, health care and other social services, they often "become dependent on subsistence-level assistance, or less, and lead lives of poverty, frustration and unrealized potential" (Loescher and Milner 2008, p. 31).

Urban refugees usually do not receive the same humanitarian assistance as those living in camps, which puts them in a very precarious situation. The access to health and education systems is typically lower for urban refugees (Loescher and Milner 2008).

Among the implications of protracted refugee situations on host states are the potential security threats. These situations can create political instability in the region and pose security threats to the country of origin and host country (Loescher and Milner 2005a). Direct security threats include spill-over of conflict because of the presence of 'refugee warriors' or former soldiers, and the spread of small arms. Indirect security threats can be increased tensions between the refugee population and host populations and consequent grievances. Refugees are frequently seen as challenges to existing power structures, especially when the differences with the host population are great in terms of identity, culture and language (ibid).

Seeing the causes of protracted refugee situations, Loescher and Milner (2008, p. 28) argue that "a truly comprehensive solution to protracted refugee situations must include sustained political, diplomatic, economic and humanitarian engagement in both the country of origin and the various countries of asylum".

2.2. Solutions to Refugee Situations

As the complexity of protracted refugee situations has been laid down, it becomes evident that a wide range of local, regional, national and international actors need to engage in solving them. Now, how can a refugee situation be solved? The most obvious answer is that when conflicts or wars are over, people who have fled can return to their countries of origin (or of habitual residence) and therefore cease to be refugees since they are then again under the protection of their own state. But a refugee does not necessarily have to return to the country from which she or he fled from, for the refugee status to cease to apply. It also occurs when

one becomes a citizen of another state. The UNHCR, which is the primary international actor working with refugees, has the mandate to protect refugees who are recognised as such under the 1951 Refugee Convention, and stateless persons. As stated in the Statute of the UNHCR, adopted in 1950, UNHCR shall provide protection for refugees by, among other things, "promoting through special agreements with Governments the execution of any measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees and reduce the number requiring protection" (UNHCR 14 December / 1950, p. 9). In other words, as stated on UNHCR's website, their mission is to "resolve refugee problems worldwide" (UNHCR 2016a). This is indeed not an easy quest, and resulting from donor states' wish to see refugee crises solved, political as well as financial pressure is put on the UNHCR to end refugee situations (Black and Koser 1999).

To find solutions for individual or groups of refugees, the UNHCR works with three 'durable solutions': voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, local integration in the country of asylum, and resettlement to a third country (UNHCR 2016b). Voluntary repatriation is defined as "the free and voluntary return to one's country of origin in safety and dignity" (UNHCR 2004a, p. Module 1, p. 2). Some conditions need to be met in order for the UNHCR to promote and facilitate voluntary repatriation: "First, there must have taken place a substantial and permanent change in the conditions which led to the original refugee flow; secondly, the decision to return must be made freely by the refugees; thirdly, the country of origin and the host country must formally agree to the repatriation; and fourthly, the refugees must be able to return safely, and with dignity." (Allen and Turton 1996, p. 15). According to UNHCR's Handbook on voluntary repatriation, a return in safety and dignity should ensure the physical safety, legal safety and material security of the returnee, and "that they are treated with respect and full acceptance by their national authorities, including the full restoration of their rights." (UNHCR 1996, chapter 4.2). The mandate of UNHCR regarding repatriation is also to assist in sustainable reintegration processes, such as supporting rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance, supporting national efforts to create conditions for reconciliation, and monitoring the safety and well-being of returnees (UNHCR 2004a).

Local integration is defined as "a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process between refugees and their hosts in which refugees gradually become integrated members of society legally, economically and socially." (UNHCR 2011a, p. 7). In establishing what the social dimension of integration is, the UNHCR refers to refugees being able to access education and social services, and "to participate in the social fabric of the community" (ibid), and they also identify a sense of social and cultural belonging as a factor which will improve social

cohesion. A bit more straightforward is their definition of the economic dimension, which "involves enabling refugees to establish sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to their host community" (ibid). The legal dimension of local integration is not defined as acquisition of citizenship, rather it "involves the establishment of a legal framework in which refugees gradually attain a wider range of rights in the host State – possibly, but not necessarily, leading to full citizenship and naturalization." (ibid). The legal dimension will be discussed further below.

Resettlement, the third durable solution, is "the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement." (UNHCR 2016d). This solution, the relocation of refugees from the first country of asylum to a third country – all located in the Global North – is offered to less than one percent of the refugees of concern to the UNHCR (ibid). It is only considered if repatriation or local integration are not viable options. The categories under which a refugee could be considered for resettlement are – and most of these relate to the situation in the host country – "Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs", "Medical Needs", "Women and Girls at Risk", "Children and Adolescents at Risk", "Family Reunification", "Survivors of Torture and/or Violence", and "Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions" (UNHCR 2011b, p. 243). So in essence, if a refugee has special protection or medical needs, or there is no foreseeable solution in sight (which is often the case in protracted refugee situations) she or he might have a small chance for resettlement.

As mentioned, the number of resettlement opportunities are extremely few, and therefore resettlement is not a durable solution that can work for substantial groups of refugees. In addition, host states have generally been reluctant to integrate large groups of refugees into their country, which perhaps already is in a resource-constrained situation. Therefore, refugees are often excluded from society and forced to live in camps where they can survive by receiving humanitarian assistance (Black and Koser 1999), and their stay there is conceptualised as temporary, regardless of its actual duration. Thus, in many cases, even though refugees may have lived in the host country for decades, they cannot be considered locally integrated. This leads to repatriation becoming the only perceived feasible solution by the host states (Black and Koser 1999), even though there are various reasons for refugees not being able to return to their country of origin. The UNHCR also sees voluntary repatriation as the preferred durable solution and therefore promotes it (UNHCR 1996). This has raised concerns as to whether the 'voluntariness' of repatriation is assured (Tete 2012) as well as the

'free' choice of the refugees, considering that there have been cases where host states have used different strategies, such as decreasing food rations, to get refugees to repatriate, and forced repatriations have been carried out (for the case of Rwandese refugees in Uganda, see Karooma 2014 and UNHCR 2010).

One of the causes of protracted refugee situations is that none of the durable solutions are found for the refugees. Recent research by Hovil and Lomo (2015) focuses on citizenship, which appears as an essential, but yet neglected, part of solutions to refugee situations. When writing about citizenship, they do not only cover legal citizenship, but also 'empirical citizenship', which they theorize as "a status of being accepted into a given community as a member, even if not originally from there, and being able to exercise citizenship rights such as social and economic rights and fulfil civic duties, including paying local taxes" (ibid, p. 40). Such citizenship often includes belonging which transcends borders. Regarding repatriation, the authors problematise the idea that a 'return' is as simple as merely crossing the border to one's country of origin: on the contrary a sustainable return includes "a long-term process of negotiated recovery and reconstruction" (ibid, p. 44) and post-conflict reintegration into an economic and political context. Also imperative is that "the bond of citizenship and belonging at both a national and local level" (ibid, p. 45) is re-established. Hence, "[w]ithout the opportunity to re-establish the state and citizen bond and the realization of their full rights as citizens, therefore, refugees are likely to continue to resist return – and others who face similar exclusion will continue to flee" (ibid, p. 44). This view on citizenship furthermore accentuates the autonomy of the refugee to decide if, when and how to repatriate – because they likely know best – which may mean a continued relationship and regular travels to the host country (Hovil and Lomo 2015).

As for the option of local integration, as mentioned above, not even UNHCR's definition of it entails an acquisition of citizenship in the host country, which shows how difficult that must be to realise in many countries. Hovil and Lomo (2015, p. 45) writes that "[i]t also raises questions about the durability of that integration without full citizenship". *De jure* local integration has not been seen as a solution to refugee situations in many parts of the world, and that also goes for the Great Lakes region (Hovil and Lomo 2015). States have often chosen to counteract local integration through policy, and contradict the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, which stipulates that states shall facilitate naturalisation of refugees (ibid). Some of the justifications for the states' actions have been described in the previous section on protracted refugee situations. Unfortunately, the positive effect local integration of

refugees can have on the host community is consequently overseen, even though "[i]n cases where refugees have been allowed to engage in the local economy, it has been found that refugees can 'have a positive impact on the [local] economy by contributing to agricultural production, providing cheap labour and increasing local vendors' income from the sale of essential foodstuffs'." (UNHCR in Loescher and Milner 2008, p. 33).

Even if refugees were to become economically and socially integrated in the host community, not being able to obtain citizenship restricts one's (mainly political) rights and the rights of one's children and grandchildren. In other words, although 'empirical citizenship' may have been developed, the impossibility of acquiring national citizenship still has consequences. Similarly, the other way around, if national citizenship were to be offered, that does not necessarily also mean the obtaining of 'empirical citizenship' (Hovil and Lomo 2015). Hovil and Lomo (2015) see the exclusion of refugees as owing to post-independence leaders failing to reform the colonial state, which among other things was based on inequality and politicized identities, and which has maintained exclusion of 'outsiders' and thus created citizenship policies which are exclusionary. Additionally, restrictive citizenship policy has been in alignment with refugee policy, which also has preserved dynamics of exclusion. "Instead of refugees being seen as an asset, their presence has consistently been constructed as a threat, ensuring that their status as outsiders is embedded in the humanitarian response (as opposed to a political response) to refugees." (ibid, p. 47).

In light of this, the difficulty and complexity of finding solutions to refugee situations appear daunting. However, just as when it comes all global challenges, that does not justify neglect and inaction. Yet, who has the responsibility to act? Considering the wide range of factors that lead to protracted refugee situations, it also seems clear that a wide range of national and international actors need to take action. So-called 'burden-sharing', meaning both financial and physical burden-sharing (see Milner 2009), between states is necessary, not only to practically find solutions for refugees, but also to avoid host states being able to justify political inaction by blaming a lack of burden-sharing, and thus making refugees pawns in a geopolitical game. While being of the position that countries – especially in the Global North – need to offer many more resettlement places; also the positive effects of local integration for the host country need to be promoted. Moreover, local integration needs to be facilitated in order for it to be successfully realised. Without room for elaboration here, recent research by Souter (2014) explores in which way durable solutions can be understood as forms of reparation to refugees, that should be offered by the state or states morally responsible for

their flight. This would recognise the unavoidable political dimension of durable solutions and move away from the humanitarian rationale which always has applied.

2.3. Refugee Education

In setting a theoretical and conceptual context for higher education for refugees, focus will now turn from issues concerning protracted refugee situations and ways to end them, to looking at the role of education. The provision of primary education for refugee children has received increased attention by humanitarian agencies over the last years (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011). With that, the policy and academic field called 'refugee education' has developed. A current state of that field will be briefly explored as well as key dilemmas that appear in the provision of education to refugee children, since it to some extent also applies to higher education.

The field of refugee education has its origins in the time of the aftermath of the Second World War, even though schools certainly had been set up in emergency situations before that (Dryden-Peterson 2011). Among the UN agencies, UNESCO initially had the mandate for educating refugees, but in the mid-1960s the UNHCR took over. Some decades later, the field of 'emergency education' or 'education in emergencies' started developing in the post-Cold War 1990s (ibid). The latter term is defined by Sinclair (2007, p. 52) as "education for populations affected by unforeseen situations such as armed conflict or natural disaster". That the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child was nearly globally ratified, meant that states now had to make sure that all children on their territory, irrespective of whether they were internally displaced, asylum seekers or legally recognized refugees, had access to education (ibid). The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) was adopted by the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and refugee education became one part within the EFA-movement, since education needs in conflicts were emphasized (Dryden-Peterson 2011). Furthermore, during this time the "concept of 'education as a humanitarian response' gained ground" (Sinclair 2007, p. 52), and became a part of humanitarian assistance beyond provisions of basic necessities such as shelter, food, water and material aid. Hence, the field of refugee education became incorporated into the broader field of education in emergencies (Dryden-Peterson 2011).

Since the EFA, not only national actors, but also international and local actors take part in coordinating education, which to a larger extent is seen as a 'global good', and this trend also applies to refugee education (Dryden-Peterson 2011). An Inter-agency Network for Education

in Emergencies (INEE) was created in 2000, which includes the UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and leading NGOs, and caters to interested parties in emergency education (Sinclair 2007). The network developed the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, which has been widely used. In refugee camps and settlements in the Global South, it is most often NGOs which in practice organise the education of refugees (ibid).

Apart from securing education for children as a goal in itself, education in emergencies can have a range of functions: it can be a way of supporting psychological healing, give a sense of normality, provide protection, restore hope through the ladder of educational opportunity, protect investments that children and their families have made in education, and teach life skills such as for example peace-building, health and gender equality (Sinclair 2007). However, when it comes to the organisation of refugee education, some key issues always arise, apart from the crucial one of funding. One question is which language of instruction should be used? Which curriculum and pedagogical style? Waters and LeBlanc (2005) analyse these questions that national schools in nation states never need to ask because it is evident into which society their children should be socialised. The answers depend on what purpose the education for the refugee children has. The choice of language of instruction is clearly linked to the expected future of the refugees, whether it is repatriation, local integration or resettlement. For example, in 1987 to 1993, Mozambican refugees in Malawi were taught in Portuguese instead of English and had Mozambican teachers who followed the Mozambican curriculum, which was in line with what had been agreed by the Mozambican and Malawian government, and the UNHCR that provided the education. Clearly, "the UNHCR-funded education program was, from its very inception, focused on promoting repatriation and discouraging assimilation" (ibid, p. 143). The curriculum and pedagogical style also have political and cultural dimensions that add to their importance. The same goes for gender roles, when it comes to if, how and about what girls are educated (ibid).

Public education is a necessary tool for a nation state to create a sense of social, political and economic community between the citizens of the (as Anderson (2006) called it) 'imagined' community of the nation state (Waters and LeBlanc 2005). In other words, public education is a prerequisite for the understanding of common identity required for a modern nation state to function, now and in the future. This makes the creation of education systems for refugees paradoxical, firstly, since they are stateless by definition. Secondly, because the refugees do not have an elected government to plan the education system, it is often the actors linked to

the international refugee regime – a so-called 'pseudo-state' – which develop this system. This has led to the refugees' opinions and their own participation being ignored. Thirdly, since school curricula are embedded in politics, there are not one or two, but multiple actors which may want to be involved, such as the home country, the host country, international organisations, and not least the refugees themselves.

It is important not to forget that "as in every situation, education is a tool with which interested groups seek to exploit or extend power as well as to promote a particular form of economic and social development" (Waters and LeBlanc 2005, p. 145). In some refugee situations, the UNHCR has been clear about the aim of the educational system for refugee children being to prepare them for repatriation and reintegration into their country of origin. Thus, through policy, the 'pseudo-state' may steer refugees into a specific future. Waters and LeBlanc (2005, p. 138) conclude that "in the confusion and incoherence of the pseudo-state situation represented by refugee camps, the use of education as a top-down tool of indoctrination can become more important than its role in facilitating free participation in the broader modern world".

2.4. Sociology of Higher Education

Sociology of higher education is a sub-field to sociology, and it can contribute to the theoretical framework of this study, in combination with theories and concepts from refugee studies outlined above. Sociology of higher education has its origins in the U.S.A. and has developed mainly in the Global North, and therefore most studies in the field are situated in a very different context than the East African, or Ugandan, context. This strongly limits the usefulness of theories derived from these studies. However, the topics and inquiries that have figured in this field may still give relevant insights, as well as depict knowledge gaps.

A description of the development of sociology of higher education will follow, but first, in order to delineate what is meant by this phrase, the definition of sociology of education will be clarified. In Scott and Marshall's (2009) online version of the Dictionary of Sociology, they give a definition of sociology of education; although not specifically for higher education, this definition nevertheless applies to a large extent. They write: "Education is a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, denoting ideologies, curricula, and pedagogical techniques of the inculcation and management of knowledge and the social reproduction of personalities and cultures. In practice, the sociology of education is mostly concerned with schooling, and especially the mass schooling systems of modern industrial

societies, including the expansion of higher, further, adult, and continuing education." (Scott and Marshall 2009).

Gumport (2007b) is the editor of the book "Sociology of Higher Education: Contributions and their contexts", which is the most comprehensive literature in this field. The first chapter is a republishing of Clark's pioneering article on "The Development of the Sociology of Higher Education", which was first published in 1973. In that article, Clark maps what research has been done in the field up to that time. The different streams of inquiry which he identifies are the Study of Inequality, the Study of College impact, the Study of the Academic Profession and the Study of Colleges and Universities as Organizations, and the headings already give a quite good idea of what the studies are concerned with. In the second chapter Gumport (2007a) reviews what has happened in the research field since then, and the contextual factors that have influenced its development. The four emerging lines of research after the 1970s are Higher education as an Institution, Sociological Studies of Academic Departments, The Sociology of Diversity, and Sociological Frameworks for Higher Education Policy Research.

To briefly look into the emergence of sociology of higher education: Clark explains it by referring to societal conditions, such as the increased importance of higher education to the public in the United States after the Second World War (Gumport 2007a). In the 1960s, he argued, the field of sociology of higher education gained momentum. As Gumport (2007a, p. 18) describes, Clark "characterizes the field as located at a scholarly nexus that reflects a convergence of a sociological concern and a practical problem". For example, the study of inequality in higher education derives from a sociological area of interest, stratification, but also from the challenge of getting disadvantageous populations educational access. In a similar manner, one can see the student protests in the U.S.A. in the 1960s as sparking scholarly interest in student attitudes and campus life (ibid). Clark reflects upon this in his article and poses the question: "how can the sociology of higher education take cues from, and make returns to, the concerns of educational practitioners without becoming a managerial sociology?" (Clark 2007, p. 12), which is a question that seemingly researchers of today also have reasons to ask themselves, and actually also relates to the study of access to higher education for refugees.

The study of inequality, which Clark (2007) identified as the first stream within sociology of higher education, is not at all outdated; rather "[i]nequality remains the root concern in the sociology of education around the world" (Clark 2007, p. 6). What has been of concern is

finding explanations to inequality mainly in dimensions such as class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Research questions have for example included the reproduction of social inequalities and status positions through higher education, and how inequality leads to different college attendance patterns (Gumport 2007a). Inequality in access to higher education is thus one of the subjects that have been researched. It is mainly here that the relevance for the study of refugees' access to higher education in Uganda is found. However, this study focuses on legal status and displacement as dimensions in relation to unequal educational access, dimensions which are not mentioned by Clark (2007) or McDonough and Fann (2007) who have written about the study of inequality. Nevertheless, this stream of research helps to localise this study within the nexus of refugee studies and sociology, as well as to give analytical starting points. Furthermore, the study of access to higher education for refugees can address a knowledge gap which McDonough and Fann (2007) find, namely to specifically study neglected groups. They also draw the conclusion that a very limited number of studies conducted regarding inequality in higher education have a qualitative research approach (only 6 out of the 114 articles they analysed), another aspect which increases the relevance of this study.

In order to understand how access to higher education is shaped, a quote by McDonough and Fann (2007, p. 58) is illuminating. To them, college access research "sees the pursuit of education beyond the secondary level as a strong long-term systemic event where individual opportunity is constrained or enabled by educational structures, the free agency choices of rational, goal-directed individuals, and the complex interplay of those individuals and structures throughout individuals' educational careers". Thus, in their perspective, both agency and structure, and their interplay, create conditions for access. Refugees' opportunities to access education are not just shaped by educational structures, but by other structures including those created by the international refugee regime and different actors' responses to refugee situations.

2.5. Education, Social and Spatial Mobility

To better understand aspirations and motivations for higher education, the relationship between education and social as well as spatial mobility is discussed. Social mobility essentially means the movement "between different positions within the system of social stratification in any society" (Scott and Marshall 2009). In other words, it involves moving up or moving down the social ladder, creating terms such as 'upward social mobility' and 'downward social mobility'. One major way of reaching upward social mobility has been seen as the attainment of formal education, because it represents "the path to secure skilled and

better paid jobs, but more importantly, for its role in the expansion of opportunities for individuals in society and as a catalyst for social change" (Rao 2012, p. 3). Elements contributing to social mobility can be income generation, the creation of social and symbolic capital, and the transformation of gender relations for example (ibid). Yet, although formal education plays a part in facilitating social mobility, the relationship between education and social mobility, as in the case of the transition from education to work, is not always straightforward, especially not for migrants (Rao 2012). Importantly, the kind of migration in question plays a part in the understanding of the education-mobility relationship. For instance voluntary or forced migration may create different needs and strategies; the latter which is dealt with in this study. Rao (2012) expresses the need for more research on forced migrants' perspectives of educational experiences and its contribution to social and spatial mobility.

Spatial mobility, or what is commonly just termed mobility, is the spatial process of movement such as migration on different scales (Rogers *et al.* 2013). It can range from commuting to a neighbouring village to international migration or travelling. Spatial mobility is in many aspects interconnected with positions on the social ladder, and it can affect social mobility. For instance, moving to another place in order to find employment or educational opportunities, can result in an upward move on the social ladder (Adey 2010). Not all people have the ability to move, and the extent to which people can do so voluntarily, i.e. how mobile they are, indicates one's social position. Adey (2010, p. 95) sees spatial mobility as "one of the greatest indicators of one's relative position in society" and with Bauman's words, the degree of mobility shows the "freedom to choose where to be" (Bauman 1988, p. 86 in Adey 2010, p. 95). At the lower end of the continuum, spatial immobility may prohibit upward social mobility. Although referring to the context of the Global North, a quote by Morley (2000, p. 202 in Adey 2010, p. 38) illuminates how immobility is seen: that it acquires "the connotation of defeat, of failure and of being left behind".

Refugees have undertaken migration because they were forced to, they have crossed an international border and entered another country, and may end up in a situation where their spatial mobility is severely restricted. As spatial and social mobility are linked, refugees may because of encampment, amongst other factors and other state policy, have limited opportunities for gaining employment and moving up the social ladder. An aim of pursuing higher education may be to become more socially and spatially mobile, but the choice to seek opportunities for higher education is certainly not exclusively influenced by a persons'

refugee status; rather, as for all people, decisions are mediated by class, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion and so on, and are embedded in their local contexts (Rao 2012).

2.6. Habitus

Bourdieu's theory of the Habitus can be helpful for understanding people's perceptions of higher education and whether it is perceived as a possible part of one's future or not. The Habitus consists of "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53). The way humans interact with their world is shaped by the Habitus, and "the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the habitus, which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences" (ibid, p. 54). So, the situationally and culturally embedded structures that constitute the Habitus, represent a historical product but also determine practices of the present. When it comes to understanding the scope of individuals' aspirations, this quote by Bourdieu (1990, p. 54) gives some insight:

> "If a very close correlation is regularly observed between the scientifically constructed objective probabilities (for example, the chances of access to a particular good) and agents' subjective aspirations ('motivations' and 'needs'), this is not because agents consciously adjust their aspirations to an exact evaluation of their chances of success, like a gambler organizing his stakes on the basis of perfect information about his chances of winning. In reality, the dispositions durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions (which science apprehends through statistical regularities such as the probabilities objectively attached to a group or a class) generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. The most improbable actions are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable".

Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010/2011), who have written an article specifically about higher education for refugees, see the concept of Habitus as useful for explaining what consequences lack of access to education for young refugees may have. "In particular, it describes processes of socialization that align aspirations with the conditions in which refugee young people find

themselves and adapt what they see as possible to the logic of their surroundings." (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011, p. 3). According to Bourdieu (1990), aspirations are shaped in relation to what is perceived as accessible or inaccessible; "[i]n fact, a given agent's practical relation to the future, which governs his present practice, is defined in the relationship between on the one hand, his habitus with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand, a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world." (Bourdieu 1990, p. 64). Thus, it can be argued that refugees' aspirations for access to education in the future, are shaped by both the historical experiences and structures within that group of people (or class) and the opportunities which presently appear as achievable in their context, for example in the settlement in which they live.

2.7. Literature review

As noted above, access to higher education for refugees in the Global South is so far under-researched, but there are a few scholars devoted to this area of research. Among the most recurring names are Sarah Dryden-Peterson, a well-known researcher in refugee education who has done fieldwork in Uganda, and Barbara Zeus who has explored barriers to higher education in protracted refugee situations, using the case study of Burmese refugees living in refugee camps in Thailand. By reviewing their and other scholars' work, I will give an overview of what research on higher education for refugees in the Global South has been concerned with so far. It is to this body of literature that this study will contribute. But first, the main international conventions which concern the right to higher education will be presented.

2.7.1. The legal and political foundation of refugee education

There are several international instruments which safeguard refugees' right to education, which also mention access to higher education. To cite the most prominent ones: the 1951 Refugee Convention's Article 22, that concerns the right to public education, states that contracting states should accord to refugees "treatment as favourable as possible" (UN General Assembly 28 July 1951, Art 22) regarding education on post-primary level. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declare that higher education "shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit" (UN General Assembly 10 December 1948, Art 26(1)). Furthermore, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the right to education includes "mak[ing] higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by

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every appropriate means." (UN General Assembly 20 November 1989, Art 28(c)). The convention also affirms that access to higher education should be ensured to all who qualify, regardless of a persons' gender, age, nationality and so on (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011). Nevertheless, the implementation of the existing legal instruments is very limited, and there is much to be done in order to realise equal access to higher education, including for refugees.

2.7.2. Higher education in protracted refugee situations

Because of the long-term nature of protracted refugee situations, the humanitarian assistance given only for relief in emergency situations is not sufficient. Seeing the challenges with refugee settlements being dependent on international donor funding and humanitarian aid, Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011, p. 52) state that "higher education cannot be prioritised in a donor-driven environment, structured to maintain a state of "permanent temporariness"". The narrative of temporariness of refugee situations is being reproduced by donors, and simultaneously causes donors to focus solely on primary and, to a limited extent, on secondary education (ibid). In international funding policies the education system is not seen holistically; rather it is divided into different levels, where access to a few years of primary education has been prioritised. Although not undermining the importance of access to primary education for all, different stages of education should be seen as "interdependent and interactive links in the educational process" (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011, p. 90), which all are crucial for the development of individuals and society.

Furthermore, research has shown that the non-availability of educational opportunities on post-primary level affects the motivations, performance, and learning outcomes for pupils at primary level (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011). On a macro level the non-existence of educational opportunities at secondary and higher level can "severely affect the capacity of the personal and national development of those involved, especially those in fragile areas that have been severely affected by conflict or disaster, perpetuating cycles of poverty, instability, dependency, and lack of good governance" (ibid, p. 91). The lack of access to post-primary education may thus impede a positive development and solutions to protracted refugee situations.

2.7.3. Higher education in relation to durable solutions

The importance of refugees being able to access higher education is not just on an individual level, but also on a societal level. Moreover, higher education can contribute to the realisation of durable solutions which are supposed to end refugee situations in a sustainable way.

For refugees, post-primary education can offer and sustain "physical, cognitive, and psychosocial security, protection, and self-reliance" (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011, p. 90). Especially for young refugees, not being able to pursue further education and being idle may increase the risk of getting into precarious types of work, criminality, the sex industry or becoming targets for military recruiters (Zeus 2011). Thus, it is important to remember that higher education, like primary and secondary education, can be seen as "an instrument of protection in refugee contexts" (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011, p. 14).

What is more, access to post-primary education can ensure human development and growth (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011), and should thus be seen as an investment to society at large. This is arguably particularly important in the rebuilding process of countries which have been at war. As some refugees may repatriate to their country of origin, that country will be in need of educated people who can have a positive impact on the socio-economic development and the reconstruction of the country, and hence contribute to the avoidance of a perpetuated cycle of poverty (ibid). In addition, in case of refugees being resettled to a third country, being able to make that journey already equipped with certain skills will facilitate their integration into the new country (Zeus 2011).

It is worth noting that refugees with higher education can improve the situation in the refugee settlement and yield social benefits. Examples include: "strengthening the quantity and quality of the teaching force within the camps, bolstering parental support for and engagement with their children's education (particularly girls' education), and promoting primary and secondary school attendance by ensuring opportunities, be they limited, to pursue higher learning." (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011, p. 43).

Perhaps even more importantly, refugees' chances of integrating into the host community may also be increased by access to higher education (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011). For the host country, integrating refugees with higher education comes along with many benefits such as "increased tax revenue, better national health, reduced population growth, stronger government and improved technology" (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011, pp. 43–44). However, these benefits will only be realised if the host state takes action to facilitate local integration for refugees, which, as mentioned before, is often not the case (ibid).

Hence, higher education can be seen as enhancing human resources and providing skills that are necessary for the effectiveness of all the durable solutions to refugee situations, namely repatriation, resettlement and local integration (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). Higher

educational opportunities need to be provided shortly after displacement, on the one hand because, as Zeus (2010 cited in Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011, p. 44) puts it, "we cannot afford to have human potential linger around until a durable solution is found ... we need to look at the immediate and long-term development needs of refugees in protracted contexts"; on the other hand, because their right to higher education should be accommodated, and there is no time to waste.

2.7.4. Educational aspirations, opportunities and challenges

When it comes to educational aspirations, several studies show that young refugees wish to be able to continue their education after primary level, and see education as a part of building their future. For example, according to Clark-Kazak's (2010/2011) findings, that was the view of all of her respondents when she interviewed over 400 refugees in Kampala and in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Opportunities for higher education that may be available in settlement contexts are scholarships for studies at higher education institutions in the country of asylum or abroad, and distance learning via online courses. The DAFI-Program, which is German-funded but administered by the UNHCR, gives out scholarships for university studies and is the only formal and global support to higher education for refugees (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011). However, the program is separate from UNHCR's education policies and only a small number of refugees benefit from it. In general terms, the access to higher education, if the refugee has the possibility to fund it herself/himself, varies greatly from host country to host country.

Acknowledging the importance of access to higher education, its realisation in refugee settlements does not come without great challenges. First of all, secondary education must be available in order to make students eligible to enter universities or colleges. Ensuring not only the access, but the quality of such education proves a challenge in this context, as the funding is limited, there is a lack of teachers, congestion in classrooms and so on (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). Second, obstacles to access to higher education may range from "the obvious practical issues such as financial shortcomings or ignorance of application procedures, to political and legal issues involving lack of accreditation and citizenship alongside restrictive host country policies." (Zeus 2011, pp. 258–259). Insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction in the new country can also limit the access to higher education (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011).

Other barriers for refugee youth may be created by economic or family obligations and cultural norms, such as having to help out in income generating activities or marrying early (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011), which is often determined by gender relations and create differential access to education. Additionally, refugee youth may need extra support to make up for disruptions in their schooling due to forced displacement (ibid).

2.7.5. Empowerment through higher education

Drawing upon the work of Kabeer (1999), Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010/2011, p. 5) argue that being able to pursue higher education can empower refugees, as the "uptake of higher education itself signals "a process of change" away from disempowerment". Refugee settlements can be argued to be disempowering places, as they limit agency and seldom provide the opportunities for people to make their own choices. A lack of access to education can also reproduce the perception of refugees as passive, disempowered victims, which may also be internalised by the refugees themselves (ibid). According to Zeus (cited in Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011, p. 5), refugee settlements or camps depend on "a narrative of the refugee as a passive victim", and higher education is a "tool to... reverse this narrative". Higher education would empower refugees from within and make them their own "agents", in contrast to humanitarian assistance which is imposed from the outside (Dryden-Peterson and Giles, 2010/2011).

Acquiring higher education will improve a person's ability to make strategic life choices and develop a critical consciousness, which is of high importance for refugees who are living in refugee settlements where choices are few, and precarious situations easily arise (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011). Unlike situations where refugees need to focus on mere survival, having the opportunity to continue studying enables people to think about the future, to plan, and to strategize (ibid). In addition, refugees who have had access to higher education will probably be more vocal and active in trying to influence decision-making of authorities and organisations working in the settlement (Clark-Kazak 2010/2011).

2.7.6. Relief versus Development debate

There is an ongoing debate regarding which approach responses to refugee situations should take: a focus on relief or on development. With a relief focus, only urgent needs are prioritised and education may be excluded (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). With a development approach, however, refugee situations can be seen as opportunities for development, both for the refugees themselves and the host community. With such an

approach, long-term planning is needed and measures taken to improve access to services, for example, to improve infrastructure or build new hospitals that would benefit the community as a whole. Furthermore, the development approach has the aim of active participation of the beneficiary population and that they become self-sufficient, and not dependent on external aid (ibid).

Improving the access to higher education for refugees and other development-focused efforts have been limited because of the preference of the international community and the host states to see refugee situations solved by voluntary repatriation (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). It has also been argued that higher education, since it only serves a small fraction of the population, is contributing to elitism and that investment in primary education would create higher economic returns in developing countries (Zeus 2011). However, recent research suggest that investment in higher education would yield higher rates of return, and seemingly the importance of higher education for refugees is getting more and more acknowledgement (ibid).

2.7.7. Higher education without a nation state

Zeus (2011, p. 264) has explored paradoxes around the provision of higher education to refugees in protracted refugee situations, and one of them goes: "Higher Education cannot exist without a nation state and therefore is impossible to provide for refugees who exist in a liminal non-state". She argues that nation states are indeed dependent on universities, since they help to develop and maintain the 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006) of the nation state. However, universities do not theoretically need a nation state, as more and more business-like universities are established today, which are run more or less independently from nation states. Moreover, when it comes to higher education for refugees, it can even be perceived as a threat, since it "encourages demands and is a focus for mobilizing opposition to the nation-state" (Zeus 2011, p. 265). In this sense, it may be in states' interest not to create conditions for refugees to educate themselves further. Zeus (2011) sees future opportunities for on-site higher education for refugees in protracted encampment, which transcends nation states and makes use of modern technology.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on the above outlined research approach, and fundamentally on a constructionist understanding that people have different perceptions of reality which are subjective, and thus "there exist multiple, constructed realities" (Ponterotto 2005, p. 130). This study does not strive for objectivity; rather it acknowledges subjectivity and that the knowledge produced will be partial and location-specific. Regarding the relationship between researcher and research participant, I have been influenced by feminist perspectives on methodology where the distance between researcher and 'researched' is designed to be minimised (England 2006), and knowledge is produced in the encounter between those parties.

Since this study aims to explore in depth the issue of access to higher education for refugees in Uganda through the perspectives and experiences of people, conducting qualitative research seemed the most suitable. As Grix (2010, p. 120) states: "Qualitative research gives the opportunity for an "in-depth investigation of knowledge"". A quantitative research approach would not have been appropriate for the purpose of this study, and the unavailability of data would have constituted a significant challenge. Another advantage with qualitative methodology is that it "eschews the linear model of research through its simultaneous data collection and analysis" (Becker 2004 in Oxford 2012, p. 417).

The case study used to investigate refugees' access to higher education in Uganda is the case of refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. This settlement is considered to serve as a good case since it is the largest one in Uganda and therefore well represents the refugee management in the country. Additionally, since refugees in Uganda only receive humanitarian assistance if they live in settlements, and urban refugees thus are 'left on their own', I have chosen to focus on camp-based refugees who directly are affected by aid policy decisions. What obviously also affected my choice of case study was accessibility, since I was conducting my research during an internship at Windle Trust Uganda (WTU) in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, which is the organisation responsible for education services in the settlement. As an intern, my chances of finding relevant interviewees were strongly increased. The single case study undoubtedly limits the generalisability of this research, since it is context-dependent and national law and policy play a significant role. Arguably, however, the research findings could possibly align with situations in other refugee settlements in Uganda,

so there is at least some extent of transferability. Some findings might also give insights into situations in neighbouring countries where the challenges are similar.

It was actually during the internship at WTU, and my stay in Nakivale, that I started developing my research topic. I was thus already in 'the field', and observations and conversations that I had there sparked my interest for the subject. After reviewing the limited existing literature on higher education for refugees, I developed a research design and started collecting data. I went into the field with the aim of broadly exploring the issue of access to higher education for the refugees in Nakivale and had a couple of preliminary research questions in mind. Simultaneous to the data collection, I was also developing the theoretical framework and analysing the data obtained. I found this very productive, as I could adjust my research along the way and benefit from "[o]ne of the strengths of qualitative research [which] is its ability to refine the research question during and after data collection and analysis" (Oxford 2012, p. 417).

3.1. Methods

The field studies were carried out between the 6th of July and 18th of September 2016, and the research methods that I used were in-depth semi-structured interviews, semi-structured focus groups and observation. Using a combination of methods has proven beneficial in order to be able to obtain a variety of data from different sources.

I chose to do interviews with both refugees (referred to as respondents) and with informants at relevant organisations working with education for refugees, in order to get a broad understanding of the issue through different perspectives. For the individual interviews, semi-structured interviews seemed to be the appropriate choice, since "[i]n this technique the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation but still ensures flexibility for the interviewee to direct part of the conversation." (Sànchez-Ayala 2012, p. 123). The questions posed were open-ended, and it was ensured that the respondent had the chance to bring up issues she or he wanted, and could respond with questions of their own. Although the data derived from a semi-structured interview are strongly shaped by the researchers' questions and research interest, this method was deemed the most appropriate in order to investigate this quite specific research topic, and also because it would presumably appear the most logical to the respondents who all were informed about the study's purpose.

Semi-structured focus groups were also conducted, where I would introduce the topic and then let the participants discuss freely, and then ask follow-up questions throughout the

discussion. The method was advantageous since in a focus group the participants can influence each other (Sànchez-Ayala 2012) and it allowed for me to see how the participants discussed the topics among themselves. The third research method was observation, by which I refer to the time I spent as an intern at WTU in Nakivale, and observed the encounters between staff and refugees looking for educational opportunities and services. Field notes were kept on a daily basis, including anything from information about the general organisation of the settlement to conversations I heard taking place or informal conversations I engaged in myself.

3.1.1. Sampling and selection of interviewees

With regard to sampling methods, I essentially used purposeful sampling where "meaningful cases" (Morse 1998 in Flick 2009, p. 123) were selected, which means persons who "have the necessary knowledge and experience of the issue or object at their disposal for answering the questions in the interview" (ibid). Regarding respondents among the refugee population, I only interviewed persons who I knew had a relationship to higher education: either they aspired to access it, were at university or had completed university studies. This was a way to find a broader range of experiences in relation to higher education. Additionally, I interviewed refugee leaders (chairpersons) because of their large knowledge of the context in the settlement, and because they could express their views as well as views of their community members.

The sample population of refugees who have accessed university and are living in Nakivale Refugee Settlement is very small, which on the one hand was a complicating factor, but on the other hand was facilitating, since these persons often are known by staff members at organisations in the settlement or by other university students. In general, that was how I found respondents; either through the contacts that I had made during the internship, or through random encounters that became possible because I was living in the refugee settlement. During daily work at the internship, I got in contact with other interns in different organisations, some of whom were refugees who studied at the university, and thus were possible respondents. I was aiming at having a balance in the group of respondents regarding gender and nationality, and although the gender balance is close to equal with just slightly more males than females, it was much harder to find respondents across a range of nationalities. The great majority of my respondents were Congolese, only a few others are Burundian and Sudanese, which however still reflects the demographics of the settlement

since the largest group (over 30,000 among the over 90,000 inhabitants) comes from the DRC. It should be noted that all of the three refugee leaders at the highest positions in the settlement were men, and I thus preferred interviewing leaders at the same position from the different sub-camps, to finding female leaders on other positions.

The selection of informants from organisations was determined by relevance and accessibility. Informants were chosen because of their experience of working with education for refugees in the settlement or in Uganda, and the interviews with them were dependent on the access that I had to their contacts and in the end the availability of them to participate in an interview. See appendix for a complete list of the research participants in the study.

I conducted two different focus groups, which had quite different groups of participants, both of which would contribute a special perspective on the issue of access to higher education. The first focus group was with new scholarship holders, meaning young refugees who had recently been selected for scholarships and were about to start higher education soon after the focus group took place. This focus group was an ad hoc initiative because these scholarship holders were summoned to a meeting with the WTU in any case, and afterwards, those who were interested could stay and participate in the focus group, where only I, and no other person from the organisation, was present. The second focus group was with students at the highest class in the only secondary school in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, who could give their perspectives on both the access to secondary school but also their views on the future and their thoughts about higher education. This focus group took place at the school and the eight participants were selected by the teacher asking the class for persons who would be interested in participating. As both refugees and Ugandan nationals attend the school, both refugees and Ugandans were among the participants.

In line with the methodological stances taken in this study, it should be noted that the selection of respondents has not aimed at being representative for the whole refugee population in Nakivale. Rather, a limited number of respondents have been interviewed in order to show examples of experiences and opinions. In total 39 persons participated in the study: 11 informants at relevant organisations were interviewed, 13 refugees were individually interviewed, and 15 participated in focus groups.

3.1.2. Practical methodological issues

In interviews that are conducted with a translator, the researcher is inevitably prevented from getting a first-hand version of the answers given. This is one of the arguments for interviews

without translation, and other advantages are the possibility of one-on-one conversations, the higher assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, and the avoidance of possible issues related to, for example, the identity or gender of the translator. Therefore, I chose to only conduct interviews that were possible without a translator; however, this had the implication that I could only interview English or French speakers. Even though that covers large groups of people – first of all, since English is an official language in Uganda, and second of all, since a majority of refugees in Nakivale come from countries where one of the official languages are French (the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi) – it still excluded for example Arabic-speakers or persons only speaking (non-colonial) 'local' languages. Nevertheless, the latter did not create a major problem since I was looking for respondents who had some relation to higher education, and thus most probably had gone through formal education at least to the secondary level, and had become fluent in the official language. Another issue to take into account is that my knowledge of French is sufficient for conducting interviews, but since I am not fluent in it, it likely restricted the interviews to some extent.

With the aim of the respondent being as comfortable as possible in the way that the interview was performed, I always preferred if the respondent would choose the location for the interview. However, no one – apart from one refugee leader – suggested their home as the location, which perhaps was because homes are not necessarily places where you may speak in private without disturbances. Seeing the lack of ideal accessible, quiet and private places in the settlement, I concluded it was best if I had suggestions in mind if the respondent did not want to choose a location. The interviews with the respondents ended up taking place at restaurants, inside offices and in a pavilion close to the offices, in classrooms, and at the Youth Centre. One interview was conducted with a university student from Nakivale in a garden at his university campus in Kampala. In general, doing research in the refugee settlement within a limited period of time put demands on flexibility in terms of when and how an interview can be conducted.

3.2. Data analysis method

Most of the interviews, which were between 30 and 60 minutes long, were recorded and transcribed. A few were written down during the interview, due to some respondents' preference for avoiding recording. The data analysis method that has been used to analyse the transcripts is thematic analysis, a widely used type of qualitative data analysis, although rarely accounted for in methodology literature (Braun and Clarke 2006; Bryman 2012). Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data"

(Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79). As a first step, I have organised the interview data by using 'open coding', a process by which component parts of the transcripts that appear to be of theoretical significance, are given labels or 'codes' (Bryman 2012). Afterwards, codes that relate to each other have been put together in groups, and these groups are called themes. The themes that have been selected for later analysis further relate to the research focus of the study (ibid). When identifying themes and later selecting the ones of interest for my study, I have searched for repetitions of topics, and similarities and differences in how different respondents speak about a certain issue (Ryan and Bernard 2003), but also looked for themes of special relevance to the research question (Braun and Clarke 2006). In Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 86) summary of thematic analysis, it "involves the searching across a data set – be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning".

In the process of identifying and selecting themes, the researcher certainly plays an active role (Braun and Clarke 2006). In an inductive approach to thematic analysis, the themes are strongly linked to the data itself and the whole data set is considered equally important, similar to methods in grounded theory. 'Theoretical' thematic analysis, on the other hand, is more analyst-driven and reflects the researcher's theoretical interest (ibid). I have used a combination of inductive and theoretical approaches throughout the thematic analysis, since some themes have been 'found' in the data and some have obviously been generated by my interview questions, and while coding the transcripts, I have had specific – yet changeable – research questions in mind (Ryan and Bernard 2003). One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it is not linked to any particular theoretical framework and therefore it is flexible (Braun and Clarke 2006). With a constructionist perspective also in the qualitative data analysis, I have sought to "theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 85). The repeated patterns of meaning or themes are recognised as socially produced within a constructionist epistemology (ibid).

3.3. Ethical Considerations

The inescapable, ever-present power relations between a researcher and 'the researched' (England 2006) are perhaps never as strikingly evident and visible as when a white European is doing research in a refugee settlement in a sub-Saharan African country. There are power relations linked to colonial heritage, global inequality, legal status and the hegemonic nation state system, and so many other dimensions. Research has a long history of contributing to

such power relations (Robbins 2006) and it should be recognised that this study is one of many studies where the researcher comes from the Global North, collects the data in the Global South, and later processes, analyses and disseminates it in the Global North again. The production of scientific knowledge in the world, and the perception of what counts as knowledge is gravely skewed, Western-dominated and Western-centric. With an awareness of this, a choice was nevertheless made to conduct research in a refugee settlement, the reason for this being the presence of international agencies there, as well as the impact that the international refugee regime has on realities for refugees. Transnational companies, banks, and international agencies spread to all parts of the world, just to give some examples. Without trying to conceal the problematic nature of a person from the Global North conducting research in a formerly colonised country, I agree with Robbins (2006, p. 315) on "the inevitable fact that though the critical researcher may choose to stay at home, the rest of the world most definitely will not".

In trying to understand and account for my position of power, it has been important to seek awareness of my positionality, and to be reflexive over my role as a researcher. Positionality refers to "our location in the social structure" (Sànchez-Ayala 2012, p. 118), and the notion that we are all positioned on several axes of difference, such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexuality, (dis)ability and so on (England 2006). The position the researcher holds affects the relationship with the research participants as well as the knowledge produced. The fact that I am a white Swedish-Iranian woman, and also was an intern at an organisation working in the refugee settlement, has certainly played a part in my positioning in relation to the respondents and has affected the encounter between me and them.

Considering the precarious situation that most refugees in Nakivale live in, with a dependency on foreign aid and humanitarian assistance, it is not surprising that white persons commonly are perceived as having the power to help in one way or the other; be it with donations, providing employment opportunities or arranging resettlement. This has of course been important to bear in mind while searching for respondents, and I have tried, as much as possible, to ensure the voluntariness of the participation in my study. I have consistently and comprehensively described the purpose and scope of my research to the possible respondents, and have always given them time to reflect on whether they want to be interviewed or not. I have described my role as a student and an intern at WTU and explained that I have no influence over decision making, for example over scholarships. I have explained what they

can, and cannot, expect from me. This is how I claim that I have created conditions for oral informed consent to be given by the research participants. Before the interviews, the option of not answering questions has furthermore been made clear to the respondents.

Having an outsider position in the context in which the research takes place may assist or obstruct the gathering of data (England, 2006), but in any case, undoubtedly influences what information is given. Even though I had an outsider position I sometimes found commonalities with the research participants. Without ignoring all the evident differences between our positions, I found a commonality as an intern in relation to some of them, and as a student in relation to others. For example, when explaining confidentiality to the respondents that were university students, it became clear that we had the shared experience of having learnt basic rules of research ethics.

How researchers interpret and analyse data is certainly influenced by social and cultural background, research orientation, and familiarity with the context in which the research is carried out, to name just a few factors. During transcription of an interview, I was myself surprised to hear what I had said, and the following dialogue for me symbolises my own deep-rooted whiteness and 'westernness';

> *"Interviewer: Now when you are a university student, do you think that people see you differently?*
>
> *Respondent: No. No. They don't. But for the case of Sudanese, they just know they are black. Black people.*
>
> *Interviewer: Okay, who says this?*
>
> *Respondent: The students, like at the university.*
>
> *Interviewer: They call you black people? But they are black themselves?*
>
> *Respondent: No, they are also black Africans like us, but for us, our colour is very dark [laughs]"*
>
> (Refugee woman, 6 August 2016b)

Trapped in the white/black dichotomy I (at least instinctively) was blind to the 'shades of black' or ethnic differences which also play a part in shaping the refugees' experiences in relation to the host population. It can thus be noted, once again, that the identity of the researcher affects the research process in many different ways.

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION

All studies are located in a specific time and space frame, therefore all findings depend on the context of the study. The aim of this chapter is to present this frame and to contextualise the issue of higher education for refugees in Uganda and more specifically in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Firstly, after a brief introduction to the state of higher education in Africa, attention is paid to the general situation of access to higher education in Uganda. This is followed by an account of the refugee situation in the country. In order to understand the issue of access to higher education for refugees, an insight into the structures that shape the lives of refugees is needed. Therefore Ugandan refugee law and policy will be examined and analysed, which in turn reveal a great deal about what opportunities and limitations exist, and how these relate to access to higher education. Thirdly, Nakivale Refugee Settlement, which is the site for the case study, is presented, and the situation regarding secondary education provision is described. Secondary education in Uganda means the 8th to 11th year of schooling in the formal system.

4.1. Higher Education in Africa

If one looks globally at higher education institutions and enrolments, one can conclude that Africa is the least developed region (Teffera and Altbach 2003). The global average enrolment rate for higher education in 2008 was 26 percent, and the corresponding figure in Sub-Saharan Africa was only 6 percent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010, p. 1). Teffera and Altbach (2003, p. 3) describe the background to this situation by referring to "[t]he overall reality of inadequate financial resources combined with unprecedented demand for access, the legacy of colonialism, long-standing economic and social crises in many countries, the challenges of HIV/AIDS in parts of the continent, and other significant issues [which] present a particularly difficult reality". From the 1970s, following a period in which higher education was expanding in Africa, spending resources on higher education was no longer prioritised by the international community and donors, nor by the national governments (ibid; Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). One of the arguments for this strategy was that only a few people would be served by a disproportionately large percentage of the educational budgets. Instead, basic education for all was prioritised, which in turn led to a deterioration of higher education on the continent (Bloom *et al.* 2006). This changed in the 1990s when higher education again came to be seen as a key sector for the development of the African countries. Around 2010, the share of the international aid to the education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa

that was targeted to higher education was one-quarter (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011, p. 43), and higher education is certainly higher up on agendas for development efforts in Africa today.

4.1.1. Higher education in Uganda

The trend in Africa with the de-prioritisation of higher education during the 1970s and 1980s was also seen in Uganda (Musisi 2003). Nevertheless, since then the higher education sector has expanded and access to it has increased. As can be read in a report done by the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) of Uganda in 2013, the number of institutions of higher learning grew from 148 in 2006 to 187 in 2011, which is a growth of 26% in that period (NCHE 2013, p. 1). Up to the late 1980s, the Ugandan government's policy was that all public institutions of higher learning should be fully government funded, and all nationals admitted to the public university Makerere University should be given a full scholarship (Musisi 2003). Yet, the financial resources to pursue such a policy were insufficient and this limited the number of university places in a time when the demand was growing. The access to higher education institutions later increased alongside liberalisation and privatisation. In 1992 the "White Paper and Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) recommended divestiture from full sponsorship of tertiary education through the introduction of cost sharing, private sponsorship, evening programs, long-distance programs, internal generation of income through consultancies and the sale of services, and the establishment of scholarships for those who qualify but cannot afford higher education." (Musisi 2003, p. 618). According to the latest published statistics by the NCHE (2013, p. 1), the increase in total enrolment in tertiary education was 44.4% between 2006 and 2011 and the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) had reached 6.2% by 2011 (ibid, p. 2). This figure slightly differs from UNESCO's statistics on GER in tertiary education from 2011 (their most recent figure), which is 4.48% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016).

In 2011 there were 5 public and 29 private universities in Uganda (NCHE 2013, p. 9), which shows that the sector in its expansion has become highly privatised. Nevertheless, higher education in Uganda has still remained elitist since it is mostly an opportunity for people from more affluent families (Musise and Mayega 2010). The government gives out 4000 merit-based scholarships per year to students going to public universities, but that only translates into 17% of the students who are eligible for entry (ibid, p. 200). Because the secondary education is dominated by the private sector, most students even being able to complete secondary school and qualify for tertiary education come from higher middle or high-income

groups (Musisi 2003). Out of the 4000 scholarships, a quarter is earmarked for addressing equity gaps. Thus, some scholarship holders are chosen from each district; and disability, gender and accomplishments in sports are also aspects that are taken into consideration (Musise and Mayega 2010). Considering equity, there are regional differences where the Northern and Eastern parts of the country are underrepresented in higher education institutions "largely due to a number of factors – such as limited secondary education, regional variations in income levels, political instability, and war" (Musisi 2003, p. 620).

The demand for higher education in Uganda is likely to continue to grow (Musise and Mayega 2010) and this is coupled with already strained financial situations for the universities which have led to decreased quality of the education and higher rates of failure and drop-outs (Musisi 2003). The NCHE (2013, p. 3) has drawn the conclusion that "[v]irtually, all higher education institutions, public and private got less money than is needed for producing a graduate". The large part of the households in the country are unable to manage the true cost of higher education, due to the prevalent socio-economic conditions (Musise and Mayega 2010).

4.2. Refugees in Uganda

Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees: it dates back to the early 1940s when some 7000 Polish refugees found refuge in the country (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009, p. 10). Since the 1950s, African refugees from countries in the region have been coming to Uganda. With regard to the state's approach to refugees, Uganda has claimed to be a "friend to refugees" (Lomo *et al.* 2001, p. 3). As it seems, Uganda's approach up to the 1980s was similar to other East African countries, such as Tanzania and Kenya, which used to have an open approach in their asylum policy, welcoming refugees coming from countries that were in the midst of independence struggles (Milner 2009). In the 1980s and 1990s, however, when the influx of refugees increased significantly, they moved towards more restrictive asylum policies (ibid). In Uganda, the hosting of refugees was initially met with popular support, but a change in attitude could be seen along with higher numbers of arriving refugees, who did not have prospects for a return in the near future, and the perception that refugees were a burden on the local communities developed (Kreibaum 2014). Refugees have in general always been seen as a temporary phenomenon in Uganda (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009) which corresponds with the state's preference for repatriation as the solution to refugee situations (Meyer 2006).

Uganda has not only received refugees but also produced them: the most well-known case being the Ugandan Asians who were expelled by the former president Idi Amin (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). Furthermore, during the civil war in northern Uganda, which started in 1986 and stretched over two decades, 1.7 to 2 million people became internally displaced (ibid, p. 39). Since Uganda is located near many countries who suffer from war and instability today, the number of refugees arriving is high, and in September 2015 Uganda was hosting 482,569 registered refugees (UNHCR 2015, p. 1). The major countries from which these refugees come are the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Burundi and Somalia (ibid). Also, refugees from Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and other countries are residing in Uganda (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). Refugee settlements are established in the eastern part of the country, mostly in border regions close to the South Sudanese, DRC, Rwandan and Tanzanian borders (see map on the next page).
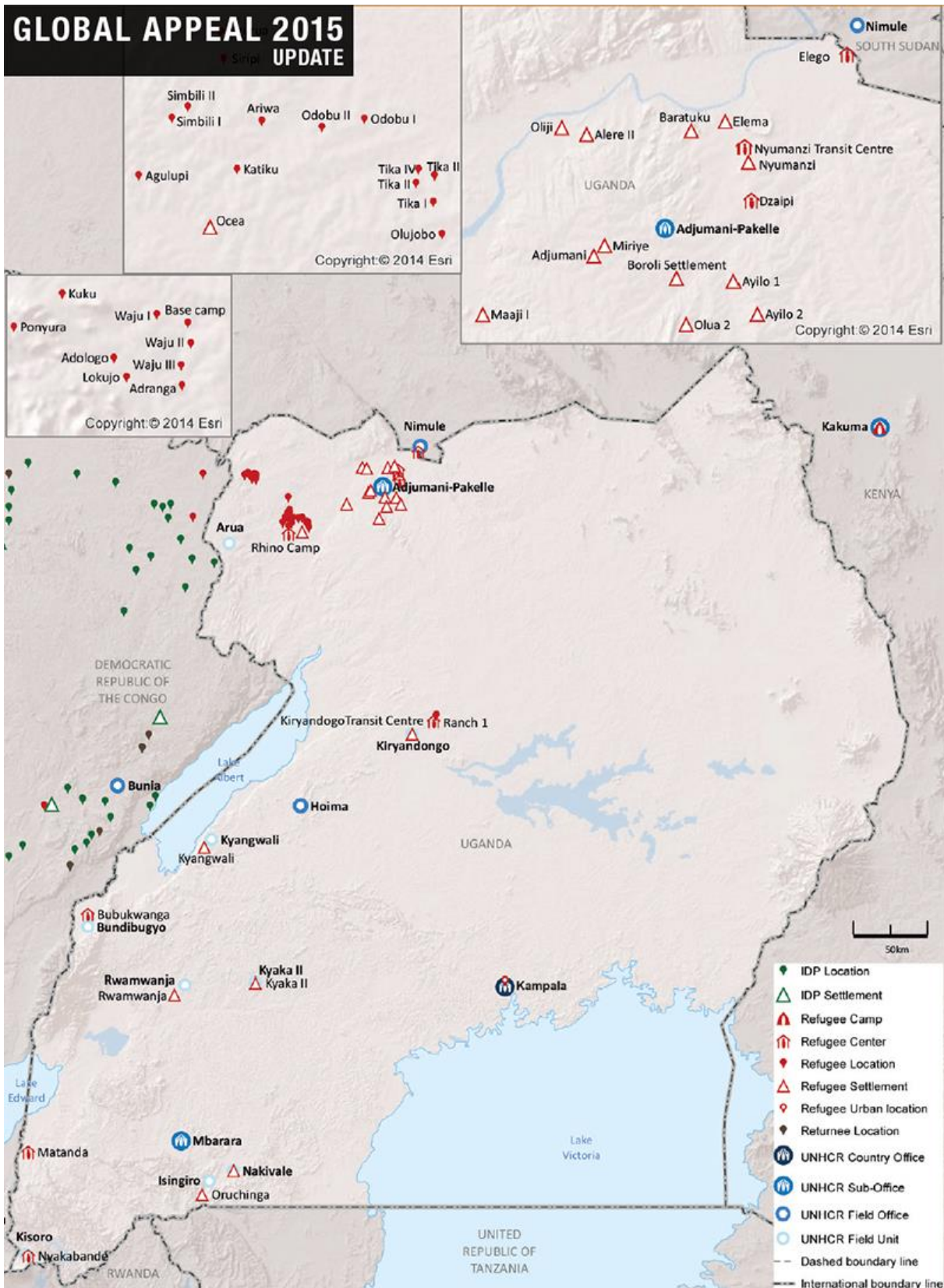
Map of refugee-related sites in Uganda. Source: UNHCR. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483c06.html
(retrieved 18 January 2016)

4.3. Refugee Law and Policy in Uganda

The rights of refugees are stipulated in several international conventions to which Uganda is a signatory: both international instruments relating to all human beings, and those directly concerning refugees. The latter are the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Refugees in Uganda should have these rights, and additionally those which are specified in Uganda's Refugees Act. The Refugees Act, adopted in 2006, replaced the old Ugandan refugee law named Control of Alien Refugees Act from 1964, which was subject to much criticism because of its divergence from international refugee law (Sharpe and Namusobya 2012). The rights stipulated in the 2006 Refugees Act will be outlined in this section of the chapter, in order to analyse how these laws affect the lives of refugees, and their chances of accessing higher education. It should be noted that the Act only applies to formally recognised refugees, thus leaving out asylum seekers who then are only protected by human rights law (ibid). The focus here is to analyse rights relating to recognised refugees and therefore asylum policy and refugee reception in initial stages fall outside of the scope of this analysis.

To further set out the legal context, a quote from the Bill of Rights which concerns civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), seems relevant. Although refugees are not explicitly mentioned, Article 21 refers to "All persons":

> "(1) All persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect and shall enjoy equal protection of the law.
> (2) without prejudice to clause (1) of this article a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability."

4.3.1. Local settlement policy or encampment policy

Uganda's main strategy of hosting refugees is based on what is called a local settlement policy, where refugees are supposed to live in designated camp-like areas, called refugee settlements (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2003). The objective of the settlement policy is stated to be to make the refugees self-sufficient to some extent, by providing all households

with a small plot of land which can be used for cultivation (ibid). This objective could perhaps justify the locations of the settlements, which are in rural areas far from the main urban centre of the country. Be that as it may, it is rather questionable due to the realities of the refugees' situation: they are geographically isolated and have restricted access to markets and local economies. This, in turn, hampers their chances for self-sufficiency (ibid). The policy that Uganda is implementing is essentially an encampment policy. This encampment policy is effectively a way of "warehousing" refugees (Kaiser 2008, p. 258): a global phenomenon which governments resort to, and justify according to security concerns (Loescher and Milner 2005b; Mogire 2009). Refugees in Uganda can opt to stay outside the settlements, to self-settle in for example the capital city Kampala, but then they will not be provided with any material assistance in line with government and UNHCR policy (Sharpe and Namusobya 2012). This prohibits non-financially able families from settling outside the settlements, and practically, therefore, confines them to the settlements.

4.3.2. Freedom of movement

The right to freedom of movement for refugees in Uganda is stipulated in the Refugees Act, but this right is nevertheless restricted, as can be seen in Sharpe and Namusobya's (2012, p. 573) statement below.

> "Section 30(1) of the Refugees Act provides that all refugees in Uganda are entitled to freedom of movement, but section 30(2) provides that this right may be restricted in line with the laws of Uganda or the directions of the Commissioner for Refugees applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstances, 'especially on grounds of national security, public order, public health, public morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others'."

According to the Act, a refugee who wants to live outside the designated settlements has to apply to the Commissioner in order to get permission (ibid). Granting permissions could be based on certain conditions, related to health, security and education (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). But even with permission, the refugees may be asked to report to the authorities of the new area of residence from time to time (Hovil and Okello 2008). In practice, however, it is not likely that refugees seek such permission if they want to move out from the settlements, since they will not receive any assistance from the government or the UNHCR in any case.

That the freedom of movement for refugees is restricted can also be proven by the movement or travel permits that they should apply for from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) if they would like to travel outside of the settlement, even if it is for a short period of time (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). The Settlement Commandants working for the OPM are supposed to monitor and control the refugees' activities (ibid). But for the refugees, the process of getting a movement permit can be lengthy and unpredictable (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2003). Again, however, this does not mean that it is impossible for the refugees to move outside the settlements, as they are not materially fenced. Many refugees travel frequently outside the settlements without bothering to ask for permission. Noting what has been said in informal conversations with refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, the reason to apply for a movement permit is to avoid situations of insecurity outside the settlement, for example in encounters with the Ugandan police.

4.3.3. Self-Reliance Strategy

In 1999 the Office of the Prime Minister and the UNHCR designed a Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS), which was supposed to empower both refugees and nationals to become self-reliant (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2003). The goal of the strategy was ""to integrate the services provided to the refugees into regular government structures and policies" and, in so doing, to move "from relief to development."" (ibid, p. 8). The sectors which were to be integrated were "agricultural production, income generation, community services, health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, the environment, and infrastructure development." (ibid). Within the strategy, what was meant by refugees being self-reliant was basically the ability to produce one's own food, to pay for health and educational services at the same level as nationals, to participate in income-generating activities, to take care of the community's vulnerable people, and to be able to respond to issues concerning their own communities themselves (Meyer 2006). As mentioned above, recognised refugees are allotted a small plot of land for cultivation, which is supposed to enable them to grow some of their own food, and reduce the dependence on food rations given out by humanitarian organisations. However, there are significant disparities between the Ugandan refugee settlements with regard to how fertile the soil really is. Much of the land has been overused and has become unproductive, and the refugees lack fertilisers and agricultural modernisation skills (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). Hence, the consequence has been that the food rations for the refugees have been reduced (Kaiser 2008), while the intended success with food production

from their own agricultural land has failed. The refugees in the settlements are still highly dependent on the humanitarian aid (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009).

The Self-Reliance Strategy has been subject to critique since it actually does not seem to create conditions for self-reliance. This is because the strategy advocates for self-reliance without advocating for local integration (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2003). Social and economic integration is needed in order for people to become self-sufficient, and these aspects are disregarded in the strategy (ibid). This is affirmed by the isolated location of the settlements, and the clear promotion of repatriation as the solution to the refugees' situation from the government's side, rather than permanent local integration (Meyer 2006).

4.3.4. The right to work

The 2006 Refugees Act accords refugees the right to work; regarding this matter it states that recognised refugees in Uganda should be treated just as "aliens generally in similar circumstances" (Sharpe and Namusobya 2012, p. 577). However, "article 64 of the Regulations suggests that refugees need a permit to work" (ibid, p. 578) and that in most cases they need to pay a fee to obtain it. This violates the right to work for refugees as it is set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention (ibid).

Even though refugees thus have the right to work, but may need to pay for a work permit to be able to get more qualified employment, in practice they have very restricted access to the labour market. In the settlements, where most of the refugees live due to the encampment policy, employment opportunities are highly limited. Cultivation of one's own plot of land is often the only possible income-generating activity, but this requires some knowledge about agriculture (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). In particular, professionals and refugees with specialised skills have difficulties finding work in their field of practice (Sharpe and Namusobya 2012). The meagre resources at the refugees' disposal make it hard for them to obtain a work permit as well as accessing the labour market outside the settlements (ibid). It appears that the process of getting a work permit is time-consuming and practically complicated, since it probably has to be done from Kampala. This can be exemplified by a testimony from a chairperson in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, who has been living there for 20 years and has some sort of tertiary education, but has never even tried to get a work permit (Chairperson Basecamp, 5 Sep 2015).

4.3.5. Freedom of association and expression

Refugees in Uganda do not have the right to freedom of association and expression and are not allowed to engage in any political activities (Sharpe and Namusobya 2012). Freedom of association and expression is not protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, and in line with that, the 2006 Refugees Act states that refugees can only have the right to join associations "as regards non-political and non-profit making associations and trade unions" (ibid, p. 576). Furthermore, the Act states that refugees are not permitted to "engage in any political activities in Uganda, whether at local or national level" (ibid).

4.3.6. Citizenship

There are legal obstacles that prevent refugees from becoming citizens of Uganda. Since citizenship by birth is based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, only children of Ugandan citizens become citizens at birth, and not those children born on Ugandan territory with foreign parents. Regarding citizenship by registration, article 12(1)(a)(ii) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda states that a person can only get citizenship through registration if "neither of his or her parents and none of his or her grandparents was a refugee in Uganda" (Republic of Uganda 1995). As Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema (2009, p. 27) have stated, this provision "is discriminatory and violates refugee rights, and tantamounts to the perpetuation of being a refugee throughout generations". Furthermore, article 12(2) states that:

> "The following persons shall, upon application, be registered as citizens of Uganda -
> (a) every person married to a Uganda citizen upon proof of a legal and subsisting marriage of three years or such other period prescribed by Parliament;
> (b) every person who has legally and voluntarily migrated to and has been living in Uganda for at least ten years or such other period prescribed by Parliament;
> (c) every person who, on the commencement of this Constitution, has lived in Uganda for at least twenty years." (Republic of Uganda 1995)

Thus, even though the refugees may have lived more than 10 years in the country, that the person has to have migrated "voluntarily" in order to acquire citizenship by registration rules them out, since they fled to Uganda because of fear of persecution, war or conflict (Hovil and Lomo 2015). The criteria needed to be met for acquiring citizenship by naturalisation, defined by The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, does not exclude refugees, and

"[r]efugees who have lived in Uganda for more than twenty years could explore the possibility to naturalize" (Hovil and Lomo 2015, p. 46). However, studies have shown that the process of acquiring citizenship for persons who have stayed a long time in Uganda is difficult and bureaucratic, which also makes it more unlikely that refugees would actually get the opportunity to naturalise (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009).

4.3.7. Implications for access to higher education

Now, how do these laws and policies affect the access to higher education for refugees in Uganda? The discussion here will concern basic conditions which are needed in order to create the opportunity of accessing higher education, and not specific procedures, such as for example accreditation of education certificates.

In contrast to other countries, e.g. Kenya (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011), refugees in Uganda may choose to self-settle from the beginning or to leave the settlements eventually, even though in theory they are supposed to ask for permission. Such a permission could be granted for educational purposes for instance. So, in that way, the encampment policy is not strict to such an extent that it would prohibit refugees from joining universities or other institutions of tertiary education outside the refugee settlements. Refugees are allowed to join these institutions if they can afford to do so. In Uganda, there are some refugees who finance their own higher education, but even without any available data on that, it can be assumed that the number is extremely small. What the encampment policy does, together with the requirement of work permits, is to considerably restrict the possibilities for refugees of getting employment. And furthermore, to get a job with a salary that could finance a person's own or child's university education is nearly impossible, and thus the likelihood of reaching the financial situation needed to access higher education is very low. This becomes even more problematic in a country like Uganda where the university sector is privatised to a high extent. Another fundamental issue to which the encampment policy contributes is that the refugees' access to secondary education is severely limited, which obviously affects the prospects for reaching higher education. The situation regarding secondary education in Nakivale Refugee Settlement presented below confirms this.

The laws regarding citizenship show that it is very hard, probably close to impossible, to naturalise in Uganda as a refugee (not considering illegal ways here). This presumably limits the hopes of refugees of becoming full members of the Ugandan society as citizens in the future. What it means to not be able to become a citizen in relation to access to higher

education, is that, even though having spent perhaps 20 years in the country, a refugee cannot apply for government scholarships in the same way as a national. When refugees access universities through self-sponsorship or through scholarships provided by the UNHCR, they can usually pay the same fee as nationals if they register as refugees. If they were registered as non-nationals they would pay a significantly higher tuition fee.

The fact that the right to freedom of association and expression is not accommodated for refugees in Uganda, and that they cannot engage in political activities, is unlikely to affect the access to higher education in any significant direct way. However, not being allowed to organise themselves politically certainly hampers their chances of claiming their rights, the right to education included.

Turning to the Self-Reliance Strategy, and following the critique that has been presented against it, it seems evident that if the goal of it is not local integration, then the strategy fails to see self-reliance in its entirety. The strategy does not mention higher education, which arguably then again shows that long-term development of the community is not what is prioritised here, and not local integration either. Rather it is a strategy that helps to create temporary integration at best. As Meyer (2006, p. 7) states, the "[p]romotion of self-reliance is clearly an interim measure in the context of an over-arching commitment to repatriation as a durable solution".

In Uganda, integration policies are virtually non-existent, which likely also indirectly influences the access to higher education in a negative way. The positive impacts of local integration – which could have informed policy reform – are consistently overlooked. In conclusion, even though the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995, Article 12) states that "all persons" should be equal "in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life", the Refugee Act effectively restricts the rights of refugees in such a way that their opportunities cannot be equal with the rest of the population.

In general, the contextual conditions need to be taken into consideration when examining access to higher education or any other service. As was noted above, there is a very small share of the population in Uganda that has access to higher education. Therefore, improving the access for refugees has to come alongside a general improvement of the access to higher education for the whole population. What is desirable is that refugees have the same or similar chances of accessing it as nationals. For that to be realised there needs to be a policy change; as Dryden-Peterson (2011, p. 13) reminds us, "[a]ccess to education depends on the refugee

governance structures and asylum policies in different locations and at different historical times".

4.4. Nakivale Refugee Settlement

To the eye, Nakivale Refugee Settlement comprises a vast land of rolling hills around the Nakivale Lake in southern Uganda. The settlement, covering a large area of 185 km^2 (UNHCR 2014) is located in a semi-arid area of Isingiro District. It lies an hour drive away, on a partly very poor road, from Uganda's second largest town, Mbarara. Nakivale refugee settlement, which in October 2015 was hosting 92,787 refugees from different countries (Refugee Desk Officer Mbarara, personal communication 28 Oct 2015), is the largest settlement in Uganda, and the 8th largest in the world (UNHCR 2014). It was established in 1960, in response to a large Tutsi population fleeing from Rwanda (Dryden-Peterson 2003), and since then it has varied largely in terms of population size. What makes Nakivale Refugee Settlement unique among the Ugandan settlements is the diversity of the inhabitants, which at times has caused conflicts (ibid). The biggest group of refugees come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but among the refugees' nationalities are also Rwandese, Burundian, Sudanese, Somalian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and a few more (UNHCR 2014). Burundian refugees account for the most recent large influx to Nakivale since they have fled the violence that erupted following the demonstrations in April 2015 sparked by the President's announcement of seeking a third term in office (Human Rights Watch 2016). The diversity among the refugee populations does not only have to do with nationality; also the duration of stay in Nakivale varies greatly. While some have just arrived, others have spent decades there. There are youths in their twenties who have never lived outside of the settlement. Thus, the situation for several of the refugee populations resident in Nakivale can be conceptualised as a protracted refugee situation.

4.4.1. Organisation and management of the settlement

The settlement structure has three levels, and the terms used here for them are sub-camps, zones and villages. Firstly, the settlement is divided into three sub-camps that are named Basecamp, Juru and Rubondo. Basecamp is the centre of the settlement where the main offices are located, but also the other sub-camps have sub-offices and health centres. The sub-camps are divided into zones, which in turn consists of several villages. There are around 80 villages in total, and new ones are established in response to refugee influx when newly arrived refugees need to be settled and given land. As in other Ugandan settlements, refugee

households in Nakivale are allotted a small plot of land, on which they are expected to grow a part of their subsistence. There are Ugandan nationals also living in the area of the settlement or in bordering areas, and this has sometimes caused social tensions and conflicts over land between the host population and the refugees (Bagenda et al. 2003). The refugees also receive food rations, but the amount of foodstuffs provided depends on the length of the period one has resided in Nakivale. In 2015, the food distribution personnel had these directives: the refugees who arrived in 2012 or later should be given 12 kg maize (not grounded), 2.4 kg beans, 1.5 kg Corn Soya Blend, and 0.9 litre cooking oil (Hakami, field notes, 4 Sep 2015). The ones that arrived before 2012 receive about half that amount. The food rations, which are distributed every month, last about half a month according to informal conversations with refugees in Nakivale. The shortage of food is thus a serious concern; and for example it has negative effects on children's learning abilities in school.

The settlement is co-managed by the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda (OPM) and the UNHCR. They collaborate with organisations present in the settlement which are UNHCR's implementing and operating partners. These are the American Refugee Committee (ARC), Windle Trust Uganda (WTU), Nzamizi, Medical Teams International (MTI), Samaritan's Purse, Finnish Refugee Council (FRC), Tutapona, Uganda Red Cross Society, and since recently the International Organization of Migration (IOM). All villages have a Refugee Welfare Committee (RWC) which consists of village members that they elect (in a more or less democratic manner). There are also RWCs on zone-level and sub-camp-level. The chairpersons of the RWC on sub-camp-level, called RWC3, meet with the organisations on a weekly or monthly basis (Hakami, field notes, 27 July 2015). The RWCs are supposed to function as an information channel between the organisations and the populations of the villages.

4.4.2. Education management

Windle Trust Uganda (WTU) is the organisation responsible for education services in the settlement. They monitor the schools: presently the number of primary schools are 41, including three schools completely funded by the UNHCR through WTU, nine schools funded by the WTU and the government, and the rest are private schools, which are community funded, i.e. funded by the refugee community of the area (WTU Nakivale 2015). Not all of these schools have classes up to Primary 7 (P7), the highest class in primary schools. Primary education for refugees in Uganda, which is given within the general context

of education in the country and under the program of Universal Primary Education (UPE), is supposed to be without fees (Dryden-Peterson 2003). However, since parents have to pay for costs of some of the books, materials and development of structures, some schools do end up charging school fees (ibid).

The WTU also manages secondary education, Early Childhood Development Centres (pre-schools) and scholarships for higher education. In Nakivale Refugee Settlement, 74% of the refugee population consists of children under 18 years (UNHCR Mbarara, personal communication 12 Aug 2015), creating high pressures on schools and pre-schools, and challenges for a large number of youth who are outside the school system and face unemployment and idleness.

4.4.3. Secondary education in Nakivale

The difference in access between Ugandans and refugees is significant, as is the difference between enrolment in primary and secondary education. National statistics from Uganda show that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary education was 109%[2] and 25% for secondary education in 2015 (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, The Republic of Uganda 2015, p. XCIII). In the most recent available statistics (from 2012), when looking at the total refugee population in all refugee settlements in Uganda, 73% of the children attended primary school, and 16% attended secondary school (UNHCR n.d.b, p. 11). Looking at Nakivale Refugee Settlement in particular, UNHCR has published statistics on education from 2014, when the GER for primary education was 58% and 2% for secondary education (UNHCR Uganda 2014).

There is one only secondary school within the borders of the settlement which is called Nakivale Secondary School (Nakivale SS). The school began operating in 2010 and is now both a day school and a boarding school, meaning that some students live at the school and some do not. It offers secondary education on ordinary level, thus class Senior 1 to Senior 4 (S1 - S4). Hence, during the time of the research, it did not offer secondary education on advanced level, meaning class Senior 5 and Senior 6 (S5 – S6), which are the last two classes on the secondary level in Uganda. However, according to the plans, the school is supposed to offer those advanced level courses from 2016. The school is 75% funded by UNHCR through WTU, and the rest through school fees (WTU Nakivale n.d.).

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[2] "GERs can exceed 100% due to early or late entry into school or to repetition." (Dryden-Peterson, 2011, p. 24)

Statistics presented in the Nakivale Secondary School profile (WTU Nakivale n.d.) show that over the recent years the number of enrolled students has increased: in 2012 a total of 291 students were enrolled, whereas in 2015 the number was 713. As the school accommodates refugees as well as nationals living in the surrounding area; the number of refugees enrolled was 447 and nationals was 266. The number of girls in the school were lower than the number of boys, as there were 318 girls compared to 395 boys enrolled. Recently there has been a large Burundian influx into the settlement, which is also reflected by an additional 270 Burundian students registering in the Secondary School; however, their regular attendance is presently a challenge (Headteacher Nakivale SS 30 September 2015).

There is only a dormitory for girls on the school's premises, and the August-September 2015 report from the Secondary school show that it is currently hosting 129 girls, although the capacity is for 104 (Headteacher Nakivale SS 30 September 2015). 88 boys are accommodated at Nakivale Vocational Training Centre which is located 800 meters away from the school.

There are some scholarships given out to students for secondary education. As of 2015, there were 42 students who had a scholarship from the Parent-Teacher-Association, 25 got full scholarships from WTU (WTU Nakivale n.d.), and 125 got partial scholarships from WTU (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). 12 students also got self-help scholarships from the school, meaning that they work in the school garden during holidays and then study free of charge (WTU Nakivale n.d.). The factors that determine which students are prioritised for scholarships are vulnerability and academic excellence (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). Depending on the availability of funds, a few scholarships may be given out for studies at S5 and S6, classes which one up until 2016 had to take at a school outside the settlement.

In 2015 in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, 328 students qualified for secondary school, but only 203 enrolled (WTU Nakivale n.d.). There are several barriers that restrict the access to secondary education, which are highlighted by WTU and UNHCR staff, the headteacher of Nakivale SS, students at the school and RWC3 Chairpersons. The major barrier is undoubtedly the cost of the school fees. As a student in the secondary school explains: "*when you flee, you reach here and we didn't come with anything to support us/.../poor financial status, that's the worst factor that makes it difficult continue with education.*" (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015). There is an additional cost for lunch,

and the implication of that is that some students will attend classes all day without feeding, which also creates a separation between those who eat lunch and those who do not. Although some scholarships are given out, it does not nearly meet the demand.

Another barrier is that refugees who come from other countries with different curricula and languages of instruction, now have to adjust to the Ugandan system and with English as the language of instruction. Equating education certificates, if they are accessible in the first place, may present a challenge. Without certificates proving previous studies, the students need to go back to attend lower classes, which may demoralise them. The language barrier is also a reason why students are put in lower classes; for example, a student who has already started secondary school might need to go back to class P5 or P6 in primary school in order to catch up with the English language (Education Officer WTU Nakivale, personal communication 3 Sep 2015).

Clearly, that there is only one secondary school in Nakivale – a settlement with an area of 185 km^2 (UNHCR 2014) and over 90,000 residents – represents an insufficient education service provision and an immense barrier to access. The distance for many students to school is extremely high, it can be as far as 34 km (WTU Nakivale n.d.). Hence, students have to walk several hours to get to and from school, which means walking in the dark with security risks along the way. This is compounded by the fact that there is a lack of boarding facilities at the school.

Being able to stay in the secondary school has also proven to be a challenge. The drop-out rates are high, as reflected in the significantly lower number of students that attend S4 (78 in 2015), than those who enrol in S1 (256) (WTU Nakivale n.d.). Again, the paying of the school fees is one of the major causes of this, as well as the distance from home to school. Moreover, some students get discouraged because of different reasons: such as parents not prioritising their education and seeing them as a source of labour, because of seeing graduates unemployed, and because of prospects of repatriating to country of origin or resettling in a third country. Other reasons which may cause drop-outs are for example early pregnancies and early marriages, substance abuse, social difficulties because of trauma, as well as harsh conditions at the school (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015).

While in school, there are also many challenges that the students and teachers meet. There is congestion in the classrooms as the classroom to pupil ratio is 1:178 (WTU Nakivale n.d.). Only 17 teachers work at the school; among which most are Ugandan nationals but some

teachers from countries that the refugees origin from have also been recruited. The teachers get overwhelmed with the high amount of work, which indicates that the quality of the education is being negatively affected. Regarding harsh conditions at the school, students underline that the nutrition is inadequate, that there is a lack of water, lack of latrines (latrine to pupil ratio is 1:89) (ibid), insecurity in the boarding section due to congestion and thefts, lack of sickbeds, and violence by staff in the school, such as beatings and humiliating treatment (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015). Lastly, there is a lack of infrastructure at the school, as for example there is no room to sit and eat, forcing the students to eat outside (WTU Nakivale n.d.).

The access to post-primary education in Nakivale is, as shown, very limited. Notably, just as with tertiary education, the encampment policy does not prohibit refugee children from studying outside the settlement. Therefore, those parents who can afford it put their children in boarding schools outside of Nakivale. The limited access to secondary education for the great majority of the refugees, however, should be put in relation to the conditions in the host country, since secondary education is not secured for all Ugandans either. The Ugandan government introduced a policy in 2007 on Universal Secondary Education (USE), where the tuition is free in the (mainly) public schools which were enlisted by the government (Pallegedara and Yamano 2011). Although this resulted in higher enrolment in secondary education, access is still restricted since the students in the USE schools need to pay for boarding fees, scholastic materials, medical care etc. (ibid). The Associate Education Advisor at UNHCR Kampala (personal communication 17 Sep 2015) explains that, in discussions with the Ugandan government authorities, they cannot use the argument that refugees should have the same access to secondary education as nationals as a leverage since the access for nationals also is limited.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter the findings of this study are presented and analysed and hence, in three different parts, this chapter answers the research question. The first part describes the opportunities for higher education that exist for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and the barriers to access, the second part considers individual experiences of access and non-access to higher education, and the third part analyses how aspirations of higher education are linked to future goals and solutions to refugee situations.

5.1. Opportunities for Higher Education and Barriers to Access

There is no available comprehensive data on the access to higher education for refugees in Uganda, nor from Nakivale Refugee Settlement specifically. As mentioned above, there are no restrictions for refugees to attend Ugandan higher education institutions if they can finance it themselves and have the necessary certificates proving sufficient previous education. Regardless, I find it safe to state that there are extremely few refugees who can actually access university, in large part due to insufficient financial capability. In particular, those refugees who live in settlements are unlikely to be able to afford university studies, since the more well-off refugees commonly live outside of settlements and provide for themselves. This part of the chapter presents what opportunities for higher education exist for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, even though there is restricted access to these opportunities as well. In the settlement there is a vocational school and a centre for computer literacy and e-learning, and there is a possibility of being granted a scholarship for studies outside the settlement. The main focus lies on these scholarships as the empirical data of this study mostly centres on university education. Following the descriptions of the different education opportunities, barriers to access (meaning obstacles which prevent people from gaining access) and challenges that complicates access will be discussed.

5.1.1. Scholarships for higher studies

Ordinarily, there are scholarships given out for university studies to the refugees in Nakivale every year. DAFI-scholarships, which are for undergraduate and postgraduate studies are funded by the German government through the UNHCR. WTU manages the implementation of the scholarship programme and UNHCR oversees it. The DAFI-scholarship covers the tuition fees, medical insurance and an additional sum of money for upkeep, which is supposed to cover accommodation and pocket money for the scholarship holders. The number of scholarships varies every year since it is dependent on funds: in 2015 40 DAFI-scholarships

were given in total to refugees in Uganda, which were to be divided between nine settlements and urban-based refugees. Four of them were for postgraduate studies and 36 for undergraduate studies (WTU n.d.). The scholarships are distributed over the different settlements and five scholarships were allocated to Nakivale Refugee Settlement the same year. The time of the year that the funds for scholarships are given to the WTU can vary, and therefore, the scholarship application process may start in different months in different years, making it crucial that interested refugees stay observant for information. When the application period starts it is advertised on the notice board in Nakivale, and the refugees can pick up application forms at the WTU's office. The first step is a written application, where the applicant presents personal information, previous education and employment as well as which studies they are applying for (WTU n.d.). A selection process follows, where a number of applicants are selected and shortlisted to go further to the second step, an interview. After the interviews the new scholarship holders as well as people for the reserve list are selected. The interview is held by a panel of representatives from the WTU, the UNHCR, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and other implementing partners working in the settlement, as well as Refugee Welfare Committee leaders, according to the manager of WTU in Nakivale in order for it to be as transparent as possible (personal communication 20 Aug 2015).

There are several criteria that people have to meet in order to be considered for a DAFI-scholarship (WTU n.d.). The person has to be a recognised refugee from the post-1990 refugee caseload, be able to prove sufficient grades in previous studies, and for the undergraduate studies one has to below 28 years old; for postgraduate below 36. In the selection process, there are some factors which decide who gets priority, such as gender and nationality. 50% of the scholarships should go to female applicants, and the choice of scholarship holders should reflect nationalities and ethnic groups in the settlement. Vulnerability is also a factor in the selection process, as well as equitability: there cannot be more than one person from the same family that receives a scholarship (ibid). What the panel additionally takes into consideration is whether the applicant has volunteered in the settlement, for example in a school (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). Furthermore, something that is also looked at is whether the applicant is likely to stay in Uganda, as both the Associate Education Advisor from UNHCR Kampala (personal communication 17 Sep 2015) and the Education Programme Officer from WTU Kampala (personal communication 18 Sep 2015) say that from the organisations' side, it would not be

beneficial to give a scholarship to someone who is soon going to repatriate or resettle in a third country.

As of 2015, Nzamizi, which is a government institute, also gives out scholarships in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. These scholarships are for two-year-long diploma courses at their institute and will be given out once every two years. In 2015, five Nzamizi scholarships were granted to refugees in Nakivale.

A clear barrier to access to higher education is that the number of scholarships available are so very few. In Nakivale Refugee Settlement in 2015, around 200 people applied for the scholarships, and approximately 70% of those were qualified (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). But as mentioned, only five scholarships were available at university level (DAFI-scholarships) and five at diploma level (Nzamizi-scholarships). There is certainly a lack of funds for scholarships directed towards refugees. Yet, Uganda is one of the countries in Africa that receives the most DAFI-scholarships, and although 40 scholarships in total may seem few, in 2014 there were only 18 scholarships available (Education Programme Officer WTU Kampala, personal communication 18 Sep 2015).

Regarding the selection of scholarship holders, one challenge that arises is that there are many fewer female applicants than male ones. Furthermore, since the nationalities of different refugee groups in the settlement should be reflected in the choices of candidates, chances in fact become higher for those refugees who are from smaller groups of a certain nationality. This may have the implication that some applicants who are part of a large refugee group in Nakivale feel that they are in a disadvantaged position. That there is an age limit for the scholarships also presents a barrier, since it is common that refugees have had one or several breaks in their schooling (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011), and may lose the opportunity of getting a scholarship because of being too old.

Although measures have been taken by the WTU in order to ensure the transparency of the selection and interview process, some refugees mistrust it, as cases of corruption seemingly has occurred. Several respondents claim to have heard of applicants being asked for bribes from panelists, and one has been asked to give a bribe to a panelist prior to that person's own interview.

A big barrier for refugees aspiring to go to university in Uganda is that they need to be able to show certificates of previous education. Many flee quickly and thus leave without any or

many of their belongings; as one respondent said: *"to here, I didn't even bring a single document"* (author's translation) (Refugee man, 11 Aug 2015a). The Uganda Red Cross Society in Nakivale works with tracing education certificates for refugees through collaboration with Red Cross organisations in the countries of origin (Staff Uganda Red Cross Society Nakivale, personal communication 3 Sep 2015). The process is not uncomplicated, however, since it depends on the availability and collaboration of people who the refugee declares are allowed to pick up her or his certificate. Nevertheless, if successful, this service can be essential to some students. Between June and September 2015, the Red Cross in Nakivale had sent for 30 certificates in Burundi, but by early September there had not yet been a single response (ibid), exemplifying how such tracing is very difficult in practice.

As mentioned above, refugees who cannot show education certificates need to start in lower classes in order to gain necessary documentation. This means that refugees who had started university might have to go back to secondary school. Going back to secondary school can also be a way of learning the English language for refugees coming from countries with other languages of instruction. The other alternatives for learning English that exist in Nakivale are to attend free classes given by the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) or to pay for private classes.

Those holding an education certificate need to have it translated and equated into the Ugandan system. This means a challenge as it is costly to accomplish. The WTU can support some refugees by collecting their certificates and sending them to the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) for translation and equation. Given their inability to help everyone who needs it, WTU in Nakivale have focused on helping the children with primary certificates (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). Congolese face an additional challenge, as there is no agreement between Uganda and the DRC for the equation of education certificates (Associate Education Advisor UNHCR Kampala, personal communication 17 Sep 2015). However, at Bugema University in Kampala, there are deans who are Congolese and can assess grades from the Congolese education system. Because of that, many of the Congolese refugees with scholarships attend this university.

Even though the DAFI and Nzamizi scholarships can be given out to refugees who attended secondary school in Uganda, as well as to those whose university studies were interrupted in their countries of origin, in practice people from the former group have a higher chance of being granted a scholarship. In the focus group with seven of the new scholarship holders for

2015 from Nakivale, all of them had attended secondary school in Uganda (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015). According to WTU and UNHCR staff, the reason for this is that, since the criteria for the scholarship has to comply with criteria for attending Ugandan universities, the refugees who have gone through the Ugandan education system might have better chances because of better grades as well as better knowledge of English. According to the Focal person for education at UNHCR Mbarara (personal communication 26 Aug 2015) "there are equal competitive opportunities for scholarships", but refugees who did not attend secondary school in Uganda obviously face a greater challenge. However, as the chance is sometimes also given to them, those who have already completed some years of their university education face the quest of starting university from year one again.

5.1.2. Computer literacy and e-learning

There is a Community Technology Access Centre (CTA) located in Basecamp, the central sub-camp of Nakivale refugee settlement. It has two parts, an internet café with ten computers where people can access internet (for example in order to communicate with families and friends) and a training centre with 30 computers where courses take place (CTA 2015). The CTA has a community-based approach, and is run by refugees in a volunteer management committee. The centre obtains funds from the UNHCR through the WTU, but is partly funded by the revenue of the centre. The income generated is used to pay staff and cover some of the running costs (ibid), but the future goal is that the centre should be self-sustaining (Coordinator CTA Nakivale, personal communication 18 Aug 2015). The price to use a computer in the internet café is 1500 Ugandan shilling (USH) per hour, which is around 40 cent euro. The courses offered at the training centre are skills development courses, such as basic computer skills and videography. The courses are one month long, and cost between 10,000 and 20,000 USH. More advanced courses in computer skills, for those who have already gone through the basic skills course, are being established (ibid). In 2014, in total 292 people participated in the basic computer skills-course, among which the largest share were male: 233 males compared to 59 females (CTA 2015). Furthermore, since 2015, there is also the opportunity to access online courses in the training centre (Coordinator CTA Nakivale, personal communication 18 Aug 2015). UNHCR collaborates with Fuse Foundation that finds online courses that are free of charge, and provides links for them which are shared on a platform called UNHCR Exchange. The courses offered are certificate courses that are recognised by universities; they are usually around one month long and are concluded with an

exam, upon the passing of which one obtains a certificate. There are also degree and diploma courses available, but at a cost. In August 2015, 85 students had registered for online courses, but only 5 had started. This was because not all courses that the students wanted were available at the time, and the universities often have time schedules for their online courses, so one needs to wait until the right course starts (ibid).

From the CTA's coordinator's point of view, one of the challenges that they face at the CTA is to find online courses which are marketable on the local market (Coordinator CTA Nakivale. personal communication 18 Aug 2015). Since one of their aims is to help refugees improve their livelihood, courses in humanities, for example, are not as useful as courses in business or agriculture. Moreover, since the settlement is very large, the distance to the CTA becomes a barrier for many who live far away from Basecamp. The CTA usually organises transport once a week for the students living in other sub-camps who are taking the basic computer skills course. However, as the vehicles are limited, it happens that they are unable to provide transport, which results in postponement of the class. Furthermore, when students have finished a course at the CTA, because of the distance, it might take many months before they can come and practice their skills again. The CTA are looking into the possibility of purchasing laptops which could be transported to the sub-camps and thereby solve the distance problem by giving the classes there. Another challenge is that, even though the teachers of the courses are refugees and speak many languages, for those who do not know English or French, using the computers becomes difficult since local languages are not available on the computers. Additional challenges are that the internet connection fails frequently and that the internet speed is slow (Coordinator CTA Nakivale, personal communication 18 Aug 2015).

The fees are a barrier to accessing the courses at the CTA, which the students at the secondary school underlines (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015). Even for the online courses that are free of charge, one still needs to pay per hour for the internet. The students also mention that the limited number of participants in the skills development courses is restricting access.

5.1.3. Vocational training

Nakivale Vocational Training Centre (VTC), which was established in 2012, is located in the settlement's sub-camp Juru. There are four courses given there, namely, Bricklaying and concrete practice, Agronomy, Tailoring and garment cutting, and Carpentry and joinery. In

the first semester of 2015, there was a total of 110 students at the school, where 47 of them were refugees and 63 were nationals (Nakivale Vocational Training Centre n.d.). On average there are 25 students in one course but due to high interest in a course, the number of students can in some cases be up to 40 or 50. Especially Tailoring and garment cutting have proved popular. The number of women and men studying are almost equal, and they are mostly between the ages of 14 to 30 (Principal Nakivale Vocational Training Centre, personal communication 18 Aug 2015). The tuition fees for the courses, which are subsidised by the UNHCR, are 260,000 USH for nationals and 230,000 USH for refugees, including accommodation on the premises. UNHCR also funds the tutors' salaries (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). At the institute they offer both informal and formal courses, which have different requirements, are examined through different examinations, and result in different certificates obtained (Principal Nakivale Vocational Training Centre, personal communication 18 Aug 2015). There are no entry requirements for informal courses. Regarding formal courses, a person who has finished Primary 7 can join, but needs to start with what is called junior level, and then to continue on to craft level. If a person has completed Senior 4, she or he can go directly to craft level. One course is one semester long, thus 4 months, and according to the Principal of the school many students prefer to stay and study for two semesters in order to gain more knowledge (ibid).

The most obvious barrier to the refugees' access to vocational training at the centre is the tuition fees. Even though they are much lower than what would be the case if UNHCR were not contributing with funds, not many are able to afford it. Scholarships used to be given to a number of students, but currently, due to limited funds, there are no scholarships available (Focal person for education UNHCR Mbarara, personal communication 26 Aug 2015). The manager of WTU in Nakivale has met former students who have been frustrated since it is hard to gather start-up capital, which is needed in order to start one's own business and make use of the obtained skills (personal communication 20 Aug 2015). In some other settlements WTU has been able to give out a number of start-up kits to some who completed their vocational training (Education Programme Officer WTU Kampala, personal communication 18 Sep 2015). Students in the secondary school also say that they feel discouraged to start vocational training, as they have seen graduates unable to find work (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015). Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the courses offered are not high in demand, and other courses would be more of interest, such as mechanics, driving courses, computer repairing, and journalism. A challenge that the

Principal of the VTC brings up is that they are short on manpower, since one teacher has to teach in the informal and formal sessions of the same course simultaneously (personal communication 18 Aug 2015).

5.2. Experiences of Non-access

As becomes evident when investigating what opportunities for higher education actually exist, their highly limited accessibility is a tremendous issue. The general perception among the refugee respondents is also that the opportunities are way too few. As there are many young refugees in the settlement who want to – but are unable to – attend secondary school or higher education, many have experiences of non-access to education. Among these are both refugees who have lived their whole lives, or most of their childhood, in the settlement and those who have come later in their life and studied before in their country of origin.

The chairperson of the sub-camp Rubondo emphasises that non-access to education, and the lack of vocation that comes with it, has various consequences:

> *"Most of our students who finish primary school, they can't get that chance of going ahead with their studies. So we have many consequences, some of our young girls, they get married early. Our boys, they don't have what to do. So they change somehow, they behave very badly, because they don't have any occupation. They're not in school, so that's why you can see them abusing alcohol, drugs... Everywhere wasting time by playing pool table."*
> (Chairperson Rubondo, 9 Sep 2015).

As Zeus (2011) has pointed out, idleness may increase several risks, such as entering into precarious types of work, criminality or being recruited by armed groups. The idleness may also have psychological effects, such as psychosocial stress, feelings of frustration and suffering. An expression by a young male refugee who has not being able to continue his university education which he started in the DRC; *"I'm suffering, because I can't plan about my future"* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015), shows how the non-access to higher education can be linked to anguish because of the feeling of uncertainty and of lost control over one's future. As remarked by Dryden-Peterson (2010/2011, p. 15), access to education "provides refugees with the ability to think about the future", to plan and strategize, which is much more difficult when having to focus on survival. Several have the feeling of just sheer waiting, without knowing how, or if, that waiting will end. A female refugee who had started studying law in Burundi, says: *"But here, you see, I don't study, I just wait"* (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015)

(Author's translation), expressing a sentiment of being in a state of liminality. This supports Dryden-Peterson's (2010/2011) assertion that, in order to lessen frustrations and absorb energies, young people need stimulus and education, especially in situations where the labour market does not provide options, commonly the case in refugee settlements.

For those refugees who have had the opportunity to study at university in their countries of origin, the transition to settling into life in the settlement may be experienced a bit differently than by others, depending on their background. For many, living in the countryside presents a whole different way of life and different available means of subsistence. At a community sensitisation meeting in a newly-established village with Burundians, a young man spoke up; he said that he had arrived without any family, that he was a university student in Burundi and that he did not know how to build a house. He wanted to ask how he could continue his studies, which came across as his main priority. Afterwards, he told me that he used to study French at the university, and that the chairperson of the village had been kind enough to give him shelter (Hakami, field notes, 20 July 2015). Another male refugee who had just started university when he had to flee, mentions that he took a small job as a construction worker when an opportunity came in the settlement and that he was feeling very out of place: *"I was working there. I was just helping you know with carrying heavy things. Look at me [laughs loud]. Like I am not so strong. So doing those stuffs, those jobs, it was difficult for me."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). Indirectly, these examples relate to one of the critiques of the self-reliance strategy applied in the Ugandan settlements: that the refugees are assumed to be able to live on, and make a living out of the land they are allotted (Mulumba and Mlahagwa Olema 2009). Certainly, fleeing from conflict and war will put people in new difficult and often precarious situations, but it is experienced differently by different people, and all my respondents whose university education had been interrupted shared the desire to continue their education as soon as possible. Clark-Kazak's (2010/2011) conclusion applies also in the case of Nakivale Refugee Settlement: there is a distinct conflict between the aspirations of young refugees and the lack of higher education opportunities.

There are many challenges that the refugees may run into in their search for further education that have been outlined above. The major one is the inability to afford fees at secondary and tertiary education institutions, if one does not succeed in obtaining one of the extremely few scholarships available. Knowing that families affected by conflict and emergencies often are not able to meet the costs of further education, the refugee children and youth who actually are able to continue secondary and perhaps higher education are generally the ones who have

the financial support of their families (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011). This is even more distinctive in locations such as refugee settlements where many have lost family members in war or conflict. Two of the respondents from the DRC explain how the conflict did not just force them to flee, it also caused the death of their parents, meaning that they could no longer get financial support from them in order to fund their studies (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015, Refugee man, 11 Aug 2015a). Their socio-economic situation had thus abruptly changed, but nevertheless, their aspirations and perceptions about their future did not seem to have changed as markedly. One of them who at the time of the interview was in the selection process for a small job in one of the NGOs in Nakivale, was sincerely worried about his future since he equated getting further education with surviving: *"But I don't believe that even with that job I can really survive in Uganda. I can't even afford to pay my education with that."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). As ambitions and aspirations for one's life course do not necessarily change because of the change of circumstances, such as being in refuge, the experience of non-access to higher education may lead to severe feelings of dissatisfaction and hopelessness. Relating it to Bourdieu's (1990) theory of the Habitus, coming from a social context where acquiring higher education is seen as a given, aspirations will reflect that, perhaps even after several years of being displaced and being within a new context where the opportunities for higher education are so limited.

5.2.1. Different perceptions of access to information about education opportunities

In response to the question of how one can get information about what education opportunities exist in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, all respondents bring up the notice board, which is hanging on the wall of the office buildings. That is where all organisations including the UNHCR put up information and hence a place around which there are almost constantly people standing. None of the respondents mention the Vocational Training Centre or the Community Technology Access Centre (CTA) when thinking about higher education opportunities, probably because it is not to the same extent considered as higher education, and also, since these places are located in the settlement, people can know about them just by passing by them. The respondents who have been living most of their lives in Nakivale, and are fluent in English, were of the opinion that it is easy to obtain information about scholarships available because it is advertised on the notice board, and word travels through friends, family and acquaintances. One of them, however, brings up the issue that one might be outside the settlement during a period of time, for example searching for a job in Kampala, when the advertisement for scholarship applications is put up and therefore might miss out on

the information (Refugee man, 10 Aug 2015). Another issue for some is that the advertisement is only given in English, and for people who don't know English, asking about information in the WTU office might also be difficult, depending on which local languages are spoken by the person in question and the office staff. Some of the staff are refugees themselves, or come from the South of Uganda where the local languages resemble the local languages in the nearby regions of the DRC or Rwanda, and therefore there is a range of languages spoken by the staff. As for the time I spent there, however, none of the staff was a French speaker for example.

The female respondent from Burundi, who had spent only 3 months in Nakivale, felt that the information given out at the WTU office was random and that one would get different information depending on which member of staff one would happen to talk to (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015). She felt that it was very hard to get information about the scholarships: on how the process is done, on when you can apply, and what criteria you need to fulfil. The uncertainty about what information is correct, her encounters with the staff and what she has heard from others made her believe that they are corrupt and want bribes in order to give out scholarships: *"Over there, corruption rules. I am not afraid to say it"* (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015) (Author's translation). One time when she had been to the office in order to, as she put it, register for university studies, she had been asked many questions by the staff present who afterwards told her to come back another day. The second time she went there she was told that the scholarships for that year had already been given out. Another time she says her friend went there and was able to register, and luckily her friend had put down her name in the registry as well. These different experiences show how the information dissemination and procedure seem completely arbitrary to her, which is a problem in terms of transparency and how access to education opportunities is perceived as being equal or not.

The woman's testimony links together with one of my observations from the WTU office. One day when I came to the office I saw a group of young Burundians crowding around one Burundian girl with a piece of paper, writing down names and contact details. I asked one of the staff what was going on and the staff said that the Burundian refugees could put their contact details down so that if the UNHCR would provide any extra funding for scholarships the WTU would already have their names noted (Hakami, field notes, 15 July 2016). Although they meant well, I found it greatly problematic that the staff would let the refugees register and thus give them false hope, since it was extremely unlikely that the UNHCR would provide additional funding for higher education opportunities, irrespective of the

ongoing high influx of Burundian refugees. Although the young Burundians that were at the office may have felt that they were being heard by the organisation, it probably caused a lot of confusion, which I could discern from my respondent, the Burundian woman thinking that she now was registered as a scholarship applicant, and did not have an idea of how long she would have to wait to see the results: *"Until now, we are waiting. We don't know anything/.../We really don't know if we will get this chance"*. (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015) (Author's translation). This exemplifies the need for information about scholarships to be consistent and explained in several languages, in order for everyone to have equal access to information about higher education opportunities.

5.2.2. Language barriers and lack of education certificates

Lack of documentation of previous studies is, as presented above, also a large barrier to accessing higher education. First of all, many do not manage to bring their certificates with them when they flee; second of all, the documents most often need to be translated and equated into the Ugandan system. One refugee from the DRC who tried to apply for a scholarship twice, probably did not succeed due to lack of documentation of previous studies: *"But unfortunately, my documentations were not enough at all. I have that document which shows that I have completed the secondary school in Congo, but that document wasn't enough. They need something else... they need some document which I don't have. When I fled from Congo, I didn't have time to get all my documentations."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). That shows how serious the issue of lack of, or insufficiency of, education certificates can be, since there is no system in place to qualify for university by giving an exam or the like. Hence, educational documentation is highly valued, which can be exemplified by a quote by the refugee woman from Burundi: *"I was not able to bring my certificate, but my father helped me. He went to Burundi in hiding to bring me my high school diploma in humanities. I now have it. I have my diploma."* (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015) (Author's translation).

As has already been highlighted, language barriers are also one of the challenges that the refugees may encounter during their search for educational opportunities. One respondent from the DRC who wanted to get around the language problem says that when he wanted to apply for a scholarship, he asked a friend of his to translate his application from French to English. He was not successful with his application (Refugee man, 11 Aug 2015a). Had he gone through to the interview, there would have been a high probability that the panel would not have chosen him due to his lack of knowledge of English; another respondent stated that he knew several applicants who failed the interview because they did not know English well

enough (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). These people were encouraged by the panelists to go and learn English and try to apply again.

Learning English in Nakivale, however, is not always straightforward. The Finnish Refugee Council (FRC), an operating partner of the UNHCR in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, organises learning courses for adults, one of them called English for Adults. The courses are free, and are taught by volunteer instructors from the refugee communities three times per week. Even though there are supposed to be other courses in literacy for those who have not had any previous formal schooling, the English for Adults courses are certainly attended by people with various levels of previous education, which may cause it to be unstimulating for refugees who have attended higher education institutions in their countries of origin. A Congolese refugee explains: *"Of course I tried also the FRC, I spent only one month and then I dropped out. Because it was really... you know for us, at least we reached the university. But for those, they put you in a level with people who have never gone to school. For them, some of them don't even know how to write. But for you, you know all those things."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). This respondent, who had been able to save up some money and could stay at a friend's house, went to Kampala to attend an intensive language course instead. His sister stayed in the FRC's course, and as he says, since she was very patient, stayed for the whole three months and got a certificate. But since that was not enough, she started trying to learn more by herself and using books she asked to borrow from primary schools. As both siblings managed to learn English, but in different ways, it opened up some opportunities for them to work as translators for organisations and researchers. The importance of learning English is something that the respondent underlines: *"You know, since I got to know English, I think my life has become better."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015).

5.2.3. Stuck in immobility

The access to education can be related to the refugees' social and spatial mobility. Their social mobility is restricted due to limited access to further education, as well as other factors such as being non-citizens and having low access to the labour market. Spatial mobility is also restricted for the refugees in Nakivale due to their socio-economic position and the policy that requires them to apply for movement permits if they wish to move out from the settlement. These mobilities may often be interconnected, and in the case of refugees in Nakivale, the non-access to higher education makes their immobility in both the social and spatial sense persist. Because there are very few employment opportunities in the settlement, they have very limited chances of getting well-paid employment without higher education, and thus the

chances of being able to move out of the settlement and being completely self-sufficient are low. One could say that they are stuck in immobility, which is exemplified by the refugees' testimonies.

A quote by a female refugee reflects how gravely the non-access to education can be viewed in relation to the future, and even how it can be seen to cause downward social mobility: *"It is very important for me, because if one doesn't study, one becomes… I don't know how to put it… I would become like an illiterate. Much later I would become like an irresponsible woman."* (Refugee woman, 14 Sep 2015) (Author's translation).

One refugee man expresses that access to higher education is a prerequisite for getting a job, irrespective of whether it is locally or globally, and thereby a prerequisite for moving out of social immobility: "*…but still you will never be selected when you don't have a degree. Most of the jobs around the world, they need people who are qualified, by education level or experience, you know all those things. I just think that you, yeah, it's really important to have a degree."* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015).

Perceptions of the social position to which higher education will take you drives aspirations of getting access to it. A boy at the secondary school in Nakivale explains: *"For me, it's not only about accumulating documents. But what we have to consider is what the documents will do in our lives. Because now, if we were to check worldwide, people that are leading the world are the educated ones. So you, as an individual, if you are educated at that level, let's say university level, you find that you talk a word and it sounds vocal."* (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015).

A refugee woman experiences spatial immobility in Nakivale as an isolation which limits the way one thinks and perceives the world, and therefore also limits knowledge acquisition and social mobility: *"If you keep recycling yourself in this settlement you can never know anything./…/ In Nakivale, you feel as if you are in one box. You don't see out. Let's say you are in this room, you are not going out there. You can't know what is taking place, but if you have at least gone out, you can move."* (Refugee woman, 7 Sep 2015). Leaving Nakivale is by her thus seen as a way to actually become mobile.

5.3. Experiences of Access

Although the reality for the majority of the refugees in Nakivale wishing to pursue higher studies is non-access to it, this study also aims to provide insight into the experience of those

who actually get access to higher education. This section will first look into the experiences of those who were just awarded scholarships and had not yet started university, secondly, it will explore the experiences of those who have studied for a couple of years or have finished university.

5.3.1. Experiences of scholarship

It is important to draw attention to the experiences of scholarship holders in order to understand how access to education is conditioned because of the scholarships being given out as aid in a refugee context. What choices scholarship holders are given, how the NGOs' staff act towards them, and how the surrounding refugee community react to their success, are examples of experiences which shape their realities, and shed broader light on challenges related to access to higher education for refugees in Uganda.

The uncertainty of where one will live in the future – which many refugees in Nakivale share – plays a role in shaping experiences, also in relation to scholarships. An example of this is the case of a university student on DAFI-scholarship who was about to start the last semester at university. However, the WTU had put the student on hold because they were reconsidering whether they would continue to give out the scholarship or not, because it had reached their attention that the student had gone further in the resettlement process (Hakami, field notes, 20 Aug 2015). Although not mentioning this case specifically, the Associate Education Advisor from UNHCR Kampala had the general perception that: *"We don't want to waste scholarships on those who are not likely to finish"* (personal communication 17 Sep 2015). This is the approach that Zeus (2011) also found at the UNHCR in Thailand, which is in line with UNHCR's guidelines about the DAFI-scholarships, where it is stated: "the provision of scholarships to refugees likely to be resettled is the least preferable option." (UNHCR n.d.a, p. 3). It furthermore coincides with the purposes stated for the DAFI-program: first and foremost to develop human resources which are needed for reconstruction in countries of origin, and secondly, if repatriation is not feasible, to contribute to developing the refugee community or the host country (Refugee Education 2016).

This implies how scholarships for higher education are also embedded in politics about preferable solutions to refugee situations. Another rationale behind UNHCR's approach is that the opportunities of getting higher education in a third country of resettlement are higher (Zeus 2011). However, that does not necessarily mean that resettled refugees can access higher education, for example due to challenges in providing for themselves and their families

(ibid). That scholarships for students who may resettle are seen as a waste sheds light on how higher education, as Zeus (2011, p. 260) has noted, "is seen primarily in terms of its externalities rather than as an individual right". The rights dimension is ignored and the focus remains on the instrumental value of higher education, rather than on the intrinsic value of it: the value it has for the refugees themselves. Coming back to the scholarship student who had one semester left, it is important to note that even if that student would have been granted resettlement, the period between the decision and the actual boarding of the plane can take several years.

5.3.2. Availability of choice

What scholarship holders are allowed to study is another issue which shows the peculiarity of living within a system of humanitarian assistance dependent on donations. In Zeus' (2011) study of refugee camps in Thailand, she finds scholarship providers that try to steer the scholarship holder's choice into courses that serve community needs, are more accessible and are heavily subsidised. She asks: "Are HE [higher education] opportunities offered to refugees meant to be for the good of the individual who will undertake the course of study, or are they meant to satisfy donor interests?" (Zeus 2011, p. 268). Similarly the distribution of DAFI-scholarships in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and the experiences of my respondents raise questions about to what extent they can make a free choice regarding what course to study.

From the interviews it was not completely clear which field of study the scholarship holders in Uganda can choose. While the manager of WTU in Nakivale answers the question by starting to say that the scholarships are given out for the course according to the need of the applicant, she continues by stating that they sometimes give preference to sciences and courses that usually lead to higher employability (Manager WTU Nakivale, personal communication 20 Aug 2015). According to several of the refugees, they have been told that one is not allowed to choose a course which is too expensive. In the interview for the scholarship, the applicants are asked about their preferred field of study and university, and sometimes they get the opportunity to study that course, and sometimes not. After all, it is not only the scholarship providers' opinions and guidelines that determines what field of study scholarship holder can undertake, but also what course she or he qualifies for at the university in question. At the focus group with the new scholarship holders, several of them gave examples of people they knew who were beneficiaries and wanted to study a certain course; but were given a completely different one. As one woman from Rwanda who spent most of

her life Uganda says: "*They might even give you languages, they tell you, "You go and study Ryankole beginners"[the local language in Southwest Uganda] [all laugh]. It's true, it is there!/.../ [or] "you go and study French beginners"* (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015). As one might expect, these type of courses are not desirable for the scholarship holders, nor for the scholarship providers. As one focus group participant implies, the choice of study has to be strategic from their personal point of view, which probably is affected by where they see themselves living and working in the future: "*The choice that we make also determines how capable you can be in the competitive world that we are having today*" (ibid). Although perhaps the NGOs would have welcomed more residents of the refugee settlement becoming teachers and social workers in order to fill gaps, that is not necessarily what the refugees themselves want, and should not be expected to study in order to satisfy other parties' interests.

What has to be underlined is that the organisations who provide scholarships should see higher education as an individual right, and therefore let the scholarship holders make their own choices of field of study. This in the longer perspective is also what would create benefits for the community, since according to Zeus (2011, p. 268):

> "Denying individual self-realization by restricting students' freedom to make their own informed choices but persuading students into subjects deemed best for them constrains their potential to innovate. Higher Education needs to be offered through a demand-driven strategy since only individual self-fulfilment can in the long run yield any anticipated social returns and lead to sustainable development of whole communities".

5.3.3. "A beggar has no choice, and we are all beggars"

Not only are the scholarship holders expected to take whatever course they are offered, they are also supposed to show gratitude for any opportunity given to them. During the time I spent at WTU in Nakivale there was a grave mistake in communication between WTU and Nzamizi, the institute giving out scholarships for diploma-level studies at their own institute. It was the first time Nzamizi was giving out scholarships through the WTU, and according to WTU's manager, she did not have the information that these scholarships were for diploma level and not bachelors level. Diploma-level courses are usually two year long and examples of such courses are social work, social administration, community health, among others. So the advertisement for scholarships on the notice board said "Do you want to attain a

university degree?" and during the interviews the applicants did not know that there were some who would be granted scholarship for diploma level and some for bachelors level. That information was not communicated even when the shortlist of the new scholarship holders was printed and pinned on the wall of the WTU office. Ten successful applicants' names were on that wall, and all of them thought they were now going to university. Only a period of time later, when some of the new scholarship holders had already travelled to Kampala (the capital city of Uganda) to look for accommodation and admissions from universities, they were informed that half of them had actually been granted a scholarship to go and study at Nzamizi's institute in the small city Mpigi. This of course stirred up many feelings among the new scholarship holders, and was the topic that dominated the focus group that I held with them. Before the focus group, the manager of WTU in Nakivale held a short meeting with them where she, as mentioned, said that she did not have the right information before, but also that she thought they should be grateful still. Her tone was sometimes condescending. She advised those concerned to take the diploma scholarship because, as she said, it is better than sitting at home, and that they can apply for bachelors scholarships again next year (Hakami, field notes, 5 Aug 2015).

Regardless of to what extent this mistake in communication could have been prevented, this is an example of an event where the discourse prevalent in the popular view is reproduced: that refugees are "grateful for whatever help is given" (Preston 1995. p. 34 in Zeus 2011, p. 268). Several quotes from the new scholarship holders show how they, while knowing that their choices are extremely limited because of their subordinate position as beneficiaries in a refugee settlement, still express their agency in refusing to being reduced to just passive recipients of aid. In that way they are contributing to reversing the dominant narrative. For example, a young man who had been granted a diploma scholarship at the Nzamizi institute, instead of a scholarship for university, said:

> "You know they say "a beggar has no choice", okay? [several laugh]. But as much as a beggar has no choice, you can't impose me on what to do, because I know my capacity, okay? You can think I'm able to do this, when me, personally, I know my limit. That is that. Yeah, Nzamizi is also an organisation and they also bring in help, we haven't refused, but the problem is which help are they going to give us? Because there is some time when you can give help which I don't want. I'm suffering from one arm, for you, you want to treat this [other] one which is OK./.../ So, they can say, since we are in Nzamizi, we sponsor

people in social work or what. Yet, for me, I don't want to be a social worker, and they want to help. Maybe there are a couple of people out there who want to be social workers and me, I want to take IT because I think it can sharpen my future in one way or the other."

(New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015)

The frustration is clear: his preferred choice of study had been disregarded, but still he had to remain grateful for the help that is given. The refugees are constantly reminded of the power structures between the aid providers and them as beneficiaries. Another man discusses about the attitude of officers in the NGOs in relation to scholarship holders:

"The problem we have here, there is a tendency from these officers, they say "For you, you are lucky you have got a free thing" [laugh]/.../ Now they think, the services that we get here, they are just free. Free of charge./.../ Me, I always correct these officers. Let me tell you, they are there because we are here. That is the first point. And it's not a free thing, because I have to qualify. Ok, I have to be actually fitting the criteria they are setting. Not everybody in the camp can go there. But they have chosen a few who qualified./.../ [The fact that] I'm fitting in the criteria has given me the scholarship. And it's not an officer person that is giving me the money from the pocket./.../So, it's not a favour from individuals, it's foreign aid, and Windle Trust is there to deliver that foreign aid".

(New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015).

This scholarship holder expresses his discontent with being perceived as undeserving, which also relates to being seen as a passive victim who accepts any kind of treatment.

Based on Dryden-Peterson and Giles' (2010/2011) understanding of empowerment and disempowerment, these new scholarship holders are arguably empowered to some extent because of their awareness of their ability to make choices, but at the same time they are disempowered in the sense that they cannot really make any choice but to accept what is offered. As one of them concludes: *"But anyway, we are still on that statement: a beggar has no choice, and we are all beggars. So, even if you complain time and again nothing will happen."* (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015).

As Zeus (2011) has noted, there is a clear lack of participatory approaches that enable refugees to be involved in the policy and planning that affects them. This can, for example, be seen in the abundance of recommendations that the new scholarship holders wanted to put

forward in the focus group, which there is not enough space to account for here. Moreover, considering how the refugees are being talked to by staff at the organisations and how this relates to larger dynamics of the aid provider and aid recipient relation, it is "crucial for the IRR [international refugee regime] to recognize refugees' agency and potential and for refugees to be able to incorporate this potential into their identity" (Zeus 2011, p. 269).

5.3.4. Being one of few selected

Something that came up in several interviews with the refugees who had got access to higher education was challenges related to being one of the very few who were selected for a scholarship. As some members of their community might feel jealousy, they may resort to wanting to inflict harm upon the scholarship holder. As one of the students in the secondary school explains: *"People are jealous. When someone sees for you, you have studied, you have climbed the ladder and you are there, and someone watches you from down, they can bewitch you."* (Students Nakivale SS, personal communication 10 Sep 2015). A number of respondents' spoke of the risk of being bewitched, and one man said he had himself suffered from it:

> *"When I was at school [university] I was doing my exams/.../when I wanted to write on a paper, my pen couldn't touch the paper. It could stop here, see? [showing with hands] You could even press like this, but it couldn't touch /.../After two days I became sick, sick, I was almost dying. So I came back here, I went for this local herbs, local doctors gave me, they told me someone had poisoned me."* (Refugee man, 10 Aug 2015).

As a matter of fact, there are very few people in Nakivale who are awarded scholarships every year. The demand for scholarships is indeed much higher than their availability, and this is a reality in a refugee settlement where resources are scarce and there is a risk of antagonism. For example, stories of hostilities that I was told during my stay in Nakivale Refugee Settlement concerned resettlement to third countries and water resources. When asked about the issue of scholarship holders being afraid of getting bewitched, the Education Officer of WTU said he had not heard much about the issue (Education Officer WTU Nakivale, personal communication 3 Sep 2015). This, firstly, shows that organisations providing scholarships apparently need greater awareness of the experiences and realities of scholarship holders, and secondly, awareness-raising among the refugee communities is needed regarding the benefits of higher education; not only for the individual scholarship holders, but also for the larger

community. This is of obvious importance since scholarship holders should be able to live and study without fear, even though they are in a minority of people who have been selected.

5.3.5. Experiences of university life

When the respondents, who are presently or formerly university students, described their life at university, many of them expressed enjoyment and contentment. Several spoke of making friends with Ugandans, but also with people from many other countries. One refugee woman, however, said that she has encountered challenges with tribalism, as she called it. Referring to other students, she said that *"[i]f they know that you are a refugee they undermine you in everything. They don't see you as persons like others."* (Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015a). Undeniably, racism against foreigners and refugees in Uganda (as elsewhere) needs to be countered in all spheres of society. When it comes to negative attitudes and behaviours towards refugees at university, the respondents seem to perceive it as central whether or not the students and staff know about the person in question being a refugee, as can be discerned from the quote above. Similarly, another female respondent said that the professors *"treat everyone the same because for the professors, they don't know where you're from, they treat you the same way as others"* (Refugee woman, 7 Sep 2015).

Another challenge that many of the respondents bring up is financial problems during their time at university. The allowance that they get as scholarship holders has sometimes been delayed several months, which puts them in difficult situations as they have to pay for their accommodation near the universities, which is far from Nakivale. Furthermore, since the allowance usually barely covers the expenses for accommodation and food, they have difficulties buying literature which they need for their studies.

5.3.6. A change of role in the community

From the respondents' perspective, being given the opportunity to study at university changes one's role in the community. They spoke about becoming a "big person", being respected, that one has become "someone" now. As one refugee man put it:

> *"[W]hen you are at university, at least you are a big person. You can reason. You can see something and analyse it. You become different from other people. You can even try to teach your fellow youth/.../Because you are at university, they see you as a big person. They can even come to you for some counselling, some advice"* (Refugee man, 10 Aug 2015).

Several mentioned that people in the community now come and ask for their advice, or ask them to speak to their children and encourage them to attend school or perform better. They become role models. Not only are they the proof that it is possible to reach university level in Uganda as a refugee, but half of them are also proof that females can do it, which is very important in a context where many fewer women than men apply for scholarships for higher studies. One woman said that *"In our country we could find that boys are the only ones who study. Now they see that ladies can also study"* (Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015a). This type of knowledge-sharing, inspiration, and encouragement that students and graduates from university can provide, is an additional argument for increased access to higher education, also put forward by Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011). The importance of role models can also be discerned in relation to the theory of Habitus, since role models can contribute to changing the young refugees' perception of what is possible within the logic of their surroundings, and their aspirations may adjust to it (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010/2011).

The respondents also say that they now can help other people in their community when they are looking for services in the settlement. One man explains: *"Many refugees don't even know about work permits. Many refugees don't know their rights. They have not been made aware. But these people that have gone to school, they go in and ask for which acts or laws protect us, pin us"* (Refugee man, 11 Aug 2016b). Furthermore, the treatment you get as a refugee when you approach staff in the offices might be affected by your status or level of education; according to one woman, *"If you are not educated they undermine you, in the offices and in the community"* (Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015a). Building on findings by Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010/2011, p. 5), higher education for refugees improves "the quality and quantity of information and knowledge that is accessible to them", but arguably also indirectly increases the amount of information accessible to other community members.

5.3.7. Giving back to the community

As such, the change of role that comes along with pursuing higher studies enables the students and graduates to influence people and children in their community. Moreover, what several respondents bring up regarding the purpose of accessing higher education is that they want to give back to their community. For example, a student of the subject ethics and human rights, who has spent most of his life in Nakivale, said:

> *"I chose this course mainly because of my background, from where I came from, what we go through in the camp./.../It's very relevant to the communities in the*

refugee camp, because there are human rights violations./.../So, from my background I believed in change, I believed in changing my community, especially helping my community and there is no way I could help my community without going to school. So I believe after school [university] I can go back to my community and help them. That's what pushes me."
(Refugee man, 19 Sep 2015).

Similarly, one woman said she wants to work in an NGO after graduation, in order to not only help her family, but also other refugees:

"My goal, my vision of going to university was to help my family in the future, and my children. That was my purpose for going to the university. And also helping the fellow refugees who are suffering here like me. To help them out. If I get a good job I can help them. My purpose was to work with these NGOs."
(Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015b).

This is of course honourable, and again provides arguments for why more higher educational opportunities should be offered to refugees, perhaps especially in protracted refugee situations, but it also raises questions regarding how free the young refugees are in their decision making related to higher education, and to what extent their choices and lives are conditioned by the fact that they are refugees in a refugee settlement. How free are they to choose to study their field of interest? Do they feel obliged by the settlement management, the NGOs and the community to 'give back'? Is 'giving back' part of the discourse that surrounds opportunities to higher education, from the different actors' side? Would one get similar answers if asking Ugandan youth? Without being able to investigate these questions further, they give an indication of the peculiarity of being a refugee in search of higher education in a context of humanitarian aid. Furthermore, it again shows how the instrumental value of higher education is emphasised, unlike the intrinsic value. As Zeus (2011, pp. 271–272) has argued: "The normative recognition of HE [higher education] as an inalienable right still needs to be translated into unconditional practice. This is constrained by dominant discourse emphasizing externalities rather than individual rights".

5.4. Aspirations for Higher Education linked to Future Goals and Ends to Refugee Situations

As discussed in the theoretical framework, protracted refugee situations are a very common phenomenon today, and they are partly caused by inactions and the inability to find solutions by both country of origin and host country (Loescher and Milner 2008). In the context of refugee settlements where the humanitarian assistance is dependent on donations, prioritising higher education is more controversial than prioritising primary education, regardless of the protractedness of the displacement. Primary education, unlike post-primary education, is today seen as one of the fundamental parts of humanitarian responses, alongside water, food, shelter and material aid (Sinclair 2007). Furthermore, in a refugee settlement, the provision of education is also embedded in politics, for example regarding what language of instruction should be used, which curriculum and so on (Waters and LeBlanc 2005). These choices reflect what the aim of the education is, and thus relate to the most favourable solution to the refugee situation, i.e. where the refugees should live in the future (ibid). Since the preferred solution by the UNHCR and the host states is that the refugees should return voluntarily in the future (UNHCR 1996), and the general discourse around refugee situations is that they are temporary phenomena, it is relevant to understand the refugees' own perspective of their futures.

Just as primary education is embedded in politics, so is higher education, and of course, different actors may have different perspectives and aims for the provision of it. There is research on refugees' perspectives on the different (in UNHCRs terms) 'durable solutions' to refugee situations (see for example Tete 2012); however, there is a lack of research on refugees' perspectives on higher education as well as on higher education in relation to solutions to refugee situations. Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011, p. 43) have argued that "higher education and training can provide refugees with the skills and knowledge needed to increase the effectiveness of durable solutions, be they repatriation, local integration, or third-country resettlement". But how do refugees perceive the relation between higher education and ends to refugee situations? How do they see their future, and what role does higher education play in it? These are questions which the present case study of Nakivale Refugee Settlement aims to answer.

When the respondents were asked about why they found higher education important for their lives, not many related it directly to a solution to their refugee situation, i.e. deliberately

related it to repatriation to their country of origin, integration in Uganda, or moving to a third country, for example through resettlement. They spoke about higher education as a prerequisite to get a job, to earn a living, to be able to support family members. The fact that certificates of secondary or higher education are needed to get many of the jobs in today's labour market competition was often underlined. To be able to give back to the community, as discussed above, is one reason why many find higher education important. Many spoke of higher education enabling them to reach their dreams. These reasons are, however, of course linked to the end of one's refugee situation in one way or another, regardless of whether or not it is articulated. For example, moving out of poverty will not automatically result in ceased refugee status, but it will enable people to move from the refugee settlement and be self-sufficient.

"Education is our weapon for the future", one of the new scholarship holders said (personal communication 5 Aug 2015), reflecting a reality for young people in Nakivale where dependence on aid and poverty is widespread, and opportunities for employment are very few. Another one said: *"[T]here is nothing that I can inherit from my father. Now I shall depend on myself. Depend on my brain. If I pass through education very well, I know I can be able to at least struggle in life for some years, so I can get a job"* (ibid). Maintaining on this emphasis on realising social mobility through higher education, one man said: *"[A]ctually in Africa, we study to attain jobs, full stop. Outside, they study to understand, to create things and innovate. But here after education, I want to work, full stop. I want money afterwards. Now how do I get the money if I don't actually channel a way for my future?"* (ibid).

When talking more broadly about the future, and where they would like to live, however, some of the respondents' answers reflect the importance that higher education may have for them and what benefits they perceive that it will have for them in their future lives. It sheds light on how people have different perceptions and goals regarding accessing higher education, which may divert from the perspectives of the host country, the humanitarian organisations, the donors, or any other actor involved in the provision of higher education to refugees.

Moving up the social ladder undoubtedly is the most common motivation for pursuing higher education. Some see it as a way out of Nakivale and out of dependence on aid: *"Because like refugees, you run from your country, you come when you have nothing, you have no money, you have nothing, you're just poor, you eat, you sit here, you eat only UN maize, UN beans*

from Monday to Monday. So I was like, at least I go to university, I will study, get a job. At least I'll live a better life than this one I am living here" (Refugee man, 10 Aug 2015).

Others, however, rather see it as way to stay in Nakivale, but living a better, more fulfilling life. The man who is studying ethics and human rights wants to follow his dream to work for the UN or in an NGO, and he said: *"I would actually prefer to work in Nakivale. Because that's my target, that's where my target group is"* (Refugee man, 19 Sep 2015).

5.4.1. Higher education as a way to integrate in Uganda

Considering how the discourse around provision of higher education for refugees not uncommonly includes statements which assume that refugees will eventually repatriate – such as one by the Principal of the Vocational Training Centre in Nakivale: "*When* they go back to their own country they have an impact on their country" (Principal Nakivale Vocational Training Centre, personal communication 18 Aug 2015, emphasis added) – it is interesting that most respondents in this case study do not see themselves repatriating in the future. Indeed, most of them want to stay in Uganda. This is perhaps not surprising in this context where many of them have spent the largest part of their life in the settlement on Ugandan soil and the prospects of their countries of origin becoming stable in the near future are relatively remote.

Accessing higher education can be seen as a way to integrate in Uganda. One of the new scholarship holders expresses it almost as a given: *"So, you are in a foreign country, so you have to study and you see you're suiting in the country you are in. And in the case of job seeking, you find you are in the same level as the people in the same country, as we are looking for jobs after"* (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015).

One of the refugees who does not have access to higher education since he came to Uganda said: *"[I]f I could have at least an opportunity of going back to the university in Uganda, probably I could tell you that I would love to stay because once I have a degree, I will just be considered as a Ugandan, and you know, people will mind about my education, and they will maybe give me a job"* (Refugee man, 2 Aug 2015). He thus sees acquiring higher education as a way to not be seen as a refugee anymore, and just be seen as any other national, which in his perspective would facilitate economic integration. However, since he has not been able to access university, he actually sees resettlement as the only opportunity for the future which remains for him. This reflects a reality where lack of opportunities in the host country fuels hope for resettlement, even though the chances of getting it are very limited as well.

5.4.2. Higher education in relation to repatriation

As mentioned, not many of the respondents speak of returning to their country of origin, but some do. A Sudanese woman says that: *"If God wishes, I wanted to go back to Sudan. Because I know there I can get a job, a good job. But still even if I work from here [in Uganda], It's OK, as long as I'm working with the NGOs that I want"* (Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015b). She is thus mostly concerned with what work opportunities she could have in the future, and not which country she would live in. Poor preconditions for local integration in Uganda may hence cause repatriation to be seen as a more viable option.

Whether or not repatriation is a part of a person's perceived future certainly varies between individuals, but what recurs when the respondents mention higher education in relation to repatriation is again the wish to give back to the community, in this case to the 'home' country. One refugee man said: *"For me, I'm Ethiopian, if I complete my bachelors here in Uganda and asking repatriation, to go back when maybe our country will be getting peace. So I will help in my community and then motivate them to get the knowledge which I have"* (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015).

Similarly, a refugee woman said: *"In our home countries, we are facing a lot of problems because of injustice. And it's because they don't know what they are doing. But for us, we have decided to fight and see how we can solve such problems. And that's why we are going to school. We make the place better, and see how we can come up with the good nation"* (ibid).

In these statements it is not to build one's own career that is emphasised, but helping one's community or nation to develop. The importance of having highly-educated persons in a post-conflict situation and reconstruction process has been highlighted by Anselme and Hands (2010/2011), and an understanding of this importance appears to be shared and spread within families, networks of countrymen, as well as NGOs and other actors.

Nevertheless, repatriating and reintegrating into one's country of origin is not an easy process and one of the chairpersons in Nakivale Refugee Settlement sees the difficulties of moving back when one has gone through the Ugandan educational system: *"It will affect our children. From here they learn in the English system, Ugandan system. When they reach in Congo, French. Imagine if someone has completed secondary school or even he has completed university, reaching in Congo, it will not be easy to get a job"* (Chairperson Rubondo, 9 Sep 2015). On the other hand, it can be argued that having acquired secondary or higher

education, regardless of the language used, would have a positive effect on reintegration, because of the higher level of knowledge obtained.

The complexity of provision of education in a refugee context and of educational motivation, is again demonstrated because, beyond issues of financing and resources, it is strongly linked to the future that is imagined, either by the actors and organisations responsible for the education provision or by the refugees themselves.

5.4.3. Higher education linked to resettlement

Getting resettlement, or by other means being able to move abroad, is what some respondents wish for their future. A Congolese woman who has spent all of her school-age years in Nakivale dreams about becoming self-employed, but first she has to finish university, find a job, and accumulate capital. Moreover, she is hoping for resettlement: "*I don't want to stay in Nakivale. We are here because of money. For resettlement they take some, others remain. But we have that hope of going. We don't think about going back to our country, because it is always war. Even since we came here. We don't want to stay here because of the challenges here*" (Refugee Woman, 6 Aug 2015a). Resettlement for her thus appears to be the only future possibility that is worth hoping for.

A student who is in the resettlement process, now has dreams in the destination country: *"If I were to stay in Africa, before my aim was to go and buy a house and live in Kigali. But now, since I am going to [country in the Global North], my dreams are there. I want to get a job there"*. The goals appear achievable, *"because now I am an educated person. I can hopefully get money, get a job and live a better life than here"*. The dreams are thus in line with what is perceived as possible, but being educated is a prerequisite for reaching those dreams either way.

5.4.4. "If you are educated, you suit in every society"

As stated above, the impression from the interviews is that most respondents do not directly link their aspiration for, or access to, higher education with a specific solution to their refugee situation, or where they wish to live in the future. The goal of accessing higher education is a goal in itself. It prepares people for any kind of future, which may be especially significant in a situation where the future is very uncertain. To get out of Nakivale or Uganda is not necessarily the aim of the refugees in search for higher education, but to be able to become socially mobile, and move out of poverty.

A Congolese man who started university in Congo but was not able to finish said: *"My goal is, if I would ever get the possibility, to continue my studies. I would continue and then prepare my future. My future is the future of my children too"* (Refugee Man, 11 Aug 2015a) (Author's translation). When asked where he would like to live in the future he answered: *"Everywhere, everywhere. Even here, even elsewhere"* (ibid) (Author's translation).

"If you are educated, you suit in every society", one of the new scholarship holders said (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015), a perception which corresponds with Crea's (2016, p. 12) argument that "[a]ccess to higher education can play a critical role in facilitating transitions for refugees by providing skills that increase social capital and are transferable in different contexts". The scholarship holder stresses the transferability of skills when she talks about how higher education can make it easier to integrate in Uganda, but also to reintegrate in one's country of origin, even if it would be a French speaking country, *"because you are flexible, because learning never ends"* (New scholarship holders, personal communication 5 Aug 2015).

In conclusion, based on what is implied by the respondents, access to higher education appears as an enabler of a brighter future, not a determinant of what that future will be.

5.5. Unequal Access to the Labour Market

Although access to higher education increases the chances of getting employment, it does not translate into access to the labour market on the same terms as nationals in Uganda. Something that was brought up by almost each and every one of the respondents was frustration because nationals would have higher chances of getting a job and would get a higher salary than a refugee, regardless of educational background. As one refugee who has finished university said: *"Generally, when you finish university, you are ready to compete with others on the job market. You have a level or status in society. You are respected. They come for your ideas. You have a different status. But in a refugee setting, it is not the case. A refugee is not given equal access as nationals"* (Refugee man, 11 Aug 2015b).

Apart from having refugees as volunteers, the organisations working in Nakivale Refugee Settlement (such as the implementing partners of the UNHCR) also offer some employed positions to refugees although at a significantly lower pay. *"Here to get a job, they give you lower positions, like cleaner, guards, not positions like manager. They don't pay them as they pay nationals. Like, for example, for the same work a refugee could be paid 150,000 USH while a national would get 300,000 USH"* (Refugee woman, 6 Aug 2015a).

As Crea (2016) has noted, refugees with higher education generally face an enduring lack of employment opportunities in refugee camps, and the case of Nakivale Refugee Settlement is no exception. The lack of jobs available after completion of higher studies creates discouragement, as several respondents emphasise. Additional issues include the injustice of not competing for jobs on the same terms as nationals, being overqualified, and being underpaid; these issues paint a more pessimistic picture of life after higher education. This may have implications for the well-being of the graduates: "Psychosocial stress due to the uncertainty of life in a refugee camp is thus exacerbated by few opportunities to put into practice what one has learned and find recognition and self-fulfilment in a paid job" (Zeus 2011, p. 264).

The chairpersons spoke of employers asking job applicants that are refugees for work permits or for proof of citizenship, thus minimising their chances of securing employment (Chairperson Juru, 26 Aug 2015; Chairperson Basecamp, 5 Sep 2015). Clearly, policy change and actions are needed from the Ugandan government's side to facilitate local integration and labour market entry, in order for higher education to be beneficial for the refugees, as well as for the country.

Additionally, the chairperson from the sub-camp Juru underlines that the unavailability of more qualified work for refugees in Uganda also discourages parents to put their children through school. People become disillusioned when they see graduates back in the settlement, unemployed. He says that some parents argue that *"even if we educate our children, there is no job in Uganda/…/why I am losing my money again to pay for my children?"* (Chairperson Juru, 26 Aug 2015). The need for a functioning system with an educational continuum from primary to higher education which leads to employment is evident.

6. CONCLUSION

The lack of access to higher education for refugees is an immense issue, considering that there are 21.3 million refugees worldwide, amongst a total of 65.3 million forcibly displaced persons (UNHCR 2016c, p. 2). Especially in light of the prevalence of protracted refugee situations, the non-access to higher education is alarming, and ignoring it will lead to long-term negative consequences not just for individuals, but also for societies (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011). As the average duration of protracted refugee situations today amounts to 26 years (UNHCR 2016c, p. 20), many children are growing up and becoming adults in refugee settlements where the chances of reaching an educational level beyond primary school are very slim. Applying a human rights perspective, it is evident that most refugees are not able to exercise their right to higher education.

What complicates the issue of provision of higher education to refugees is the "inherently political nature of a refugee presence" (Kaiser 2005, p. 353). As host states and the UNHCR see voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution to a refugee situation (UNHCR 1996), host states are often disinclined to work for initiatives or policy change which seem to go in the direction of local integration (Kaiser 2005). Providing opportunities for higher education may be equated with facilitating integration, since it is likely that the refugees will stay in the host country for a long period of time, and they will most probably have higher chances of economic and social integration due to skills gained and relationships established at higher education institutions.

Additionally, as refugees in refugee settlements are dependent on humanitarian assistance, donors' interests and priorities shape the assistance that is given. As Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011) have noted, in a donor-driven environment such as a refugee settlement that is structured to be temporary, higher education cannot be prioritised. What approach is taken to refugee situations in general is here crucial: "[t]he challenge of higher education embodies the paradox of "relief versus development."" (ibid, p. 44). A relief focus towards refugee situations will not pave the way for provision of higher education, regardless of whether it is a protracted refugee situation or not. Development approaches that acknowledge the long-term duration of refugees' stay – and alter the narrative of temporariness – are needed in the response to protracted refugee situations. The provision of higher education opportunities should be understood in terms of development, more than in terms of humanitarian aid (ibid) .

Higher education for refugees is of significant importance for solutions to refugee situations, since it contributes to the effectiveness and realisation of durable solutions (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). Access to higher education and the skills acquisition that comes with it may facilitate local integration in the host country (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011), increase the success of integration after third-country-resettlement (Zeus 2011), and facilitate reintegration into the country of origin; a country which probably will be in need of highly-educated people to participate in the reconstruction process (Anselme and Hands 2010/2011). Host countries, like countries of origin, would gain from the societal benefits that accompany highly-educated people, such as socio-economic development, improved national health, stronger government, reduced population growth, increased tax revenue etc. (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). As Wright and Plasterer (2010/2011, p. 43) have argued, the provision of higher education is "as essential in refugee contexts as in development contexts". Thus, investment in higher education does not only improve the chances of a durable solution for the individual, but improves development in the country that the solution involves (Dryden-Peterson 2010/2011). In order to generate positive impacts for host countries, however, actions need to be taken to facilitate integration, i.e. integration policy needs to be implemented. Moreover, seeing that acquiring the right to accessing higher education on the same terms as the host population could be considered being a part of realising 'empirical citizenship' (Hovil and Lomo 2015), naturalisation should also be facilitated, since getting legal citizenship and empirical citizenship reflects successful integration.

Regarding the situation in refugee settlements, higher education can improve it in various ways. Highly-educated refugees generally help to increase the educational level for others in the community, and the conditions in the settlements may improve as they take up work there or stay engaged in other ways (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011). More specifically, "higher education programs can help strengthen community learning, cultivate social development, promote ideas of gender equality, and reduce youth social deviancy by encouraging school attendance" (ibid, pp. 51–52). Host states who see the presence of refugees as a security risk should then invest in providing refugees with the chance of furthering their education, as getting out of idleness reduces the risks of being recruited to armed groups or getting into criminality (Zeus 2011). From the young refugees' perspective, studying may give them a sense of self-reliance which could "mitigate the need to identify with violent and sectarian ideologies to which they may otherwise be vulnerable (Crea 2016, p. 13).

From an individual perspective, access to higher education seems to greatly improve the situation for the refugees as research has found links between this access and increased livelihood opportunities, better quality of life and improved mental health (Crea 2016). Higher education can empower refugees, and in certain cases enable them to participate in policy making and planning that affects them (Zeus 2011). This would require a transformation in the narrative prevailing in refugee settlements, that refugees are passive victims and passive recipients of aid. As Zeus (2011, pp. 271–272) argues, higher education "could be a tool to further reverse this narrative and help shape a new narrative of refugees as agents of their own and their communities' development, and as such act as a subversion of power structures from within, rather than adopting approaches that envisage imposing aid on refugees in order to empower them".

In line with one aspect of Bourdieu's (1990) theory of the Habitus – that people's aspirations are shaped in relation to historical experiences and structures within that group of people, as well as to what is presently perceived as possible within their social worlds – it is thus of great significance that opportunities for further education exist in settlement contexts, and that conditions are conducive for both male and female refugees to access it. It will boost aspirations for education on lower levels as well. Moreover, it stresses the need for role models within one's own group that can influence people's perceptions of what is achievable.

As the issue of higher education for refugees not only has been neglected in policy, but also in research, this study contributes to the limited body of literature on the subject. By examining access to higher education for refugees in a country in the Global South, and focusing on refugees' perspectives and their lived experiences, this study contributes to closing a knowledge gap in this field, a field which hopefully is in the process of expanding.

This study has delved into the issue of access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda. By looking at the legal, institutional, and practical contexts that affect access, an in-depth exploration of refugees' conditions in the search for higher education has been carried out. To summarise, there is a clear discrepancy concerning educational aspirations and educational realities, since the access to higher education is very limited. Although the access to higher education for refugees in Uganda in principle is unrestricted, refugee laws and policies shape the conditions for them in a way that it in practice becomes impossible to access it without external or additional financial support. Conditions such as encampment and work permit requirements restrict the chances of getting

gainful employment, and thus limit the possibilities of having the financial capability to pay for further education. Refugees are also preserved in a state of exclusion because of very restrictive citizenship laws, which for example result in the inability for refugees to apply for government-funded scholarships. The few opportunities that remain for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement are a handful of scholarships for higher studies per year from a foreign donor, a few scholarships for diploma courses from a national institute, vocational training which requires tuitions fees, and online education which is currently under development at the Community Technology Access Centre located in the settlement. The access to secondary education is also highly restricted as there is only one secondary school within the settlement and scholarships are limited, naturally lowering the number of people that qualify for higher education. The access to higher education for the refugees is thus conditioned by agency and educational structures, but also by structures shaped by refugee law and policy, as well as refugee management in Uganda. The gender disparities in access to secondary or higher education, where females are underrepresented, presents a major issue whereby the refugees' opportunities also are formed by cultural and gender norms. This study has demonstrated that there are several barriers and challenges that the refugees encounter in their search for higher education; among them are financial shortcomings, lack of education certificates, and language barriers.

Based on interviews with residents of Nakivale Refugee Settlement, namely ten refugees between the ages of 20 and 28 and three chairpersons, and two focus groups with a total of 15 participants, this study has presented and analysed lived experiences of access and non-access to higher education. Experiences of non-access have included feelings of idleness, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, and frustration over an inability to plan for the future. Those who had accessed university in their country of origin before their flight found getting adjusted to new circumstances and a new way of life in the settlement difficult. Testimonies shed light on how educational aspirations do not necessarily change because of downward social mobility following forced migration. When it comes to the search for higher education opportunities in the settlement, there are diverse perceptions on how easily necessary information can be accessed. There is a clear need for transparency and consistency in the provision of information by the organisation responsible for education. Challenges arise regarding recognition of prior learning, because of a lack of education certificates and the need for their verification. Furthermore, language barriers are a major challenge for the refugees who mostly come from countries where English is not the official language, and the

opportunities for English learning in the settlement are not suitable for people who have already reached a certain level of education. Non-access to higher education is perceived as a barrier to mobility, both in a social and spatial sense.

With reference to refugees who have been granted scholarships, questions arise regarding the extent to which they are allowed to choose what subject they want to study. Findings suggest that they are expected to take any subject and be grateful for whatever opportunity they are given, sometimes to the discontent of the scholarship holders. Attitudes of NGO staff towards scholarship holders indicate how skewed the power relations between provider and recipient of aid are and how distinctive accessing higher education can be in an aid context.

Most of the refugees that were or had been students at university expressed contentment regarding their time at campus, despite mentioning challenges such as financial constraints and racism. They found that their role in the community in Nakivale had changed: they were now role models who people came and asked for advice from. As expressed by several respondents, their aim with higher education was to give back to their community (either the refugee community or in the country of origin), which, although honourable, reflects a discourse that emphasises the instrumental rather than the intrinsic value of higher education. In other words, it emphasises the value that it would have as a means to an end that benefits many actors, rather than the value it has for the person her or himself.

Higher education is indeed an investment for the future, and part of the politics in which higher education for refugees is embedded concerns where that future will take place. As a consequence of the Ugandan government's preference for refugee repatriation (Meyer 2006), improving the access to higher education for refugees is not a priority for them, since such an improvement implies leaning in the direction of local integration. The complexity of provision of education in a refugee context is partly caused by the discrepancies in how the future for the refugees is imagined by different actors. How the refugees themselves link their future with higher education varies of course, and the findings from the case study suggest that not many perceive themselves going back to their country of origin and putting their skills into action there. Some hope for a future abroad through resettlement, but most of them would prefer to stay in Uganda if they could have the same opportunities as others there, that is, if there were conditions in place for successful integration and labour market entry. Moving up the social ladder by securing gainful employment is perceived as the main aim associated with pursuing higher studies. Higher education can prepare people for an uncertain

future; the transferability of skills is emphasised by respondents in the study. Acquiring higher education arguably increases the possibilities for the refugees to become socially and spatially mobile.

In this study I take the position that access to higher education is an individual right that should be unconditional, and should be equally accessible to people regardless of their legal status, nationality, ethnicity, gender, class and so on, and thus also to refugees. Although this study has its base in the rights perspective, I also want to stress the wide societal gains that could be generated from an increased number of highly educated people among the refugee population; however, the issue should not be reduced to only concern human capital.

It is argued that higher education has a major role to play in the solutions to protracted refugee situations, not least in a region such as East Africa, where conflicts and instability prevail in several countries, and large refugee flows in different directions have been occurring over so many decades. To not manage to provide higher education to refugees would, apart from meaning a denial of their rights, mean huge losses in terms of individual non-fulfilment of potential, as well as substantial losses for the development of society, whether it is in the host country or country of origin. It is imperative that opportunities for higher education are made available as soon as possible during displacement, in order to minimise those losses. Certainly, a general improvement of the access to higher education for people in Sub-Saharan Africa is needed, but it should be underlined that the refugee populations should not be left behind in the progress that is underway.

In order for access to higher education to be improved for refugees there are many changes that need to occur and different actors that need to act. The discourse of repatriation as the one presumed solution – just as the discourse of temporariness of refugee situations – needs to be moved away from. The reluctance by host states to integrate refugees puts refugees in a precarious situation since they often cannot or do not want to repatriate. Resettlement is also not an option for the very large majority. They thus end up spending many years in a state of limbo in refuge, where the prospects of local integration are poor due to the non-existence of integration policies. Host states such as Uganda need to recognise the likelihood of refugees staying permanently, and implement integration policies which would facilitate access to the labour market and secure freedom of movement, which as a consequence likely would improve the conditions for access to higher education. Host states would also get incentives to

increase the access to higher education for refugees if the potential benefits of local integration were recognised.

The Ugandan state and the other responsible actors for refugee management in the country, such as the UNHCR and partners, need to take action to improve the access to higher education for refugees. It is suggested that the way forward is reforming existing refugee law and policy, introducing integration policy, facilitating naturalisation, expanding the provision of primary and especially secondary education, removing barriers such as lack of education certificates or verification of such, reducing language barriers, substantially increasing the number of scholarships accessible and in more ways removing obstacles to access to higher education. The aim needs to be to build up the capacity for provision of education at all levels, in order to create a functioning educational system. Importantly, the creation of new and innovative ways of providing higher education is needed. New technology can dramatically transform the provision of higher education and make possible online education that is accessible to larger segments of the refugee population. Distance learning can also be an interim solution in the early stages of displacement, which would enable knowledge acquisition of transferable skills that later could assist in integration into the state educational system (Wright and Plasterer 2010/2011).

In a context where conflicts and war are increasing refugee flows globally, and where there is an inability to find solutions to refugee situations, improving access to education appears to be one of the most important measures that should be implemented, evidently alongside efforts to solve the causes of refugee flows, and finding real solutions for refugees, individually and collectively.

Although higher education has long been outside of the global education movement's focus (which has been on primary education) there seems to be change on the horizon. The goal for education in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted in 2015, "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning", can be a good base for advocating for access to higher education for refugees. Moreover, at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, a fund for education in emergencies was launched called "Education cannot wait", which, although not mentioning higher education, at least recognises the protractedness of refugee situations and calls for innovative solutions to education delivery such as online education (UN News Centre 16 May 2016).

From an academic perspective, there is indeed a lot to be done when looking at further research on higher education for refugees. There is a considerable need for collection of quantitative data that can contribute to a comprehensive mapping of the access to higher education for refugees globally. Furthermore, in-depth qualitative studies that can analyse different actors' perspectives are needed to provide a deeper understanding of how access to higher education is conditioned, and how realities are shaped by non-access or access to higher education in refugee contexts. Further research on this topic will add to the fields of migration studies, refugee studies, sociology of education, and development studies, among others, and will not least be of significant importance in the quest for the fulfilment of human rights and equality.

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Appendix - Research participants

Informants:

- Manager, Windle Trust Uganda, Nakivale
- Education Officer, Windle Trust Uganda, Nakivale
- Education Programme Officer, Windle Trust Uganda, Kampala
- Focal person for education, UNHCR Mbarara
- Associate Education Advisor, UNHCR Kampala
- Principal, Nakivale Vocational Training Centre
- Coordinator, Community Technology Access Centre
- Community Development Officer, Finnish Refugee Council
- Project Officer, Finnish Refugee Council
- Staff, Red Cross
- Headteacher, Nakivale Secondary School

Respondents:

- 1 refugee that is presently in upper secondary school (Class Senior 5)

- 3 refugees who are currently aspiring to access university
- 4 refugees who are presently at university
- 2 refugees who have completed university
- Out of the 10 refugees stated above, 6 are male and 4 are female, they are between ages 20 and 28, and are of Congolese, Burundian and Sudanese nationality

- Chairperson, Refugee Welfare Committee 3 (RWC3), Juru sub-camp
- Chairperson, Refugee Welfare Committee 3 (RWC3), Rubondo sub-camp
- Chairperson, Refugee Welfare Committee 3 (RWC3), Basecamp sub-camp

Focus groups:

- 7 new scholarship holders: of which 5 are male and 2 are female, ages between 23 and 25 years old, and are of Rwandese, Congolese, Burundian, and Ethiopian nationality
- 8 students in class Senior 4 at Nakivale Secondary School (lower secondary school); 4 female and 4 male, of ages between 17 and 20, and of Congolese, Rwandese, Burundian and Ugandan nationality (students at the school are both refugees and nationals)