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### Webinar: Internationalization and Refugee Education

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## Internationalization and Refugee Education.

>> Good morning. Good afternoon and good evening. I'm an Associate Dean here at Sheridan College who will be moderating this session for you today. We would like to welcome everyone for joining Sheridan's international education week. Before going any further, it is important that we have a land acknowledgment. I'm as acknowledging that many of you are joining us from other tradition alter Tories.

We acknowledge the land for providing the necessities of life. This is covered by the dish of one spoon treaty that entices peace and respectful relationships. Let us remember that we are all stewards of the land and of each other. We recognize the land on which we gather has been and still is the territory of several indigenous nations, including the Wyn ndet and the first nations. Since time and memorial, numerous and indigenous nations and indigenous peoples have lived and passed through the territory. It is our shared responsibility as we honor those who have

gone before us, those who are here and those who are yet to come. We are grateful to be learning, working and thriving on this land. Thank you.

Again, folks, I said good morning, good afternoon and good evening. I would look to recognize our speakers, two joining us from our nation's capital, but one on the ground in Nairobi doing amazing work. I have the privilege of overseeing Sheridan's Student Refugee Program. In 2016, at the work of our student government and current chair of our local committee, we welcomed our first refugee student to Sheridan College in 2016.

Since then, we have welcomed five students and currently have four current students studying at Sheridan College through the SRP program, which you will hear from one of our colleagues shortly. Three of the most recent students to join us, joined us from the Refugee Olympic Team through a new pathway through WUSC. It is my privilege to oversee and participate in the Student

Refugee Program and we have an amazing local committee that continues to support our students. Without further ado, I would like to mention the topic of what we will be speaking about today.

So, only 3% of refugees have access to higher education compared to 37% of the global higher education access rate. Having fled their countries due to conflict and persecution, refugees find themselves in limbo where they find barriers to working and studying their passions. This webinar aims to shed light on the global crisis and provide collaborative solutions to respond to it. I would like to welcome our first speaker, Mr. Michael Casasola who is with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Michael's presentation will provide a brief overview of the growing challenge of the forced displacement, the strategy to expand solutions for refugees, including through education and the education gaps refugees face compared to other children and cents. Michael, over to you sir.

>> Michael Casasola: Hi. Can you see my screen? Hello? Can you hear me? >> Yeah, we

can see your screen, if you want to minimize this one, so we can get the main presentation up.

>> Michael Casasola: Sure, I'm not sure how to.

>> Yep, there we go.

>> Michael Casasola: OK, sorry. Is that OK? >> If you can play it from the beginning.

>> Michael Casasola: Now, I'm all confused.

>> There you go. Perfect. Perfect.

>> Michael Casasola: Thank you very much for inviting me to this event today. I first want to start with the acknowledgment and appreciation to Sheridan College, its faculty and staff, for its leadership and involvement in providing refugees for access to education and how critically important it is at this time. It has been interesting the Sheridan's reopening of Refugee Olympic Team. We were doing a retreat a couple of weeks ago and our commissioner who is in Geneva was reflecting on international things going on, and key developments in Canada. She was referencing and there are the three Olympic athletes that went to Sheridan College, so thank you for welcoming them to Sheridan and the sort of leadership you provided in providing opportunities is critically important. I hope it will

become transparent as I go through my presentation today.

Now, I had a presentation developed in advance of yesterday, but only to find out just yesterday that there was an update on the number of what we call the global trends in forced human displacement. Key development is forced human displacement increased by 1.6 million over the past six months. Now, when I talk about forced human displacement, I'm referring to refugees. I'm referring to asylum seekers who waiting, requesting refugee protection and awaiting for decision from whatever respective countries, but in that number, 15 million eternally displaced people, they are refugee, but have not acrossed the border. To be a refugee, you have to have persecution linked to five different grounds and you have to across the border, but there are people who have not acrossed the border, but are in need of help.

The lack of solutions and the conflicts that created them and now we're at a point as our high

commissioner says, it is not a question of the world will reach 100 million forced displaced people, but when. Now, United Nations High Commissioner UNHCR our role was given to us by 1950 to help refugees have international protection when they across the border, but to work with states when they find a solution, return to their country of origin, stay where they are located and obtain the rights as citizens to stay there or go to resettlement in a third country.

Now, this is known to us in Canada, because Canada has one of the most celebrated ways of assisting refugees is the refugee resettlement. 26 million are R.s and of the 26 million refugees, we're not seeking for all of them to be resettled, but we know 1.74 million are in need of resettlement. If you look at the blue line, you see it has developed year-over-year and the number of places that have been made for refugees for resettlement is no way keeping with that need. We had a low point last year where all of the R.s that are identified in need of resettlement, only 207,000 were able to be resettlement.

So, recognizing this ongoing trend that there is a gap between the need of refugees and resettlement solutions they developed plan that resulted from the global compact of refugees to effectively to try to achieve three goal, one to try to grow the number of resettlement, but also to find new countries. The second goal is to advance what we call complementary pathway, other legal immigration routes that refugees may take advantage of. Are there other ways refugees can find protection and a solution through other legal immigration routes?

The third goal and this is sometimes overlooked and this is important in the Student Refugee Program that is referenced that Sheridan is participating in is promoting welcoming and inclusive communities. We can't have resettlement if there is not a welcoming environment. We know the college and faculty and staff play a tremendous role in helping refugees feel welcome and integrating life into Canada.



On the second path of the complementary pathways, what we're talking about are different examples of legal migration, which is family reunification, for example, or economic integration. So, for 400,000 economic immigrants that Canada will welcome this year, 200,000 are for economic immigration. How can refugees access these opportunities for immigration, so they can find a solution? In addition to that, of course, is education, scholarships. The world that education can provide in providing, not just a solution, but as well as education for refugees. In addition there is private sponsorship, which Canada has tried to help promote. In addition to expanding resettlement, we're trying to develop these pathways internationally, so refugees can find additional solutions.

Mentioned at the outset, education for refugees is a tremendous challenge. Sorry, compared to other children around the world, refugees have lower rates of enrollment at school in all levels. We know from stats and such that there is a tremendous drop between primary school and

secondary school. You can see it in the stats right there. There is a variety of reasons for this. There is tremendous pressure on refugee adolescents to drop out of school and help their families. The pressures on their families to survive, the children oftentimes, adolescents are forced to work in difficult situations, sometimes subjected to child labor to support their family. As a result, they drop out of secondary education. COVID has had a tremendous impact. These stats predate the COVID impact.

What we know from 37 countries polled, 132 school days were lost up to 2021 because of COVID, so we're seeing -- we haven't seen what it means in terms of education. we know the community and kids are concerned about remote education, but for many refugees remote learning is challenging, if not an option, whereas people rely on digital learning, Internet connections, device, many of these things are not available for refugees or the Wi-Fi is questionable or they live in conditions where it is not possible. Again, we're waiting to see the impact that we're expecting to be unfortunate.

The other trend that I want to point out is the gap between education of boys and the education of girls. The level of girl enrollment education is three to four points, whether it is primary school or secondary school always below boys. It is an important challenge for us, in terms of how are we able to help girls participating in schooling in primary, secondary and Tertiary Education level, but how do we improve the education of girls. higher education, we see it is 5% of this, which is well below the global enrollment. Our plan is to try to expand this to 15% by 2030. And the key, of course, for all of this, there are many aspects of Tertiary Education that needs to be developed and not all of it will involve, and you will hear from other panelists, people moving to third country, how can we expand education where they are at. The plan is quite diverse and my gift to you is not read through the plan, but acknowledge that part of the plan that we have expanding Tertiary Education by 2030 is as includes this complementary pathway of education as a pathway for refugees.

So, I'm going to stop there and provide you with that overview. Thank you so much and I want to express my appreciation to Sheridan, its faculty, and leadership and encourage you to continue to be advocates and provide support to refugees through Tertiary Education. Thank you again.

>> Thank you, Michael. To me there is two things that jump out, there are many things that jump out, but one word that resonates with me is perspective. When I hear 142 days lost perspective is very important. The last thing I loved the correlation between building the foundation and welcoming inclusive communities, because that is part of Sheridan's international globalization framework. That is a wonderful correlation. I thank you for your time and we will see you shortly sir, in the question and answer period.

>> Michael Casasola: Thank you. >> I see many comments going on in the chat that folks are loving the content so far. I'm going to welcome another friend to the stage. Katharine Im-Jenkins is the Chief Programs Officer for WUSC. Her presentation will focus on how the important role of secondary institutions in Canada and globally

can play in responding to the refugee crisis.  
Katharine over to you.

>> Katharine Im-Jenkins: Thanks for the introduction and the invitation. It is wonderful to be amidst the Sheridan community today and to be joined by three excellent panelists whose work I follow closely and some of whose work I collaborate with WUSC and greatly admire. I am joining you from Ottawa and it is my pleasure to join this session on international education week on a topic that is close to my heart, refugee education.

We talked a little bit already about the Student Refugee Program and I will tell you a little bit more. This program is a unique program. It is a program that offers protection to young refugees through an educational opportunity, post-secondary scholarship, and it's powered by the incredible network of students and post-secondary institutions coast to coast across Canada. It has deep root, including my organization, which date back to the faculty and student movements in solidarity of each other between the two World Wars and trying to

respond to students and scholars who were displaced by those events. So, we continue that work today.

So, a little bit more detail about the Student Refugee Program. Since, 1978, we have been able to resettle almost 2,500 students from 39 different countries. Currently, most of them are based in countries of asylum such as Jordan, Malawi and we will be opening a new stream to help refugees displaced by the takeover of the taliban earlier this year.

In Canada, we have an incredible network, which Sheridan is a wonderful part of, of more than 100 post-secondary institutions and more than 1,000 volunteer students, faculty, staff members, community members who are the foundation of that welcoming that we've been talking about.

So, this program is made possible by the work of all of these students, and of course, the support

that they receive from faculty members. So, I don't want to just talk about the SRP, because I know most people know about it. I wanted to share a little bit more with the audience today about some of the other work that WUSC is doing. What we heard from Michael and all of his context and trends is really alarming, in terms of the state of the global displacement crisis and the state of access to education for refugees.

So, we at WUSC, alongside many other partners are working closely to see if we can create more opportunities, leveraging education as a potential pathway and taking this global, so we're really proud of the history and the tradition of the SRP and of the accomplishments of the SRP that we have in partnership with so many institutions. And we want to be part of a global movement to expand more opportunities to young people around the world.

So, in the last number of year, we have been working closely with UNHCR, so Michael's colleagues and many other university networks,



open society university network, the government of Portugal, some organizations in Japan and Mexico, lots of countries who are keen to finding solution, coming up with tailor-made solutions that work for them and building on the expertise that WUSC developed with the work on the SRP.

This task force is advocating for how different actors, governments, universities, colleges can use scholarships and opportunities to create pathways for students to find opportunities in third-world countries. We want to ensure we're sharing tools and resources and having strong standards in these sorts of programs. This community is coming together and we're rolling up our sleeves and getting work done and we want to contribute to the 15by30 goal that Michael was talking about.

Coming back closer to home, one of the other ways that WUSC is trying to respond to the displacement crisis is through innovation and experimentation and more partnerships that build on the strength of the Student Refugee Program.



So, here we have this wonderful made at home example of the partnership that we have with the Sheridan Local Committee to welcome the three refugee athletes and this is so exciting in so many different ways, not only because it is creating opportunities through a sports pathway for different students from different backgrounds who have different talents and aspirations to pursue. Also, it is a way to connect with the rich and robust Canadian athletic community to get folks who might not normally know and learn about refugee issues aware and engaged. And so many other reasons, so we're pretty excited about this partnership and we hope we can work with the UNHCR and the International Olympic Committee to offer up opportunities to student athletes.

I had the opportunity to participate in the welcome event that the Sheridan team organized earlier this year to welcome Rose and James -- and did I get everybody? I think I forgot someone. It was a wonderful event. As I said, WUSC as we were planning this event, we knew Sheridan would be a great partner for this program, not only for the strength of the local committee, but

because of the strength of the institution overall and how strongly you are connected to the communities you are in and welcoming the supportive atmosphere you offer all students.

Another example that I'm excited to share with this group today is a partnership that WUSC has with Camosun College and a number of businesses in the tourism sector in British Columbia. This program is what we call HIRES, which is a play on words. It is an employment-linked pathway, so that experimentation around different ways, like Michael was suggesting in his presentation, different ways we can create pathways and opportunities for refugees to find protection and pursue their aspirations.

What we like about this is it is a win-win-win partnership for the students who are selected. They do an accelerated training program with Camosun and placed in a job opportunity with our industry partners, so it accelerates their integration into Canada. They're selected in Kenya and you will hear later from Phyllis, one of

our colleagues, her organization plays a role in that process. We work to prepare the students while they are awaiting their arrival in Canada. This program is new and we're excited to see what can happen as a result. We had some delays related to the pandemic, as you might imagine, so we were able to welcome the first cohort this year and we will welcome a second cohort in January. Again, what this is so exciting about this is much like we mobilize the secondary education for the Student Refugee Program, here we're able to tap into industry, have different organizations play different roles in the global displacement crisis and we're able to make practical contributions to the Canadian economy to help address labor shortages, to accelerate that integration, to create opportunities for connection and community to be built.

So, this is another program that we're hoping to scale up and to share on the global stage. There's a lot of creativity and innovation in the pathway space right now. It is certainly not without its challenges, but I think these are some of the initiatives to watch.

So, I would like to just wrap up, because I know we have primarily a post-secondary institution audience and I would like to say that there are so many different ways beyond, of course, participating in the Student Refugee Program that we feel institutions can engage and respond. I was reading through Sheridan's internationalization strategy earlier this week. The ethos of that around creating the welcoming spaces, connecting digitally, including these issues in the curriculum, in the pedagogy, certainly in the research agenda, there are so many opportunities to engage with this issue with the forced displacement crisis and post secondary institutions to contribute. There are some ideas here and I would just say in all of this, my advice would be to also consider how you're partnering with refugees as you do this, and so that can look differently. I think in HaEun's presentation later will tell us how they are doing it in York in their initiative. Thanks again and looking forward to continuing the conversation with everyone.

>> Thank you so much, Kat. I appreciate your time and look forward to seeing you in the

question and answer period. I want to say, thank you. I can appreciate the creativity and innovative ideas and we're looking forwards to the pathway with your organization and UNHCR. I can't help but think, I stayed in academia because of the power to transform lives and we witness it and we continue to hope to partner with your organization to continue to bring the opportunity to many more refugee students, so thank you and I look forward to seeing you shortly.

All right, folks, to our third speaker. Any could please welcome Ms. Phyllis Mureu to the stage. Phyllis is the Executive Director of the Windle International Kenya and Somalia. She is joining us Nairobi, Kenya. She has a wealth of experience in education in Kenya and Somalia and has been in the field for the last 15 years. Over to you with respect of your presentation.

>> Phyllis Mureu: Thank you. Thank you very much once again for the introduction and also thank you to Sheridan College for giving me this opportunity to share our experience in supporting education for the displaced persons.

Just for the sake of the audience to note that international Kenya has been in operation for the last 14 years and within that period, we have been supporting education for refugees. I'm happy that Kat is part of the panel. We have been working closely and you have on my first page is the project that we do together. York University and HaEun will be talking more about that in her presentation. Next slide, please. Thank you.

As mentioned in Michael's presentation that one of the challenges that the youth face is the limited education opportunities, especially at the higher level. From Michael's presentation, you could see that the bulk of the support is at the primary level where students are at 68% and secondary school at 34%, but at tertiary level was only 5%. So, you can see there is a big disparity between those who graduate from high school and those end up getting on to university.

In Kenya, we have two in the refugee camps. They host the populations that come from the

conflict area, but the majority of them come from Somalia and South Sudan, but we do have other communities from DRC, Ethiopia and Uganda. Part of providing education are those who are not able to continue with their education because of conflict and this makes it also difficult for them to move from one level to the next, and that is a group that we have to support to ensure they do not drop out and also increase the number of them that get into the higher education.

When Katharine was talking, she mentioned about Tertiary Education opportunities and one of the things that we also experienced is the limited opportunities they are experiencing. One is financing, because it is very expensive to support education and the scholarships that are available are limited and very competitive. For example, the scholarship that we support through the Student Refugee Program that scholarship is very popular among the refugees in Kenya, but unfortunately, we only get about 55 slots per year, and sometimes you have about 1,500 students competing for those slot, so the competition is very high.



We also get additional slots for opportunities for students to pursue their degree courses in Kenya, but again, compared to the number of slots available and the students applying, the numbers are always limited. We do have the other challenge. Sometimes the refugees come into the country and they have done their high school in their home country, but for them to access education in any of the Kenya institutions, they have to ensure the certificates they have are acceptable by the administration of education, and sometimes that does not work well and they may have to repeat some units in order for them to access higher education. Instead of going forward, you have to go backwards for you to move.

Kat mentioned the other challenge, the number of girls who transition from each level keeps going down. At the beginning, normally at the primary level the ratio is almost 50-50. As they go to secondary school, the numbers drop and then at university level it really drops. So, those are some



of the challenges that we also see as we try to provide university education. Next slide, please.

Why do we provide education in our intervention? As an organization, we strongly believe that education transforms society, and when we look at the population that we serve, we believe that the only thing the refugees are able to take away from the camp, especially in the context of Kenya, it is only education. No matter what happens, once they have learned, once they have acquired that skill, it can't be taken away and that can help them access the options that are there. We talk about opportunities that exist in countries or opportunities that exist within the country, they can only take advantage of the opportunities only if they are educated and have the skills that are required.

The support that we provide to the refugees, we don't just do it in Kenya, but we do the same in the countries that we are intervening, we do this in Sudan and recently in Somalia. Next slide, please.

As we support the students in higher education, we are also very aware of the need and the changes that happen in the 21st century, and we try to look at what is the nature of our population. One of the things that we saw about the population is they are very mobile, and this is because they either have conflicts that are manmade in their countries or what we are dealing with at the moment in Kenya, drought, which is making people move from Somalia into Kenya and from South Sudan into Kenya, so that means you get more people coming into the refugee camps, not only because of conflict, but other natural phenomenon.

We also are aware that sometimes there are competing priorities between earning and living and acquiring skills. Sometimes we have to ensure the kind of education we provide is flexible enough to be able to accommodate those unique requirements of our population. Then we also do work to what is making sure as much as possible that we are supporting both boys and girls,

because we do realize that development can only be sustainable if it benefits both men and women, so higher education opportunities, which are able to accommodate both genders and provide same opportunities are always a good option for us.

Also, we look at how do we provide the education with COVID, we have seen and Michael mentioned, that students have lost a lot of their schooling and schools had to be closed down. We are looking at what are the opportunities that are there that enable the students who come from the refugee communities that they are able to continue with the education without being interrupted. But even when the interruptions happen that they are not disadvantaged. We have seen through COVID people are marginalized because of drought, conflict and so on were further marginalized because of technology. In most of the camps that we work, internet connectivity is not stable or not available, so that means the students who need to access their classes using technology are not able to do that and that put them at a more disadvantage. Next slide, please.

Next slide. Sorry, the previous one. Thank you. So, through the partnerships with the different universities, we are able to support students and currently, we have nine different tertiary scholarships that we are supporting and we do this through the different partnerships that we have created over the years. The partnerships, we have them in country and also outside of the country, and we are able to provide solutions to the students depending on what they are eligible to take advantage of. Next slide, please. Thank you.

So, as part of our intervention and in order to increase access to university education and have the ability and said before, the partnership with universities and in other countries helps us have more students access higher education, because not everybody will be able to get a scholarship outside of the country. So, if we can get as many as possible students into the Universities in-country that means we have more students who graduate from high school accessing higher

education. Then we have partnerships with universities outside of the country and through this, we work in close collaboration under the SRP program. I mentioned it before, we get 55 slots every year from the SRP program and that means the students have an opportunity to access education outside of Kenya.

As I mentioned before, financing for higher education is a challenge and we have found that as using blended models as part of delivering education is another way of increasing the number of students who access higher education. My colleague HaEun will be talking more about the model that we are running in the refugee camp and she will explain how that helped to increase the number of teachers in the refugee camp. We as use the on-job training and we have a model of secondary education. With work again with universities to provide ongoing training and, especially for the refugee teachers. One of the challenges that we have seen before is as much as we would like to have more students transition to university, if they are not doing very well in their high school then we will not are the numbers that

we need, and sometimes that part is on how well prepared or what type of teacher they have in class and one way of ensuring we are increasing the numbers is ensuring that our teachers are well trained. Next slide, please.

We've seen a number of benefits in using the different models to deal with the challenges of university education access for the refugees. One of the benefits is through the partnerships that we have with the Universities, we get the refugee student admitted into the in-country institution on the same entry as the national students. They are not required to have special entry behavior are they required to take another required course, as long as they meet the grade minimum as everybody else. We have the ability to send the students to third countries, such as Canada, as I mentioned before. We have partnerships in the U.K., especially for the post graduate level of education.

As I mentioned, regarding the limited resources that are available for higher education, the

blended models have really helped in increasing the number of refugees who are accessing the higher education, but it also helped us to increase the number of female students who access education, because in some cases, some families don't want their daughters to go away from home. Using the blended models that has helped to increase the number of the female students.

The other benefit is having teachers who are trained and that means we have more teachers who are in the schools from the refugee community, and the beauty is if they are already skilled teachers and already working in the schools, it means even when they move back home or if they transition to a third country, those skills are still relevant and they can be of use. Of course, with some university, they have been able to provide subsidized tuition fees for refugees making it easier for us to put more refugees into schools. Next slide, please.

What are some of the opportunities that still exist out there for us to be able to provide more



students with access to university education? One is doing more advocacy with the host governments to consider student loans for refugees. I know, for example, in Kenya and Uganda, the governments provide student loans for their students, but they do not do that for the refugees. The other one is to work closely with the private sector to provide internship opportunities to give them an experience, what is it that the market requires, what does the industry require, what is it they need to have in place, so when they do actually get into the industry, they are prepared for it.

In In terms of additional support, especially young mothers, provide a stipend, so they can support their children and they can continue being in school and they don't have to drop out. The students who have gone through higher education and they have acquired skills that can be of use, and this is one area that is good, because it gives them an opportunity to give back to society and back to the same communities that they came from and to the students such as career development. Next slide, please.



And I say once again, thank you very much Sheridan College for this opportunity to be part of the webinar. Thank you.

>> I think the thought goes to you and Windle and all of the amazing work you're doing on the ground. I had questions in light of some of the recent announcements with the camps in Kenya that we will hold for the Q&A section. It is so amazing that our speakers and organizations are so interrelated and working towards the same cause. A thank you to you and I look forward to seeing you in the question and answer period.

Before we welcome the next guest to the stage, I want to encourage participants, those who are joining us for the webinar that we would welcome your questions for our speakers in the chat or Q&A function. Following HaEun, our next presenter, we will be opening it up for questions.

Our fourth and final speaker is HaEun Kim who is a Program Administrator for the Borderless

Higher Education for Refugees led by York University. This presentation will introduce and share lessons learned through York University's border less high ere education project and their blended teacher program to train teachers in the camps of Kenya. HaEun, over to you.

>> HaEun Kim: Thank you. I want to echo thanks to the rest of the Sheridan team for putting this panel together. My name is HaEun Kim, and for the past five years, I have worked for the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees Project or BHER as we like to call it. The project was conceived back in 2010 and it was then that partners from Kenya and Canada were first brought together to consider new opportunities and models for offering higher education for refugees.

So, the project first put together a feasibility study, and it was this study that informed the launch of BHER programs where York and our partners have been working since 2013. Today, I just want to share our experiences and some reflections after 10 years of operations.

So, just to begin, the BHER consortium consists of MU and NGO's and to develop and enhance teaching capacities through university teaching programs. Because of this, our admissions is focused on untrained refugee and local teachers or those who are interested in the teaching profession. We partner with Windle and LWF who are the implementers of second education. York University lead this is initiative. For the first five yearses of the project, four university partner, two from Kenya, two from Canada worked together to offer primary and secondary teaching credentials.

Since 2018, because funding has scaled back, we're only offering the primary program, but we continue to work right here in Dadab. This is an aerial view of the encampments and Phyllis has shared some contextual information about the camps. They have been in operation for 30 years now. Opportunities for higher education in the camps are limited. Scholarships are available, but as Phyllis shared, they are highly competitive and reserved for the top-performing students. This is

where the blended model helps increase access for those to study directly in the camps.

These are a few pictures from our learning centre. The BHER Learning Centre is what we call our campus and constructed back in 2013. This infrastructure allows for the project to reach a greater number of students at a cost benefit while maintaining high-quality programs and maintaining safety of both students and staff. And I think that for the bulk of young refugees who attend high school in Dadaab with lower KCSC scores, which is the national examine and for the bulk of students who have a lower KCSC grade for women and men, but a lot of times women who cannot leave home due to familial responsibilities, as well as older refugees displaced after high school or don't have the documentation, opportunity for the scholarships are scarce. The blended model offers new opportunity for them to continue their learning where they are at.

So, this is a flowchart of the different programmatic streams in B HER. On the left is the primary stream where students can earn a certificate and then a diploma in primary education in York and Kenya. On the right is offered jointly and students were able to take the credits they earned and get them transferred into their bachelor's degrees. So, two cohorts of students were serviced through this model for over five years.

Since 2018, operations have scaled back, but we continue to operate with the support of open society foundations and York University in offering the primary stream in Dadaab. An exciting development that occurred, despite the scale back in funding, back in 2018, we were able to pilot a masters program here under phase five. so, we began offering a master's degree in the camps and it was very successful and we have continued to offer graduate studies in Dadaab ever since.

So, the BHER model follows four key principles, stackability, portability, gender equity and inclusivity, and peaceful co-existence with the host community in the northeast. Most of these principles sort of speak for themselves, but the only thing I want to highlight here is the stackability piece. Our programs are designed so if students relocate. For example, if a student completes a certificate and finds a job in Somalia, they can move on and still earn the year-long credential. They are able to stop their studies, still have an accredited credential and move on to the next phase of employment or other opportunities that come to them.

I think this was a great achievement that BHER was able to do with its four university partners, and all academic programs are offered free to refugee and local students who are serviced by BHER.

This is just a snapshot of all of the students that we have engaged with. Since 2013, we have engaged with over 400 individual students.

Currently, we have 60 active students. When we first started, I want to acknowledge briefly here that you can see from the numbers that the participation percentages of women are low in certain cohorts and a lot of that has to do with low KCSC scores barring them from admissions, particularly there the secondary stream in science programs and the Kenya institutions.

Something I do want to highlight that isn't in the stats is that what we found was that once the women who were admitted into the program were afforded accommodations by their instructors and provided with the supports and flexibility that they needed, for example, providing childcare space at the learning centre or enabling extensions or giving women a chance to retake a course if they have to miss a semester because they gave birth. If these accommodations were given, the retention rates of women soared. In the first cohort of York degree programs, we had an 83% retention rate of women versus the overall average of 67%. In cohort two, 100% of the women were retained in York programs versus the overall average of 83%. I think, you know,



what this tells us is once women are given the chance and they are afforded the flexibility that they need that their commitment is strong, if not stronger than their male counterparts in their studies.

For the remainder of the presentation, I just want to share three key lessons and a short reflection. The first has to do with university partnerships and collaborations, and so the idea is that universities can work in humanitarian settings, but in order to do so, strong collaboration among partners is essential. I think that this is one of those lessons that is obvious in principle, but difficult in practice. Over the last 10 years even though I have only been around for five, I know over the last decade there has really challenged Canadian and Kenyan universities to look beyond their physical campus and really rethink what it means to deliver quality programs in settings like Dadaab, populations whose access to learning and resources is severely limited.

There is an unpredictability and tension when working in such environments and oftentimes, it seems there is never a simple solution for anything, whether it's transporting books or making sure students get to class, even the things we take for granted, it is something always that comes up. The success of delivering programs in these types of spaces, from our experience, hinges on partnerships and creative collaboration. I think that genuine commitment from leadership in each institution is vital, so too is the flexibility of that leadership to work in response to changes, both internally within their individual programs and institutions, and externally in the refugee campus where things happen outside of our control and we need to find ways to make it work. So, creativity, commitment and flexibility are all needed on the part of universities and NGO's, but I think the success of BHER programs over the last eight years has demonstrated it can be done and it should be done.

The second lesson is one that is a little closer to my heart, because I come from a teaching background. I will just read it out loud. So, the

second lesson learned is should travel be permitted, I had to add this caveat because of the last year and a half with COVID, should travel be permitted, we have learned that a combination of modes of delivery, blends, is most effective. Even though online programming is ideally suited and completely justified in emergency settings such as Dadaab and over the last year in the context of COVID-19, it is not by itself sufficient and it does not make for, I think, a quality learning experience, both for the learner and for the instructor. Personally, my philosophy with learning and education is it see learning as a relational experience and oftentimes, it requires vulnerability and trust, and while there are great potentials to the reach of online learning and technology, I think that there there are also limits on what can be done over Zoom, for example,.

Over the year, again, within the context of Dadaab, we have learned that our students in the camps need support and guidance in order to become successful learners, both online and offline. We are a university from the global north and to be successful in an English language,

Canadian university program, our students need a training and practice and various technologies. They needed a lot of instructor contact to become accustomed to new English, new literacies, new study and assessment structure, modes of communicating. For example, learning e-mail etiquette and different communication skills and communication skills, all of these required a scaffolding approach and they needed opportunities to practice this type of learning through a blended, face-to-face and online sessions before we were able to venture to the fully online model. I would strongly encourage any university or institution considering working in these spaces to consider blended forms, and to make sure the physical infrastructure necessary is there for their delivery. I think that we've seen the benefits of blended structures really manifest, both for the instructor, as well as the learner.

So, the final lesson learned I want to share is the importance of building in opportunities for reciprocity in our program. So, I will start with this photo. So, this is a picture of one of our graduate student, our master students working with Don

right here. He is the co-director of BHER, but he is as a course director. Our student is working as a peer mentor for the course that Don is teaching.

So, in the same way that course directors in Canada have graduate student TA's, instructors in BHER, graduate students have peer mentors. They work with course directors and they are mentored on how to teach, how to assess and grade and how to support students in a university course. I think the BHER dream is one day our graduate students will become the course directors of the course that we teach, but when we began implementing this peer-mentor model, we understood the capacity building, but we did not realize the full value of capacity building until COVID-19 struck. At the end of the day, it is local actors who are able to enact lasting solutions, and in the case of BHER, our peer mentors are integral in keeping our peer mentors active. In the larger context in universities working in new space, I think development projects need to take a participatory approach ensuring that students or the populations that they are working with are collaborating with partners and being given

leadership roles, opportunities, learning relevant, transferable skills, and of course, a reciprocal approach entails additional time. It entails training and resources, as meaningful capacity building needs to take place first, and these opportunities need to happen in order to build up students into researchers, adult educators, community leaders and more.

I think that related to the last slide, our masters program has enabled our students to engage and write about the field of education and forced migration studies. I think the knowledge production and mobilization and advocacy work initiated by our students, I think that it really is the growth and aspirations of what they see and what they want to do. Those are the things that will enact the changes that they want to see in Dadaab and beyond.

This is my last slide. So, I just want to end with one final reflection and this is one that our team has been grappling with for the last while. I think after 10 years of working in one place, we are

really starting to see meaningful impact emerge. Because we have gotten to know the space and the community, and because of the relationships built, and the knowledge incurred, we were able to innovate in ways that was never intended. I don't think that when the project began, we imagined graduate programs with nearly 50% women, but now we're at the point where the research and knowledge created by our students is informing our practice. Our students themselves see themselves as agents for change in Dadaab and the northeast region. What we have learned through our practice is sustainable changes take time, and I think this has to do with the point on fostering inclusive communities that Michael, that the UNHCR is targeting. Sustainable changes take time, but oftentimes, this type of long-term engagement is at odds with the industry of development where donors start to lose interest once they reach outcomes. The intent is to scale and to replicate, but we have found, in the case of York through BHER that the continued investment really compound great things. It seems like we're starting to delve into our peace building by our student, but it is constrained by the reality of resources. Regardless, I think I want to end the



presentation with this idea of quality and long-term engagement and the investment it yields. We're at a point now where it is our students and their knowledge that informs the vision and practice of what we do. I hope more university, more institutions and more organizations will find ways to invest and innovate and work in more spaces. As we have seen, the need is great. Thank you all for listening. If I went overtime, I'm so sorry. I just saw the chat.

>> Absolutely, no problem. As with many of our participants here, really enjoyed your presentation and thank B HER for the work they are doing. HaEun, I can't help but think that your lessons learned are applicable, not only home country, but everywhere, the relational experience with students and their faculty, the building of trust, the hybrid model, the peer-to-peer about giving the tools to the next generation to be part of the next solution. I think that is absolutely amazing and I thank you very much for your presentation.

At this point, folk, we're going to be bringing our speakers to the stage to open up a question and answer period. There was one specific question for Ms. Phyllis after her presentation that I would like to start with. The question and comment is in relation to, first of all, great presentation. But question in relation, if you are working with colleges and technology institutes in Kenya who have partnerships with institutions in Canada and making the comment and offering training and what is shared in Camoron college seems to be relevant to Kenya's needs. If you want to speak to that, please.

>> Phyllis Mureu: Thank you. Just to confirm, yes, we have partnership with many of the universities that work with other institutes. We offer at the moment, working with universities like University of Nairobi and those are the places where we have our students, so it helps to have the partnerships in place, because when they do advertise for the scholarships then we are able to lobby and ask can we also have additional scholarships for the refugee students. Thank you.

>> Great. Another question is in reference to a comment, closing comments that HaEun made that are meaningful and sustainable changes take time, as echoed by the partnership. What lessons and this is open to everyone, what lessons can be drawn for funding models that have 12 and 18-month periods in this space?

>> Katharine Im-Jenkins: I have some thoughts. HaEun, you raise a critical point and something, of course, all of us really struggle with. I think the unique funding model for the Student Refugee Program is a critical factor for its success, so the whole institution approach, the contributions that come from across the institution whether that these students, the institution itself, community member, other fundraising modalities, I think that has been absolutely essential for the success of the program, and for program to have 40 years through all sorts of changes, through a pandemic, through political dynamics, you name it.

What I was reflecting on listening to each of the presentations of this conversation, I think Sheridan, you guys have curated such a perfect panel, a real snapshot and a case study in a context where Canadian organizations, Canadian institutions that are connected to Canadian institutions have engaged in an ecosystem in interesting ways, and ways that build upon each other's work. That has happened, both organically and intentionally. I have been with WUSC for 14 years and certainly we have been partnering with Windle for 30 years, and some of the work that WUSC and Windle do together on primary and secondary information is part of why, HaEun, you are seeing more women get into your program as they mature. Part of the work the BHER program in training educators is feeding back into the success of that very program that WUSC and Windle are running at lower levels. We can see these different connections across the different initiatives and they don't always come together the way we would like to, because we're all working on the way the humanitarian response system is funded. We're all working to build on each other's work to coordinate across. The question that you ask is a real challenge and a

structural barrier in taking this work further and faster, but I would say there are ways to kind of really lean into that tension and really manage it.

>> Thanks, Kat. I'm going to turn it over to Phyllis for comments on short-term funding and then over to Michael, please.

>> Phyllis Mureu: Thanks. I want to mention that the short-term funding for 12 months or 18 months is an opportunity for some of the refugees who have part funding from other sources, but they don't have the full funding, so if they get another person who is willing to meet them halfway, it ensures they are able to meet in school for the full time. It does not go to waste if structured properly. It does help to meet the gap that we see. Thank you.

>> Michael Casasola: I just wanted to offer some reflections and maybe some contradictions around funding and such. We're working in an environment that by in means, we are not providing the totality of services for refugees when there are many other agencies and geo partners who play critical roles to refugees. Our budget is

\$9 billion globally. When I started in 2002, my boss said we will never go above \$1 billion. That is not which we get, that is the need. We have gotten to \$5 billion, but what that means is some things don't get funded. We are moving to a multi-year funding cycle. You deal with emergencies and the concept that -- when you listen to HaEun, that camp has been there since the '90's, the early '90's. A refugee becomes a R. tomorrow, they may be a R. -- refugee for the next 18-20 years. Get them general protection and assistance and things like education are put off until, well, we'll see how this works out, maybe we can go back and maybe we won't. Education is one of the vulnerable funding area, because you are always on the edge in terms of, which is vital of life and wellbeing of all people, and young people. Because of funding and funding models in the contradictions, oftentimes it is, over use of the word, vulnerable situation. Pardon me.

>> Thank you, Mike. I can't help but bring up some of the announcements in relation to the camps and potential closures in Kenya. I would

like to open that up to folks with any comment, because that could further displace or cause and I know your organizations are still digging through this, but I'm curious about preliminary comments with the respects to some of the announcements.

>> Phyllis Mureu: Michael, do you want to say something from your perspective or should I?

>> Michael Casasola: Please go ahead.

>> Phyllis Mureu: OK, so in the Kenyan context, we have until June 2022 to close the camps, but what has happened is the government and the NCR are working on a pathway that they have agreed upon and there are six activities that needed to be done for that to happen. So, I don't want to say the camps will not close, but I would like to say those activities are still ongoing. They are not yet completed, so as it stands, maybe the camps are not going to close as soon as tomorrow, because there is a lot of work to be done.



One of the activities that needs to be done, as you know, the camps are placed in areas where the populations are marginalized, so you will find people who lived in those areas before the refugees moved in and when the refugees came and the kind of support that was being provided, they are now refugees. We need to identify the population that we're dealing with, who is the refugee and who is the Kenyan. That is what needs to be decided before we close the camp, we might end up saying, we have 100% Kenyan, but then it becomes the responsibility of the government and we discover everybody who is there is a refugee then what do we do with that population, yeah, thank you.

>> Michael Casasola: Thank you, Phyllis. Phyllis is on the ground, so she would know more about how this situation is developing. I want to make a couple of reflections. First, we're grateful for the government of Kenya. They have been hosting refugees for decades and waiting for plan in terms of what is the solution. We don't solve the political problems that create them that is up to the international community, so the ongoing conflicts then is the problem where the international community has let so many conflicts fester and

offer displacement over so many years that is the root of the problem, right. It is a challenge, but until the conflicts are solved, refugees are not able to return, which is what we're ideally working towards.

That being said, I also want to acknowledge there is a pathway and again, obviously we're concerned about refugees affected acrossing borders and we don't want to create a humanitarian crisis. At the same time, these very states in the global south that host the majority of the world's refugee see the examples of western countries and externalization of the barriers. They see what is happening, so why are we having to do this when western states aren't providing effective protection. Again, when they see bad examples in other states, again, it can exacerbate some of these problems.

>> Katharine Im-Jenkins: Can I just add very briefly to what Phyllis and Michael said? I don't want to comment on the specifics on the situation of Kenya, but I want to say building off of your point, Michael and what you said HaEun, in your presentation about portability of education and

being a worthwhile investment, no matter what the solution is, if it is a volunteer patriotization or integrating to a local context, education is going to be a very, very smart investment no matter what. I think that is something I always take away in these broader context where there is a lot of political complexity and uncertainty, we can be assured of the value of the investment in education.

>> Thanks, Kat. HaEun over to you for comment and I have one last question for everyone.

>> HaEun Kim: Yeah, I think building off of what Kat just shared. Most of the students currently enrolled in BHER in Dadaab are Somali and the proximity to the Somali border makes it a little bit of unique context, where the border is quite poorest and people will move back and forth.

The thing I want to add is listening to our students, and just the aspirations they have for the future is they want to return and the Kenyan government ideally, we want to see a peaceful northeast region where people are living safely and able to access everything they need. Again, just to -- you know, the students who grew up in

the camps, one day they envision a peaceful Somalia and they want to return. A lot of our graduates, once they are armed with an accredited university degrees, they're able to go back and find opportunities in civil society and international NGO's, but only with the credentials that they have are they able to facilitate for themselves a meaningful return.

There are voluntary repatriation programs, but antidotally from what I have seen, when graduates are able to secure the credentials they need to do the work they want to do, which is rebuild their homeland is they are able to return in a more sustainable way. So, I'm echoing Kat in that education, higher education in light of one of the durable solutions, I think is key. And it is an investment and I think it will compound and so, I hope that funders will see the value in that just going forward. >> Thanks, HaEun. Noting that we have the last few minutes here, folks, I don't want to rush through the thought. The thought to the four of you for your time in supporting Sheridan's International Education Week. Thank you, thank you. I think what has been demonstrated here is

the collaborative approach that all of the organizations are taking to address the same crisis. With that, I think it is a natural tee up to a call to action. So, in the final minute, if we could go around, final two minutes here to get a quick point, what a call to action, regardless if it is our institutions on the call, whether it is possible volunteer, students, faculty, staff, what can we do, what is one thing we can do to support? I open that to anyone who has comment. Michael?

>> Michael Casasola: Continue to support the Student Refugee Program. Colleges are the way forward and we can see for expanding access to education and Tertiary Education in Canada as a pathway. The students who come through the program are the best ambassadors to the cause and I would say, listen to them. They have great ideas. Every one of them get these discussions, oh, you are robbing the intellectual, future intellectualse of the refugee populations. No, every one of them gets education wants the sister family members, wants back in the countries of origin. The cascading effect of education and that colleges can provide is immense.

>> HaEun Kim: Can I just echo to say, you know, if you're a student joining your local SRP community is a great way to get involved for all of the reasons that Michael just shared. I think that in the context of our graduate program, if there are people who are looking to write, we have a roster of students in Dadaab who are eager to collaborate, participate in research projects, to speak, so that's one way academics can reach out. But I'm assuming a a lot of people on the call are from Toronto and I think the SRP program is a great way to get involved.

>> Ms. Phyllis or Kat, any closing comments?

>> Phyllis Mureu: Yes, I have a final one, just to emphasize when we have the across border meetings and we have populations from Somalia coming in and they are asked, what is the most important thing they want done in their country, they always say education, and it always comes at the top, so there is no way we can get away from it. As much as we have other priority, they rate education as a first priority for them, so maybe to some extent, the refugee camp

continues to exist, because each of the education is not stable in their own country, then they ensure their children access education. Thank you.

>> Ms. Kat, final comment?

>> Katharine Im-Jenkins: I will end on a slightly more fun note. It is lunchtime, it isle dessert time maybe. My call to action is to eat chocolate, by eating chocolate, you can support the Student Refugee Program, not only at Sheridan and the GTA, but across the country. We have a special partnership with account peace By Chocolate, which is a refugee founded organization on the East Coast. If you buy chocolate for yourself or for your family for the holiday, a dollar goes to support. That is my call to action. >> On that note, I would like to thank the four of you for the time, your expertise, experience in providing to us, again, thank you so much. I'm going to eat some chocolate now. Have a great day.

>> Phyllis Mureu: Thank you very much.