



Challenges and Ways Forward

Education: The Key to the Future

Refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) often see education of their children as the principal way of ensuring a better future for their family. Just as importantly, education often plays a critical role in creating stability in the daily lives of displaced children.

However, education in exile is often less than adequate at promoting either present or future stability. Around the world, children, parents, and teachers face numerous educational challenges in situations of displacement. These challenges include lack of schools and trained teachers; confusion over curriculum and language of instruction; and difficulty in coordination of the many local, national, and international actors. These same challenges have been documented through a three-year study of primary-school-age refugee children from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who live in Uganda (available at www.mbeleni.org).

Addressing Challenges

Research is often good at identifying challenges. More important, though, is how to address these challenges. Advocacy workshops held in three refugee-hosting areas in Uganda—Kyaka II refugee settlement, Nakivale refugee settlement, and Kampala—involved stakeholders in planning the way forward. Participants included parents, pupils, teachers, community leaders, UNHCR staff, implementing partner staff, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) staff, and Ministry of Education representatives (District Education Officers and District Inspectors of Schools).

The aims of these workshops were as follows:

- ◆ to present findings from the research;
- ◆ to collectively analyse the challenges identified with a focus on advocacy;
- ◆ to train stakeholders at all levels in advocacy strategies; and
- ◆ to develop a way forward for education in displacement in Uganda.

Ten priorities emerged from these workshops. The stakeholders worked collaboratively to chart a way forward with the goal of activating local, community-based resources to make education better for all children. While the focus of these workshops was refugees, the priorities outlined here are also applicable to IDPs and to the context of poverty in Uganda more generally. Indeed, many other communities may benefit from the strategies presented on the following pages.



Ten Priorities for Education

1

Access

Education does not come without its costs to families. In urban areas, primary schools continue to charge school fees ('development fees') despite Universal Primary Education (UPE). In rural areas, families are asked to contribute money for school feeding, construction, and top-up for teachers' salaries. Displaced people often do not have the means or livelihoods that allow them to contribute money. As a result, many children are denied access to schools. Communities can increase access to education for displaced children by thinking creatively: instead of chasing children away from school for lack of payment, why not ask families to contribute firewood, water, cups of beans, or their own labour?

2

Communication

There is often inadequate communication between schools and families. Parents and teachers may not speak the same languages. Displaced parents may be unfamiliar with the curriculum and school operations of the Ugandan government schools that their children attend. Teachers, most of whom are Ugandan nationals, may not understand the situations in which their displaced pupils live. Schools can better serve their pupils if parents and teachers interact well. Frequent meetings and one-on-one conversations as well as teacher visits to pupils' homes can foster these interactions.

3

Stakeholder Responsibility

Many stakeholders are involved in education for displaced children: UN agencies and their implementing partners, other NGOs, the national Ministry of Education and Sport, teachers, parents, pupils, and community members. What is the role of each actor? Lack of clarity about who is responsible for providing which services often leads to confusion, blame, and inaction. Stakeholders will be encouraged to play their parts if their roles are clearly defined and well disseminated.

4

Teachers

Teachers are the cornerstone of education. When they are trained and competent, pupils can expect high quality teaching. In displacement situations, it is difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers. The pay is low and the 'incentives' paid by international agencies are not coordinated with government salary scales. Reallocation of budgets by funders—both international agencies and national governments—to place priority on the training and remuneration of teachers would greatly contribute to educational quality.

5

Language

The choice of a language of instruction in schools that cater for displaced children is always contentious. A pupil from DR Congo, for example, may have grown up speaking Lihuku at home, Kiswahili with neighbours, learning French at school, being sent back two classes to learn English in Uganda, while still uncertain what the language of her future will be. One language of instruction is critical in this type of situation in order to provide stability for children.

in Displacement in Uganda

Infrastructure

6

Displaced children often attend schools that lack basic necessities like classrooms, benches, latrines, and water. In the common situation where displaced children are integrated in government schools, parents are unsure of whom to lobby about these problems. The government has responsibility for the construction of school structures that serve both nationals and refugees. UNHCR assists in some cases. There could be better coordination between the two actors. Some communities have taken matters into their own hands and called upon parents and pupils to contribute blocks, sticks, and labour to build new classrooms.

Secondary School

7

Parents and pupils place a high value on access to secondary schools. Their hopes for future employment and stability hinge on these opportunities. However, secondary education is not universal in most settings of displacement, and it is beyond the mandate of UNHCR. To create and sustain a secondary school in this environment requires the commitment of resources by multiple actors: UNHCR, educational NGOs, government, and most importantly parents and pupils themselves.

Vocational Education

8

There is a lack of vocational education available in situations of displacement. Many pupils, especially as they near the end of primary school, see potential benefits from studying trades: carpentry, metalworking, tailoring. There are often displaced people who have the skills to train others in these trades, but they do not have the necessary equipment. Possibilities for collaboration between educational NGOs, microcredit facilities, and income-generating activities are ripe.

Educating Girls

9

Rates of school attendance among displaced girls are low. In situations of extreme poverty, parents often make a decision to keep their daughters at home to look after young children or do domestic work. The incidence of early marriages is also high for girls and frequently tied to family need for income. Teachers and community leaders have an important role to play in raising awareness about the social and familial benefits of girls' education and in intervening to prevent forced early marriages.

Values and Behaviours

10

Values and behaviours shape how people deal with and understand an issue. These values may be influenced by religion, custom, class, gender, ethnicity, or age. Often changes in values and behaviours are necessary in order to address the challenges of education in displacement. Schools can play a central role in educating parents, pupils, and community members about the value of sending children to school or of educating girls, for example, while taking care to respect individual cultures.

Resources

Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
www.ineesite.org

Global Information Networks in Education (GINIE)
www.ginie.org

International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO (IIEP)
www.unesco.org/iiep

"The Education Imperative: Supporting Education in Emergencies." By Marc Sommers.
www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/EducationImperative.pdf

Refugee Law Project (RLP)
www.refugeelawproject.org

A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation.
By Lisa VeneKlasen with Valerie Miller. Description, training guide, and resources available at www.fahamu.org

Education in the Creation of Stability for Refugee Children in Uganda: Reports on a Three-Year Study.
By Sarah Dryden-Peterson, available at www.mbeleni.org

Workshop Participants

Bujubuli Primary School

- P.O. Box 15 Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Uganda
- ◆ Busesire John, Deputy Head Teacher
 - ◆ Swithen Dutchman, Former teacher; Chair RWC
 - ◆ Aloysius Rwamafa, Teacher
 - ◆ Annie Badibe, Teacher
 - ◆ Kobusinge Scholastic, Parent
 - ◆ Marie-Jeane Angeangu, Parent
 - ◆ Kezabu Rosert, Pupil
 - ◆ Mananu Rachel, Pupil

Kashojwa Primary School

- P.O. Box 1757 Mbarara, Uganda
- ◆ Mugumya Godfrey Willy, Deputy Head Teacher
 - ◆ Bashir Michael, Teacher
 - ◆ Natuhwera Abel, Teacher
 - ◆ Katengyero Benon, Parent
 - ◆ Mubirigi Oscar, Parent
 - ◆ Tushemerirwe Beatrice, Pupil
 - ◆ Kadogo Rasmus, Pupil
 - ◆ Sengabi Alexanderson, Former pupil

Katwe Primary School

- P.O. Box 71111 Clock Tower, Kampala, Uganda
- ◆ Bwana Yeko, Head Teacher
 - ◆ Mbago Robert, Teacher
 - ◆ Miriam Alokim Etiu, Teacher
 - ◆ Kengonzi Mary, Parent
 - ◆ Nalukwago Victoria, Pupil

Workshop Facilitators

- ◆ Jacques Bwira, Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre (kurcec@yahoo.com)
- ◆ Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Harvard Graduate School of Education (sarah_dryden@post.harvard.edu)
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Mirembe Primary School/Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre (KURCEC)

- P.O. Box 12716 Kampala, Uganda
- ◆ Grace Tusiime, Head Teacher
 - ◆ Pastor Kipanga Kissu, Parent
 - ◆ Payaba Bahati, Former pupil (now at Katwe)

Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES)

- P.O. Box 7010 Kampala, Uganda
- P.O. Box 1002 Kyenjojo, Uganda
- ◆ Dr. Charles Masaba, DEO Kampala
 - ◆ Rwebembera Godfrey, DIS Kyenjojo

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

- P.O. Box 341 Kampala, Uganda
- ◆ R.M. Wafula, National Coordinator, Development Assistance for Refugee-Hosting Areas
 - ◆ Mugasa Simon, Kyaka II

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- P.O. Box 3813 Kampala, Uganda
- ◆ Miiro Rehema, Protection Officer Kyaka II
 - ◆ Rehema Kauma, Protection Officer Nakivale

GTZ

- P.O. Box 10346 Kampala, Uganda
- ◆ Innocent Asimwe, Settlement Officer Kyaka II
 - ◆ Atwooki Imelda, Community Services & Education Coordinator Kyaka II
 - ◆ Balikunda Felicien, Education Assistant Kyaka II
 - ◆ Besigye Michael, Settlement Officer Nakivale
 - ◆ Irene Atuhurire, Community Services & Education Coordinator Nakivale
 - ◆ Tibahiganira Peter, Education Assistant Nakivale

For other advocacy briefs on Education and Displacement in Uganda, log-on to www.refugeelawproject.org or contact the **Refugee Law Project** at P.O. Box 33903, Kampala, Uganda Telephone: +256 41 343 556