

Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 9

EDUCATION OF REFUGEES IN UGANDA: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SETTING AND ACCESS

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The Refugee Law Project (RLP) was established in November 1999 with the aim of protecting and promoting the rights of forced migrants in Uganda. The RLP operates as an autonomous project within the Faculty of Law of Makerere University, and focuses on three main areas: legal assistance, training, and research and advocacy. The Refugee Law Project works towards ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees are, as specified under national and international law, treated with the fairness and consideration due fellow human beings.

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REPORT SUMMARY

Refugees often see the education of their children as a principal way of ensuring a better future. The literature on education of refugees is nevertheless limited in its scope, focusing primarily on education in emergency situations within the confines of camp or settlement structures. In many countries, including Uganda, education of refugees takes place in multiple and diverse settings. This research explores the education of refugee children in Uganda, specifically addressing the multiple ways in which refugees access education and the social effects of the differing forms of education on the creation of stability for refugee children.

Four distinct arenas in which the primary education of refugee children takes place are identified and examined through a case study approach: first, primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by refugees and some nationals; second, primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by nationals and some refugees; third, government-aided schools in the major urban centre, Kampala, attended primarily by nationals and some refugees; and finally, self-help schools in Kampala, attended primarily by refugees and some nationals.

The relationship between the setting of education and access to education is evaluated. Factors that affect access to education are identified, including the prohibitive costs of urban education, the lack of qualified teachers in rural settings, the limitations of English as a language of instruction for Francophone refugees, the stability created through the integration of refugee and national pupils, and the co-ordination of services between UNHCR, its implementing partners, and district education officials.

This working paper is based on research conducted in Kampala, Kyaka II, and Nakivale by Sarah Dryden-Peterson from 25 October 2002 to 9 May 2003. It was written by Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Research Associate of Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) and Fulbright Scholar. Without the work of research assistants Sylvia Bohibwa and Jacques Bwira, this research would not have been possible; thank you for your commitment and insights. The author also wishes to thank the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for funding assistance and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and the Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate for Refugees, for permission to conduct the research. Many people have shared their time, ideas, and experiences with the author over the course of her research, in particular, the Refugee Law Project, especially Lucy Hovil, Emmanuel Bagenda and Zachary Lomo; professors and staff at Makerere University, including Silus Oluka, Deborah Mulumba, Dixon Kamukama, and Patrick Mulindwa; UNHCR staff, in particular Linnie Kesselly and Dorothy Jobolingo; members of the Congolese Refugee Development Association (COREDA) and the Association des refugiers francophones (ASSOREF); the Camp Commandants and the staff of the implementing partners in Kampala, Kyaka II and Nakivale settlements, in particular Atwooki Imelda of the Office of the Prime Minister and Kiwanuka Monica of the Uganda Red Cross; and members of local government in Kyenjojo and Mbarara Districts. Most of all, I am thankful for the time, energy, wisdom, and generosity of the teachers and pupils in the schools in which I was fortunate enough to work.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARC:	American Refugee Committee
ASSOREF:	Association des refugiers francophones
COREDA:	Congolese Refugee Development Association
DEO:	District Education Officer
DRC:	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EUPEK:	Enhancement of Universal Primary Education in Kampala
GoU:	Government of Uganda
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person
KCC:	Kampala City Council
KURCEC:	Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre
LC:	Local Council
MFPEDE:	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MISR:	Makerere Institute of Social Research
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sport
NRM:	National Resistance Movement
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister
PEAP:	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PLE:	Primary Leaving Exam
RLP:	Refugee Law Project
SRS:	Self Reliance Strategy
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
URCS:	Uganda Red Cross Society
UShs:	Uganda Shilling; UShs1990=\$1, fluctuates according to market trends

1 INTRODUCTION

The denial to citizens of their basic human rights is what creates refugees in the first place. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and host governments are jointly tasked with the international mandate to restore people to dignity by ensuring the provision of the basic human rights that have been denied to them in their home countries. The first priorities are, in all cases, shelter, food, and personal safety. These elements of aid to refugees are emergency services. As the situations that create refugees continue to exist, however, durable solutions are needed.

Worldwide, the percentage of children within the refugee population ranges from 13 to 57.¹ In Central Africa, it is 57 percent.² Refugee children are indeed doubly vulnerable: as refugees and as children. Education is a way to prevent the recurrence of violence and to create economic opportunities that allow refugees to become self-reliant. As Jacques Bwira, a Congolese refugee in Kampala, explains, “[e]ducation is what will prepare our children for their future, for education is, after all, the key to the future.”³ Indeed, for any durable solutions to be successful, education must be seen as a priority.

This research seeks to explore the education of refugee children in Uganda. Specifically, it addresses the multiple ways in which refugees access education and the social effects of the differing forms of education on the creation of stability for refugee children. Conditions in Uganda have allowed the development of four distinct arenas in which the primary education of refugee children is taking place. These four settings provide the basis for the case studies that form this research (see Appendix I for locations of case study sites):

1. Primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by refugees and some nationals;
2. Primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by nationals and some refugees;
3. Government-aided schools in the major urban centre, Kampala, attended primarily by nationals and some refugees;
4. Self-help schools in the major urban centre, Kampala, attended primarily by refugees and some nationals.

This research adopts a case-study approach with the aim of capturing the contextual forces and dynamics at play in each situation. Schools have been chosen in each of the settings not to represent the best or the worst, but to characterise common situations.

¹ Europa World. 2001. “UNHCR Releases 2001 Global Refugee Statistics.” URL: <http://www.europaworld.org/week87/unhcr21602.htm>. Accessed: 3rd April 2002.

² McNamara, Dennis. “Promises Broken.” URL: <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/promises/refugees.html>. Accessed: 3rd April 2003.

³ Interview, Jacques Bwira, Headmaster of Kampala Urban Refugee Children’s Education Centre, 25th November 2003.

The study focuses specifically on Congolese refugees in Uganda for a number of reasons. Although there are fewer Congolese refugees in Uganda than Sudanese, there are a number of factors that make this population particularly suitable for the study. First, Congolese populations are settled in areas of Uganda that are not as disrupted by issues of insecurity. They are further from insecure borders and the violence associated with these regions, and they are less impacted by a rise in Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs). As a result, a study of this population can examine stable educational situations rather than the constant flux of emergency situations. Second, there is a substantial population of Congolese refugees in urban areas of Uganda (particularly Kampala) and this group is an important case study. Third, the issue of language of instruction in refugee situations is an important question for research. Congolese refugees have come from a school system in which the language of instruction is French into a system in which the language of instruction is English, a change in language that represents a common situation for refugees. Finally, most of the research on refugees in Uganda has taken place among Sudanese communities; there is a sizeable Congolese population in Uganda and it is not as well-represented in the research. While this study focuses on the situation of Congolese refugees in schools, it nevertheless deals with sites of access to education which are common to many refugees in Uganda and the results are thus generalisable.

The research findings suggest that access to education for refugees is largely determined by the setting in which the refugee lives. Access is interpreted broadly and includes not only the number and percentage of children enrolled in school but also the ability for a refugee child to access—or benefit from—the education once he or she is in the classroom. Over the course of this paper, factors affecting the access of refugee children to education are identified and evaluated. First, the financial costs of education, especially in urban areas, limit the number of refugees who can go to school. Second, the lack of qualified teachers, particularly in rural settings, impinges on the quality of education available to refugees. Third, English as a language of instruction means that refugee children must repeat classes, and they are often old socially for the level of education to which they find themselves limited by language. Fourth, immense social stability is created for refugee children in situations where there is integration of refugee and national pupils, as the context of displacement is somewhat normalised. Finally, this study examines the need for increased co-ordination of services between UNHCR, its implementing partners, and district education officials in order to improve overall access to education for refugee children in Uganda.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 presents a framework for analysis of the education of refugees, outlining both the global context and the specific educational context of Uganda. In Section 3, each of four sites of access to education for refugees in Uganda is identified. The type of school and its development is outlined; the school is situated in its geographical, economic, and social context; and, through ethnographic observations and interviews, the school is presented as a case study. Section 4 synthesises the information presented in the previous section and identifies themes that emerge in the study of access to education. It employs these themes to organise specific conclusions of the research. In Section 5, recommendations are made and interventions proposed to increase access to education for refugees in Uganda.

2 EDUCATION OF REFUGEES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

2.1 A Global Perspective

UNHCR is the international body mandated with the provision of education for refugees. It advocates for “education as a basic right” in the context of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. As stated in the 2002 Education Sector Policy and Guidelines Draft from the UNHCR Geneva, “UNHCR will ensure and advocate for basic education of female and male refugees and other persons of concern as a matter of priority and as part of the process of finding durable solutions and enhancement of their capacity for security and protection.”⁴

UNHCR identifies four reasons why education is essential in refugee situations. First, education is a human right. Within this right, as outlined in numerous international conventions and most specifically in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, primary education should be both free at the point of delivery and universal. Secondary education should be available and accessible to all. And tertiary education should be accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means (see Appendix II: Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention). Second, education is a tool of protection. Through education, the exploitation or abuses of children can be identified, as can children who are in need of medical or psychological attention. In addition, education promotes understanding of society and the rights and responsibilities of individuals, building stronger communities that ultimately protect children. Third, education helps to meet psychosocial needs. Due to the disruption of children’s lives through conflict and displacement, there is a great need for structured activities that provide a sense of routine and normality. Education fills such a role. Finally, education promotes self-reliance and social and economic development by building ‘human capital.’ This human capital is needed for the future reconstruction and development of displaced persons’ areas of origin or settlement.

The first priority of UNHCR in the provision of education is the enrolment and retention of all refugee children in primary education. In many of the refugee-hosting countries worldwide, education is universal only at a primary level and the education of refugees, by necessity, takes place in this context. The focus of refugee education, thus, is to provide education of an equivalent quality to that received in local schools.⁵ Some programmes augment the provision of primary education, depending on the country and the individual situation of the camp or settlement, to include the possibility of secondary and tertiary schooling, early childhood and pre-school education, non-formal education such as literacy and numeracy for adults, recreation, health education, and peace education.

⁴ UNHCR Geneva. 2002. *Education Sector Policy and Guidelines (Draft)*. Geneva: UNHCR, p.1

⁵ It is important for education to take place in context and to consider local conditions and standards. However, most refugees live in developing countries where governments struggle to educate their own citizens according to high standards. As a result, the quality of education provided for refugees is also often deficient. A report by the UNHCR Inspection and Evaluation Service, *Review of UNHCR’s refugee education activities* (1997), concluded: “Many refugee schools encounter problems maintaining an acceptable level of performance,” p.15. For further discussion of this issue, see Brown, Timothy. “Improving Quality and Attainment in Refugee School.” In *Learning for a Better Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*. URL: <http://www.unhcr.ch/pubs/epau/learningfuture/learningtoc.htm>.

UNHCR-sponsored education is not the only context in which refugees are educated. Refugees often see education as a means to a better future. They are therefore active in seeking out ways to ensure that their children have access to high-quality education, often outside of UNHCR settlements, even if it means creating that education themselves. In most countries, the legal provision of education when a refugee lives outside an UNHCR-sponsored settlement is in question. Thus, much of the alternative education of refugees that is in fact taking place may be against the laws of the host countries. The laws that keep refugee children out of national education systems are set up to protect host communities from a drain on scarce resources. Nevertheless, refugees are increasingly seeking the possibility of education for their children outside of refugee settlements and within stable national systems. In some countries, including Uganda, UNHCR and host governments are piloting programmes to integrate refugees into these national systems in an effort to promote development both of refugees and their hosts.

2.2 The Case of Uganda

Education of refugee children in Uganda takes place in the general context of education in this country.⁶ Major educational reforms began in Uganda in the late 1970s when an Education Review Committee under Idi Amin Dada proposed the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) over a period of 15 years. Another commission on education was created by Milton Obote in 1980, but it was not until January 1997 that a programme of Universal Primary Education was introduced, this time under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government.⁷ This programme exempts four children per family from paying primary school fees. The number of children enrolled in primary school increased that year from 2.6 million to 5.5 million. By 1999, 6.5 million children were enrolled in primary school in Uganda, equivalent to a net enrolment rate of 85%.^{8,9}

The existence of UPE does not mean that primary school education in Uganda is completely free. Parents or guardians must often support the cost of school buildings, books, writing materials, school meals, and uniforms. The result has been the development of schools that—while licensed by the government and receiving government aid for teachers' salaries—do charge school fees, which are prohibitive for many families, especially in urban areas. At these schools, the school fees pay for construction of new

⁶ See National Curriculum Development Centre. May 1999. *Uganda Primary School Curriculum: Volume One*. Kampala: National Curriculum Development Centre, pp.v-x for a summary of the aims and objectives of education in Uganda.

⁷ Important documents to consider when examining these educational reforms in Uganda are: the Report of the Education Policy Review Commission (1989), the Government White Paper on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Report of the Education Policy Review Commission (1992), and the Report of the Curriculum Review Task Force (1993).

⁸ Office of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Uganda. September 2000. *Uganda: Promise, Performance and Future Challenges (Common Country Assessment of the United Nations agencies working in Uganda)*. Kampala: The United Nations System in Uganda, p.27.

⁹ The introduction of policy which increases educational enrolment has been identified as an action which directly improves the quality of life of the poor; see Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. February 2001. *Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2001-2003)[Volume 1]*. Kampala: MFPED, pp.123, 136.

school buildings, the hiring of teachers to decrease the pupil-teacher ratio, and the expansion of recreational and technology programmes. In addition, the quality of education at UPE primary schools that do not charge school fees—and are therefore accessible to most families—is low. There are insufficient schools, classrooms, and trained teachers for the influx of pupils who have joined primary school since the introduction of UPE in 1997. Indeed, for every permanent classroom in Uganda, there are on average 228 pupils.¹⁰ As concluded in a study of the ActionAid-Uganda/Centre for Basic Research, “UPE has improved children’s access to classroom buildings but not to quality primary education.”¹¹

Within this Ugandan context, UNHCR strives to meet three overall objectives in its education programmes:

- “Increase access of refugees/nationals hosting community, girls and boys, to good quality formal education.”
- “Increase capacity of refugee and hosting community to become self-supporting and responsible for its members with special needs, including women, adolescents and children, and to maintain peace.”
- “Promote self-reliance in education and continue to strengthen co-ordination with the District Education office (DEO), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) so that they can play an effective role in the planning, implementation, monitoring and management of refugee education.”¹²

These overall objectives guide UNHCR programmes in both the formal and informal education sector. Some of the diverse programmes offered to refugees by UNHCR in Uganda include support for secondary school with a cost-sharing strategy; nursery and pre-school education; teacher training; adult literacy; peace education; reproductive health and HIV/AIDS education; and sports and recreation activities. The focus, however, is on free primary education and the enrolment and retention of all refugee children in school. As is appropriate in the context of Ugandan education and that provided by UNHCR to refugee children in Uganda, this study is situated within this sphere of primary education.

3 EDUCATION OF REFUGEES IN UGANDA: SITES OF ACCESS

The literature on education of refugees is limited in its scope. It focuses primarily on education in emergency situations within the confines of camp or settlement structures. In many countries, however, including Uganda, education of refugees takes place in multiple

¹⁰ Office of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Uganda. September 2000. *Uganda: Promise, Performance and Future Challenges (Common Country Assessment of the United Nations agencies working in Uganda)*. Kampala: The United Nations System in Uganda, p.29.

¹¹ Opolot, S.J. 2001. “How Universal is Universal Primary Education? A Case Study on Access and Equity Dimensions in Arua, Gulu and Selected Schools in Kampala.” A report prepared for the ActionAid-Uganda/CBR study on “Contradictions in UPE in Uganda: Case Studies on Access, Relevance, Quality and Gender Dimensions.” Kampala, Uganda.

¹² Jobolingo, D. February 2002. “UNHCR BO-Kampala: Education for Refugees in Uganda, Education Strategy for 2002/2003.” UNHCR-BO Kampala: Community Services/Education Sector, p.1.

and diverse settings. These sites of access are an important area of investigation as they provide examples of the effects and consequences of different models of schooling and can thus be used to inform future policy formation.¹³

As outlined in the introduction, four principal sites of access to education have been identified over the course of this study. In Section 3, each of these four sites is described. First, the type of school is outlined and background on the development of the particular school-type given. Second, the school is situated in the context of the geographical, economic, and social conditions in the region of Uganda in which it is located. And, finally, the school itself is presented as a case study, drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews from the schools. The aim is thus two-fold: to create generalisable models of the sites in which refugee children access education in Uganda; and, at the same time, to focus on individual schools to provide readers with detailed descriptions of the daily life of specific schools that represent common educational situations for refugee children in Uganda.

3.1 Primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by refugees and some nationals: The Case of Kashojwa Primary School in Nakivale Settlement

3.1.1 UNHCR sponsorship in schools

Forty-two percent of the refugees registered with UNCHR by June 2002 were school-age children, between the ages of 5 and 17 years (79,698 children out of 187,683 total refugees).¹⁴ UNHCR supports 84 refugee primary schools in the eight settlements that come under its mandate in Uganda.¹⁵ In December 2002, 51,194 refugee children were enrolled in these 84 schools.¹⁶ The schools in this category derive their main source of funding from UNHCR; they are set up to cater primarily to refugee children. However, in most of these schools, there are also national pupils in attendance, with the number and percentage varying according to the settlement and the school.¹⁷ The level of involvement of the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES) and district level education officials also varies from school to school. In some schools sponsored by UNHCR, the government manages the school completely, including all hiring of staff and payment of teachers' salaries. At other schools, there is little involvement of government personnel.

Within these primary schools, UNHCR provides free primary education to all refugees in the form of payment of school fees for each refugee child. In addition, UNHCR aids in the development of infrastructure for schools including provision of scholastic materials,

¹³ Due to the difficulty of counting refugees, especially in urban areas, reliable figures regarding the numbers of refugee children who access education in each setting are not available. Statistics available from UNHCR for UNHCR-sponsored schools are presented with the appropriate case studies.

¹⁴ Jobolingo, Dorothy. July 2002. "Mid Year Progress Report: Education 2002." UNHCR-BO Kampala: Community Services/Education Sector, p.1.

¹⁵ UNHCR BO-Kampala. 2002. Education Statistics Report.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UNHCR data suggest 14,343 national pupils in refugee schools out of a total of 79,698 which is a ratio of 5:1 refugee: national, nation-wide. (From Jobolingo, Dorothy. July 2002. "Mid Year Progress Report: Education 2002." UNHCR-BO Kampala: Community Services/Education Sector, p.1.)

building materials, and school equipment and furniture.¹⁸ Also central to UNHCR work with the schools it supports is teacher training, both through in-services and through national institutions and systems.¹⁹ In each settlement, UNHCR has an implementing partner that carries out the day-to-day running of education programmes.²⁰ As a result, programmes can vary from settlement to settlement depending on the expertise, mission, and effectiveness of the implementing partner; nevertheless, all are organised according to the principles outlined in Section 2.

The site of access to education for most refugee children in Uganda is a school of this type, an UNHCR-sponsored primary school within a refugee settlement.

3.1.2 Background to Nakivale Settlement

Nakivale Refugee Settlement is located in Mbarara District in Western Uganda on 86 square kilometres of land, approximately 60 kilometres south of the town of Mbarara. At the end of April 2003, 14,729 refugees were living in Nakivale, including 12,311 Rwandese, 1,154 Congolese, 838 Somalis, 236 Barundi, 82 Kenyans, 52 Ethiopians, and 56 Sudanese. Fifty-three percent of the refugees are male, 47 percent are female.²¹

Nakivale refugee settlement was created in 1960 in response to an influx of Rwandese Tutsi refugees fleeing the Hutu regime that had taken power in Rwanda.²² At that time, the colonial government acquired land in the Nakivale area—close to the border with Rwanda and with a low population of nationals, due to infestation with tsetse fly—that was owned by the Ankole King, in exchange for land in the Nyabushozi area of Mbarara. This land, which would become Nakivale refugee settlement, has hosted varying numbers of refugees since this time. Most of these refugees have been from Rwanda, however, the diversity of nationalities represented in Nakivale has also made it unique among settlements in Uganda. At times, this diversity has created complex situations and sometimes conflict.²³ Moreover, tension between refugees and nationals over access to land in the Nakivale area is one of the largest issues facing the settlement at this time; as the Camp Commandant states, “all problems originate from land.”^{24,25}

The implementing partner in Nakivale is Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), a national and autonomous branch of the International Committee of the Red Cross and part of the

¹⁸ Education and Community Services Sector. “An Overview of UNHCR Education Programme in Uganda.” UNHCR BO- Kampala: Education and Community Services Sector, p.2.

¹⁹ Jobolingo, D. February 2002. “UNHCR BO-Kampala: Education for Refugees in Uganda, Education Strategy for 2002/2003.” UNHCR-BO Kampala: Community Services/Education Sector, p.1.

²⁰ Research for this study was carried out in three settings with three different implementing partners, which are as follows: the implementing partner in Nakivale settlement is Uganda Red Cross Society, in Kyaka II settlement is Office of the Prime Minister, and in Kampala is Inter-Aid.

²¹ Statistics compiled by the Camp Commandant in Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

²² Interview, David Mugenyi, Camp Commandant, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

²³ Interview, Linnie Kesselly, Senior Community Services/Education Co-ordinator, Kampala, 28th April 2003.

²⁴ Interview, David Mugenyi, Camp Commandant, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

²⁵ For a thorough discussion of the issue of land in Nakivale settlement, see Bagenda, Emmanuel, Angela Naggaga, and Elliott Smith. May 2003. “Land Problems in Nakivale Settlement and the Implications for Refugee Protection in Uganda.” RLP working paper No. 8.

International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.²⁶ Since 1994, URCS has been the implementing partner in both Nakivale and Oruchinga refugee settlements.²⁷ Their mission is “to mobilize [sic] the power of humanity for improving the lives of the vulnerable in Uganda.”²⁸ In Nakivale refugee settlement, their work covers a number of spheres: community services, education, health, water and sanitation, relief distribution, and camp management.²⁹ Within the sphere of education, URCS pays some teachers salaries, pays school fees for refugee children, works to address issues of education with the district education officials, provides scholastic materials, and aids in infrastructure development.³⁰

3.1.3 Case Study School

Kashojwa Primary School holds an important place within Nakivale settlement. It is located close to the base camp and to the main trading centres. It has also been the only school in the area for long periods of time and, thus, many educated people in the region attended this school. Indeed, many of the teachers at all three schools in Nakivale settlement themselves attended Kashojwa Primary School as pupils.³¹ The school has been opened and closed over the years in response to the number of refugees in the area. Most recently, it was closed in 1994 when the Rwandese Tutsi repatriated with the changing of government in Rwanda. It remained closed for one year before a Kenyan refugee living in Nakivale petitioned the UNHCR to reopen the school to cater for the refugees remaining in the settlement.³² Kashojwa was thus reopened in 1995.

There are three primary schools in Nakivale settlement. Kashojwa was chosen among these schools as the site of a case study due to the demographics of the school. Neither Juru Primary School nor Kabazana Primary School, the other two schools in the settlement, have any pupils from Congo. In addition, these other two schools have relatively equal numbers of refugees and nationals (Juru has 412 refugees from Rwanda and Burundi and 502 nationals;³³ Kabazana has 437 refugees from Rwanda and 293 nationals³⁴). Refugees, on the other hand, dominate the population of Kashojwa Primary School, and it was chosen to represent this common situation in schools that refugees attend.

²⁶ URCS website. URL: <http://www.redcrossug.org/aboutus.php>. Accessed: 11th May 2003.

²⁷ URCS website. URL: <http://www.redcrossug.org/disaster.php>. Accessed: 11th May 2003.

²⁸ URCS. URL: <http://www.redcrossug.org/aboutus.php>. Accessed: 11th May 2003.

²⁹ Interview, Arinaitwe Frank, camp manager for Uganda Red Cross Society, Nakivale refugee settlement, 5th May 2003.

³⁰ Interview, Kiwanuka Monica, Co-ordinator for Community Services and Education, Uganda Red Cross Society, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

³¹ The continued presence of Rwandese Tutsis as teachers in refugee settlement schools was mentioned to the researcher numerous times as a problem area. Most of the Rwandese refugees who currently live in Nakivale settlement are Hutu and some described feeling threatened by “old Rwandese nationals” who are Tutsi and who are now in positions of power within the settlement. See RLP working paper No. 8, “Land Problems in Nakivale Settlement and the Implications for Refugee Protection in Uganda,” for further discussion of the “old Rwandese national” population.

³² Interview, Renson Nangendo-Ngassi, teacher at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 2nd May 2003.

³³ Statistics from first term 2003, obtained from deputy Headmaster of Juru Primary School, 5th May 2003.

³⁴ Statistics from 2002 (2003 numbers not available), obtained from deputy Headmaster of Kabazana Primary School, 5th May 2003.

Kashojwa Primary School is the largest school in Bukanga Country. It is a Grade I school³⁵ with a total population of 1,822 pupils with 26 teachers. The motto of the school, proudly written and illustrated on the front of the school, is “To produce self-reliant citizens of the nations.”³⁶ Indeed, the school population is composed of children from many nations: 1,212 pupils from Rwanda, 348 from Congo, 35 from Somalia, 12 from Kenya, 5 from Burundi, 4 from Sudan, and 206 from Uganda.³⁷ Kashojwa has three permanent structures made from concrete; the floors are sand, the roofs are tin, and most of the windows have wooden shutters. There are also two non-permanent structures, made from wood planks, that have been built recently to accommodate the swelling numbers of pupils, especially in the younger classes. While most of the classrooms have adequate benches, the P.1 classrooms—which host 586 pupils—do not have any furniture; there, children sit on stones.

Overcrowding at Kashojwa is an issue that affects teaching and learning. One Rwandese refugee who has been successful in small businesses within the settlement sends his daughter to boarding school in Mbarara because “it is too crowded here.”³⁸ Indeed, there is a sense of chaos within the school. There are too many pupils for the number of teachers and sometimes classes simply remain without a teacher; the pupil to teacher ratio in each class is approximately 100 to one. By way of example, the moment that the bell rings to signify break time, children stream out of classrooms, having been waiting at the doors; this serves as a sign that all available time is not being taken up with teaching and learning. Nevertheless, Kashojwa Primary School continues to attract large numbers of pupils due to the presence of qualified teachers (18 out of 26)³⁹ and to the increasingly high academic standards it achieves. In 2002, Kashojwa had the greatest number of pupils with a first grade pass on the Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) in Bukanga County.

The issue of nationality never seems to be far below the surface of discussions at Kashojwa. As the Headmaster explains,

Harmonising people from different countries. It is just a miracle, as I see it, a miracle to harmonise them to fight for one thing because there are so many differences between the nationalities, the parents, between children themselves, and at times between even teachers.⁴⁰

³⁵ Grade I schools have facilities of a certain standard; for example, they have permanent structures, double streams in each class, amenities such as latrines and staff accommodation, and a head teacher with at least one deputy. The system of grading schools at one time also depended upon the number of pupils, although, with the introduction of UPE, numbers have changed too rapidly for the grading system to reflect them; usually, however, a Grade I school would have more than 1,000 pupils.

³⁶ Personal observation at Kashojwa Primary School, 29th April to 7th May 2003.

³⁷ Statistics from first term 2003, obtained from Headmaster of Kashojwa Primary School, 29th April 2003.

³⁸ Personal communication, male Rwandese refugee, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

³⁹ Teachers attribute the high number of qualified teachers to the presence of teacher housing at the school. The other schools in Nakivale settlement do not have teacher housing and do not attract the same number of qualified teachers.

⁴⁰ Interview, Twinomugisha Victor, Headmaster of Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April 2003.

Nakivale settlement itself is set up in ‘zones’ that are named after the ethnicity of the group that lives there. Thus, children will say “I live in the Munyamulenge zone” or “I live in the BaKongo zone” or “I live in the Somali zone.”^{41,42} When children are asked to draw their friends, most draw friends of the same national origin. When asked about friends of other nationalities, children often respond: “We don’t live together.”⁴³ Children are also often grouped together by their teachers into national groups. At one end-of-day parade, a teacher demanded an explanation for the number of children who were not present. “Where are the Somalis?” he yelled. “They always run away before the end of the day...do I need to chase them all the way to Mogadishu?”⁴⁴

The stereotypes that result from this kind of grouping of children are obvious in pupils’ responses to questions about how children at Kashojwa get along. One pupil explains how pupils classify themselves: “Some say ‘We are Congolese,’ others say ‘Rwandese,’ some are from Burundi and others are from Sudan. Everyone separates themselves.”⁴⁵ Another explains why he, himself, does not have friends of other nationalities: “I see that [pupils of other nationalities] are not happy with me...Even when I ask them a question, they do not respond to me.”⁴⁶ “Somalis are hostile,”⁴⁷ says another. “I do not know their culture,”⁴⁸ one girl says of other refugees, explaining why she does not have friends who are not Congolese. Interviews suggest that Ugandan nationals feel even more isolated than refugees; “Eeii, these Banyarwanda. You see, if you talk to them, and say touch on their book, she may even beat you. So if you don’t want to quarrel or fight with her, don’t touch their books. But Ugandans, you can touch it and they don’t abuse you.”^{49,50}

Four flags fly outside Kashojwa Primary School, representing the different stakeholders in the school: the Ugandan national flag, the UNHCR flag, the Uganda Red Cross flag, and the school’s own flag.⁵¹ Indeed, although the vast majority of pupils at Kashojwa are refugees, it is now a government school. As Kiwanuka Monica, Community Services and Education Co-ordinator of the URCS explains,

⁴¹ Interviews with refugee pupils at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003 and 2nd May 2003.

⁴² For further discussion of the ordering of space within refugee settlements, see Foucault, Michael. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage; and Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.137.

⁴³ Interviews with refugee pupils at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003 and 2nd May 2003.

⁴⁴ Deputy Headmaster, personal observation at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April 2003.

⁴⁵ Interview, refugee pupil 1 at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

⁴⁶ Interview, refugee pupil 2 at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

⁴⁷ Interview, refugee pupil 3 at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

⁴⁸ Interview, refugee pupil 4 at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 30th April 2003.

⁴⁹ Interview, national pupil 1 at Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 2nd May 2003.

⁵⁰ The question of social integration of refugee children from different nationalities and of refugee and national children is one deserving of more in-depth investigation. This topic will be further addressed in Section 4.

⁵¹ Personal observation, Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April to 5th May 2003.

All of these schools are government schools. So the government has the responsibility of posting their teachers. So it's not our responsibility....We only put in refugee teachers for the sake of the refugee children. Because ... somehow they might be mistreated by the nationals....That's why we are having refugee teachers in those schools.⁵²

Responsibility for Kashojwa Primary School is indeed shared between URCS, as implementing partner for UNHCR, and the Mbarara District, through the District Education Office (DEO). One of the central issues in this relationship is the co-ordination of funding. URCS employs eight teachers out of the 26 at Kashojwa and pays school fees for all of the refugee pupils.⁵³ The district employs 18 teachers and pays UPE funds for all of the pupils in the school, regardless of whether they are national or refugee.⁵⁴ In this way, the Uganda government is heavily subsidising the education of refugees in Mbarara District, as refugee pupils are “double-counted” for the purposes of funding.⁵⁵ This issue will be further addressed through the next case study.

3.2 Primary schools in refugee settlements, attended primarily by nationals and some refugees: The Case of Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II Settlement

3.2.1 Government-Aided Schools in Refugee Settlements

The Symposium, ‘Assistance to Refugees in Africa: Alternative Viewpoints,’ gathered together representatives of refugees, governments, national and international bodies, refugee workers and academics. Held in Oxford, England from 27th to 31st March 1984, this Symposium generated resolutions and recommendations that aim at promoting durable solutions to the situations of refugees in Africa. One of the spheres of recommendations deals with education, and one of the recommendations specifically highlights the possible relationship between education of refugees and education in the host community:

That refugee education policy always be developed with regard to the host country's educational policy, in order to optimize [sic] the use of resources for the good of both refugees and the host community.⁵⁶

Refugees have lived in Uganda for many years and are unlikely to be able to return home in the foreseeable future. By the late 1990s, policy makers were increasingly encouraged to look for a more sustainable solution to this protracted refugee situation.⁵⁷ At the same

⁵² Interview, Kiwanuka Monica, Co-ordinator for Community Services and Education, Uganda Red Cross Society, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

⁵³ Interview, Kiwanuka Monica, Co-ordinator for Community Services and Education, Uganda Red Cross Society, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

⁵⁴ Interview, Tindikira Michael, Inspector of Schools Bukanga County, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

⁵⁵ This provision of education is in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention, Article 22, Section 1: “The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.”

⁵⁶ Harrell-Bond, B.E. 1986. *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.370.

⁵⁷ According to Crisp, the label, ‘protracted refugee situation’ is applied when a refugee has been in exile for more than five years and still has little prospect of finding a durable solution. See Jeff Crisp. 2002. “No

time, the need to operate in co-ordination with the wider service-delivery structure of Uganda, “to optimize [sic] the use of resources for the good of both refugees and the host community” as stated above, has been recognised. The result is the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS).

The SRS was jointly designed by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR Uganda in May 1999, the culmination of a process that officially began in 1998. It was conceptualised specifically for Sudanese refugees living in Arua, Adjumani and Moyo, recognising the long-term nature of their situation.⁵⁸ Its overarching goal, as stated, is “to integrate the services provided to the refugees into regular government structures and policies”⁵⁹ and, in so doing, to move “from relief to development.”⁶⁰ As Dorothy Jobolingo, Education Advisor to UNHCR states, “[w]e cannot treat it as a relief situation where we give them something to eat every day. That is not a durable solution....The SRS is not theory. It is a practical solution.”⁶¹

In order to bring about a change from relief to development, the SRS emphasises the dual objectives of empowerment and integration, in order “to improve the standard of living of the people in Moyo, Arua and Adjumani districts, including the refugees.”⁶² It seeks to give refugees the ability “to stand on their own and build their self-esteem” through gaining skills and knowledge to both take back to their home countries when they return, and to leave behind sustainable structures.⁶³ At the time it was written, it was envisaged that, by 2003, refugees would be able to grow or buy their own food, access and pay for basic services, and maintain self-sustaining community structures. The SRS was designed to be implemented at a district level, with OPM and UNHCR playing co-ordinating roles, and “[ensuring] harmonisation of policy.”^{64,65}

Education is a sector directly affected by implementation of the SRS policy. Of particular relevance to this study, the SRS advocates “integrating refugee primary and secondary schools into the district education system.”⁶⁶ In so doing, the SRS aims to develop “mechanisms for the inclusion of the refugees into the Universal Primary Education (UPE) being implemented in Uganda” and to ensure that “the conditional grants provided to the

solutions in sight: the problem of protracted refugee situations in Africa.” Paper prepared for a symposium on the multidimensionality of displacement in Africa, Kyoto, Japan.

⁵⁸ Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR Uganda. 1999. “Strategy Paper: Self-Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999-2006,” p.10.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.2.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.2.

⁶¹ Dorothy Jobolingo, UNHCR Education Advisor, at UNHCR Community Services/Education Co-ordination Meeting, Entebbe, 1st April 2003.

⁶² Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR Uganda. 1999. “Strategy Paper: Self-Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999-2005,” p. 8.

⁶³ Ibid, p.2.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.9.

⁶⁵ In addition, the SRS emphasises that UNHCR will maintain its primary international mandate to protect refugees, and will keep a presence in districts where there is a “sufficiently large presence of refugees.”

⁶⁶ Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR Uganda. 1999. “Strategy Paper: Self-Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999-2005,” p. 32.

districts for UPE...be increased to include refugees.”⁶⁷ Under this system, schools would receive an allocation of UPE funds from the Ugandan government for all pupils, regardless of whether they are refugees or nationals, in addition to funds provided by the UNHCR designed to specifically target refugee education.

Although Kyaka II refugee settlement was not included in the conceptualisation of the SRS, the abundance of land and the stability of surrounding national communities have been conducive to the integration of services in this settlement. While schools in Kyaka II have received and continue to receive assistance from UNHCR, “they are like any other schools because to us those schools are also government schools.”⁶⁸ Indeed, refugee pupils are counted in the overall population of a school, and UPE funds are granted on the basis of those numbers,⁶⁹ UNHCR supplements the amount the school receives with school fees paid for each refugee child.⁷⁰ As the District Education Officer (DEO) for Kyenjojo says, “I grew up and found that these people are studying together.... [T]here is no way you can say that refugees go there [points one direction] and those who are not refugees go there [points in the other direction].... [T]he goal is to have the child educated. So we don’t separate them.”⁷¹

3.2.2 Background to Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

Kyaka II Refugee Settlement is located in Kyenjojo District in Western Uganda on 81 square kilometres of land,^{72,73} approximately 70 kilometres by road from the town of Mubende. At the end of December 2002, 3,159 refugees were living in Kyaka II, including 1,905 Rwandese, 1,242 Congolese, and 12 Kenyans. Fifty percent of the refugees are male, 50 are female.⁷⁴

The Kyaka area first hosted refugees in the 1950s following the political turmoil in Rwanda that led to the flight of thousands of Tutsi into Uganda.⁷⁵ Kyaka II was created as a settlement to host these refugees in 1959, and many of them stayed until 1994 when it became safe to return to Rwanda.⁷⁶ Since 1994, Kyaka II has hosted primarily Congolese refugees and Rwandese of Hutu origin.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is the implementing partner for UNHCR in Kyaka II. This office of the Ugandan government has been implementing in Kyaka II settlement

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.32.

⁶⁸ Interview, Mugisa Charles, Inspector of Schools Kyaka County, Kampala, 4th April 2003.

⁶⁹ Mugisa Charles, Inspector of Schools Kyaka County, at UNHCR Community Services/Education Co-ordination Meeting, Entebbe, 1st April 2003.

⁷⁰ Personal communication, Atwooki Imedla, Co-ordinator of Community Services/Education for OPM, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 25th March 2003.

⁷¹ Interview, Asiimwe Douglas, DEO Kyenjojo District, Kampala, 25th April 2003.

⁷² Interview, George Bomera, assistant camp commandant, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 25th March 2003.

⁷³ Kyaka II refugee settlement was regazetted in 1994 after the repatriation of Rwandese refugees. At this time the area of the settlement decreased from 220 square kilometres to 81 square kilometres.

⁷⁴ UNHCR-BO Kampala. December 2002. “Refugee Statistics as of End of December 2002.”

⁷⁵ Barongo, Yolamu Rufunda. “Problems of Integrating Banyarwanda Refugees Among Local Communities in Uganda.” In A.G.G. Gingyera Pinyewa (Ed). 1998. *Uganda and the Problem of Refugees*. Kampala: Makerere University Press, pp.118-122.

⁷⁶ “Refugee Life,” a broadcast of Common Ground. Air date: 11th March 1997.

since the withdrawal of the American Refugee Committee (ARC) in 1997 following the repatriation of Congolese refugees. Two settlements in Uganda were handed over to the OPM in 1997 as part of a move to declare them self-reliant and place them under the jurisdiction of the Ugandan government: Kiryandongo⁷⁷ and Kyaka II. As Linnie Kesselly explains, however, there have been serious problems in the implementation of programmes in the settlements under OPM. “Somehow the money just didn’t reach the settlement,” she says of Kyaka II.⁷⁸ As a result of these problems, the implementing partner in Kyaka II was set to become the Uganda Red Cross Society as of 1st April 2003; however, that handover has been held up in contract negotiations between URCS and the UNHCR.⁷⁹

3.2.3 Case Study School

Bujubuli Primary School opened in 1984 and has, since that time, served both the refugees and the nationals who have made their home in the area. It is a Grade I school, categorised as such before the repatriation of Congolese refugees in 1997. Now, however, there are only 337 pupils, making it the smallest school in Kyaka II settlement. There are three primary schools in Kyaka II: Bukere Primary School with 898 pupils and 15 teachers;⁸⁰ Bujubuli Primary School with 337 pupils and 13 teachers;⁸¹ and Sweswe Primary School with 448 pupils and 15 teachers.⁸² Bujubuli was chosen as the case study school due to its demographics. Located close to the settlement headquarters, Bujubuli is also on the edge of the settlement and surrounded by national communities. The population of nationals in the school is high with 160 refugees and 177 nationals; this relatively equal number of refugees and nationals represents a different situation from Kashojwa in Nakivale settlement. In addition, Bujubuli has the greatest number of Congolese refugees.

At Bujubuli Primary School, there are two classroom blocks. One was just finished for the 2003 school year, having been funded by the district.⁸³ Despite the new construction, there is still a lack of classrooms for the pupils at Bujubuli and one class, P.5, studies under a tree on the school compound. This lack of facilities distresses the pupils in P.5; while many pupils in P.4 describe the new building they study from with cement floors and metal bars on the windows, pupils in P.5 draw a tiny tree in the middle of the page when asked to draw their school.⁸⁴ The pupil to teacher ratio at Bujubuli, however, is much lower than at some schools in the area and than at Kashojwa. No class has more than 60 pupils for one teacher.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ See Kaiser, Tania. 2002. “UNHCR’s withdrawal from Kiryandongo: anatomy of a handover.” *Refugee Survey Quarterly*. 21(1). pp.201-227.

⁷⁸ Interview, Linnie Kesselly, Senior Community Services/Education Co-ordinator, Kampala, 28th April 2003.

⁷⁹ During the time of fieldwork, OPM was the implementing partner in Kyaka II refugee settlement.

⁸⁰ Statistics collected from Headmaster of Bukere Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 8th April 2003.

⁸¹ Statistics collected from Head teacher for OPM at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 11th March 2003.

⁸² Statistics collected from Headmaster at Sweswe Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 8th April 2003.

⁸³ Personal communication with settlement and district officials, 23rd March to 10th April 2003.

⁸⁴ Interviews with pupils at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 25th, 26th, and 27th March 2003.

⁸⁵ Personal observation at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 24th to 28th March 2003.

The school motto at Bujubuli is “To learn for a better future.” Pupils struggle to learn effectively at this school, however, due to a lack of qualified teachers and the absence of a guiding mission. Only five of the 13 teachers at the school are qualified. Teachers cite the lack of suitable accommodation at the school, or even in the area, as the reason why the school cannot attract qualified teachers. In addition, of the 11 days that research was conducted at the school over a period of one month, the Headmaster was never present.⁸⁶ This lack of leadership hinders teaching and learning at Bujubuli Primary School.

Though lacking in academic rigour, a sense of co-operation among pupils and teachers and between teachers and pupils pervades Bujubuli. The school feels peaceful; it does not feel like a conflict or displacement situation. It is located far from insecure borders and there is enough land for people to grow their own food. One refugee in Kakoni area says: “here we can sleep well at night whereas in Congo, we could be assassinated in our homes.”⁸⁷ The integration of refugee and national pupils in the school makes it feel like any rural school in the region.⁸⁸ Refugees do not all sit together in class but integrate themselves with nationals by their own choice.⁸⁹ In fact, Bujubuli feels more stable than other schools due to the continued presence, aid, and supervision of both OPM/UNHCR and district education officials.

At this school, two flags fly: the Ugandan national flag and the flag of the Batooro people.⁹⁰ At afternoon parades, the children sing the Ugandan anthem, the Ugandan school anthem, and the anthem of the Toro Kingdom. There is a sense that all of the children of the school are “young women and men of Uganda... uniting for a better Uganda.”⁹¹

3.3 Government-aided schools in urban areas, attended primarily by nationals: The Case of Katwe Primary School

3.3.1 Government-Aided Schools in Urban areas

The context of education in Uganda has been described above. The specific situation of education in Kampala, however, warrants special attention. Kampala is by far the largest urban centre in Uganda with a population of 1,208,544; Gulu, the next largest city, has a population of 113,144.⁹² In December 2001, there were 80 government-aided UPE schools in Kampala and 800 licensed private schools.⁹³ By that time, there were 190,000 pupils

⁸⁶ Personal observation at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 7th March to 10th April 2003.

⁸⁷ Personal communication, male refugee from Congo, Kakoni area, Kyaka II settlement, 10th April 2003.

⁸⁸ Personal observation at Kabweeza Primary School, Kyaka County, 7th April to 10th April 2003.

⁸⁹ Personal observation in P.5 class, Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 24th March 2003.

⁹⁰ The Batooro people traditionally live in the Toro Kingdom area of Kabarole and Kasese districts.

⁹¹ From the Ugandan school anthem.

⁹² Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). 2002. “2002 Housing and Population Census.”

⁹³ Private schools are regulated by the Education Act of 1970, which outlines a procedure for establishing a private school as well as standards to be met. The extreme growth in numbers of private schools in Kampala is often attributed to the hiring policy of the government. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government did not hire on any new teachers; teachers who qualified, therefore, had to begin their own (private) schools to create jobs. For further discussion, see Ssekamwa, J.C. 2000. *History and Development of Education in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, pp.188-190.

enrolled in school under UPE.⁹⁴ On average, that would mean over 2,000 pupils per school. The guidelines governing UPE in Kampala are also different from those in rural areas of the country; while aiming to promote universal access to school, UPE schools in Kampala charge school fees of US\$10,400 per pupil per term.⁹⁵ In addition, there is overcrowding of classrooms. As explained by a teacher at Katwe Primary School:

With UPE, the classes are crowded. We have so many [pupils] and the rooms are not big enough for it. So the government should look into it, at least to expand and build new buildings and recruit new teachers. We are overloaded... I was alone man-ning P.4 with one hundred children [until last week when a second teacher was added, paid for by school fees collected from parents].⁹⁶

While these school fees mean that there are Kampala families who cannot send their children to school, the quality of education in UPE schools—often as measured in terms of class size—means that any family that can afford to do so, sends their children elsewhere, to private schools.

3.3.2 Background to Katwe Area of Kampala

Katwe is a peri-urban area, just south of Kampala city centre. Katwe Primary School is located in the Kinyoro section of Katwe. For some time, it has been known as a trading centre of smiths; it was the site of the Kabaka of Buganda's metalworks and now, driving along Entebbe road, one can see the work of the smiths of Katwe in the form of security gates and bunk beds.⁹⁷

Many of the families of Katwe make their living through this metalwork or through small trading. As one teacher explains, it is a poor area; “the area in which [the school] is found, it is somehow slummy. So we have a problem, some of the children are unruly according to the places where they come from. Most of the children at school come from those small houses, slums.”⁹⁸ The Headmaster describes the effects of the poverty of Katwe on education in the area: “when you go along the road [in Katwe] during the school time, you will find so many children running and playing around. These are the children I think whose parents cannot meet the financial contribution a parent has to give the school; others, we demand shoes [and] they cannot provide shoes.”⁹⁹

3.3.3 Case Study School

Katwe Primary School was started by the Buganda government in 1953 as a private school. The need for a school in the area developed after the building of the railroad through Kampala City; there were no schools on the east side of the tracks, on the side of Katwe, and young children could not safely cross the tracks in order to attend school. The school began with P.1, P.2, and P.3 and then expanded as the children grew older. In 1966, after

⁹⁴ Jjuuko, E.C. 3 December 2001. “UPE numbers in the city soar to 190,000.” *The Monitor*.

⁹⁵ Jjuuko, E.C. 3 December 2001. “UPE numbers in the city soar to 190,000.” *The Monitor*. And personal communication, Headmaster of Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 18 March 2003.

⁹⁶ Interview, Nabwegamo Jane, Teacher at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

⁹⁷ Interview, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

⁹⁸ Interview, Nabwegamo Jane, Teacher at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

⁹⁹ Interview, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, 19th March 2003.

the Kabaka Mutesa II of Buganda was stripped of his Presidency by Milton Obote and forced into exile, Katwe Primary School came under the control of the Kampala City Council (KCC) and became a City Council School. With the introduction of the UPE policy in 1997, Katwe Primary School became a government-aided school, which is its status at present.

Katwe Primary School has a population of 620 pupils, 339 girls and 289 boys. There are 14 teachers and nine classes, with two streams in each of P.1 and P.4.¹⁰⁰ The school is spread out on two acres of land, on a hill overlooking Kampala City. Four classroom blocks, each with at least three classrooms, are made of concrete slab with tin roofs; there is ample office space and a small library. Gardens have also been planted in the compound. The motto of the school, proudly written on the side of the school building, is “Work for progress.” The sense, when present at the school, is that each member of the school community uses that motto as a guide.¹⁰¹ The mission of the school, as one teacher describes it, is broad: “I hope this education brings [the pupils] to be good citizens.... [W]e try to model [for] them, [how] to become good citizens, to be responsible for themselves and for others.”¹⁰²

The Headmaster praises his teachers for creating a positive environment for teaching and learning at the school. He says, “[t]he teachers are hardworking, they like their work.”¹⁰³ Teachers at Katwe work from the moment they enter the school grounds until the time when the last pupil leaves at the end of the day. When they are not teaching, they sit on pupils’ benches right outside of classroom doors, ready to lend assistance to the teacher who is teaching by fetching a teaching aide or talking with an individual pupil. The teachers meticulously plan their lessons, delineating learning objectives and steps of activities as well as aligning each lesson with the syllabus.¹⁰⁴ Since there is no money in the school budget to purchase teaching materials, the teachers have begun to make teaching aides with the help of the Aga Khan Foundation’s Enhancement of UPE in Kampala (EUPEK) programme.¹⁰⁵ On the wall of the P.5 classroom is a diagram of a “domestic bird digestive system,” drawn with marker on big paper, with shapes of internal organs cut from coloured paper, the bird’s shape accented with gathered feathers. Parts of the digestive system are clearly labelled. The 72 pupils in the class look up at it often when they are finished with other classwork.¹⁰⁶

The teachers at Katwe Primary School are working to improve their teaching skills. They are attempting to move beyond the lecture and call-and-response teaching methods that have dominated Ugandan education for years. In the *Teacher’s Guide to Uganda Primary*

¹⁰⁰ Interview, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

¹⁰¹ Personal observation at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 13th March to 21st March 2003.

¹⁰² Interview, Nabwegamo Jane, Teacher at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

¹⁰³ Interview, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

¹⁰⁴ Personal observation at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 13th March to 21st March 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Personal communication with Aga Khan facilitator at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 17th March 2003; see also “Getting the Best out of Primary Education,” 14 March 2002. *The New Vision*. URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200203140492.html>. Accessed: 12th April 2003.

¹⁰⁶ Classroom observation at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 17th March 2003.

School Curriculum, Volume One, a guideline for “effective teaching, learning and remembering” is outlined:

“We learn and Remember:
 10% of what we hear
 15% of what we see
 20% of what we both see and hear
 40% of what we discuss with others
 80% of what we experience directly or through practical activities
 90% of what we attempt to teach others involving practical activities”¹⁰⁷

Teachers at Katwe are working to operationalise these guidelines: they are creating visual teaching aides; they design classroom activities to involve pupils; they have set-up classroom benches to allow for groupwork and pupil discussions rather than in rows, which focus all attention on the teacher; and they have developed a system of group leaders whereby pupils are held accountable for each other’s learning.¹⁰⁸ In addition, they provide individual attention to pupils, despite the large class sizes. Teachers meet to discuss individual pupils and their work and, in dividing the P.4 class into streams, teachers attempted to create a stream from individual pupils who could work well together.¹⁰⁹ In one P.4 classroom, the whole front wall is decorated with “children’s work,” showcasing the achievements of pupils.¹¹⁰

Out of a school population of 620, there are approximately 20 refugees who attend Katwe Primary School. They are from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Congo. “Sometimes it takes some time to know how many refugees we have at this school. Sometimes we do not know the exact number,” the Headmaster explains. “We do not ask if they are refugees or not, we simply allow them to come to school.”¹¹¹ These refugees attend Katwe under UPE in the same way that a national does; they are subsidised by the government and their families pay an additional US\$10,400 per term. Families who do not pay this contribution are followed up and put under pressure to pay. As a result, many children end up leaving the school when their families cannot pay. Refugee and national children alike worry that they may have to leave school at any time if their families cannot come up with the money that term.¹¹²

Refugees come to Katwe Primary School mainly out of convenience. The Headmaster explains what he has heard from refugee pupils and their families:

Some of them come to this school simply because they have found accommodation around or near this school. Mainly it’s accommodation.
 Others it’s because their friend who came here before is also staying here.

¹⁰⁷ National Curriculum Development Centre. 2000. *Teacher’s Guide to Uganda Primary School Curriculum, Volume One*. Kampala: National Curriculum Development Centre, p.ix.

¹⁰⁸ Personal observation at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 13th March to 21st March 2003.

¹⁰⁹ Personal communication with teachers at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 18th March 2003.

¹¹⁰ Classroom observation at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 18th March 2003.

¹¹¹ Personal communication, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 13th March 2003.

¹¹² Interviews with pupils at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th and 20th March 2003.

Others are recommended to this school because it's a government school and you know there is UPE and they contribute little.¹¹³

One Congolese pupil explains his very specific reason for coming to Katwe: "We asked around to people, which is the best school for me if I want to learn English well? They recommended that I come [to Katwe]."¹¹⁴ This pupil is lucky, however; he has the option of attending Katwe Primary School as his father sends school fees from Canada. Most urban refugee children are not able to afford education, even in UPE schools.

3.4 Self-help schools in urban areas, attended primary by refugees: The Case of Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre (KURCEC)

3.4.1 Self-Help Schools

As outlined above, Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Kampala is not free. Due to the extra burden of the cost of water, electricity and higher salaries for teachers, government-aided schools in Kampala receive more aid under UPE grants (US\$810 per pupil per term as compared to US\$550 per pupil per term in rural areas). They also charge families school fees, usually US\$10,400 per term.¹¹⁵ As a result, education in urban areas is out of reach for most of the Congolese refugees who make their home in Kampala yet who are not on the UNHCR urban caseload (see below, Section 3.4.2, for further elaboration on this topic). As a result, refugees have needed to begin their own education initiatives.¹¹⁶ The Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre (KURCEC) is one such initiative. It is the only functioning school in Kampala that is specifically for Congolese refugees.

3.4.2 Background to Refugees Living in Kampala

UNHCR has a small caseload of urban refugees who are assisted in Kampala rather than in settlements due to security threats or medical emergencies. At the end of December 2002, the urban caseload was 180 refugees; a staff member at Inter-Aid, the implementing partner for UNHCR for the urban caseload, estimates that the average number in a given month is 200.¹¹⁷ The primary school-age children of these refugees are provided with school fees to attend primary school for the temporary period that they reside in Kampala; there is a limited amount of money available for secondary education. The families are able to choose the school that the child will attend and then must secure admission to that school; once the admission letter is brought to Inter-Aid, the school fees are paid directly to

¹¹³ Interview, John Zirimenya-Mirundi, Headmaster at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th March 2003.

¹¹⁴ Interview, Congolese refugee pupil 1 at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 20th March 2003.

¹¹⁵ Jjuuko, E.C. 3 December 2001. "UPE numbers in the city soar to 190,000." *The Monitor*; Personal communication, Headmaster of Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 18th March 2003.

¹¹⁶ For further discussion of self-help schools in refugee situations, see Harrell-Bond, B.E. 1986. *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.418-419; Hassan, Abdalla. July 31, 2000. "Sudanese Refugees: Down and Out in Cairo." URL: http://www.worldpress.org/article_model.cfm?article_id=362&dont=yes. Accessed: 12th April 2003; Emergency Educational Assistance Unit. October 1999. "Education in Situation of Emergency and Crisis." UNESCO: Paris, pp.64-65; Sommers, Mark. "Emergency Education for Children." Mellon Reports Series.

¹¹⁷ Personal Communication, Scholastica Nasinyama, Inter-Aid counsellor, Kamapala, 18th November 2002.

the school. In the first quarter of the 2003 school year, 19 children were enrolled in primary school in Kampala through Inter-Aid.^{118,119}

Despite the small urban caseload of UNHCR, staff at Inter-Aid estimates that between 10,000 and 12,000 refugees come to the Inter-Aid office in search of assistance each year. Of these, they believe that 5,000 live permanently in Kampala, most of whom are undocumented.¹²⁰ Due to the difficult nature of a census of urban refugees, the number of refugees who reside in Kampala is much debated. A Human Rights Watch report of December 2002 states that there are 50,000 refugees in Kampala.¹²¹ A recent working paper of the Refugee Law Project (RLP) cited research conducted in 2001 out of the Centre for Refugee Studies at Oxford in which the number of refugees in Kampala, registered and unregistered, reached 14,000.¹²² Members of the Congolese refugee community estimate the number of Congolese alone in Kampala to be 20,000.¹²³ As an indicator, the Congolese Refugee Development Association (COREDA) has 2,000 active members who are registered refugees residing permanently in Kampala.¹²⁴

There are many reasons why Congolese refugees opt out of formal assistance structures and come to Kampala, either leaving the settlements or coming directly from their country of origin to the city. First, as stated above, some refugees are in Kampala as part of the UNHCR urban caseload as a result of security concerns or medical emergencies. Second, due to the deprivation of economic freedoms in the settlements, some refugees seek different economic opportunities in Kampala.¹²⁵ Third, some refugees find the settlements unsuitable places to be. As one Congolese refugee in Kampala said, “people say [refugees in Kampala] should go to the camps. But I have been there. It is full of discrimination.”¹²⁶ Finally, many Congolese refugees in Kampala find the settlements unsuitable places for them to live for another reason. All of the settlements in Uganda are in rural areas and self-sufficiency in these areas is based on agriculture. The armed conflict in Congo has not only displaced people from rural areas but also from the towns and cities of eastern DRC. Many of the refugees who come to Kampala do so because they do not know how to make their living by agriculture. As one refugee said, “village life would just be too hard for people who have always lived in cities.”^{127,128}

¹¹⁸ Personal Communication, Inter-Aid staff, UNHCR Community Services/Education Co-ordination Meeting, Entebbe, 2nd April 2003.

¹¹⁹ Since the numbers are so small and children are enrolled at schools all over this city, this population does not make for a suitable case study.

¹²⁰ Personal Communication, Scholastica Nasinyama, Inter-Aid counsellor, Kampala, 18th November 2002.

¹²¹ Parker, Alison. 21 November 2002. “Hidden in Plain View: Refugees Living Without Protection in Nairobi and Kampala.” New York: Human Rights Watch.

¹²² Macchiavello, M. 2001. “Urban Refugees: an under-utilized asset,” Unpublished 2nd Bimonthly Report (12th June-25th August 2001) of fieldwork in Kampala, Uganda, Centre for Refugee Studies, University of Oxford, p.1.

¹²³ Personal communication, male Congolese refugee 1, Kampala, 12th November 2002.

¹²⁴ Personal communication, Chairman of COREDA, Kampala, 19th November 2002.

¹²⁵ See Werker, E. November 2002. “Refugees in Kyangwali Settlement: Constraints on Economic Freedom.” Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 7.

¹²⁶ Personal communication, male Congolese refugee 2, Kampala, 18th November 2002.

¹²⁷ Personal communication, male Congolese refugee 3, Kampala, 18th November 2002.

3.4.3 Case Study School

KURCEC was started in January 2000 with the assistance of Père Michel Lingisi of the Bondeko¹²⁹ Centre in Najjanankumbi I, Central Zone I, Rubaga Division. At that time, there was an influx of Congolese refugees to Kampala and many were seeking temporary shelter with Père Michel at his Centre. The children of these refugees were “simply hanging around”¹³⁰ and parents began to wonder what they could do for the children’s education. There were problems involved with accessing education in local Ugandan schools. The Headmaster of KURCEC explains:

The first condition [of entry into a local school] is to have money, a condition that we refugees cannot meet because many of us are very poor. They pay even for food with great difficulty [and]... parents are simply not capable of sending their children to these schools. The second problem also is language. Even if [a child] was, for example, in a French-speaking country in P.5, once arriving here, he is obligated to go back maybe to P.2 or maybe P.3, which retards the level of learning. That is the second problem. The third problem is frustration. Imagine someone comes into this new world, he does not know Luganda nor English, he is first of all frustrated which also influences his intellectual capacity.¹³¹

Without access to local schools, another alternative for education for refugee children in Kampala was needed. Two men who were teachers in DRC agreed to teach classes for the children and began to hold these classes of 20 to 30 pupils in people’s homes. They soon moved the classes to the Bondeko Centre to accommodate the increasing number of refugee children. Headmaster Jacques Bwira explains how the initiative developed:

The reason that pushed me [to start this school] is that where I live, there were many refugee children who did not go to school. And, I saw them only passing their days in the streets, stealing, there was even a girl who became pregnant. I felt that it was in any case better to try to occupy them for at least half a day, from morning to noon, so that they would at least know something. I was only motivated by the fact that they were in the street, without anyone to help them. And, I saw that if there was someone who started, there would be people who would come.¹³²

A policeman observed this “school” in operation in 2001 and threatened to close it down, citing the law that states a gathering of 30 children without official permission is not allowed. In order to avoid this closure, the teachers proceeded to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to begin the process of obtaining a license for the school. A school without an adequate school building cannot obtain a license, so as of May 2003, KURCEC does not have its official license. The school has, however, obtained the permission to

¹²⁸ As B.E. Harrell-Bond notes in her study of Ugandan refugees in the Yei River District in Sudan in *Imposing Aid*, “although 80.1 percent of the assisted refugees came from rural areas, only 20.1 percent had previously earned their living through agriculture,” p.252.

¹²⁹ The Lingala word for ‘brotherhood.’

¹³⁰ Personal communication, Congolese refugee parent, Kampala, 18th November 2002.

¹³¹ Interview, Jacques Bwira, Headmaster at KURCEC, Kampala, 25th November 2002.

¹³² Ibid.

operate from the OPM,¹³³ the Kampala City Council (KCC),¹³⁴ and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES).¹³⁵

In February 2002, Père Michel no longer had the funds to pay for the space out of which KURCEC was operating. The Pastor of Fountain of Life Church, David Tomusange, agreed to host the school and, up to the present, the school operates from 8am to 12:30pm in the space of this church. The church is an open space, with cement block walls and a mud floor. The children use the church benches as both their seats and desks. The school is divided into four sections: P.1; P.2; P.3 and P.4 together; and P.5, each of which occupies one corner of the large room. Says Headmaster Bwira,

... access [to this school] is free. In addition, we are motivated by the fact that these children do not have assistance and they are in need. Up to the present time, a child is accepted without having to pay anything and without condition. Students must only have a notebook and a pencil or pen. That's it. They may come to school.¹³⁶

Sixty-two pupils have availed themselves of this opportunity and are registered at the school. Forty of these pupils come regularly.¹³⁷ One of the pupils is from Rwanda, seven are Ugandan nationals, and the other 54 are from Congo. Eighteen of these children have ration card numbers issued by UNHCR; twelve are asylum seekers and have registered with OPM; five have been in Uganda since 1964, having originally come from Congo as refugees; and the status of 20 are undetermined.¹³⁸

While set up with the intention of serving refugees, KURCEC also meets the needs of poor Ugandans who live in Kampala. Dela Bituka, one of the two teachers at the school, explains:

In this school, to obtain access to education, there is not the condition that you must be a refugee. Instead, this school is for all the people who do not have the means to pay for their studies in local schools here. Even if you are Ugandan, a native of this country, you always have the right to come to school here, if you do not have the means to pay for schooling here in Uganda.¹³⁹

That Ugandan nationals would choose to attend KURCEC underlines some of the issues of access to primary education in Uganda, as described above. Despite the introduction of UPE in 1997, there is insufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of all pupils.¹⁴⁰ In UPE schools in Kampala, the only schools that are accessible to the poor, there may be up to

¹³³ Ref. OPM/R/59.

¹³⁴ Letter dated 16 August 2001.

¹³⁵ Ref. ADM/137/235/01.

¹³⁶ Interview, Jacques Bwira, Headmaster at KURCEC, Kampala, 25th November 2002.

¹³⁷ Based on personal observations at KURCEC during three weeks of operation, 12th November to 29th November 2002.

¹³⁸ Data collected from pupils at KURCEC and their parents, Kampala, February 2003.

¹³⁹ Interview, Dela Bituka, teacher at KURCEC, Kampala, 5th December 2002.

¹⁴⁰ Lubega, D. 10 November 2002. "Financing of Education in UPE Schools: Insights from the Districts." Centre for Basic Research, Draft

200 pupils in one class.^{141,142} In that situation, pupils do not receive the attention they need to succeed in their studies. In addition, a Ugandan parent of a KURCEC pupil explained that “schools let children in under UPE and then demand school fees the next term and chase families away who cannot pay.”^{143,144} Even though the language of instruction at KURCEC is French, a language new to Ugandan children and arguably not substantially useful for life in Uganda, some parents feel that KURCEC will provide a better and more stable education than local UPE schools.¹⁴⁵

The language of instruction in the school at KURCEC is indeed French and the teachers follow the curriculum from DRC. The conditions of teaching at KURCEC are challenging: the teachers do not have books or guides and therefore plan their lessons from memory. The two teachers are volunteers. They do not get paid from any source and rely on the continued goodwill of the Fountain of Life Church for the donation of space, and on small personal donations of chalk and pens to keep the school going. Despite these lack of resources, the teachers at KURCEC are able to give each pupil abundant individual attention and thus to promote real learning for all pupils. They themselves are struggling to survive as refugees in Kampala, but they feel that, in providing an education for some children, they are doing an important job.

When we were studying...they [our teachers] gave us examples of... if we were to arrive in the middle of a forest, where there was no education, but where we would find people, children. It is in the middle of the forest, there are indigenous peoples, people who are not civilised. It is up to you, if you find yourself in that forest, to struggle to teach those children so that they will have something in their heads. And, for me, here in Kampala with these refugee children, I find myself as someone who is in the forest where there are children who do not know schooling... And I, I have this vocation [of teacher]. I must struggle so that these children can study. It is for this reason that we are here at this school. And, even though there is no salary, even though there is no assistance, I still have, in my heart, this vocation. So, when I see children who suffer, who don't even have an idea in their heads, a child who is not even capable of reading or writing his name, that touches me a lot. And because of that, I find the courage to say that even though there is nothing, no salary, there are still these children.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Personal observation in UPE schools in Kampala, February to April 2003.

¹⁴² See Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. February 2001. *Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2001-2003)[Volume 1]*. Kampala: MFPED, p.24. “Internationally, class size has not been found to be very powerful in explaining learning outcomes, but very few countries have class sizes as large as Uganda’s now; the evidence in Uganda is that class size does make a difference.”

¹⁴³ Personal communication, Ugandan parent at home in Katwe, Kampala, 27th November 2002.

¹⁴⁴ As described in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.4.2, UPE schools in Kampala do charge school fees to cover costs such as water, electricity, and augmentation of teachers’ salaries.

¹⁴⁵ “The key issue now is to keep enrolment high and improve quality in a very heavily burdened system...the Integrity Survey found that 60% of parents were satisfied with the quality of their children’s education (suggesting that 40% were not).” From Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. February 2001. *Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2001-2003)[Volume 1]*. Kampala: MFPED, p.136.

¹⁴⁶ Interview, Dela Bituka, teacher at KURCEC, Kampala, 5th December 2002.

Sixty-two children in Kampala, both refugees and nationals, have access to education in the city as a result of the courage, good will, and dedication of the teachers of KURCEC who are, themselves, refugees from Congo.

4 CONCLUSIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SETTING AND ACCESS

Refugee children in Uganda access education in the four sites described in Section 3. The level of access to education, however, varies depending on the site. While these levels of access are difficult to quantify in terms of the percentage of school-age children enrolled in school, as explained above, there are distinct barriers to education that present themselves in each setting that involve both physical attendance at school and benefit from education once enrolled. These barriers are outlined below.

4.1 The Cost of Education

Cost is the most oft-cited factor that affects the ability of families to educate their children. With the introduction of Universal Primary Education, and the universal sponsorship of primary education for refugee children by UNHCR, education in all sites has become more accessible than it was even five years ago. Despite this improved access, education is never free. In the settlements of Kyaka II and Nakivale, parents are not asked to make contributions to the school by way of school fees. They do, however, need to provide their children with uniforms, scholastic materials, and packed food for lunch. In the absence of being able to afford these elements of education for their children, some parents elect to keep their children out of school. In at least one instance, children in Kyaka II were chased away from school for failing to bring packed food and told not to return to school until they had it.¹⁴⁷

In the urban areas of Uganda, the costs associated with education are more explicit. Even at schools covered by UPE, families must pay school fees for their children to offset additional costs incurred in an urban setting, such as water, electricity, and increased teachers' salaries. There are many children, both refugee and national, who cannot access education in Kampala due to the prohibitive cost. Children at Katwe Primary School describe their pattern of access to school. During the first term, they can attend school without facing any consequences of non-payment of school fees. Come second term, they are chased from school if their families do not pay; at that point they can change schools and attend the new school for another term without paying fees. This pattern continues with children attending numerous schools in a given year and, often, not completing the final term of study or the exams that allow passage to the next level of schooling.¹⁴⁸ KURCEC, the self-help school set up by Congolese refugees, does not require the payment of any fees; as such, it has attracted not only refugees but also nationals who cannot meet the requirements at UPE schools. This school, however, is only accessible to children who

¹⁴⁷ Personal observation at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 25th March 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with pupils, Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 19th and 20th March 2003.

live in a certain area of the city, as transportation proves prohibitively expensive for others.¹⁴⁹

The associated cost to a family of having children in school in terms of labour lost is also a factor that affects the access of refugee children to education. Teachers in rural areas notice that school attendance drops precipitously during planting and harvest times, as children are needed in the fields.¹⁵⁰ In both rural and urban areas, the attendance of girls is less frequent than that of boys. Girls are required to stay home to look after smaller children or to prepare food when mothers are incapable of doing so.¹⁵¹ In Nakivale settlement, the introduction of pre-primary education that includes a feeding scheme has prompted a noticeable increase in the number of girls attending primary school, as it releases them from childcare and meal preparation duties.¹⁵²

4.2 The Availability of ‘Quality’ Education

In addition to the above outlined physical barriers to education, access to quality education for refugee children in Uganda remains a pertinent question. ‘Quality’ education is difficult to quantify and it certainly demands a more in-depth study; while often defined by the structural issues facing schools, quality education needs also to be about pedagogy.¹⁵³ Two interrelated factors that affect pedagogy, and the quality of education available to refugee children, are worth noting: pupil to teacher ratios and the presence of qualified teachers. High pupil to teacher ratios at Kashojwa Primary School prevent individual pupils from seeking attention with their studies.¹⁵⁴ At Bujubuli Primary School and KURCEC, on the other hand, lower pupil to teacher ratios allow for greater interaction between pupils and teachers, more frequent marking of books, and increased class participation by individual pupils.¹⁵⁵ Teachers at Katwe Primary School have attempted to offset the disadvantages of high pupil to teacher ratios through the introduction of groupwork and pupil leadership.¹⁵⁶ In situations where class sizes remain large, experimentation with such methodologies will help to promote increased learning.

¹⁴⁹ Personal communication with women of the Association des refugiers francophones (ASSOREF), Kampala, 18th March 2003.

¹⁵⁰ Personal communication with teachers, Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, and Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 7th March to 9th May 2003.

¹⁵¹ Interview, Kiwanuka Monica, Co-ordinator for Community Services and Education, Uganda Red Cross Society, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

¹⁵² Interview, Arinaitwe Frank, camp manager for Uganda Red Cross Society, Nakivale refugee settlement, 5th May 2003.

¹⁵³ The question of criteria in evaluating ‘quality’ in education is an important one. With the many stakeholders involved in refugee education, there are multiple sets of criteria. Further in-depth study of this question would necessarily examine the expectations of refugee families for the education of their children and how the implementation of education programmes meets these expectations

¹⁵⁴ Classroom observations, Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th and 30th April 2003.

¹⁵⁵ Classroom observations, Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 24th, 25th, and 16th March 2003.

¹⁵⁶ Classroom observations, Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 17th, 18th, and 21st March 2003.

Access to quality education is also affected by the presence of qualified teachers. Schools have difficulty attracting qualified teachers to rural areas, not only to refugee-hosting areas but to rural areas of Uganda as a whole.¹⁵⁷ The Inspector of Schools in Kyaka County says, “We have a lot of untrained teachers. Most of them are untrained, and ... others they are not even fit to teach in our classes because the problem is that they are lacking methods of teaching.”¹⁵⁸ In particular, schools that lack teachers’ quarters prove inhospitable to nationals, who make up the majority of teachers in schools that serve refugees. As the Headmaster of Kashojwa Primary School says, “[s]ome national teachers don’t like this place. It is isolated, it is expensive”¹⁵⁹ The difference in numbers of qualified teachers between Kashojwa and Bujubuli is notable. Eighteen of the 26 teachers at Kashojwa are qualified; this school has teachers’ quarters that accommodate 17 teachers and their families. At Bujubuli, a school lacking in teachers’ quarters, only five of the 13 teachers are qualified.

4.3 Language of Instruction

The language of instruction in schools is a political issue the world over; it comes to represent the dominance of a group, a culture, an ideology. For refugees, it can also represent an issue of access to education. Uganda is host to refugees from countries where the language of instruction in schools is not English. Whereas many refugees from southern Sudan seek education in English and readily join the Ugandan education system,¹⁶⁰ refugees from countries where the language of instruction in schools is French face a different situation. These refugees from Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi are left at a disadvantage when they arrive to find that education in Uganda is only open to them in English. This language barrier is an issue both in accessing education in Uganda and in the condition of eventual repatriation to a French-speaking educational system. It also prohibits many refugee teachers from gaining employment in schools that serve refugees; they simply do not have sufficient knowledge of English.¹⁶¹ Says a refugee from Congo who teaches P.1 at Bujubuli Primary School, “our pupils have a problem. It is a problem of language.”¹⁶²

The language barrier creates problems for refugee children in school that go beyond language. As they are not able to communicate in English, or in the vernacular of the area, children of all ages are placed in lower classes as an attempt to have them learn English. One Congolese refugee in Kyaka II settlement, for example, has four children at Bujubuli

¹⁵⁷ Unqualified teachers are on the payroll both of the Ministry of Education and Sport and of the implementing partners.

¹⁵⁸ Interview, Mugisa Charles, Inspector of Schools Kyaka country, Kampala, 4th April 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Personal communication, Twinomugisha Victor, Headmaster of Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April 2003.

¹⁶⁰ Harrell-Bond, B.E. 1986. *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁶¹ Personal communication, Atwooki Imedla, Co-ordinator of Community Services/Education for OPM, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 10th April 2003.

¹⁶² Personal communication, Kabagambe Moses, teacher at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 24th March 2003.

Primary School, ages twelve, ten, eight and eight (twins). All four children are in P.1.¹⁶³ Academically, these children are at a level more advanced than P.1, however, they are not able to express their knowledge and ideas in a language that is familiar to the teachers. This situation contributes negatively to the social development of refugee children; it also leads to increased rates of school drop-out. Educational research suggests that rather than subject children to this academic and social retardation, intensive language classes to elevate pupils to the level of their peers are more positive in the long-term on the social well-being of children.¹⁶⁴ At Katwe Primary School, a pupil from Congo says, “my mother told me to go to P.4 so that I could learn English. I think I should probably even be in P.3, but I am too big.”¹⁶⁵ This situation is not as marked in Nakivale as “[t]he Congolese pupils have been here for ten years. They started P.1 from here so that English has been the language for them all along.”¹⁶⁶

In situations where nationals and refugees study together, the use of vernacular also creates problems of understanding for refugee pupils. A refugee from Congo whose four children attend Bujubuli Primary School says, “they speak kiToro [sic] and my children do not understand at all.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, at this school, when children are copying notes from the board, they look up for each letter,¹⁶⁸ having little command of English even by P.5. The complications caused by language in these settings are indeed immense. At KURCEC, for example, most of the pupils speak Lingala at home, are learning Luganda as they play with friends in the street, and are taught in French at school; really, it would be most useful for them to learn English to be able to succeed in Kampala. The time and energy spent learning languages in these schools detracts from the ability of children to advance academically. At Kashojwa Primary School in Nakivale, on the other hand, the language of instruction truly is English; pupils speak so many languages that it is the one means of communication between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves.¹⁶⁹

4.4 The Stability of Environment

One of the primary purposes of education in a refugee situation is the creation of stability for children coming from situations of conflict and displacement. As stated in the UNHCR “Education Sector Policy and Guidelines,” “[e]ducation helps meet psychosocial needs.... Crisis situations involving conflict and displacement cause disruption of children’s lives,

¹⁶³ Personal communication, female Congolese refugee 1, Kyaka II settlement, 10th April 2003.

¹⁶⁴ For additional discussion of this topic, see Alberta Education Curriculum Standards Branch. December 1996. “Elementary English as a Second Language: guide to implementation.” Edmonton: Alberta Ministry of Education; Freeman, Yvonne, David Freeman, and Sandra Mercuri. Winter 2003; 1:1. “Helping Middle and High School Age English Language Learners Achieve Academic Success.” *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, pp.110-122.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, refugee pupil 1 at Katwe Primary School, Kampala, 20th March 2003.

¹⁶⁶ Personal communication, Twinomugisha Victor, Headmaster of Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April 2003.

¹⁶⁷ Personal communication, female Congolese refugee 2, Kyaka II settlement, 26th March 2003.

¹⁶⁸ Personal observations in P.4 and P.5 classes at Bujubuli Primary School, Kyaka II refugee settlement, 24th to 28th March 2003.

¹⁶⁹ Personal observation, Kashojwa Primary School, Nakivale refugee settlement, 29th April to 7th May 2003; personal communication with teachers and pupils at Kashojwa Primary School.

the break up of families and social ties, and uncertainty regarding their futures.”¹⁷⁰ A comparison of the settings in which refugees access education in Uganda reveals that the stability created for children varies with the setting.

When asked to about how they imagine their futures, all pupils at Bujubuli expressed a desire to remain in Uganda in the future, to finish their education and find to a job in this country. The majority of pupils at Kashojwa, Katwe, and KURCEC, on the other hand, expressed the desire to return home as soon as possible.¹⁷¹ While this evidence is not conclusive, it suggests that stable situations for children include the absence of security threats, the presence of a means for a sustainable livelihood for the family, the presence of nationals in the same educational setting, and an environment that encourages positive interaction between refugees and nationals.

These indicators of stability for refugee children echo the need to establish policy for refugee settlement and programmes in Uganda that ensure security, grant access to means of livelihood, and integrate nationals and refugees through service delivery in areas such as education. All of these measures are suggested by the SRS; implementation of these measures, however, has not been adequately addressed. The implementation phase is critical. Indeed, in order to “empower refugees and nationals...to the extent that they will be able to support themselves,”¹⁷² not only physical integration of services but also social integration of people must take place. As explained by Patrick John Muzaale, education serves as “one critical mechanism for integrating the refugee population with its hosting community.”¹⁷³ In addition, how refugees and hosts adjust to sharing the highly valued and scarce resource of education is an effective barometer of the process of integration.

In the sociological literature, integration is often defined as the process of interaction between groups of people through which change occurs in both groups. In the context of the SRS, however, the definition of integration varies depending on the constituency. The SRS document outlines the provision of integration of refugee education with national education in a purely structural way. It addresses issues of access to education, monitoring of the extent to which refugees and nationals share educational facilities, the strengthening of school management, and the promotion of vocational and Girl child education.¹⁷⁴

Social integration, however, is not only about structural issues. As Dr. Silus Oluka of the School of Education, Makerere University, points out, “the conceptualisation [of the SRS] did not take into account issues of multiculturalism.”¹⁷⁵ The strategy of the GoU and the UNHCR simply puts people together but does not consider the effects on teaching and

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR Geneva. 2002. *Education Sector Policy and Guidelines (Draft)*. Geneva: UNHCR.

¹⁷¹ Interview with pupils at KURCEC, Katwe, Bujubuli, and Kashojwa Primary Schools, 25th October 2002 to 9th May 2003.

¹⁷² Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR Uganda. 1999. “Strategy Paper: Self Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999-2005,” p.8.

¹⁷³ Muzaale, Patrick John. “Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees in Uganda.” In Gingyera Pinyewa, A.G.G. (Ed) 1998. *Uganda and the Problem of Refugees*. Makerere University Press: Kampala, p.155.

¹⁷⁴ Office of the Prime Minister/UNHCR Uganda. 1999. “Strategy Paper: Self Reliance for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua, and Adjumani Districts, 1999-2005,” p.32.

¹⁷⁵ Personal communication with Dr. Silus Oluka, Makerere University, Kampala, 31st October 2002.

learning or the socio-cultural implications. In a draft report on the integration of education under the SRS, Dr. Oluka clearly explains the limitations of the SRS: “In the education sector, the proclamations of the policy has [sic] no curriculum manifestation both in terms of curriculum, teaching and learning activities and in pedagogical reformation to bring about the aspired social change and self-sufficiency among the refugee peoples.”¹⁷⁶ Attention to these pedagogical issues in social integration, however, will be crucial in ensuring long-term stability for both refugee and national communities.

4.5 Partnerships between Stakeholders

Barriers to education for refugees in Uganda, in many ways, mirror barriers faced by nationals in similar settings.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, primary schools in many areas of the country are increasingly serving both refugee and national populations. The current separation of spheres of accountability for refugee and national pupils, however, hinders joint efforts to address barriers to education. The question of responsibility for monitoring is critical. As Kiwanuka Monica of URCS in Nakivale explains,

We monitor refugee education of children and refugee teachers, whether they are attending, if there are any complaints. But we don't monitor the education system. So, our role is just to support the school for the sake of refugees, to improve education for refugees, not for the whole school.¹⁷⁸

Rwebembera Godfrey shares his perspective from the district level: “[a]nd the UNHCR is not even co-ordinating with us, even at the district. I have never seen any representative of UNHCR coming to my office.”¹⁷⁹ If barriers to education for refugees are to be alleviated, increased communication and co-ordination of programmes between UNHCR, its implementing partners, and district education officials are essential.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Certain recommendations have been made in the body of this paper, in the context of presenting research findings. This section summarises these recommendations and proposes interventions and actions by official actors as they work to ensure the greatest possible access to education—both physical enrolment of pupils in school as well as benefit from teaching and learning once in the classroom—for refugee children in Uganda.

¹⁷⁶ Oluka, Silus. May 2001. “Draft Report: Integration of Refugees into Uganda’s Education System.” School of Education, Makerere University, p.82.

¹⁷⁷ While beyond the scope of this paper, the study compares the situations of refugees and nationals in two ways. First, at each refugee-hosting school, national pupils were also interviewed and observed in classroom situations. Second, each refugee-hosting school was paired with the case study of a national school in the same area. These comparisons allow for analysis of factors such as poverty rather than refugee-status on the well-being of children in schools.

¹⁷⁸ Interview, Kiwanuka Monica, Co-ordinator for Community Services and Education, Uganda Red Cross Society, Mbarara, 5th May 2003.

¹⁷⁹ Interview, Rwebembera Godfrey, District Inspector of Schools Kyenjojo country, Kyegegwa, 8th April 2003.

5.1 To teachers in schools that host refugee pupils

The teaching and learning that goes on in schools that host refugees ultimately depends on you. Despite the barriers that you face in lack of teaching aides, scholastic materials, and lack of access to additional training, ideas of what can be possible in the context in which you find yourselves emerge from this research:

- *Language is a true barrier to learning.* Many refugees do not perform well in school due to their inability to speak English, not because they lack academic potential. Teachers can recognise the level of education of older children and give them tools of language rather than demote them to classes below their academic and social level. In this way, teachers can promote the greater social and academic well-being of refugee children and can encourage older pupils to continue with their education. Teachers would aide their pupils by dedicating themselves to English as a language of instruction, as the teachers at Kashojwa Primary School have done. With this strategy, an already complicated learning environment is not confounded with an abundance of languages.
- *Children who have been displaced by insecurity and conflict are in need of stable social environments.* This research has suggested that integration of refugee and national pupils in schools promotes a sense of stability among refugee pupils by situating them within populations that are permanent and secure, despite their own displacement. The promotion of social integration among these pupils, however, does not happen by itself. Teachers are encouraged to promote the social integration of refugees of different nationalities and of refugees and nationals through pedagogy. At Bujubuli Primary School, teachers have created an environment that is open to and respectful of the differences that refugees and nationals bring to the school. At the same time, however, they have worked to establish a sense of unity within the whole school population simply as children of Uganda; in this situation, the temporary or permanent state of refugees within the country or the region does not detract from a sense of belonging by refugee pupils. At this school, refugee and national children themselves chose friends of other nationalities and do not segregate themselves in class or at play, a sign of true social integration.
- *Teaching in situations of displacement requires a sense of purpose and a desire to serve children and their communities.* Children learn from their teachers about what is important, what is valued. Teachers communicate these ideas through words, actions, and through their own beliefs. At Kampala Urban Refugee Children's Education Centre (KURCEC), children learn the importance of education and of coming to school through their teachers' own dedication to teaching, despite lack of salary, school building, or even the most basic of supplies. A school culture of positive attitudes towards education encourages children both to come to school and to reap the greatest possible benefit from the teaching and learning that goes on there.
- *Large class sizes demand creative teaching methodologies.* In advocating that refugee and national pupils study together in the same schools, it is also important to examine

this issue, one of the most pertinent in Ugandan education. Teachers at Katwe Primary School demonstrate that with limited resources, teachers can create visual teaching aides; they can design classroom activities to involve pupils in their own learning; they can set up classroom benches to allow for groupwork and pupil discussions, rather than in rows, which focus all attention on the teacher; and they can developed systems of group leaders whereby pupils are held accountable for each other's learning. These teaching methodologies are encouraged in order to promote access to quality education for refugees and nationals alike.

5.2 To district education officials responsible for schools hosting refugee pupils AND To the UNHCR and its implementing partners

While teachers are the “front-line” in the education of refugee children, they cannot work to improve access to education alone. They need the assistance you can bring in the form of training, funding of programmes, and strategic planning. The sharing of responsibility and the communication of ideas in this joint work is critical. In light of the above recommendations to teachers, and the foregoing research, district education officials and UNHCR and its implementing partners are encouraged to consider the following actions:

- *Integration of refugees and nationals in schools promotes stability for refugee children.* Working together, government and UNHCR can ensure that refugee children live in secure settings, away from insecure borders, with possibilities for integration with stable national communities. It is recommended that strategies to integrate services such as education be pursued vigorously. The Self Reliance Strategy could be used as a starting point for this endeavour, with the first step in its re-evaluation being a clearer definition of implementation to include strategies not only for structural integration of services but for social integration as well.
- *Frequent and effective communication among stakeholders is key to the success of partnerships in education.* This research shows that a financial burden of educating refugees has fallen on the districts of Mbarara and Kyenjojo, and it also indicates a need for further research in other refugee-hosting districts.¹⁸⁰ Meetings of UNHCR, implementing partners, and districts in which the integration of educational services has already taken place (whether under the Self Reliance Strategy or not) should be held to clearly define the roles of various stakeholders and to outline how costs are shared. In addition, where districts include refugees in their own development plans, donors should be encouraged to do the same.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Research by Dr. Silus Oluka of Makerere University School of Education suggests similar confusion in Adjumani and Moyo over accountability and responsibility of government and UNHCR (through its implementing partners) in both funding and monitoring of education.

¹⁸¹ The reluctance of donors to include refugees in district development plans is highlighted as one of the constraints within the education sector in the UNHCR Uganda Country Plan; obtained from Linnie Kesselly, Senior Community Services/Education Co-ordinator.

- *Teachers are in need of highly specialised training opportunities to promote teaching and learning in displacement situations.* Proposed areas of training include:
 - ✓ Methodologies to promote participatory learning among pupils, especially in situations where class sizes are large;
 - ✓ Pedagogy for the teaching of English to older pupils with the aim of creating intensive language training programmes for children when they arrive from an education system with a different language of instruction;
 - ✓ Strategies to promote the recognition of cultural difference and respect for diversity that lead to social integration of pupils and the creation of stability for refugee children.

- *Structural issues in education pose barriers to the access of education for refugee and national pupils alike.* Co-ordination of funds, expertise, and planning on issues of teacher training, recruitment of qualified teachers, decreasing class size, and provision of language training between district education officials and UNHCR and its implementing partners would benefit both refugees and host communities and contribute to the development of both groups.

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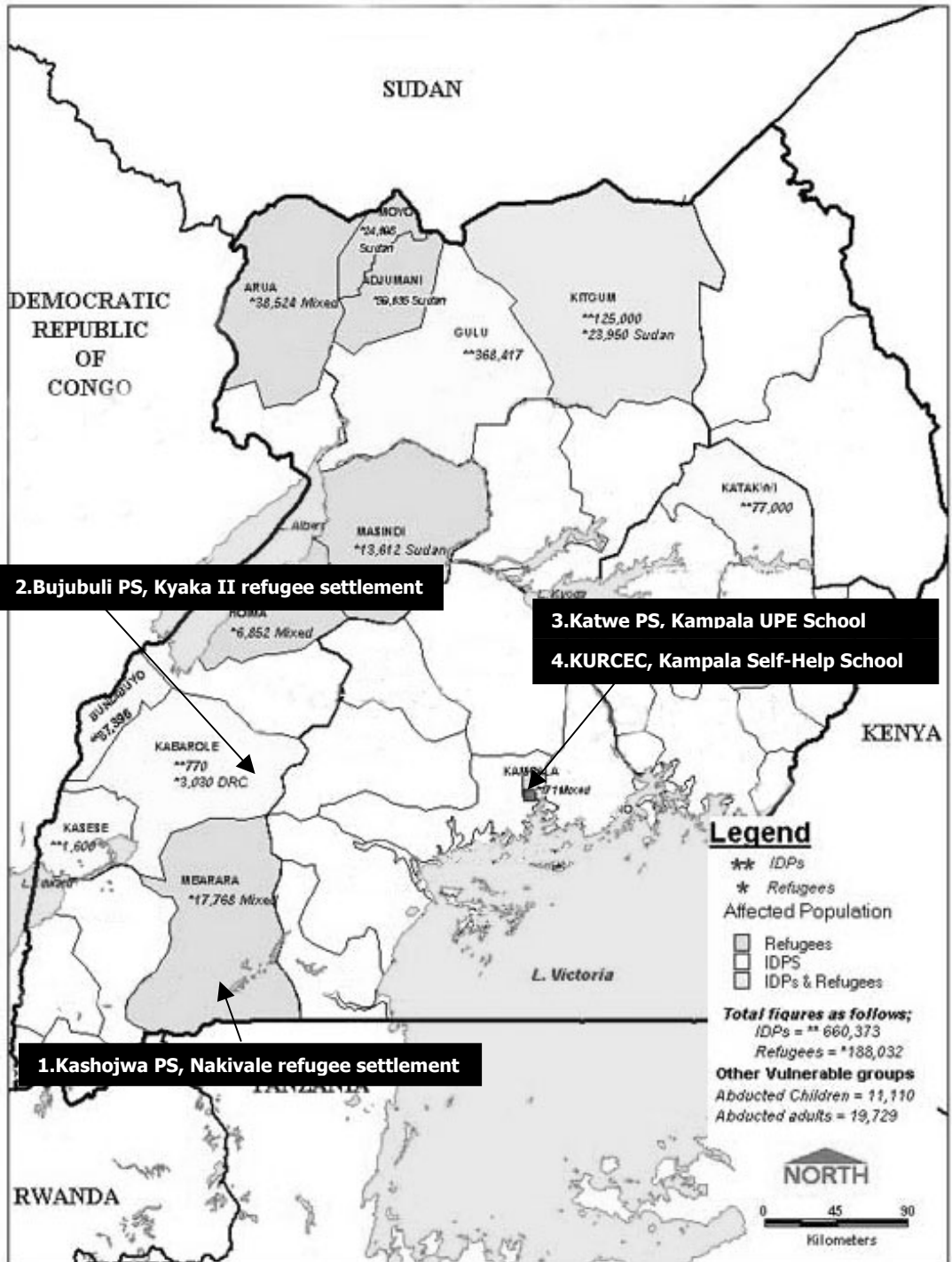
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Appendix I: Map of Uganda with refugee-hosting districts and identification of case study sites



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Prepared by OCHA Regional Support Office - CEA, Nairobi

**Appendix II: Select Articles from The Convention on the Rights of the Child,
Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989**

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international co-operation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.