

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEE CHILDREN IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM



SARAH DRYDEN-PETERSON

The Educational Experiences of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum

Sarah Dryden-Peterson

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Executive Summary

Past experiences can affect how children encounter school and the relationships they form with their teachers and peers—and this is especially true for refugee children, whose pre-resettlement histories can have significant ramifications for their academic careers. Yet these histories are often hidden from U.S. teachers and school staff by factors such as language barriers, privacy concerns, cultural misunderstandings, and stereotypes. Gaps in understanding about resettlement histories can negatively affect refugee children’s sense of belonging and relationships with teachers and peers, as well as the provision of adequate academic and psychosocial services.

The existing literature on the education of refugee children in the United States focuses primarily on postarrival experiences, with little attention to educational experiences in the children’s countries of origin and first asylum. This report seeks to address this gap by drawing on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data on access and quality of education, and more than a decade of in-depth qualitative field-based research on the educational experiences of young refugee children in countries of first asylum prior to arrival in the United States. The fieldwork examined refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Uganda and Burundi, Somali refugees in Kenya, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Malaysia, and Syrian refugees in Egypt.

Many refugee children experience frequent disruptions and limited access to schooling.

The prior schooling experiences of refugees have considerable implications for postresettlement education in the United States. First, many refugee children experience frequent disruptions and limited access to schooling. The enrollment rates of refugee children fall far below those of other children globally, and disruptions leave many behind their age-appropriate grade level. Secondary-school enrollment rates are very low for refugee children in some first-asylum countries: about 10 percent in Kenya and Pakistan, and less than 2 percent in Malaysia. Several factors impede refugees’ enrollment, including living amid acute conflict, legal restrictions on enrollment and frequent moves within first-asylum countries, and fear of exposure to immigration enforcement and other authorities.

Second, refugee children often encounter language barriers in school. Refugee students may struggle to access instructional content taught in a language other than their own, or in an environment with limited resources to support language learning. Refugees in the same classroom may speak several different languages, requiring multiple interpretations and slowing or even impeding instruction. To complicate matters further, UNHCR and host-country policies on the language of instruction—that is, whether to teach refugee children in their origin-country or host-country language(s)—have changed over time. These policy shifts often mean that refugees are exposed to multiple languages and attain academic mastery of none. For instance, one student interviewed during fieldwork followed a Tanzanian curriculum in English and Swahili during primary school; began secondary school following a Burundian curriculum officially in French and Kirundi, but with teachers using mostly English and Kiswahili; and completed secondary school following a Congolese curriculum in French. As this example illustrates, teachers may struggle to use the official languages of instruction and use their own primary language instead, which can further compromise the quality of instruction.

Third, refugee education is of low and uneven quality globally. As a result, even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in countries of first asylum are likely to have skills and knowledge far below the expected grade level for their age. Student-teacher ratios are very high in most refugee schools, and in some countries these ratios are nearly twice the UNCHR guideline of 40:1. While the share of teachers in refugee classrooms with appropriate professional training is rising, in most coun-



tries of first asylum it is still well below the UNCHR goal of 80 percent. For instance, the share of Kenyan teachers with professional training in refugee classrooms only recently rose to 60 percent. Teacher-centered instruction often predominates in refugee classrooms, with teachers lecturing almost all the time and offering very few opportunities for students to ask questions or engage in creative thought.

Finally, refugee students face a number of different forms of discrimination in first-asylum country schools. These schools often have curricula emphasizing the host country history and culture, while neglecting refugees' origin countries. Refugees may be singled out because of their nationality, and in cases where refugees are associated with terrorism or other threats (e.g., Somali refugees in Kenya and Syrian refugees in Egypt), they may face outright hostility and bullying.

Refugee students face a number of different forms of discrimination in first-asylum country schools.

These global patterns of education for refugee students in first-asylum countries have several important implications for their schooling after U.S. resettlement:

- Refugee children may have gaps in their skills and knowledge resulting from disrupted schooling, not a lack of aptitude. The gaps may be small (a few weeks of missed school) or large (years without schooling).
- Refugees' pre-resettlement schooling is typically sporadic, which may shape the attitudes of refugee families. Recognizing refugees' past experience may help U.S. teachers to understand any reluctance on the part of parents or children to invest time in schools and relevant relationships.
- Refugee children are frequently exposed to multiple languages of instruction over the course of their migration, resulting in language confusion and limited opportunities to master academic content. Careful attention is needed to identify educational needs based on prior exposure to academic content as opposed to innate capacities for learning.
- The quality of English-language instruction available to refugee children in countries of first asylum is variable and often poor. Experience in an English-language school system does not guarantee proficiency in English.
- Past experience with teacher-centered pedagogy may leave resettled refugee children unaware of the behaviors and approaches to learning required of them in U.S. classrooms. Explicitly teaching refugee children how to ask questions and otherwise engage in learning may be essential to their acculturation to U.S. schools.
- Refugee children may be influenced by prior experiences of discrimination in school settings. Developing a positive ethnic and cultural identity can buffer the effects of teacher and peer discrimination—effects such as poor academic performance and self-concepts, and depressive symptoms.

I. Introduction

Every child in every classroom brings a history to school. Children's previous experiences—with teachers, with parents and siblings, with peers, in communities—are important to the ways in which they experience school and to the relationships they form with teachers and peers. The histories that resettled



refugee children bring to classrooms in the United States are multiple and varied. Refugees come from many countries and many socioeconomic, political, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. Their reasons for resettlement are diverse. Their migration paths are unique, but most include extended stays in refugee camps or urban areas within countries of first asylum.

The histories of resettled refugee children are often hidden from their teachers and other school staff in the United States by factors such as language barriers, privacy concerns, cultural misunderstandings, and stereotypes. These gaps in understanding have implications for refugee children's academic performance, psychosocial service needs, sense of belonging in school, and relationships with teachers and peers. What educational experiences do resettled children have prior to their arrival in the United States?

The existing literature on the education of refugee children in the United States focuses primarily on postarrival experiences, with little attention to the educational experiences of these children in their countries of origin and first asylum.¹ The author's analysis draws on more than a decade of in-depth research conducted on refugee education in countries of first asylum prior to arrival in the United States. This report explores the educational experiences of young refugee children in first-asylum countries and identifies critical elements of these experiences that are relevant to postresettlement education in the United States. The first section provides background on the contexts of refugee children and their education globally. The second section explores in depth four key elements of their educational experiences in first-asylum countries: (1) limited and disrupted educational opportunities, (2) language barriers to educational access, (3) inadequate quality of instruction, and (4) discrimination in school settings. The final section outlines the policy and practice implications of these four elements for U.S. teachers and policymakers as they seek to meet the needs of young refugee students.

II. Background: Refugee Children in a Global Context

In 2014, there were 32 armed conflicts globally in 26 countries, and the number of refugees was at its highest level ever recorded.² Currently, 230 million children live in countries affected by armed conflict, and children make up half of refugee populations.³ Most refugee children, like refugee adults, are not

- 1 See Jody Lynn McBrien, "Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Students in the United States: A Review of the Literature," *Review of Educational Research* 75, no. 3 (2005): 329–64; Athanase Gahungu, Olive Gahungu, and Florah Luseno, "Educating Culturally Displaced Students with Truncated Formal Education (Cds-Tfe): The Case of Refugee Students and Challenges for Administration, Teachers, and Counselors," *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation* 6, no. 2 (2011): 9–19, <http://cnx.org/contents/6d4de2e2-dda7-474e-a00f-f3298941e101@2>; Zeynep Isik-Ercan, "In Pursuit of a New Perspective in the Education of Children of the Refugees: Advocacy for the 'Family,'" *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice* 12, no. 4 (2012): 3025–38; Jody Lynn McBrien, "The Importance of Context: Vietnamese, Somali, and Iranian Refugee Mothers Discuss Their Resettled Lives and Involvement in Their Children's Schools," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 41, no. 1 (2011): 75–90; Barbara Nykiel-Herbert, "Iraqi Refugee Students: From a Collection of Aliens to a Community of Learners," *Multicultural Education* 17, no. 3 (2010): 2–14; Megan A. Prior and Tricia Niesz, "Refugee Children's Adaptation to American Early Childhood Classrooms: A Narrative Inquiry," *The Qualitative Report* 18, no. 39 (2013): 1–17; Judit Szente, James Hoot, and Dorothy Taylor, "Responding to the Special Needs of Refugee Children: Practical Ideas for Teachers," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 34, no. 1 (2006): 15–20; Doris Walker-Dalhouse and A. Derick Dalhouse, "When Two Elephants Fight the Grass Suffers: Parents and Teachers Working Together to Support the Literacy Development of Sudanese Youth," *Teaching And Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies* 25, no. 2 (2009): 328–35.
- 2 Lotta Themnér and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1946–2012," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 4 (2013): 509–21; United Nations, 2014 *Syria Regional Response Plan: Strategic Overview* (New York: United Nations, 2014), www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6.
- 3 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "With 15 Million Children Caught up in Major Conflicts, UNICEF Declares 2014 a Devastating Year for Children," (press release, December 8, 2014), www.unicef.org/media/media_78058.html; Kevin Watkins and Steven A. Zyck, *Living on Hope, Hoping for Education: The Failed Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2014), www.odi.org/publications/8829-syria-refugee-education-crisis-hope; UNICEF, "UNICEF Declares 2014 a Devastating Year for Children;" UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Trends 2013: War's Human Cost* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2014), www.unhcr.org/5399a14f9.html.



resettled in developed countries such as the United States: in 2013, 86 percent of refugees globally were hosted by developing countries.⁴ Refugee children in developing countries are some of the most educationally marginalized in the world. Indeed, more than half of the 57 million children who remain out of school globally live in conflict-affected settings.⁵ These conflicts are not short-lived. With the average conflict lasting 17 years, millions of children globally spend their entire childhoods engulfed in conflict with limited opportunities for education.⁶

UNHCR is the UN agency mandated with the provision of education for refugees globally. As a constituent body, UNHCR's work on education—as on other issues—is coordinated with the governments of the countries in which refugees reside.⁷ Realization of the right to education has depended on the laws, policies, and practices in place at different historical times and in each national context, even among signatories to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.⁸

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Some refugee children are resettled to countries such as the United States, where they then pursue their education. Of all developed countries with formal resettlement programs, the United States resettles the largest number of refugees.⁹ Between 2002 and 2013, the United States resettled 644,500 refugees, 24 percent of whom were school-age children (ages 5 to 18) and 9 percent of whom were children under the age of 5.¹⁰ These refugees had origins in 113 countries, and before arrival in the United States most of them lived in developing countries of first asylum.¹¹

The pre-resettlement educational experiences that refugee children bring with them to their schools in the United States take place in diverse global contexts. Based on an understanding of these diverse contexts, this report identifies key patterns and trends in refugee education that can help inform U.S. teachers and education policymakers in their work with young refugee children.

4 UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Trends 2013*, 2.

5 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Children still battling to go to school” (Policy Paper 10, UNESCO, Paris, July 2013), <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002216/221668E.pdf>.

6 UNHCR, “UNHCR Global Appeal Update 2013,” www.unhcr.org/ga13/index.xml.

7 The right to refugee education is articulated in Article 22 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which asserts that signatory states “shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education . . . [and] treatment as favorable as possible . . . with respect to education other than elementary education.” United Nations General Assembly, Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html.

8 Sarah Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education: A Global Review* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), 13, www.unhcr.org/4fe317589.html.

9 UNHCR, “Resettlement: A New Beginning in a Third Country,” accessed March 18, 2015, www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html.

10 Refugees from African countries have tended to be younger at the time of resettlement than refugees from other global regions; 36 percent of Liberians and 34 percent of Somalis are age 14 or younger. See Randy Capps, Kathleen Newland, Susan Fratzke, Susanna Groves, Michael Fix, Margie McHugh, and Gregory Auclair, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), 9, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges.

11 *Ibid.*, 8.



III. Methodology

Findings in this report are drawn primarily from three sources: UNHCR data on access and quality of education, key informant interviews in first-asylum countries, and field-based case studies. The UNHCR data on access and quality of education for refugees are drawn from 14 countries of first asylum: Bangladesh, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in these same 14 countries with key informants (n=80), including UNHCR staff, other UN agency staff, Ministry of Education officials, and staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) partnering with UNHCR. The field-based case studies involved children from four specific conflict-affected countries of origin (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, and Syria), who were living in six countries of first asylum (Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, and Uganda).¹²

UNHCR data are quantitative in nature. Data from the field-based case studies are qualitative, derived from in-depth interviews with children, teachers, and parents—as well as classroom observations and extended participant observation (see Appendix Table A-1).

In this report, the term “refugee” describes any person with recognized refugee status in a country of asylum, whether granted *prima facie* at the group level or through an individual Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process. In their first-asylum countries, refugees may live in refugee camps or be locally settled amid national populations in urban or rural areas, with their residential context depending on local policies, practices, and individual choices. There is evidence to suggest that permanent resettlement to countries such as the United States happens more frequently from refugee camps than urban areas, but this pattern does not hold for all groups of refugees.¹³ For example, 60 percent of the Somali refugees resettled to the United States between 2002 and 2013 listed a refugee camp as their last place of residence before resettlement.¹⁴ The data that form the basis of this analysis were collected in the camp and urban sites relevant to the particular country context. For example, in Egypt and Malaysia there are no refugee camps, and data were collected in urban areas; in Kenya and Uganda refugees reside in camps and in urban areas, and so data were collected in both contexts. These data represent the experiences of refugees in refugee camps and urban settings; they do not represent the experiences of those settled amid local populations in rural areas, who are rarely resettled to the United States or Europe or other developed countries.¹⁵

The data reflect a focus on primary education, which includes but is not limited to children under the age of 10. Whenever possible, findings are disaggregated for children under the age of 10.

It is important to note that the first-asylum countries and the countries of origin included in the study represent most of the largest sources of refugee children in the world. They do not, however, represent the countries of origin of refugee children most frequently resettled in the United States. The largest national-origin groups resettled to the United States between 2002 and 2013 were Burmese, Iraqis,

12 The case studies relate to the following combinations of origin- and first-asylum countries: refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo living in Uganda and Burundi, refugees from Somalia living in Kenya, Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in Bangladesh and Malaysia, and Syrian refugees living in Egypt. While the form of data collection was not identical across sites, the data are comparable in their country-specific approaches to understanding local policy and practice environments and the educational experiences of refugee children.

13 Sarah Dryden-Peterson, “‘I Find Myself as Someone Who Is in the Forest’: Urban Refugees as Agents of Social Change in Kampala, Uganda,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19 (2006): 381–95; Sarah Dryden-Peterson, “Refugee Children Aspiring toward the Future: Linking Education and Livelihoods,” in *Educating Children in Conflict Zones: Research, Policy, and Practice for Systemic Change (a Tribute to Jackie Kirk)*, eds. Karen Mundy and Sarah Dryden-Peterson (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011).

14 Nearly half of the Somali refugees resettled to the United States between 2002 and 2013 had lived in the Kakuma refugee camp, one of the sites of data collection for these analyses. See Capps, Newland, Fratzke, Groves, Fix, McHugh, and Auclair, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*, 15.

15 Informal conversations led the author to believe that refugees who settle amid local populations in rural areas of first-asylum countries do so without any formal assistance and are not frequently resettled in the United States or other developed countries.



Somalis, Bhutanese, Cubans, Iranians, Ukrainians, Liberians, Russians, and Vietnamese.¹⁶ The overlap between populations resettled in the United States and in the study includes two major groups: Somalis and Burmese. The Muslim Rohingya who make up a large share of Burmese refugees globally, however, are not resettled to the United States in great numbers. Syrian refugees may be another significant overlap population in the future, if their numbers resettled in the United States increase in the coming years.

IV. Findings

What do U.S. teachers and other school staffers need to know about the pre-resettlement experiences of refugee children in order to best meet their academic and psychosocial needs? Four key dimensions of refugees' educational experiences emerge from the literature review and fieldwork conducted for this study: (1) limited and disrupted educational opportunities, (2) language barriers to educational access, (3) inadequate quality of instruction, and (4) discrimination in school settings. This section explores the global patterns for each of these educational dimensions, providing select country-specific examples from in-depth qualitative interviews and observations.

A. Limited and Disrupted Educational Opportunities

Access to education for refugees is uneven among first-asylum countries and for different populations within these countries, particularly by camp versus urban residence and by gender.¹⁷ The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) measures the share of children enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of age, and is expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group for that level of education. GERs can exceed 100 percent—and often do in refugee contexts—due to late entry into school or due to grade repetition (i.e., because some refugee children are older than the specified age range for the grades they are attending). In 2009, the most recent year for which data are available, the average primary school GER for refugees was 76 percent across 92 camps and 47 urban areas reporting from 73 countries. The average secondary school GER was much lower at 36 percent across 92 camps and 48 urban areas from 75 countries.¹⁸ Refugees' enrollment rates fell substantially below 2009 global averages of 90 percent in primary schools and 67 percent in secondary schools.¹⁹

More recent enrollment data are available for the 14 countries included in the study, with substantial variation across these countries (see Figure 1). For example, while almost 80 percent of refugee children attend primary school in Uganda (including in both camps and urban areas), only 46 percent attend school in Kenya (in the Kakuma and Dadaab camps). Enrollment rates at secondary levels are drastically lower, with a high of 57 percent in Rwanda and a low of 1.4 percent in Malaysia. With such enrollment rates, it is possible that young refugee children resettled to the United States may *never* have attended primary school, and it is highly likely that older children may never have attended secondary school. Even for those refugee children who enroll in school, disruptions to their schooling are common.

16 Capps, Newland, Fratzke, Groves, Fix, McHugh, and Auclair, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*, 4.

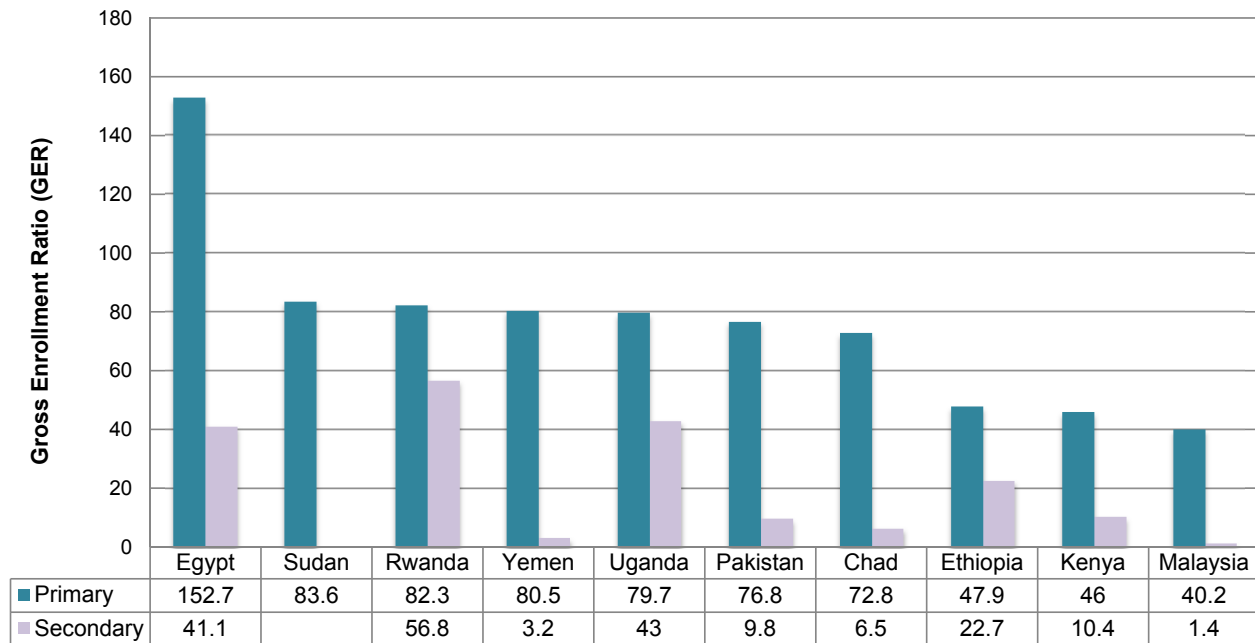
17 Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education*.

18 UNHCR, *Report on the Enrolment Rates to Primary and Secondary Education in UNHCR Operations* (Geneva: UNHCR Department of International Protection, 2010).

19 UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011), <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf>.



Figure 1. Primary and Secondary Gross Enrollment Ratios for Refugee Children, Selected First-Asylum Countries, 2013



Notes: Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs) measure the share of children enrolled in a specific level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group for that level of education. GERs can exceed 100 percent—and often do in refugee contexts—when older children are enrolled in primary school due to late entry into school or grade repetition. *Source:* FHI 360, UNHCR Education Statistics (Unpublished, 2013).

Schooling disruptions can happen for numerous reasons and during different stages of migration. First, children often live in acute conflict settings before becoming refugees. In these settings, access to education is often limited or nonexistent. One Somali boy, for example, had never been to school before arriving in Kenya as a refugee at age 11. He entered a Kenyan public school in Nairobi soon after arrival and began in Class 1. He did not miss any further years of schooling; however, when he was interviewed by the author at age 17, he was in Class 7 and had not yet graduated from primary school. Many of his peers were of a similar age, following a similar pattern of early disrupted schooling and late entry to primary school. The same trend was evident among refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Uganda, where early primary classes in camps and urban areas were filled with overage learners whose education had been disrupted by acute conflicts.

Many refugee children face legal restrictions to schooling, even in countries of first asylum.

Second, many refugee children face legal restrictions to schooling, even in countries of first asylum. This is particularly though not exclusively true in countries that have not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. For example, most Muslim Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar and live in exile in Bangladesh do not have the legal status of refugees and do not have access to education or any other form of aid. The situation is similar in Malaysia, which does not recognize Rohingya as refugees but instead considers them “undocumented migrants.” As such the Rohingya may be subject to arrest, detention, and deportation. In countries where they lack official refugee status, refugee children are unable to enroll in national schools, and it can be very challenging for UNHCR and its partners to create educational opportunities. Further, in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, refugee children described being hesitant



to go to school—despite the 73 community-based schools registered with UNHCR—given the distance they would need to walk and the dangers of exposure to the authorities. Rohingya parents described the risks of arrest by police and abuse by citizens, given their unauthorized status. At moments when tensions between the Rohingya and the authorities were particularly high, education was disrupted when refugee families elected to keep their children home from school.

Third, refugees often experience disruptions to their schooling as they pursue future opportunities through ongoing migration. For example, a refugee boy from the Democratic Republic of Congo living in Uganda moved continuously between the capital of Kampala and the Kyangwali refugee camp, as he and his family were only eligible for resettlement assistance if they established residence in the refugee camp. Each time they received word that UNHCR was conducting a population census in the camp, they boarded up their house in Kampala and travelled back to the camp to take up residence there. One year, this back-and-forth movement resulted in the refugee boy missing his final exams and needing to repeat the entire year of school.²⁰ Teachers at Eastleigh Primary School in Nairobi described a similar movement among Somali refugees in Kenya. “They are always on the move,” said one teacher. Another teacher described how on any given day, “almost half of the class is not there” because they have left Nairobi for the Kakuma refugee camp in order to participate in “interviews” or the “head count,” which are used to verify continued eligibility for resettlement. A senior teacher described the disruption to their schooling: “They have gone for . . . two terms. Now when [they are] coming, others have moved to the next class.”

Refugees often experience disruptions to their schooling as they pursue future opportunities through ongoing migration.

B. Language Barriers to Educational Access

Refugees arrive in the United States with varying levels of English proficiency. Overall, 30 percent of refugees under the age of 18 residing in the United States are Limited English Proficient (LEP)—defined as not speaking English very well.²¹ The proportion varies by group and is also informed by prearrival experiences in countries of first asylum. For example, 33 percent of all U.S. refugees arriving between 2008 and 2013 spoke at least some English (7 percent spoke English well), but only 20 percent of Somali refugees arriving during this period spoke some English (5 percent spoke English well).²² Even among the Somalis, many were exposed to English because it is the official language of instruction in Kenya. Nearly half of the Somali refugees resettled to the United States between 2002 and 2013 had lived in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya where, since 1997, a Kenyan English-language curriculum has been used.²³

Until recently, UNHCR policy advocated instruction in the language of the origin country, with the rationale that the preferred durable solution for refugees was repatriation to the home country. The protracted nature of most contemporary conflicts, however, means that repatriation to the home country is not likely over the short term. Reflecting this reality, current UNHCR policy focuses on refugee access to schools within national education systems.²⁴ By necessity, studying in national schools means adopting the language of instruction of the host country.

In the context of this global approach to refugee education, three key dimensions of the prearrival language experiences of young refugees are important for their U.S. teachers and schools.

First, the language of instruction can act as a barrier to refugees accessing the content of education.

20 For more details on this case, see Dryden-Peterson, “Refugee Children Aspiring toward the Future.”

21 Capps, Newland, Fratzke, Groves, Fix, McHugh, and Auclair, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*, 17.

22 *Ibid.*, 12.

23 *Ibid.*, 15.

24 UNHCR, *Education Strategy 2012-2016* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2012), www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html.



For most refugees, instruction in the host-country language requires a transition from one language to another. Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo living in Uganda, for example, transitioned from French to English, and were placed in lower-level classes due to their lack of English proficiency. Older children repeated lower-level classes, even if they had already mastered the content.²⁵ One teacher in the Kyaka II refugee settlement expressed the challenges this way:

My instinct is that, truly, this is a waste of time for the children coming from the outside because they do not understand the teachers. It is as if they are still in the forest of their own country. Because the child, at the end of the school day, will still not know what he did in class, as long as the question of language is not addressed.

Schools with greater resources may offer refugee children remedial classes to develop their English skills, as was the case among Somali refugees at some primary schools in Nairobi. At New Eastleigh Primary School, teachers provided new arrivals with English storybooks and remedial instruction; and, with this support, the head teacher reported that it took the average refugee child only three months to catch up with the English language skills of peers.

Second, guidelines for the language of instruction in countries of first asylum also influence refugee children's educational trajectories. The shift in UNHCR global policy regarding refugees' language of instruction noted above is predated by shifting policies at national and subnational levels over decades. The most extreme example was the case of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. Burundians who fled during the 1972-73 civil war were integrated into the Tanzanian education system, using the Tanzanian curriculum in English and Kiswahili, with the assumption that Burundian refugees would integrate into Tanzanian society. Many more Burundians fled to Tanzania during the 1992-93 civil war, and Tanzanian political will to integrate these refugees waned. Schools shifted to the Burundian curriculum, in French and Kirundi, with the intention that refugees would quickly return to Burundi. One student exemplifies a typical academic pathway in this context: in primary school, he followed the Tanzanian curriculum in English and Swahili; he began secondary school following the Burundian curriculum officially in French and Kirundi, but since there were only Tanzanian teachers, the languages used remained mostly English and Kiswahili; and, then, he completed secondary school following the Congolese curriculum in French. Shifts in policies on language of instruction often mean that refugees are exposed to multiple languages and attain academic mastery of none.

Guidelines for the language of instruction in countries of first asylum also influence refugee children's educational trajectories.

Third, even when the language of instruction is English, the quality of English instruction varies. For example, educators in the United States may assume that refugees arriving from Uganda or Kenya have mastered English. While English may be the official language of instruction in these countries, it may not be so in practice. Teachers—particularly those who are refugees themselves—may struggle with English. While the number of professionally qualified teachers has risen drastically in recent years in Kenya, 40 percent of teachers in refugee classrooms are still not qualified and many have only ten days of training, little of which is English-language based. A Somali student in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya described his teachers thus: “We used to have only our teachers who are just like us . . . They were not trained . . . my [social studies] teacher, he was a Standard 8 failure.” When faced with a class of Somali children and uncomfortable in English, refugee teachers often rely on their home languages to teach.

25 For more details on this case, see Sarah Dryden-Peterson, “The Present Is Local, the Future Is Global? Reconciling Current and Future Livelihood Strategies in the Education of Congolese Refugees in Uganda,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 25 (2006): 81–92



In many schools serving refugees, children in the same classroom speak multiple languages and do not share a common language. Without the resources or skills to engage in intensive language instruction to prepare children for an English-speaking classroom, teachers often will try to use whatever languages they have at their disposal to help young children understand them. In Ugandan classrooms, ten minutes of a lesson was often spent translating one word: the teacher said the word in his native Runyankole then asked a pupil who spoke Rutoro to translate from Runyankole to Rutoro for the national pupils whose families came from the area around the refugee camp, and also to Kinyarwanda, for the refugees from Rwanda. He then asked the refugees from Rwanda to translate to Kiswahili for the refugees from Congo. “I want everyone to understand,” he explained.

C. Inadequate Quality of Instruction

Refugee education is of low and uneven quality globally. As a result, even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in their countries of first asylum are likely to have skills and knowledge far below the expected grade level for their age. Three dimensions of educational quality in refugee settings are particularly relevant for the schooling of resettled refugees in the United States: available resources for teaching, learning outcomes, and pedagogy.

First, resources for teaching in refugee settings are limited, as reflected in high student-teacher ratios and low teacher training and qualifications. UNHCR metrics include a goal of 40 children per teacher and 80 percent of teachers trained, defined as at least 10 days of training.²⁶ The range of educational quality, as measured by these metrics in 2009, was wide, and quality was generally low. Child-teacher ratios ranged from 18:1 in Ghana to 70:1 in Pakistan, and trained teachers as a share of all teachers ranged from 0 percent in Djibouti to 100 percent in Eritrea. More substantial teacher training and professional qualifications are a priority under current UNHCR refugee education policy, with the goal that “more children will learn better in primary school.”²⁷ One of the few studies of teachers of refugees in developing countries, however, found that in Kenya, South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda, teachers were generally under-qualified and lacked experience.²⁸ UNHCR data echo this finding, but highlight the variability globally: in Uganda 92 percent of teachers in primary schools had professional teaching qualifications, compared with 65 percent in Kenya and 36 percent in Ethiopia.²⁹ In general, there is a rising trend in the percentage of professionally qualified teachers. For example, this share rose from 12 percent among primary teachers in Kenya in 2009 to 60 percent in 2013.³⁰

Even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in their countries of first asylum are likely to have skills and knowledge far below the expected grade level for their age.

Second, limited studies indicate that learning outcomes for refugee children are also very low, with these outcomes including literacy, perceived skills development, and dropout/absenteeism rates. One study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) used the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in two Eritrean refugee camps in Ethiopia. In this study’s sample, the number of children with benchmark reading fluency in grade 2, in both the Kunama and Tigrigna languages, was zero; by grade 4, only 5 percent of

26 Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education*.

27 UNHCR, *Education Strategy 2012-2016*.

28 Commonwealth Secretariat, *The Role and Status of Refugee Teachers* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013).

29 FHI 360, *UNHCR Education Statistics* (Durham, NC: FHI 360, 2013 unpublished).

30 Ibid; Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education*.



Kunama speakers and 2 percent of Tigrigna speakers had reached benchmark fluency.³¹

Third, refugee instruction tends to be teacher centered, with a heavy focus on lectures and reliance on factual questions. Teacher-centered pedagogy persists despite global policies and standards for refugee settings that place a high value on child-centered, participatory teaching methods.³² In eight refugee-serving schools in Kenya, for example, lecturing was the primary mode of instruction.³³ Lectures were central to instruction in 46 of 53 classroom observations in Kenya. In some cases, teachers dominated classroom time. More often, they interspersed their lectures with questions to the children. These were almost exclusively factual questions that required children to repeat what the teacher had just said. For example, at Sud Academy, a community-based school for Sudanese refugees in Nairobi, a teacher asked his social studies class, “What do we call [it] when you grow flowers only?” to which the class responded in chorus, “floriculture.” At New Eastleigh Primary School in Nairobi, a teacher asked his almost exclusively Somali class, “Who can tell me? We have two forms of trade, which ones are they?” to which the only accepted answers were “domestic” and “international.” Across 27 observations in the Kakuma refugee camp in classrooms of primarily South Sudanese and Somali refugee children, there was only one instance of a teacher encouraging conceptual learning.

Refugee instruction tends to be teacher centered, with a heavy focus on lectures and reliance on factual questions.

The dominance of teacher-centered methods leave little opportunity for refugee children to participate. During 53 classroom observations in refugee-serving schools in Kenya, there were only 17 lessons in which children asked any questions at all; in only six lessons did all children ask more than one question total during the entire lesson. These questions, like the ones posed by teachers, were primarily factual or definitional in nature. Across the observations, there were only two questions posed by children that probed concepts or received further explanation. One Congolese refugee girl in Uganda remarked that “the teachers, after just writing an exercise on the blackboard, they just tell you if you want to write down, just do it, but they don’t give you explanations.”

D. Discrimination in School Settings

The assumption that education serves as an unequivocally positive factor for refugee children has dominated policy and programming. Bush and Saltarelli questioned this assumption, defining the “two faces” of education: one that builds peace, the other that contributes to conflict.³⁴ Davies’ more recent “spectrum of impact” accounts for the multiple ways that education can simultaneously do both good and harm in conflict settings, including for refugees.³⁵ Indeed, education for refugees does not always offer psychologi-

31 Anita Anastacio, “Crisis and Post-Crisis Context Reading Assessments: Ethiopia Case Study,” presented at CYPD Meeting, International Rescue Committee, New York, 2011.

32 Global Education Cluster, *The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit* (Geneva: Education Cluster Unit, 2010), http://educationcluster.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Ed_NA_Toolkit_Final.pdf; Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (New York: INEE, 2010), www.unicef.org/eapro/Minimum_Standards_English_2010.pdf.

33 For more on this case, see Mary Mendenhall, Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Lesley Bartlett, Caroline Ndirangu, Rosemary Imonje, Daniel Gakunga, and Loise Gichuhi, *Quality Education for Refugees in Kenya: Instruction in Urban Nairobi and Kakuma Refugee Camp Settings* (under review).

34 Kenneth D. Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children* (Florence: UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, 2000), www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight4.pdf.

35 Lynn Davies, “Can Education Interrupt Fragility? Towards the Resilient and Adaptable State,” in *Educating Children in Conflict Zones: Research, Policy, and Practice for Systemic Change (a Tribute to Jackie Kirk)*, eds. Karen Mundy and Sarah Dryden-Peterson (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011), 33–48.



cal and cognitive protection but can also exacerbate or promote tensions.³⁶

There are two specific and relevant ways in which discrimination plays out in the educational experiences of refugee children in countries of first asylum: the content of the curriculum and direct personal discrimination by peers and teachers.³⁷ These pre-resettlement experiences of discrimination in school settings may influence the ways in which refugee children perceive school and the relationships they have with peers and teachers later in the United States.

In addition to the lack of culturally relevant curricula, many refugee children experience ethnicity, religion, and identity mobilized and politicized through education.

First, the instructional content to which refugee children are exposed in countries of first asylum can be at best difficult to relate to, and at worst highly politicized and discriminatory. What is taught in schools—i.e., the curriculum—clearly demonstrates to children the power structure in the society in which they live. When refugees attend national schools with host-country nationals, curricula are foreign and can be difficult for refugees to comprehend. For example, in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, children described having a hard time understanding concepts that lacked relevance to their lived experiences, especially when related to Kenyan history and geography with which they were not familiar.

In addition to the lack of culturally relevant curricula, many refugee children experience ethnicity, religion, and identity mobilized and politicized through education.³⁸ Frequently, the tensions that produce discrimination arise not in the formal curriculum or textbooks but in classroom discussions and practices. At New Eastleigh Primary School in Nairobi, for example, there was a stigma to the term “refugee”—children did not want to be identified as refugees or as Somalis. One boy described feeling vulnerable to being detained by police, and he and his teachers cited examples of student detention by police to highlight this risk. Many refugees tried to pass as Kenyan, the deputy head teacher said. In the classroom, Somalis felt their refugee identities highlighted in a negative way. At the end of one class, the teacher gave the children a pep talk as he prepared to leave for some time on study leave. “Do we fight?” he said. “No!” the children exclaimed in response. “Do we call each other refugee?” he said “No!” they chanted again. “Refugee” was a bad word.

In camp settings in Uganda, refugee children felt discrimination through a lack of acknowledgement of their identities. In Uganda refugee children from the Democratic Republic of Congo studied together with Ugandan children in government schools. Policies to bring together refugee and native-born children in schools focused on financial and economic considerations like numbers of refugee children and how to pay school fees to the Ugandan government for refugee children. There was no attention paid at the Ugandan policy level to the curricular or social aspects of joint schooling of refugees and nationals, such as the lack of opportunities for Congolese children to learn the history of their country or the challenges of shifting from a French-language school system to an English one. Each day in the Kyaka II refugee settlement,

36 Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*; Susan Nicolai and Carl Triplehorn, “The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict” (Network Papers no. 42, Humanitarian Practice Network, March 2003), www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/network-papers/the-role-of-education-in-protecting-children-in-conflict; Davies, “Can Education Interrupt Fragility?”

37 Traumatic experiences of conflict, flight, and xenophobia are common for refugees and have dramatic effects on young children. See, for example, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *Mental Health Interventions for Refugee Children in Resettlement* (Los Angeles and Durham, NC: National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2005), www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/materials_for_applicants/MH_Interventions_for_Refugee_Children.pdf. The educational consequences of this trauma are well documented by others and are outside the scope of this report.

38 Bush and Saltarelli, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*.



Congolese refugee children stood around the Ugandan flag singing, “Oh, Uganda! . . . We lay our future in thy hand.” While refugee children described on the one hand feeling secure living in a stable country, they also described being uncertain of where they belonged and fearful of expressing their Congolese identity.³⁹ Congolese refugee parents felt this same uncertainty and lack of belonging. A refugee parent in the Kyangwali refugee settlement who was an official representative on the School Management Committee, for example, explained that although he signed documents to approve school expenditures, he did not discuss with the headmaster ways in which the funds were spent: “He is a national, I am a refugee [he laughed], and that is why I keep quiet.”

Refugee children face more direct and personal discrimination in schools through ethnically based bullying by peers and prejudicial treatment by teachers. Bullying is common where children of different backgrounds (ethnic, linguistic, and refugee versus native born) are integrated without sufficient attention to the social aspects of living together. Ongoing violence in Kenya attributed to Al-Shabaab, a militant group based in Somalia, has fostered a hostile environment for Somali refugees in Kenya, where the discourse has at times been reduced to, “refugees equal terrorists.”⁴⁰ In Nairobi, Somalis experience harassment, bribery, extortion, assault, arbitrary arrests, and deportation.⁴¹ In 2014, the Kenyan government issued a directive that all refugees in Nairobi and other urban centers must return to refugee camps in Dadaab or Kakuma, and launched the “Usalama Watch” initiative, also known as “Operation Sanitization Eastleigh,” in a majority Somali area in Nairobi.⁴² In this context of official harassment, Somali children in Nairobi described the fighting that took place at their school between Kenyans and Somalis. One Somali boy in primary school described it as “the worst day of my life, when we had a fight in school; you know some children fought, and I was very scared that I could be included in that group.” Furthermore, school staff perceived Somali refugee children as precipitating this kind of conflict. The deputy head teacher said, “They [the refugees] bring violence here. They don’t know how to solve [problems] except violently.” The school staff ascribed personality differences to children’s national origins, consistently referring to the violent nature of Somali refugees, in contrast to Kenyan students who are “by nature humble, not violent.” Instead of addressing the underlying differences, challenges, or fears among refugees and nationals, the school’s approach was “to tame them [the refugees].”

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Similarly, in Egypt Syrian refugee parents described bullying among children in school settings, which increased in intensity in relation to the overall climate of fear there. After the overthrow of Egypt’s short-lived Muslim Brotherhood government by a military coup, the Egyptian media adopted a stronger public position against the opposition in Syria, perceived to have links to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.⁴³ The media’s negative messages encompassed both Syrian refugees and their children. Syrian parents in Egypt described a resulting increase in bullying threats to their children in school. At school, refugee children

39 For more on this case, see, Dryden-Peterson, “Refugee Children Aspiring toward the Future;” Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Lucy Hovil, “A Remaining Hope for Durable Solutions: Local Integration of Refugees and Their Hosts in the Case of Uganda,” *Refuge* 22, no. 1 (2004): 26–38.

40 Mark Yarnell, “Turning the Screw on Nairobi’s Refugees,” accessed March 18, 2015, <http://urban-refugees.org/debate/turning-screw-nairobis-refugees>.

41 Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, *Hidden and exposed: Urban refugees in Nairobi, Kenya* (London: Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group, 2010), www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5858.pdf.

42 Government of Kenya, “Press Statement by Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government on Refugees and National Security,” (press release, March 26, 2014); Pavanello, Elhawary, and Pantuliano, *Hidden and exposed*.

43 Daryl Grisgraber and Jeff Crisp, *Tough Times for Syrian Refugees in Egypt* (Washington, DC: Refugees International, 2014), www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2015/10/14/tough-times-for-syrian-refugees-in-egypt.



were faced with aggressive questions about “why they quit Syria, why they were in Egypt . . . why [they] did not go back to their own country.” Egyptian children blamed them for Egypt’s economic troubles— inflation and price increases. One mother described how the bullying became so severe that she quit her job and moved her entire family so that her children could attend a Syrian community school.

V. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Refugee children resettled to the United States bring with them specific education-related experiences that have implications for their schooling in the United States. In particular, four aspects of refugees’ educational experiences in first-asylum countries are salient for U.S. teachers and schools: limited and disrupted educational opportunities, language barriers to educational access, inadequate quality of instruction, and discrimination in school settings.

First, refugee children may experience interruptions to education for multiple reasons. They experience multiple barriers to accessing education, including acute violent conflict, discriminatory laws and policies, and ongoing migration, which can lead to late entry into school and/or interrupted schooling. When resettled refugee children arrive in the United States, they may experience further major shifts in their educational trajectories.

Second, prior to U.S. resettlement, refugee children spend a disproportionate amount of their time learning languages while often falling behind in age-appropriate academic content. Upon arrival in the United States, they may have fallen years behind in content mastery due to lack of exposure to age-appropriate content, having been placed in classes with younger children as a method of language learning. Further, while refugee children arriving in the United States may have been exposed to English at school in countries of first asylum, they may not have mastered the language. Their lack of mastery may have little to do with their abilities to learn a new language and more to do with the inconsistent and relatively poor quality of English instruction before arrival.

Refugee children often have no experience with child-centered activities or with teachers’ expectations for their successful completion.

Third, refugee education in countries of first asylum is characterized by inadequate resources for teaching and learning. As a result, previous educational opportunities do not necessarily translate into skills and knowledge, and even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in their countries of first asylum may place far below the age-appropriate grade level. Importantly, teacher-centered pedagogy dominates refugee instruction, as it more generally dominates the pedagogy across sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the developing world.⁴⁴ Teacher-centered practices are often the result of limited resources, including low funding levels, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate learning materials, poor teacher training, and curricula geared toward national exams.

Teacher-centered instruction has implications for the adaptation of refugee children to U.S. classrooms. While widely variable, U.S. schools tend to employ child-centered instruction, and teachers expect chil-

⁴⁴ Sharon Tao, “Why Are Teachers Absent? Utilising the Capability Approach and Critical Realism to Explain Teacher Performance in Tanzania,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 33, no. 1 (2013): 2–14; Frances Vavrus and Lesley Bartlett, *Teaching in Tension: International Pedagogies, National Policies, and Teachers’ Practices in Tanzania* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013).



dren to participate by working in groups, asking questions, and engaging in exploration. Refugee children often have no experience with these child-centered activities or with teachers' expectations for their successful completion. Teachers may assume that because of their silence, failure to ask questions, and difficulty in self-directed exploration, refugee children have few contributions to make in class. Instead, refugee children may be following what they understand to be proper classroom conduct.

Fourth, prearrival experiences of discrimination in school settings have the potential to shape relationships among teachers, students, and families after resettlement. Refugee children and their parents may be understandably wary of U.S. schools and teachers if they have had previous educational experiences laced with discrimination. Ongoing discrimination in U.S. schools may compound the mental health effects of prior discrimination. On the other hand, teachers and other school staff can ameliorate the impacts of discrimination by discussing it with children and addressing it directly when it occurs. The potential socioemotional consequences of experiencing discrimination for refugee children can include racial mistrust, problem behaviors, aggression, and depression.⁴⁵

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The findings from this research on refugee children's education in first-asylum countries can inform the decisions of U.S. educators about these children's grade placement, remedial assistance strategies, and ongoing learning support. In particular, U.S. educators working with refugee children may find the following points useful:

- Refugee children may have gaps in their skills and knowledge resulting from disrupted schooling, not a lack of aptitude. The gaps may be small (a few weeks of missed school), or large (years of missed school).
- Refugees' pre-resettlement schooling is typically sporadic, which may shape refugee families' attitudes and actions. Recognizing this may help U.S. teachers to understand any reluctance on the part of parents or children to invest time in schools and relevant relationships.
- Refugee children are frequently exposed to multiple languages of instruction over the course of their migration, resulting in language confusion and limited opportunities to master academic content. Careful attention is needed to identify educational needs based on prior exposure to academic content as opposed to innate capacities for learning.
- The quality of English-language instruction available to refugee children in countries of first asylum is variable and often poor. Experience in an English-language school system does not guarantee proficiency in English.
- Experience with teacher-centered pedagogy means that resettled refugee children may have a different understanding of the behaviors and approaches to learning required of them in U.S. classrooms. Explicitly teaching refugee children how to ask questions and otherwise engage in learning may be essential to their acculturation to U.S. schools.

45 Jennifer Keys Adair, *The Impact of Discrimination on the Early Schooling Experiences of Children from Immigrant Families* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2105), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/impact-discrimination-early-schooling-experiences-children-immigrant-families; Christia Spears Brown, *The Educational, Psychological, and Social Impact of Discrimination on the Immigrant Child* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/educational-psychological-and-social-impact-discrimination-immigrant-child.



- Refugee children may be influenced by prior experiences of discrimination in school settings, which has implications for their relationships with their peers and teachers as well as for the ways in which they experience further discrimination in the United States. One way that refugee children can overcome discrimination is by developing positive identities around their origin-country cultures. Research suggests a positive ethnic and cultural identity can buffer against the negative effects of teacher and peer discrimination—effects such as poor academic performance and self-concepts, and depressive symptoms.⁴⁶

For more on MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, visit:

www.migrationpolicy.org/integration

⁴⁶ Ibid.



Appendix

Table A-1. Qualitative Data Sources for Case Studies of Six Refugee Populations in Four First-Asylum Countries, 2002-14

Country of Origin	Country of Asylum	Interviews				Classroom Observation	Participant Observation
		Teachers	Children	Families	Key Informants		
DRC	Uganda	45	168	106	30	135	18 weeks
	Burundi	-	4	-	-	-	-
Somalia	Kenya	64	112	-	-	68	-
Myanmar (Rohingya)	Bangladesh	-	-	-	6	-	-
	Malaysia	-	5	5	11	-	12 weeks
Syria	Egypt	7	-	5	23	-	2 weeks

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2002-15.



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About the Author



Sarah Dryden-Peterson is an Assistant Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she leads a research program focusing on the connections between education and community development, specifically the role that education plays in building peaceful and participatory societies. Her work is situated in conflict and postconflict settings in sub-Saharan Africa and with African diaspora communities in the United States and Canada.

She is concerned with the interplay between local experiences of children, families, and teachers and the development and implementation of national and international policy. Her research reflects connections between practice, policy, and scholarship and is strengthened through long-term collaborations with UN agencies, NGOs, and communities.

Dr. Dryden-Peterson previously taught middle school in Boston and founded nonprofits in Uganda and South Africa. She has an Ed.D degree from Harvard University, an M.A. from Tufts University, and an M.Phil. from the University of Cape Town.



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1400 16th Street NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 001 202-266-1940
Fax: 001 202-266-1900

