

Session Plan

- 5 min Introduction by the Chair
- 5 min presentations by the 3 teams
- 40 min Interaction with the audience

Refugees as Researchers: Findings and Reflections from a Participatory Study of Connected Learning Higher Education Programs in Emergencies

Connected Learning Summit 2021



Research Team



Mary Achol Maduk
Isaac Augustine
Cicily Drate
Michael Drici
Elijah Guet Makuach
Harriet Kojoa
Tiza Ronald
Hellen Maridio
Dorothy Masudio
Vincent Oloya
Benton Lematia
Stephen Ambalali

Almarat Omar
Juvenal Mbonihankuye
Mohamed Abdullahi
Namarome Esther
Syntynche Mukandikwa
Pakoum Alain
Bernard Ruragira

Okello Oyat
Abdikadir Bare Abikar
Arte Saman Dagane
Ochan Leomoi

Dr. Jennifer DeBoer, PI, PU
Dr. Barbara Moser-Mercer, Co-PI, UoG
Dr. Dhinesh Radhakrishnan, Co-PI, PU

Presentation 1

Connected Learning and Participatory Research in Crisis Contexts

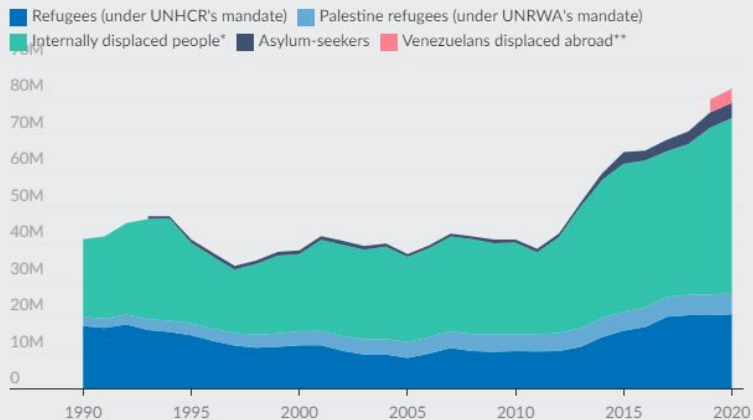
Speaker: Dhinesh Radhakrishnan, Purdue University

Connected Learning Summit 2021

Forcibly displaced

82.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced

at the end of 2020 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



18 June 2021

* Source: IDMC

** This number excludes Venezuelan asylum-seekers and refugees.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2020

Refugees (under UNHCR's mandate)

20.7M

Palestine refugees (under UNRWA's mandate)

5.7M

Internally displaced people*

48M

Asylum-seekers

4.1M

Venezuelans displaced abroad

3.9M

18 June 2021

* Source: IDMC

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2020

Tertiary Education

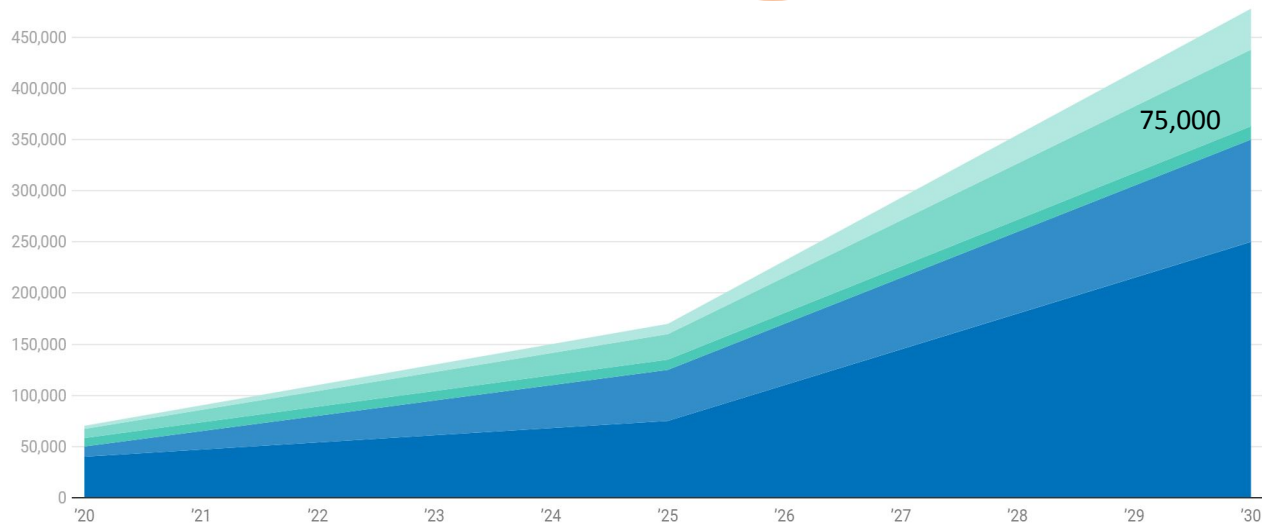
3%!



CL: 9,000

Education pathways to achieve 15% enrolment of refugees in higher education by 2030

■ National enrolment ■ Technical and Vocational Education and Training ■ DAFI scholarship ■ **Connected learning** ■ Third country higher education pathways



CLCC Quality Guideline Checklist

- Access to Higher Education
- Learning Pathway Design
- Connected Learning Pedagogies
- Academic Support

• **Connected learning in Crisis**

- Connected Learning, in contexts of higher education in displacement/fragility, is the development and exchange of knowledge and ideas among students and faculty using information technology that enables learning not bound by geographical limitations.

• **Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC)**

- Now a 33-member consortium
- Both academic and non-academic actors

• **CLCC Research Committee**

- Generate quantitative and qualitative understanding of the reported impact of different connected learning models on learners and their communities, including on different facets of the connected learning experience

Participatory Evaluation (Research)

- PE is rooted in the same theories and methods of Action Research (PAR, CAR, CBAR) *(Flores, 2007)*
- Grassroot changes lead by practical, critical, and revolutionary activity *(Cammarota & Fine, 2010)*
- Evaluate programs and organizations that support the development of communities and empowerment of people *(Flores, 2007)*
- Involves people (learners, users, most often the “researched”) in the process of evaluating the programs, organizations, agencies, and systems that have been designed to serve them

Research Sites

Adjumani Refugee Settlement



Kakuma Refugee Camp

Dadaab Refugee Camp

Reflections by Refugee Researchers

Experience in comparison with traditional approach

- Enabled us to utilize our own research skills and strength unlike traditional research which doesn't give such opportunity
- We were able to learn new things in research that traditional style doesn't provide
- Created friendliness and calmness between interviewers and interviewees that enabled a trustworthy data collection environment
- Participatory research has brought out recommendations to CLCC that could improve learning (e.g., CLCC members should involve the community in designing programs).

Team Reflections

Our students trust the research and the researchers who do this as a result. There is valuable and rich info shared without reservations. The whole exercise empowered us. Some of us, including myself had never participated in the full research process. We usually go out and collect data for others to do the rest but this project gave us the full chance. – **Research Coordinator, Kakuma**

The approach allowed me to validate my thoughts and experiences in a scientific way and be more confident in conveying the gaps to concerned people. Also, it made it meaningful for me and my fellow students knowing who we are and why we are doing this. It was easy for me and other students to trust each other. The students also said they told me information that they withheld from other researchers coming from the universities. - **Researcher, Dadaab**

Thank you!
Looking forward to the Q&A!

Presentation 2

Connected Learning in HE research at Dadaab Refugee Camp

Speakers: Okello Oyat, Ochan Leomoi, Abikar Abdikadir, Arte Samane
Borderless Higher Education for Refugees

Connected Learning Summit 2021

Borderless Higher Education for Refugees

- Consortium of Canadian and Kenyan universities and NGOs
- Aim - Make educational programs available where refugees need them
- Reached ~1000 students so far in Dadaab Refugee Complex
- Research Motivation
 - How does BHER program influence students to:
 - Know their personal interests
 - Create their peer relationships
 - Find a relevant opportunities

Research Design

Methodology

- Mixed-methods (Quantitative – Survey; Qualitative – Interviews)

Method

- Sampling: Purposive (from four Universities: York, Kenyatta, Moi Universities and University of British Columbia)
 - York University - 30,
 - Kenyatta University - 20,
 - Moi University – 10
 - University of British Columbia -20



Bridging with the CLCC Resources

- The CLCC Ecosystem provided resources for analyzing our quantitative data; for instance, it gave us tools that we could compare and contrast with what is available in the BHER against the IDEAL Connected Learning in Crisis ECOSYSTEM via the CLCC quality guidelines playbook,
 - E.g., We identified the importance of **Psycho-Social Support (PSS)** that is to be integrated as part of academic support and found the ways PSS was provided and not within the BHER program.
- The findings from our quantitative study are supported by the qualitative analysis in that **students' performance and morale are affected by situations that does not motivate their academic progress** (which relates to the element of "Opportunities" in the Connected Learning Theory).

CLCC Quality Guideline Checklist

Academic Support

Our programme(s) has:

- publicly accessible prerequisites and standards for admission
- initial assessment of student readiness in terms of language, research, and ICT skills
- periodic assessments to measure student performance and progress
- access to language competency support ahead of admission
- access to technology competency support ahead of admission
- access to research skills ahead of admission
- methods for tracking individual learner progress and needs
- periodic assessments and reflections on developing student needs
- provisions or ways to adapt resources for individual learner needs (e.g. remedial classes, individualised tutoring, etc.)
- resources that have been classroom tested or peer reviewed
- informed resource design considering technological limitations

Our programme(s):

- ensures that curriculum and resources utilise available appropriate technology to support learning outcomes
- informs technology skills development by needed competencies
- matches the use of available technology in learning to learner capabilities and abilities
- has protocols & policy that incorporate a contextual understanding of different protection concerns are drafted (collaboratively with humanitarian & university partners)

Academic Support (cont.)

Our programme(s):

- understands context that considers programme implications regarding the legal, psychosocial, and security protection of students (e.g. legal status, physical security, trauma, expectations)
- has an appropriately designed and delivered orientation component
- has accessible and appropriate counseling and support services for academic support
- has accessible and appropriate counseling and support services for professional development and career planning
- has accessible and appropriate counseling and support services for psychosocial well-being
- includes students from the host community and refugee community
- includes refugee students from a range of difficult cultural & economic backgrounds
- conducts assessment of available technologies for each new context
- integrates available technologies into programme design
- regular feedback is requested from students on the pedagogical & technological models
- new technologies are explored annually

Contribution to CLCC

- Through its Guideline Checklist, CLCC research was able to track what the BHER Program is doing in Dadaab
- It checked from the ECOSYSTEM, to advise BHER Program to commit itself to doing the right thing for the students
- CLCC empowers refugees to be emerging scholars, something that wasn't there before, so that we improve our own community, and participate in action research, from the refugee lens

CLCC Quality Guideline Checklist

Access to Higher Education

Our programme(s):

- requires applicants to have secondary school graduation Certificates
- accepts alternatives to official transcripts
- has the ability to waive requirements
- provides opportunities for students to upgrade knowledge and/or skill gaps (for example, English for academic purposes, research skills, ICT, etc.)
- recognises credits from other programmes
- is in compliance with national accreditation standards
- offers credits that are convertible to international frameworks
- provides exposure to both local and international pedagogical approaches
- engages with developing articulation agreements with other programmes
- accepts credit transfers from other programmes
- accepts alternatives to official documents when official documents are unavailable
- works to advocate with national and international institutions for credit transfer opportunities
- is offered to refugees at nominal or no costs
- is offered to host communities and/or other vulnerable or displaced communities
- is open to different financing options

Learning Pathway Design

Our programme(s):

- identifies multiple, flexible, entry points
- is post-secondary
- is modularised

Learning Pathway Design (cont.)

Our programme(s):

- utilises design that is based on learning outcomes
- has learning outcomes that contribute to the development of 21st century skills
- has learning outcomes that contribute to the development of, e.g., transversal skills, soft skills, life skills, learning fundamentals
- employs a holistic development approach (learner as a person embedded in a context)
- empowers learners
- shares learner progress with students
- promotes learner autonomy
- promotes self-advocacy
- contextualises curricula
- contextualises learning outcomes
- contextualises assessment
- adapts to learners' needs
- opens doors to livelihoods
- opens doors to employment
- opens doors to further education
- ensures data protection
- strives for validity of data (personal data)
- provides accessible transcripts for students (ie. physical, online, etc.)
- derives lessons learned from successful outcomes
- derives lessons learned from failed outcomes
- contributes to the development of good practices

Research outcomes and impact

1. It is a proof of a successful Participatory Evaluation Research by the BHER students, in conjunction with Purdue University.
2. It brought York University to fill the gaps identified in the study.
 - a. Currently, there is a BHER Counselor and students are followed by the staff to ensure they deliver as per the required standard.
 - b. The BHER Project is tuned to a collaborative approach, where universities jointly offer courses.
 - i. YU brought a number of emerging scholars out of the BHER scholarship. a number of researches were developed that can be turned into activities and actions to better the service deliveries in the camps.
3. Enhanced knowledge production through the CLCC MODEL.

Thank you!

Refugees as Researchers: Findings and Reflections from a Participatory Study of Connected Learning Higher Education Programs in Emergencies

Kakuma Camp Findings

1. Almarat Omar
2. Juvenal Mbonihankuye
3. Mohamed Abdullahi
4. Namarome Esther
1. Syntynche Mukandikwa
2. Pakoum Alain
3. Bernard Ruragira

InZone



- Connected learning in Kakuma is a pathway to higher education
- One of the implementing institutions is InZone, an academic organization at the University of Geneva working in emergencies
- InZone offers short-cycle or foundational courses for a degree.
- The courses include: Ethics, Basic Medical, Basic Engineering, Global Health, Global History, Human Rights and Global Poverty.
- The students gather together in a learning hub in the refugee camp and study courses online using a mixture of on-site and virtual tutoring.

Research Questions

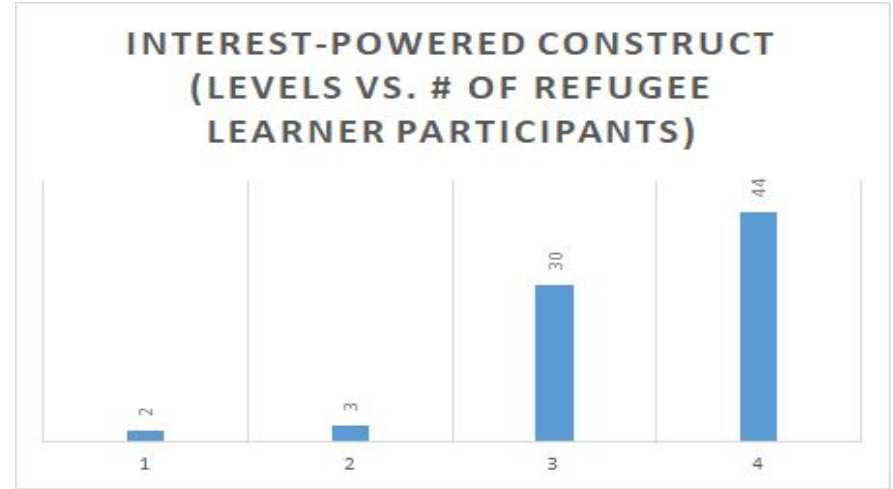
- How are the interest of the students integrated in InZone's program?
- How has the relationship between the students, tutors, and professors contributed to learning at InZone?
- What pedagogical approaches are used at InZone and how do they influence learning?
- What opportunities are available for the students during learning and after completing the course?

Research Methodology

- Used Mixed-methods - Survey (quantitative) and Case study (Qualitative)
- Used purposive sampling to locate students based on their nationality, gender, courses they took and their locations in the camp
- Identified a sample of 120 students out of 242 students from the InZone program
- 87 students out of the sample of 120 responded to the survey, with 79 completing the full survey
- 20 students participated in the semi-structured interview

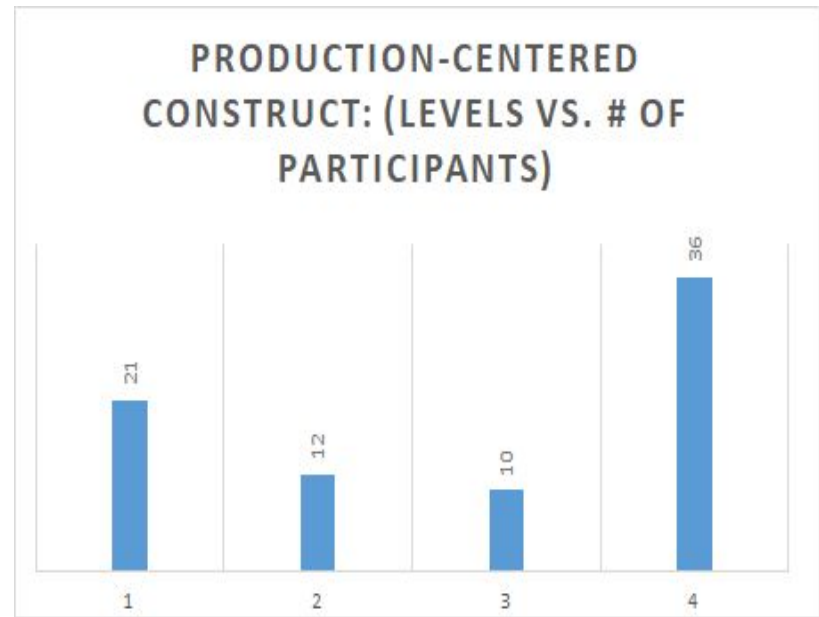
Research findings

“I'm an artist, careered, I'm an artist. I enjoy art since my primary school. I was enjoying art, drawing, scripting, painting, so we used to do also competitions in school. I'm from Zimbabwe, so there are so many things we used to do of art, so I found that I was having a passion in art. So I'm careered in art by being able to learn in here.” (Interview 1, 2019)



Interest powered principle did very well

“Another support that I wish to get from them is to improve my learning, to go ahead with my education. For me to complete my dream, I need them to support me with more knowledge and also give me some more tools to actually practice and take me to another level. Like, I said before, my dream was to become all that so that I can help people who are suffering in my place. So to make me reach that level medicine or nursing. I know nursing is not there, but I can do Medicine.” (Interview 2, 2019)



Production centred performed moderately well

Key Finding

The interest of refugee students is very important in the connected learning programs however they need higher level programs than certificate courses that will enable them compete for job opportunities around and outside the camp.

Thank you!

Interaction Session

- If you are able to see and access the raise hand option on your screen, kindly use that and if not, unmute and speak up!
- You can also chat your questions using the chat option and I will ask the question to the appropriate presenter/team

Reflection prompt: What strategies and models are out there in the Connected Learning universe that can be adapted to the crisis/emergencies context?

Challenges from the research process

- Time to conduct research is longer
- Tracing the students in the camps for data collection was difficult
- Students were not understanding parts of the connected learning survey
- Avoiding bias within the research team was challenging as being close insiders

Pre-Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
2. Identification of CLCC members
3. **IRB**
4. Participating researchers in each members
5. Funds dissemination
6. Online and face-to-face training

- IRB at Purdue, referred by each participating institution

STUDY #: IRB-2019-148

STUDY TITLE: CLCC Research – Participatory Collaborative Research on Connected Learning in Crisis

Pre-Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
2. Identification of CLCC members
3. IRB
4. **Participating researchers in each members**
5. Funds dissemination
6. Online and face-to-face training

- Transparent and unbiased process for identifying participant researchers

Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) Research Project
Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) – York
Research Site: Dadaab, Kenya

Student Selection Process (Draft)

This document outlines the participant research group selection by Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) – York for the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) Research Project in Dadaab, Kenya. In the initial call to submit a letter of interest for the project, the CLCC Research Committee outlined the following criterion:

Pre-Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
2. Identification of CLCC members
3. IRB
4. Participating researchers in each members
5. Funds dissemination
6. **Online and face-to-face training**

Training materials development and implementation

Module 1: Introduction to Participatory Evaluation Research

Module 2: Introduction to Connected Learning

Module 3: Research Design I (Framing research questions, and methodology)

Module 4: Research Design II (Data collection strategies and analysis methods)



CLCC Participatory Evaluation Research

Research

1. Research design
(methodology and
instrument design)
2. Amend IRB
3. Data collection
4. Data Analysis
5. Preliminary
dissemination and
feedback
6. Review and Revise

Participatory Evaluation in Kakuma Refugee Camp

- InZone is an academic center at the University of Geneva that uses connected learning and innovative approaches to multilingual communication and higher education in communities affected by conflict and crisis.
- They empower refugees through post-secondary education by designing and implementing formal and non-formal educational courses.
- Courses offered by the University of Geneva and partner universities (e.g. MIT, Princeton, Purdue University).



Research Team

- Juvenal - InZone Research Coordinator
- Student researchers
 - Almarat Arnu
 - Mohamed Talil
 - Bernard Ruragira
 - Esther Namarome
 - Alain Pokum
 - Syntynche Mukandikwa



Research Questions

- How is a student's interest integrated in InZone's program?
- How has the relationship between the students, tutors and professors contributing to learning at InZone?
- What pedagogical approaches are used at InZone and how do they influence learning?
- What opportunities are available for the students during learning and after completing the course?

Research Methodology

- ❖ Used Mixed-methods - Survey (quantitative) and Case study (Qualitative)
- ❖ The study used purposive sampling to locate students based on their nationality, gender, courses they took and their locations in the camp.
- ❖ We identified a sample of 120 students out 242 students from the InZone program.
- ❖ 79 students out of the sample of 120 responded to the survey.

Data Collection

- ❖ We used the survey of connected learning and contextualized it for Kakuma
- ❖ The survey is a 21-item questionnaire
- ❖ 20 students participated in the interviews following the survey (~30 mins each)

Data analysis

Quantitative:

- ❖ Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using excel;
- ❖ Data was manually transcribed by the research team from paper to excel

Qualitative:

- ❖ Audio's were recorded and third-party transcription service was used
- ❖ Thematic analysis was used in coding and generating themes.

Reflections

Experiences

- Helped us gain research skills
- Made us understand the needs of the students deeply
- Helped us create a team and ask critical questions
- Made us own the research as ours and not feel like an alien in the process
- Helped us reflect and analyze our situation of Kakuma camp critically

Reflections

Comparison with traditional approach

- Enabled us to utilize our own research skills and strength unlike traditional which doesn't give such opportunity
- We were able to learn new things in research that traditional style doesn't provide
- Created friendliness and calmness between interviewers and interviewees that enabled a conducive data collection environment
- Participatory research has brought out recommendations to CLCC that could improve learning in Kakuma (e.g., CLCC members should involve the community in designing programs).

Challenges from the research process

- Tracing the students (alumni) was difficult
- Students were not understanding parts of the questionnaire
- Avoiding bias within the research team was challenging

Participatory Evaluation in BHER, Dadaab

Research Aim: How has BHER program influenced the access to higher education and the support received for academics by students in Dadaab?

Methodology: Participatory Evaluation Research Study

Method: Mixed-Methods (survey and interviews)

Sampling: Selective sampling

Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics and Thematic Analysis



Research Team

Four researchers from Dadaab

Arte Dagane,

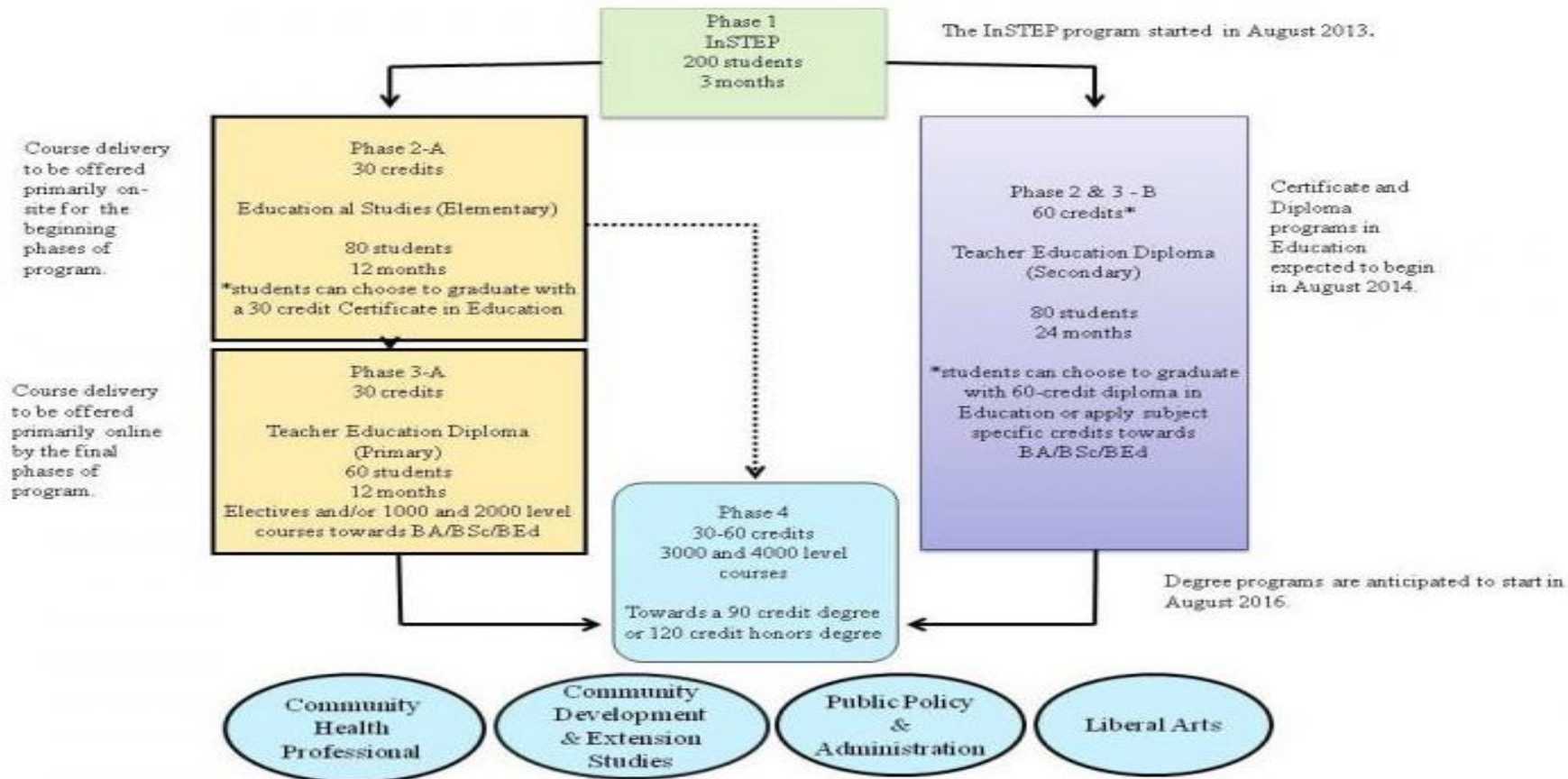
Abdikadir Abikar,

Ochan Leomoi and

Okello Oyat,

Graduate Students, Faculty of Education, York University through
Borderless Higher Education for Refugees in Dadaab.

BHER Model per Student Cohort



BHER POPULATION

Year	Program	No of students	Female
2013	INSTEP	205 students	66 females.
2014	ALL	193 students	38 females.
2014	York University cohort 1	95 students	45 females.
2014	MU/UBC DTE-S Cohort 1	70 students,	5 females.

Year	Program	No of students	Female
2015	<i>KUDT-P Cohort 1</i>	<i>42 students,</i>	<i>7 females.</i>
2016	YU CES Cohort 2	94 students,	28 females.
2016	MU/UBC DTE-S Cohort 2	65 students,	2 females.
2016	YU B.A liberal Arts		

Our Approach to Understanding Gaps

Before BHER

Before BHER, students have several issues to about, for instance:

- Limited access to academic certificates
- Students didn't know one another
- Students didn't have high life chances
- Their knowledge was restricted to a limited area

During BHER

As they joined the program, new changes in students' life:

- New terms emerge, like moodles, online learning, credit transfer, etc...
- They see computers and use them
- They observe different approaches to teaching (pedagogies)

After BHER

Challenges:

Employment, Job security, Limited opportunity for further studies, Unfavorable policies towards refugees

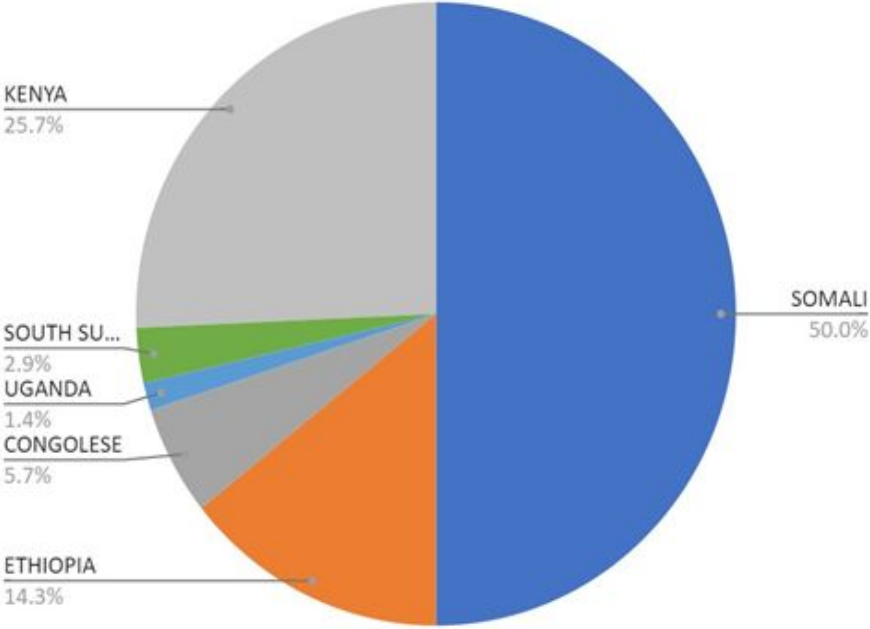
Choices:

Seek employment outside the camps, Self employment, Advocacy for refugee rights, Support BHER Program, Become lawmaker, Role model.

Participant Demographics

- Survey
 - 70 participants
 - 30 from York University
 - 20 from Kenyatta University
 - 10 from Moi University
 - 10 from University of British Columbia
- Interviews
 - 8 participants

NUMBER OF STUDENTS



Bridging with the CLCC Resources

- The CLCC Ecosystem provided resources for analyzing our quantitative data; for instance, it gave us tools that we could compare and contrast with what is available in the BHER against the IDEAL Connected Learning in Crisis ECOSYSTEM via the CLCC quality guidelines playbook,
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- conducts assessment of available technologies for each new context
- integrates available technologies into programme design
- regular feedback is requested from students on the pedagogical & technological models
- new technologies are explored annually

Reflections

Experiences

- What is my position as a researcher? (a refugee and a researcher)
- Our perspectives: we were able to do things better; we formulated the research instruments, and study.
- We know the participants and there was no need for rapport.
- We were able to get rich information with the consensus of our fellow students on issues that affect them/us directly, and can disseminate it to effect change.

Challenges

- Participants are all in anonymity; some are active students with their universities.
- Students question the credibility of our work, how different is it from the previous research studies?
- As students and researchers, keeping the timeline was not easy as we had to finish our courses in order to graduate.

Contribution to CLCC

- Through its Guideline Checklist, CLCC will be able to track what the BHER Program is doing in Dadaab
- It will check from the ECOSYSTEM, to advise BHER Program to commit itself to doing the right thing for the students
- CLCC empowers refugees to be emerging scholars, something that wasn't there before, so that we improve our own community, and participate in action research

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Learning Pathway Design

Our programme(s):

- identifies multiple, flexible, entry points
- is post-secondary
- is modularised

Learning Pathway Design (cont.)

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- derives lessons learned from failed outcomes
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Post-Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
2. Identification of CLCC members
3. IRB
4. Participating researchers in each members
5. Funds dissemination
6. Online and face-to-face training

Research

1. Research design (methodology and instrument design)
2. Amend IRB
3. Data collection
4. Data Analysis
5. Preliminary dissemination and feedback
6. Review and Revise

Post-Research

1. Report development
2. Dissemination to donor & CLCC
3. Dissemination to community
4. Lead transformation
5. Next steps
6. Next proposal/cycle

Leading the Transformation

Inter-site dissemination - CLCC Researchers Meet in Nairobi, Dec' 2019



Team Reflections

The main contribution in using participatory research is that it builds the bridge between the local community, the decision-makers and the researchers. Therefore, it brings to light the needs of the community and demonstrate an inclusive practice with all stakeholders. - ***Almarat, Kakuma***

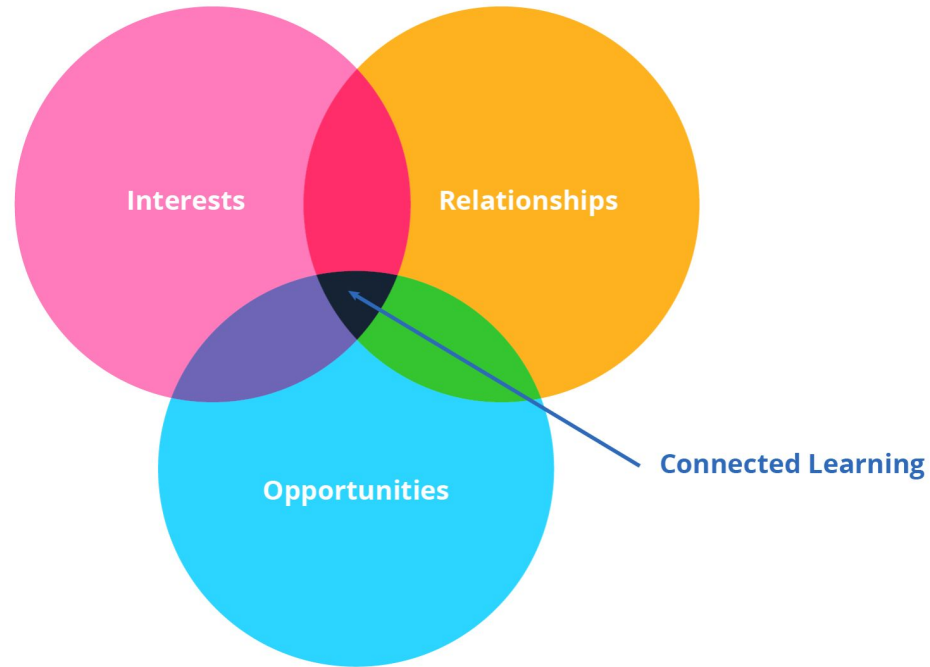
Our students trust the research and the researchers who do this as a result. There is valuable and rich info shared without reservations. The whole exercise empowered us. Some of us, including myself had never participated in the full research process. We usually go out and collect data for others to do the rest but this project gave us the full chance. - ***Juvenal, Kakuma***

The approach allowed me to validate my thoughts and experiences in a scientific way and be more confident in conveying the gaps to concerned people. Also, it made it meaningful for me and my fellow students knowing who we are and why we are doing this. It was easy for me and other students to trust each other. The students also said they told me information that they withheld from other researchers coming from the universities. - ***Abikar, Dadaab***

Thank you!

Questions/Comments/Criticism/Praise?

Connected Learning



Core Constructs

Interest Powered	Opportunity (Academically Oriented)	Production Centered	Shared Purpose	Openly Networked	Peer Supported
<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Youth pursue their interests in a way that pervades their lives, and their pursuit deepens their knowledge, and expands their horizons.</p>	<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Youth report multiple ways that their experience of the activity supports their school-related activities.</p>	<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Youth ask for and iterate based on feedback on their designs, consistently applying a critical stance toward their own and others' designs. They circulate designs to a broad audience whose thinking and action they seek to influence.</p>	<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Youth participate in activities with a common purpose, equitable participation, and opportunities to lead and contribute.</p>	<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Youth have access all the time to needed digital tools and support for their use; pathways of participation across places to deepen interest are transparent and accessible.</p>	<p><i>Deepest Experience:</i> Other people broker access to new opportunities and resources to deepen and pursue interests.</p>

CLCC Participatory Evaluation

Strategies for Engaging Youth in PE by Kim Sabo Flores (2007):

- Starting this specific PE project (critically examining the need for engaging learners, mode of engagement, and the diversity in engagement)
- Developing the ensemble PE team (understanding the creation of team and monitoring their environment)
- Developing a PE plan (articulating how the program will operate)
- Training learners to develop instruments and function as investigators (training as research designers, interviewers and survey administrators)
- Analysis and report writing (creating approaches to analysis and strategies for presenting data)
- Disseminating findings and leading transformation

CLCC Participatory Evaluation Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
2. Identification of CLCC members
3. IRB
4. Participating researchers in each members
5. Funds dissemination
6. Online and face-to-face training

Research

1. Research design (methodology and instrument design)
2. Amend IRB
3. Data collection
4. Data Analysis
5. Preliminary dissemination and feedback
6. Review and Revise

Post-Research

1. Report development
2. Dissemination to donor & CLCC
3. Dissemination to community
4. Lead transformation
5. Next steps
6. Next proposal/cycle