

“No research on us without us:” Participatory research from three refugee camps evaluating connected learning higher education programs

Dhinesh Radhakrishnan, Mark Okello, Mohamed Talil

School of Engineering Education, Purdue University
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Dhinesh Radhakrishnan



Mark Okello Oyat



Mohamed Talil



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

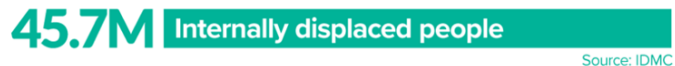
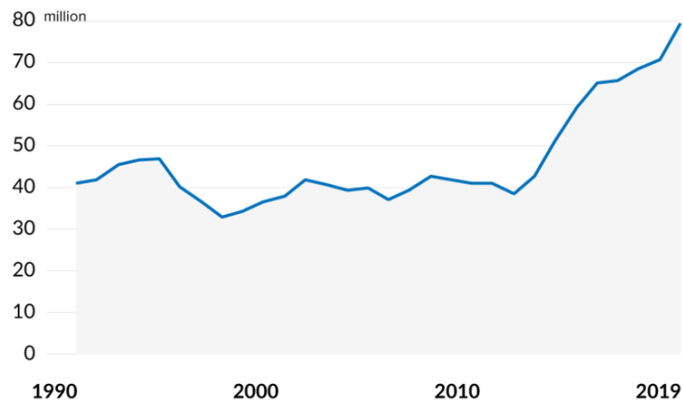
Outline

- Conflict/Crisis/Emergencies/Refugees
- Research in conflict
- Participatory evaluation research
- Connected learning theory & constructs
- Participatory research process
- Participatory evaluation in Kakuma
- Participatory evaluation in Dadaab
- Reflections

Forcibly displaced

79.5 MILLION forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2019

Source: UNHCR / 18 June 2020



4.2M Asylum-seekers

3.6M Venezuelans displaced abroad

Tertiary Education

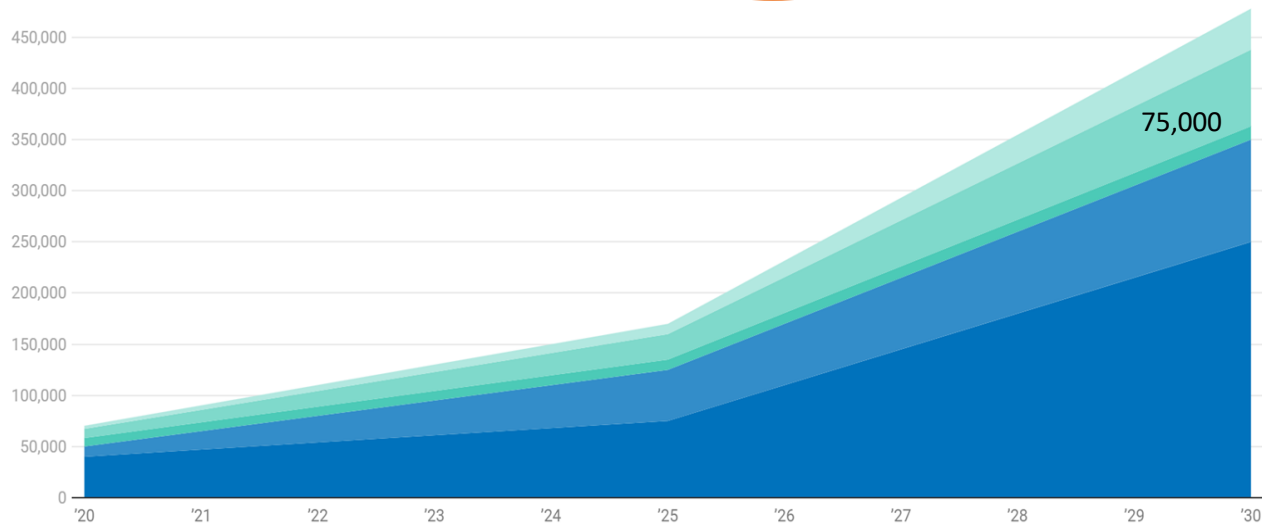
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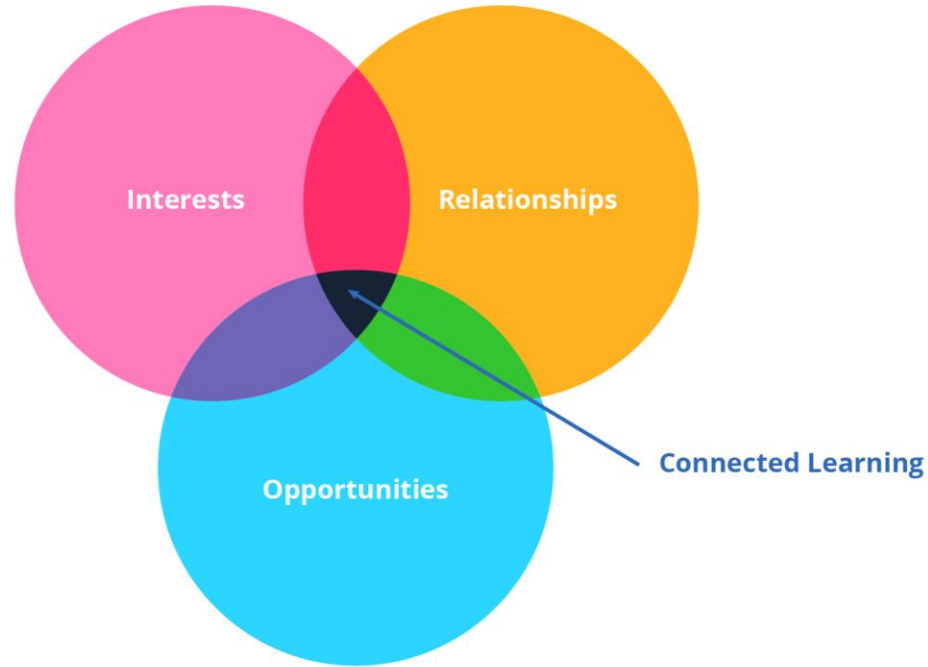
CL: 9,000

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



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>



- **Connected learning in Crisis**
 - Digital technologies to connect learners to topics and accredited courses of interest;
 - Peers, both locally and around the globe;
 - Internet and global discourse; and
 - Trained teachers, mentors and facilitators
- **Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC)**
 - Now a 27-member consortium
 - Both academic and non-academic actors
 - *Aim:* Promote and support provision of quality higher education in contexts of conflict, crisis, and displacement through connected learning
- **CLCC Research Committee in 2019 (Kigali meeting)**
 - *Research Aim:* 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;

Research in Crisis Contexts

- Evidence is emerging of unethical and potentially exploitative research being undertaken among refugee and other displaced groups by researchers (*McDowell et al. 2004; Pittaway and Bartolomei 2002*)
- The challenges arise from a range of intersecting issues

power, consent and community representation;
confidentiality; trust and mistrust;
harms, risks and benefits;
autonomy and agency;
cultural difference; gender;
human rights and social justice;
oppression and exploitation (*McKenzie et al., 2007*).

For Example:

About this report

This report was prepared by [REDACTED]. The research was generously funded by an anonymous private foundation. The research study is one of two publications stemming from the research. It is best read in combination with the other publication which is titled 'higher education for refugees in low-resource environments: landscape review'.

Acknowledgments

The research team would like to thank the individuals and organisations who contributed to the study. Particular thanks goes to all the students who gave generously of their time to share their stories, experiences and insights. All errors and omissions are the responsibility of the research team.

Suggested citation

Gladwell, C., Hollow, D., Robinson, A., Norman, B., Bowerman, E., Mitchell, J., Floremont, F., Hutchinson, P. (2016). Higher education for refugees in low-resource environments: research study.
[REDACTED]

Participatory Evaluation (Research)

- PE is rooted in the same theories and methods of AR (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

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

Pre-Research

Pre-research

1. Donor Proposal
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● Expression of Interest call and application

CLCC Research project
Request for expressions of interest to participate as members of the CLCC

Dear CLCC member,

You are herewith invited to consult the attached research proposal which is funded through the CLCC's OSF budget. The proposal has been approved by OSF and has undergone review by the members of the CLCC RC.

According to the timeline included in the proposal you are herewith invited to submit a letter of expression of interest in participating in this research project which will be led by Purdue University as PI and UNIGE-InZone as Co-PI.

Criteria for inclusion in the study:

1. Be a full member of the CLCC
2. Directly operating an implementation site. If your institution/organization has more than one implementation you may present several for inclusion and list them by order of priority. Only one site will be chosen; that decision will be based on optimal geographic distribution of study sites across those CLCC members who have expressed interest in participating.
3. Ability to refer IRB approval to another institution (your institution needs to have an IRB # and an operational Ethics Review Board)
4. Human and material resources that can support a research study of the nature described in the proposal.
5. Readiness to engage student researchers in the selected site and to support a comprehensive training that will be offered by the PI and Co-PI.

Application deadline: 30 March 2019

Application format: Your application should include a general statement on why you believe your implementation site(s) would be suitable and include responses to the 5 criteria listed above.

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)
By: HaEun Kim, Arte Samane

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 of 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,

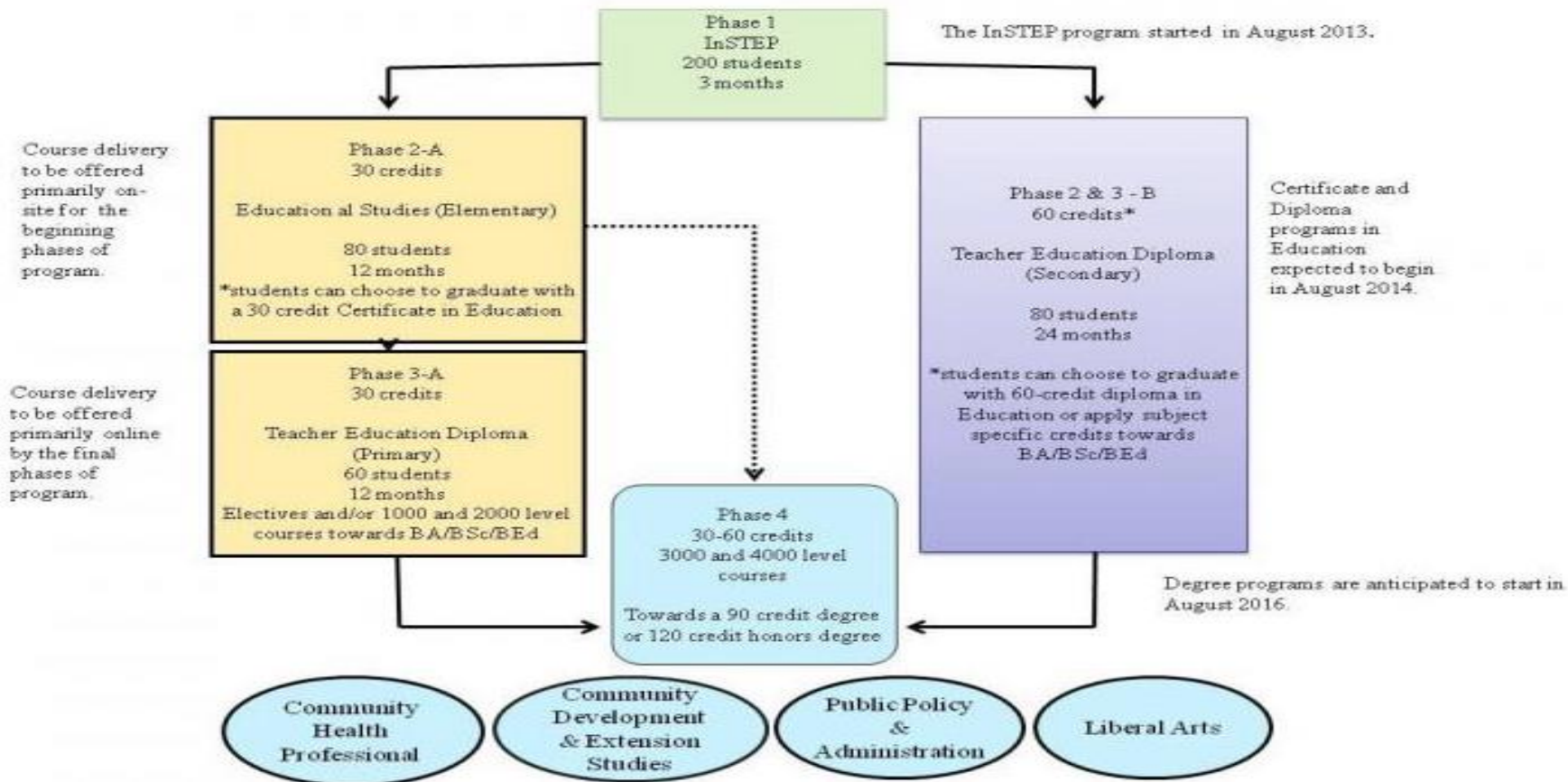
Abdikadir Abikar,

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

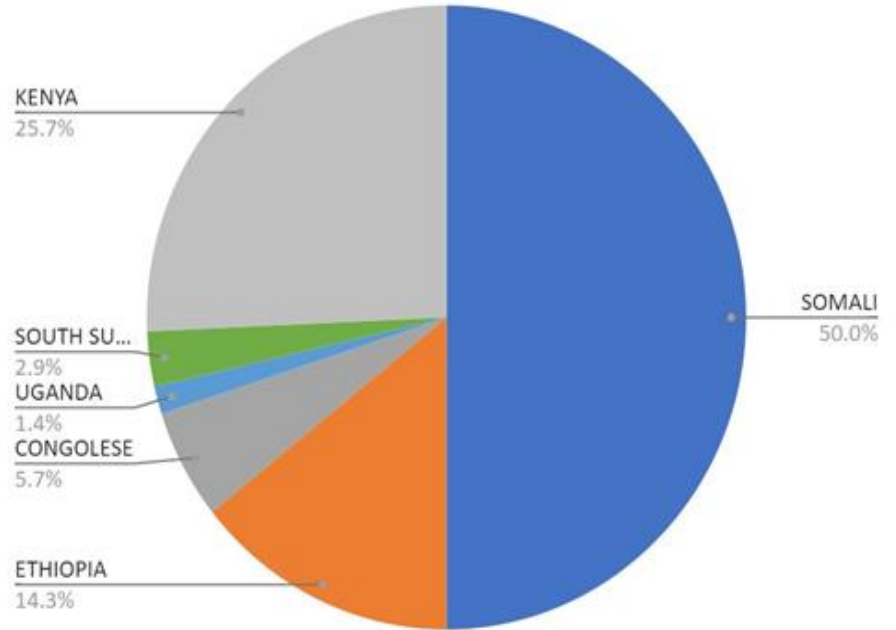
- 70 participants

- 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,
 - 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

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

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

Post-Research

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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?