Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

A full set of documents from the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University, UK, and the library of the Refugee Law Project, Makerere University, Uganda (which covers law issues and serves as a centre for urban refugees) were consulted. This was augmented by a thorough review of documentation available on the internet to provide background information. The UNHCR website in particular provided the basic background information about the countries studied.

The information available is often partial, patchy and frequently out-of-date. Efforts over the years to collect grey literature and NGO documents have been only partly successful. There remains a great deal of material held in the memories of individuals and, in a fragmented way, in the institutional memory of organisations.

Equally, little work has been carried out on the specific problems of teachers. Rather, there is work on refugees in general, and some work on the employment of refugees. Information on teachers tends to be anecdotal rather than empirical, and is not separated out from work on all professionals and their need to be trained, qualified and recognised.

Recommendation 1: Efforts must be made to put relevant unpublished United Nations, government, personal or NGO documents (sometimes called 'grey literature') online; if funds can be found, an educational NGO or university should be supported to gather the common experiences in education for refugees (with teachers as a focus) over the last 20 years. The academic community could prioritise research on refugee teachers, in order to better understand the issues that affect such teachers in different contexts and how their efficacy can be maximised. Among others, Echo Bravo, the Refugee Studies Centre of Oxford University[1] and the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University (Canada) are suggested partners in guiding and evaluating relevant research, possibly with the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO-IICBA).

2.1 Overview of documentation

The authors found that the study, 'Beyond the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol: Next steps in managing teacher migration in education in emergencies' (Penson et al. 2012), provides the most comprehensive assessment of refugee teacher issues to date. Its extensive bibliography guided this research.

The review of articles and studies confirmed that the *lack of literature* on refugee teachers in developing Commonwealth (or other) countries is a serious obstacle to understanding their needs and how refugees can contribute to education in their host countries and (eventually) to their home countries.

> '… the documentary basis for research in this field [refugee teachers] needs radical strengthening. Because of the precariousness of the working environments, political volatility and frequent rotation of key staff, most of the primary sources for educational work in emergency settings consist of grey literature – unpublished documents in the form of assessments, project evaluations and donor reports, which enjoy limited circulation and are rapidly lost in dusty filing cabinets and the C-drives of key staff. Online availability of grey literature is a vital need, to consolidate all the gains of the past few years and to ensure a rich source of documentary evidence for future research into better programming and planning.' (Talbot 2005: 6)

To date, the majority of research and reporting on education in emergencies has concentrated on:

- The needs of pupils in camp schools, IDP centres and communities affected by conflict or natural disasters and how UN agencies, governments and NGOs respond to these needs. Issues related to integrating pupils into the host-country school system are often raised (e.g. UNHCR 2007).
- The role of teachers and curriculum in camp schools in building peace and harmony during and after an emergency (e.g. Rose and Greeley 2006).

By and large, the coping strategies of refugee teachers, or educated refugees who become teachers, receive only passing mention in most of the literature on refugees and education in emergencies.

Several patterns of teacher behaviour are documented in the literature:

- Many teachers do not migrate or flee in emergencies, but find coping strategies in their home countries instead.
- Frequently, few existing teachers are found in refugee camps. Sponsors undertake to train new teachers from among the more educated refugees (Norwegian Refugee Council/The Camp Management Project 2008).
- The NGOs that manage refugee programmes will often hire refugee teachers for office or co-ordination work rather than for teaching in camp schools (Pennells and Ezeomah 2000).
- Refugee teachers whose home countries have different languages and education systems from the host countries have difficulty finding work as teachers because they do not speak the local language of instruction or do not have recognised credentials (ex. Rose and Greeley 2006). Such teachers generally seek work in other sectors.
- There are significant bureaucratic barriers to qualified teachers seeking work in host countries. There is often a lack of co-ordination between government agencies that deal with migrant and immigrant issues (usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior) and the Ministry of Education. In decentralised or federal states, provincial authorities may not be aware of, or motivated to apply, rules that might permit the hiring of refugee teachers.

2.2 Categories of refugee teachers

For the purposes of this study, refugee teachers have been grouped for analysis under three categories.

A. Individuals who were teachers when they became refugees and are teaching now or who wish to teach

The literature highlights numerous challenges for refugee and/or migrant teachers trying to obtain employment as teachers in the host country. There are differing bureaucratic requirements between countries with regard to minimum qualifications to teach. Changes to standards may suddenly make previously accepted qualifications unusable (Penson et al. 2012).

Once refugee teachers overcome the bureaucratic hurdles, they face additional problems. These may include inadequate or non-existent contracts; discovery that their job has significantly less status or remuneration than that previously promised; poor accommodation; discrimination; or job insecurity (Reid 2006). Penson et al. note that:

> 'as refugee status is often difficult to gain, and as recipient governments may be keen not to be seen to encourage further flows of migrants into their territory, ensuring refugees' rights may similarly be difficult. For example, recognising migrants' qualifications and allowing them to work might be seen by host governments as adding a pull factor to the existing socio-economic-political-environmental push factors underlying forced migration, thereby potentially increasing the number of migrants which they are already struggling to accommodate.' (Penson et al. 2012)

B. Qualified teachers who do not teach when in the host country, including those who do other jobs (such as working for NGOs)

Many teachers do not live in camps. South Africa, for instance, has a policy of community integration, meaning no refugee camps are used. This situation, and the fact that South African policy makes it a long process to obtain full refugee status, means that many experienced, well-qualified teachers and head teachers end up in menial jobs, not using their professional skills (Sibanda 2010).

However, a conclusion that this pool of unused refugee teachers *can* be utilised to the host country's advantage is not necessarily matched by evidence that it *is* being used. Most such countries already have a large number of unemployed national teachers, who are naturally given priority in employment.

The ideas illustrated in the above quotation may, however, apply to other countries with a teacher shortage – as they did indeed apply to South Africa in the 1990s, as mentioned elsewhere. Global data on teacher supply and demand suggests a significant net shortfall – around 2,000,000 – in the numbers of teachers required to reach universal primary education (UPE) alone by the target date of 2015. More than half of this shortfall is in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011), suggesting that African countries in particular would benefit from reducing teacher

loss. However, the finding of the present study, that countries had large numbers of unemployed properly qualified national teachers, suggests that the central issue for governments, though not necessarily for refugees, is not the number of teachers available, but the lack of sufficient funds to employ them.

C. **Refugees who became teachers after arriving in the host country**

In their study on Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, Kirk and Winthrop (2007) found that experienced teachers tended to exit the system, or else 'migrate up' from primary to secondary teaching positions due to the higher remuneration and status afforded by the latter. 'Spontaneous teachers' were thus recruited to replace the qualified teachers, but the researchers found that these were 'tentative' about teaching, having not previously planned on becoming a teacher.

Some educated refugees have a language advantage over host-country nationals. Hart (2001) notes that young male Bhutanese refugees living in camps in Nepal sometimes took up teaching because they could offer classes in English, the language of education at home and in the camps.

2.3 Recognition of refugee qualifications obtained in a host country

The frictions caused by professional qualifications not being accepted by a host country or by a refugee's home country (if obtained while living in the host country) have led to steps to create a quasi-legal framework for facilitating the integration of refugees. These can be comprehensive frameworks such as the Commonwealth Teacher Qualifications Comparability Table (Keevy and Jansen 2010), though this framework applies to all migrant teachers and does not specifically target refugee teachers.

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies has published a handbook and related materials that include guidance on selecting and training refugees to be teachers. It affirms the importance of obtaining prior recognition of the training (usually provided by contracted NGOs) from the national authorities of the host country (INEE 2010b).

2.4 The Commonwealth

Economic differences among Commonwealth states include wide gaps in teacher salaries and working conditions. As a result, member states such as Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom have attracted teachers from less-developed Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol of 2004 was developed to provide a framework for the ethical management of such teacher migration. This was followed by the Commonwealth Teacher Qualifications Comparability Table in 2010 (published in Keevy and Jansen 2010), which provides a mechanism for comparing teacher qualifications in 35 Commonwealth countries. However, there

remain difficulties in implementing the protocol fully. This is often because teacher unions and teacher service commissions may favour their own nationals, particularly in countries where there is a shortage of teaching jobs in the public sector. However, implementation problems may occur because the protocol has both a protective role (to avoid exploitation) and preventive role (to avoid brain drain).[2] Nevertheless, the protocol (which does not address refugee teacher issues per se) is important in that it establishes the principle of mutual recognition of teacher certification among member states and provides guidance for adjusting their respective policies and procedures on hiring teachers.

2.5 The challenges of teacher recruitment, training and certification in emergency and reconstruction

Margaret Sinclair (2002) provides a useful summary of practices and challenges in providing teachers for schools in emergency and post-conflict reconstruction environments. In the absence of trained teachers, educated refugees can be trained to serve as teachers. There is a great deal of experience available in this field, including RET, JRS and Echo Bravo, though it is not always written up, as previously noted.

There are cases where host-country nationals seek and obtain posts as teachers in refugee schools, or authorities insist that all or a certain number of teachers must be host-country nationals. In Dadaab, Kenya, the Norwegian Refugee Council is launching a new Accelerated Learning Programme in four camps by using ten well-qualified and experienced Kenyan teachers as teachers and mentors in a start-up team with all the other teachers being refugees themselves.

Certification is another thorny issue when refugee teachers are trained outside their home country. Liberian refugee teachers in the camps in Guinea received extensive in-service training and in-school support from the International Rescue Committee (IRC). However, the Ministry of Education in Liberia had difficulty in awarding qualified teacher status, which required the completion of a specific training curriculum. The main lesson of this and other interventions is that recognition needs to be built-in from the start. These issues are covered thoroughly in *Certification Counts* (Kirk [ed.] 2009).

Sinclair (2002) and others recommend the use of distance learning, as it can reach large numbers of untrained teachers at the same time. What is now called ODL (open and distance learning) is cited for its flexibility in allowing trainees to set their own learning pace to prepare for an examination. The fact that the internet and computers are penetrating deep into the camps is opening up the field in very exciting new ways. The UNHCR, Safaricom (the major Kenyan mobile phone provider) and Microsoft collaboration in Dadaab is forging ahead on technology for primary schools which have no electricity or libraries; for the moment the content (especially of ordinary subjects for the Kenya syllabus) has not yet caught up. Experiments in South Sudan with tablets-for-teachers promise to have interesting results in quality, standardisation and record-keeping. Echo Bravo is conducting a study of this transition phase where technology is leaping beyond content available.

2.6 Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

The INEE handbook, *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* (INEE 2004), is widely used and promoted by organisations working in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as natural disasters.

These standards echo many of the themes discussed by Sinclair (2002). The INEE standards and their 'teachers and other education personnel' domain are intended to provide guidance in creating or re-starting education in emergency situations. INEE emphasises community participation in managing schools or child-friendly learning spaces, as the case may be. Much importance is given to equity issues, such as removing obstacles to the inclusion of learners with disabilities, children of diverse ethnic or social origins, former child soldiers or single mothers in the education process. Schools or learning spaces must be easily accessible as well. In addition, safety concerns are examined and the handbook lists tasks such as the removal of landmines and abandoned munitions, as well as protecting learners from violence or sexual exploitation.

The original 2004 standards were updated in 2010 and renamed the *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (INEE 2010b). They were supplemented by, among the other publications comprising the *INEE Toolkit*, a complementary publication: *Guidance Notes on Teaching and Learning* (INEE 2010a) The guidance notes on the learning process highlight the importance of responding to the psychosocial needs of learners, and of using languages of instruction that are supported by the community.

One of the limitations of the *INEE Toolkit* is that it does not specifically provide guidance on the content or quality of education, nor how they may be measured. Notions of quality education instead are linked to conflict avoidance and resolution, gender equity, participation and similar notions:

> 'Quality education contributes directly to an individual's ability to engage in society as well as contribute directly to the social, economic and political stability of the society in which the individual lives. Education consensus holds that quality education is education that is relevant, effective, efficient, comprehensive in scope and participatory in delivery. It may play a role in reducing the risk of violent conflict by enabling social cohesion through promoting shared values and traditions, supporting conflict resolution and peace-building skills, and challenging inequities'. (INEE 2010a: iii)

It is noted that 'success in learning' is not specifically mentioned.

When people who are not specialised in education set up camp schools, they need to have information about practices such as classroom management and testing. The *INEE Toolkit*, for example, does not specifically address some key situations – e.g. that informally trained teachers might not use learner-centred pedagogy, indeed may not even have experienced it themselves as students. Similarly, that home/host countries may vary culturally over the use of corporal punishment. In this case, as in the exclusion of older girls, there is a clear clash between ideals and 'respecting culture'. In this respect it is also important to recognise that the NGOs or UN bodies

also have their own cultures, in the form of sometimes disparate codes of conduct that they apply, frequently without consulting the refugees' own culture.

The *INEE Toolkit* does not discuss in detail teachers who are themselves refugees. In most schools in camp settings the teachers are refugees with at least a near-secondary level of education, but not necessarily a teaching background. The *INEE Toolkit* recognises the value of certification and enjoins educational planners to learn about the teacher certification processes that are in place in a host country in order to ensure that training is formally recognised by education authorities. It also recommends that in-service training programmes be harmonised and structured so that they lead to recognised teacher qualifications (even if they incorporate additional components needed in crisis and postconflict situations) (INEE 2010a).

Nevertheless, it is likely that the host or home countries will refuse to recognise the credentials of teachers selected and trained in a non-formal process, as 'normal' pre-service teacher training usually takes at least a year of course work and up to a year of practice teaching. National authorities might also frown on instruction in languages of other countries, or have specific laws forbidding such instruction. (Sesnan 1993)

The *INEE Toolkit* gives good advice about avoiding situations where teachers of different origins (e.g. nationals and refugees) receive different levels of pay, especially in the *Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery* (INEE 2009). The notes state that a sustainable compensation system is needed. To this end, co-ordination is required between UN agencies, NGOs, education authorities and other stakeholders in order to determine common levels of compensation. This has been identified as one of the most intractable issues faced in any situation where refugees are to be employed (Penson and Tomlinson 2009).

2.7 Study countries in the literature and notes

2.7.1 Kenya

Sesnan (2011), in relation to Somali refugees hosted by Kenya, points out how complex the dynamics may be when the disparities between the two sides of a border are very great in terms of security and social and economic life. This is particularly significant where the home government has completely collapsed to the extent that no formal teacher training has taken place at home for many years and, until the relatively recent introduction of the Strengthening the Capacity of Teacher Training programme and its variants, it was impossible to qualify there.

2.7.2 South Africa

Since South Africa does not allow the creation of refugee camps or settlements, refugees must try to integrate themselves into South African society. For the most part they reside in townships and suburbs near the cities. Khan (2007) observes that the integration process faces two basic challenges: first, the need to create an *enabling environment* and second, the need to create a *welcoming society*. The latter issue hinges

on overcoming xenophobia; previous, quite recent unrest, mainly in 2008, has left a legacy of fear and uncertainty. On the other hand the unrest does not seem to have discouraged new refugee arrivals.

2.7.3 Uganda

Article 29 of the 'Uganda Refugee Act 2006' establishes the right of refugees (teachers are included implicitly) to practise their profession in Uganda, as long as their qualifications are recognised by Uganda's competent authorities. This article also affirms the process of recognition of foreign certificates, diplomas and degrees (Government of Uganda 2006).

2.7.4 South Sudan

Two studies for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) refer to issues of the reintegration of South Sudanese returnees, who were trained as teachers in Uganda when they were refugees. The principal observation relevant to this present report is that few of these teachers were found to be teaching. The reasons are clear. First, teachers' salaries are lower than salaries for almost any other job in government service, including those of drivers. Second, most teachers have to work in rural areas, get little support of any kind and may be subject to transfer at any moment away from their home area (JRS East Africa 2010 and 2011).

Notes

1 See www.rsc.ox.ac.uk (accessed 2 August 2012).
2 Source: Personal communications with officials unwilling to be named in all three countries.

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