Chapter 4

Findings – The Refugee Teacher's Experience

4.1 Findings

As would be expected, a study of three different countries hosting up to ten different countries of origin produces a complex picture of who refugee teachers are, why they came to the host country and what their status is.

The refugees may be in a strictly managed camp, in a less formal settlement or living in urban areas or with relatives, compatriots or tribe-mates in rented accommodation. They may be knowledgeable about their new country or have completely inaccurate ideas.

There may be official sympathy in the host country for the plight of refugees, but this is often not matched by the actions of authorities dealing with refugees. The host population may be warm to refugees (usually if a significant part of the host population have been refugees themselves); or refugees may find themselves competing with a population that periodically breaks out in xenophobic acts.

The unfortunate reality is that these host countries do not need refugee teachers and certainly the authors did not find any organisation, ministry or country proactively working for them per se. Refugee teachers respond to this by seeking work in other fields.

There are honourable exceptions (some mentioned in chapter 6), and the benign attitude of Uganda is commendable, but many countries do not see refugees (and will not see them any time in the near future) as a source of teachers for their own system. Nor do they feel any official responsibility on their side to improve the refugees' situation or help them. Further, what the research found in South Africa is that those who came as teachers are leaving the profession. In addition, there may be widespread cynicism in the host country about the refugees' reasons for fleeing their home countries.

Refugees may be teaching because that is what they want to do, or because it is the only option. Where and when they are allowed to teach can depend on local rules or market forces and will always depend on the availability, or otherwise, of unemployed host-country teachers.

If the refugee teachers accept lower salaries or fewer benefits than their host-country counterparts, they are seen to weaken the bargaining power of the existing teaching force. Only in special cases, such as the Congolese who can teach French or a refugee teaching other refugees, is the refugee teacher 'safe' from these factors.

There are major differences between *'trickle-in' refugees* who come largely as individuals, and *large-scale influxes*.

The authors also observed that in any given country, or even in different parts of the same country, what appear to be strict rules and regulations may be: (a) regularly enforced; (b) seemingly contradictory; or (c) regularly ignored.

4.1.1 Categories of teachers studied

For this study the following broad categories were used to underpin the analysis:

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

These individuals were already qualified and fled just like everyone else, but could teach when they got to the host country – either in camps or in a host-community job, formally or informally. Because of rules and regulations or language difficulty, some teach only members of their own community, typically but not universally, in camps.

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

Not all teachers succeed in finding teaching jobs; not all decide to stay in teaching.

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

In many settlements and camps there are no qualified teachers. The more educated, often secondary school leavers[1], are asked to teach, often receiving short training courses from their employers (churches, NGOs, private contractors). In long-term situations such as that of the South Sudanese in Uganda and Kenya, they may follow the full route to qualification at diploma or degree level in the host country. This group also includes individuals who can teach a specific skill (such as a language or mechanics) which is in short supply in the host country.

4.1.2 Migrants are not new

Professionals, including teachers, migrate to other countries all the time. The prospect of a better salary, more experience and a chance to improve oneself attract many people to seek work in a different country. 'Working abroad' is, indeed, not unusual among teachers at some point in their careers. Kenyan and Ugandan teachers working in Rwanda and South Sudan are current cases in point.

For well over 100 years South Africa has received workers from countries as far north as Tanzania. Most recently they have come from Lesotho, Mozambique and other countries of the 'near-abroad'. They came as 'labour' under various agreements, worked to make enough money and generally went back home. Such workers were not called refugees, did not usually come with their families if they came to work in the mines, and often lived in ghetto-like camps near their work. Recent xenophobic outbreaks have given the impression that South Africa and its people are fundamentally unfriendly to those coming to work in the country, but this is not historically the case.

Partly as a result of a high-level political decision to be more open to the rest of Africa post-1994 in response to their support for the liberation struggle[2], South Africa has recently received a large number of foreigners from countries which had not been a source of many migrants before. The migrants did not intend to be received as refugees, but gradually new arrivals, especially those from countries clearly in conflict

such as DRC and Somalia, or with ethnic or political discrimination, have made a more formal asylum process necessary.

There have been South Sudanese in Uganda since the growth of the sugar estates in the 1920s. Like people from West Nile – Ugandans – they came to work and went back to farm, build a house and marry. Gradually sections of their families settled in Bugerere with the King's permission, and formed a South Sudanese resident community. The civil wars in Sudan obliged these original groups of workers (who formerly did not believe the borders to be significant) to consider themselves as refugees. Some, having homes in Uganda already, took refugee registration in order to formalise their status as – especially after the fall of Idi Amin (President of Uganda from 1971 to 1979 and widely perceived to be South Sudanese himself) – their situation had become precarious from an ethnic point of view. As these were settled villagers fully integrated into the Uganda school system, some got trained as teachers in the Uganda system.

For a country like South Africa without camps, refugees teaching their own people is not a prominent issue except when, as with some Mozambicans, they are giving basic education in their home language.

4.1.3 'Push and pull'

Migrating to another country can be the result of being forced to do so because of conflict, insecurity, natural disasters or similar causes. This is known as 'push', and teachers who move for such reasons have the right to be called refugees. On the other hand, migration may be encouraged by the attraction of better pay, living conditions and options for professional development in another country. This is known as 'pull', and may be no different from 'going abroad to get a job'.

Frequently, the initial reasons for a teacher migrating are a complex mix of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Then, when home circumstances change, teachers may find themselves unable to go home; or they may find they are no longer qualified to be a refugee in the host country. They may nevertheless stay and try to keep or obtain refugee status, because there are some advantages to doing so, such as healthcare or access to schools.

It is noted that refugees in all the areas studied maintain strong links with their home countries, a relatively new situation arising from the prevalence of mobile phones and cyber cafés. In Uganda, this is tacitly encouraged by the authorities with a view to the eventual return of refugees to their home countries. The situation often results in the 'one foot in each country' phenomenon, which may go as far as periodic returns home for seasonable planting or even to take examinations, or leaving a part of the family (typically school going children) in the host country.

4.1.4 'Pull' factors

Economic survival in a fragile state or an emergency may drive teachers (and other salaried people) to migrate internally; that is, not to become refugees with the rest of the community. Sesnan attributes this to the fact that when they can, teachers flee or gravitate towards their salaries (2011).

In cases where teachers choose to migrate to another country for better pay and working conditions, they are often under the illusion that 'the streets are paved with gold' in the country they are aiming for. This perception has drawn many refugees to South Africa, as opposed to other African countries. However, upon arrival teachers often find barriers to satisfactory employment. For example, when refugee teachers are hired by schools in a host country they may be paid less than host-country nationals. More is said on this elsewhere in this report, especially section 4.3.

4.1.5 Social and psychological factors

According to many commentators, and the teachers themselves, refugee teachers face a number of challenges in adjusting to life in the host country. Our interviewees reported that xenophobia and discrimination often occurred. The authors have noted that xenophobia, discrimination and anger against immigrants and refugees are particularly strong in South Africa, and constitute a barrier to the smooth integration of asylum-seekers and refugees.

4.1.6 Resilience

This study confirms the stress factors affecting refugee teachers. However, the study also notes a strong resilience and quickly acquired self-confidence, which overcome the stress factors to a large extent when refugees are granted the freedom to find their own solutions or operate 'under the radar', as noted by JRS in their study of refugee coping mechanisms in Nairobi.[3]

This is particularly true when teachers have quit teaching and entered the wider labour market, often becoming self-reliant entrepreneurs. The available literature does not address this resilience, tending to present the teachers as passive victims of circumstances rather than actors in their own fate.

4.1.7 Working abroad or refugee?

In each country, many people had left perfectly normally, had possibly even been actively recruited, to take up jobs in a country that was at that time experiencing a shortage of teachers.

Among this group are many Zimbabweans presently in South Africa. They came from a country that, post-independence, had developed one of the best education systems in Southern Africa. For them, what had been an opportunity started becoming a necessity as the economy at home deteriorated and political and social conditions went downhill to the extent that going home and staying home was not a real option.

For these people, an intact home country still existed that one day they could go back to. Indeed, the South African government was relaxed enough to allow them to go home occasionally, something which is denied to formal refugees in other countries. Eventually, South Africa tightened status requirements and going back home became a risk, as one's status had to be renewed at every return. It is clear that this tightening will continue as South Africa's official view of Zimbabwe evolves. With the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy, salaries are beginning to be

meaningful again (and people can set up their own small businesses and earn solid money, something which had previously been impossible).

This fluid and evolving situation illustrates the point that being a refugee and not being a refugee is not the simplistic dichotomy that a process such as refugee status determination (RSD) might suggest. The blurred boundary increases the challenge of developing policies for refugees. Further, this blurring may be deliberate, as it increases options for refugees and their advocates, as well as for officials, and the blurring is increased as it happens over time.

4.1.8 Home countries and returnees

There are important differences between countries, which make generalisations difficult. For example, what is clearly a drain on the teaching force in a largely peaceful Zimbabwe to the benefit of South Africa is different from the situation in South Sudan, where there were few teachers anyway and there was a danger to life in staying at home.

Significant too is that it was widely understood in the early 1990s, by everyone working with the Sudanese as with the Somalis in Kenya, that the only way their home country would survive was to reproduce a complete education system in exile. Conferences and curriculum debates took place regularly, along with heated debates about language of instruction.

The South Sudanese teachers trained in Uganda are, in theory, now a benefit to their home country. Yet this study discovered that because teachers' salaries remain low compared to civil servants' salaries in South Sudan, few returnees are actually teaching. Instead, paradoxically, Ugandans and Kenyans teach in South Sudan, accepting the low salaries there which are nevertheless higher than those at home.

This South Sudan case illustrates that the refugee scenario may unexpectedly *reduce the overall number of available teachers*. Even though in Uganda and Kenya there were large programmes to get South Sudanese formally trained for the return home, almost no returnee teachers are now teaching (see Box 4.6). In many ways this is disappointing, as training refugees from Sudan in the early 1990s was always based on the principle of maintaining continuous training 'offshore' and ensuring an unbroken flow of educated people, even during what turned out to be a 20-year war.

The Zimbabwe case is similar. Qualified and experienced teachers not only no longer teach, but do not intend to teach when they go home.

4.1.9 'One foot in each county'

Refugees nowadays maintain strong links with their home countries. Issues of family tracing,[4] knowledge of home conditions[5] and concern for family left at home are very different in today's circumstances.

The rise of easy money transfer also plays a role. A refugee in 2012 can send money home or receive money from home or from elsewhere. These services can be either efficient, such as those provided by Dahabshil, the dominant company for money transfer in

Somalia and between countries across East Africa, or subject to restrictions, such as those applied in South Africa, where refugees cannot receive money without having at least received a green residents' card, which would permit them to open a bank account.

The following sections look at the context of each of the study countries.

4.2 Kenya

The Department of Refugee Affairs is the public office responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees in Kenya and co-ordinates activities and programmes relating to refugees. Also, the department manages the provision of protection services to the refugees and asylum-seekers in Kenya.

4.2.1 Refugees in Kenya

Kenya has hosted refugees for many years. The major source countries for refugee flows since the 1980s have been (South) Sudan, in the mid-1980s, and Somalia in the later 1980s, both of which have suffered from long-term state collapse as a result of civil war. The majority of refugees are housed in the camp complexes of Dadaab and Kakuma (see Figure 4.1), refugees being obliged to live in camps by Kenyan law.

The Somali population in Kenya has been swelled by the famine of 2011 (itself exacerbated by the political/military situation). The fact that Kenya also has an ethnic Somali population leads to continuing suspicion in some communities in Kenya, made worse by the recent involvement of Al-Shabaab in terrorist attacks on Kenya's town and economic sources (notably tourism).

South Sudan's population has largely returned home, with the exception of those completing school. Recent events in South Sudan have caused a re-return, probably temporary, to Kakuma. Kenya also has an internally displaced population as a result of the post-election violence of 2007–2008.

4.2.2 Important background

Over the years Kenya has trained and qualified a large number of Kenyans as teachers, more than budgets can support. Currently tens of thousands of these teachers are unemployed as the national budget cannot afford to employ them all, even though there are vacancies. This is aptly illustrated by the Kenya government's recent agreement to employ 10,000 more teachers (the union says it should be 20,000), *all of whom will come from the stock of unemployed trained Kenyan teachers* (Siringi 2012). As in other places, these teachers are vocal and it is unlikely they will easily make way for significant numbers of teachers coming from elsewhere, such as refugees. In Kenya the teachers' union (the Kenya National Union of Teachers [KNUT]) is strong and such as issue would require negotiation.

4.2.3 Becoming a teacher in Kenya

In Kenya refugees are not allowed to take formal employment without obtaining a work permit, as the law requires any foreigner wishing to work in Kenya to hold such a permit. Refugees are treated as foreigners when it comes to employment. The Kenya

Figure 4.1 Map of Kenya showing locations of Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps

Source: Based on UN map East African Community, no. 4248 Rev. 1, June 2012

Ministry of Education does not consider refugee teachers as a special category, as long as they have a work permit.

KNUT brings together and unites teachers of all grades and qualifications in Kenya, and provides a forum for co-operation. The union works within the laws in place. Its mandate is both of a trade union and professional organisation that serves all registered teachers in Kenya of Kenyan nationality who choose to join and, as such, to recognise the need to anchor operations on certain key principles and values. KNUT unites teachers of all grades for quality service, socio-economic improvement and professional advancement, strengthens their bargaining power and promotes quality education (KNUT 2012).

Interviews with KNUT representatives showed that they felt that, should a refugee manage to overcome the hurdles and become a teacher in Kenya, they would fight for that person's rights as a teacher. They would not, however, intervene on any issue regarding refugee status, such as deportation. The Education Officer, Kenya National Union of Teachers noted: 'As long as you are teaching in Kenya, whatsoever race or status, your case is taken into consideration since you are a teacher'.

Box 4.1 Case study of Mohammed: A former refugee teacher now looking for work in Eastleigh, Nairobi

Mohamed arrived from Somalia in one of the camps during the early years of the collapse of the Somali state with his parents as a refugee in search of safety. He sat for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2004. Having passed, he was admitted to Dadaab Secondary School in 2005 and completed his secondary education in 2008.

In June 2009, he started to teach in one of the camp primary schools without any form of teacher training. He said this was possible because of the high demand for teachers. It was during this period that he managed to acquire some training on teaching skills for a period of 12 days during one term, which was conducted by CARE Kenya. He also received short training on child protection from Save the Children and more on hygiene promotion from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

In March 2011, he decided to stop teaching and moved to Nairobi in search of better living standards.

His original reasons for choosing the teaching profession were:

a. lack of other opportunities;

b. desire to earn a living while still close to his parents;

c. desire to help his younger siblings; and

d. hope to ascend to other lucrative jobs in the camps.

The salary for primary teachers like Mohammed was as low as US$50 with a small yearly increment, while mainly non-refugee trained teachers were paid US$375–US$500 a month. His 'salary' eventually went up to US$75 a month.

His reasons for quitting teaching in the camps were:

a. the low salary and lack of other incentives;

b. long working hours and lack of holiday breaks;

c. the distance to the school and the harsh weather; and

d. zero or limited capacity building to improve the quality of teaching.

A Kenyan educationalist familiar with the Somali community summarised, in a personal communication, the reasons for those who were teachers at home dropping out of teaching as being:

- the low status of teachers in Kenya compared to home;
- the lack of professional skills and knowledge compared to Kenyan standards;

- the lack of a recognised qualification;
- an inadequate educational background due to the years of insecurity and sporadic opening and closing of schools; and
- poor remuneration compared to what can be gained in the commercial world.

4.3 South Africa

4.3.1 Refugees in South Africa

The majority of refugees in South Africa are from other African countries. This study looked mainly at Zimbabweans and Congolese. Anecdotally, the authors were told that there were few teachers of other nationalities. The authors are also aware of large numbers of Kenyans and Ugandans teaching in South Africa; these individuals do not usually claim to be refugees but have come for work.

As described above, South Africa has hosted large numbers of migrant workers since the opening of the mines in the nineteenth century. This makes migration feel normal, at least for lower status workers and those from immediate neighbouring countries. Some share a common language, and therefore having fewer problems assimilating.

In South Africa, the study included the issue of 'push' factors, which force refugee teachers to migrate from their home countries, and the difficulties experienced in host countries by these refugees, especially if they want to practise their profession. Clearly there were also 'pull' factors (social, political and economic), which cause these refugees to migrate to South Africa instead of any other country.

South Africa does not have an encampment policy for refugees. Refugees live in different parts of the country, chiefly in the main urban centres. Since all refugees in South Africa live in the community, government institutions, NGOs, associations and independent teachers were approached during the study. There were approximately 40 interviews in total and 10 small group meetings.

4.3.2 Supply and demand in South Africa

A special factor in South Africa was the emigration of a substantial number of qualified teachers (often, but not exclusively, from the white community) to Europe and other non-African countries. In 2007, there was 'a mismatch between supply and demand, for example 6,000 teachers graduated in 2006 while 20,000 left' (South African Council for Educators [SACE] 2010: 6).

> 'Various reasons contributed this state of affairs: an ever-changing education policy landscape and teachers' under-preparedness to cope with it, unattractive salaries and conditions of service leading to demoralisation and creating higher propensities to leave the profession, as well as the impact of HIV and AIDS on the teaching profession.

'In order to address the teacher shortage problem, especially at secondary level (and particularly in mathematics and science disciplines), South Africa subsequently turned

to other countries for the provision of teachers, thereby became both a 'sending' and 'receiving' country for migrant teachers.' (SACE 2011; 6, citing Appleton et al. 2006).

4.3.3 The refugee process in South Africa

The process of being officially recognised as a refugee in South Africa is characterised by several stages which often involve waiting fairly long periods and, because refugee administration has been centralised in a few centres, a certain amount of money for travel and stay in Pretoria or one of the other centres.[6]

From first registration known as 'Form 22' (Asylum-seeker) and then 'Form 24' (Refugee Status) there is an explicit right to work and study, but it is interpreted 'on the ground' universally as work *on temporary contracts*. Only on attaining the green residence card is one allowed to take up *a permanent contract* – Refugees Act No. 130; Immigration Act No. 13 (Republic of South Africa 1998; 2002).

In a short interview an officer of the Department of Home Affairs illustrated how policy might work by explaining how the school in his community (managed, like all schools, by a School Board of Governors) was able to appoint temporary refugee teachers to 'fill gaps'.

Recommendation 2: Governments should ensure by internal communications that refugee rights, in particular the rights to work and study, are respected by all institutions in the country. While governments are the primary actors concerned by this recommendation, it is also relevant to UNHCR, IOM, teacher unions and INEE members. Education International, which represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe, could play an advocacy role in supporting the rights of refugee teachers.

The researchers called at Tshwane Interim Refugee Office (TIRRO) – the initial reception centre for refugees centralised in Pretoria serving Gauteng Province. Essentially, TIRRO is a processing centre, not a policy body. Despite some of the evidence of refugees who complained, the system seemed fairly well organised, with refugees telephoned and given appointments at the various stages of the processes. Importantly for this study, this centre does not appear to collect information on a refugee's skills, experience or qualifications, which would have been useful data at various levels later.

In Johannesburg, a visit was made to KTC Computer and English Training Centre. This centre is like a home to many Congolese refugees and the authors got a chance to speak to the Congolese Association of Independent Teachers.

On a visit to the University of Cape Town, Faculty of Law, the researcher obtained a booklet that guides asylum-seekers and refugees through the refugee and asylum-seeker process in South Africa (University of Cape Town undated). In this brochure, refugees and asylum-seekers can find details of the numerous organisations offering

assistance on legal and administrative issues, as well as providing the language and skills training they need. As a result of this information the team visited Scalabrini Centre in Cape Town, which is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the assistance of refugees and asylum-seekers (see section 6.3).

Recommendation 3: The authority which first deals with refugees should maintain a database that captures the skills and qualifications of people who enter the country, and should share such information with other departments and relevant educational authorities. UNESCO and UNESCO-IICBA could give guidance on comparing teacher qualifications from different countries, as could the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth of Learning.

4.3.4 Becoming a teacher in South Africa

To work as a teacher (or in any profession) one must be qualified. If their qualification was not locally obtained, an applicant needs to get an 'Equivalence' from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The exception to this rule is applicants with a Zimbabwean teacher's qualification.

A permanent contract has to come from the provincial Department of Education if there is a request for a salaried post, which may or may not be permanent. Such a contract, as noted earlier, requires the refugee to have a resident's permit. At this point the refugee will also seek registration with SACE.

A school can only give a temporary contract, either to fill vacant government-supported post or a post paid for by the parents. This is because schools have a certain amount of autonomy under their School Board of Governors. Refugees perceive temporary contracts as being handled in an unpredictable manner, and report that they are sometimes withdrawn without warning.

Many refugee teachers work in private schools (or in structures they have created for themselves, usually to teach other refugees). The authors also heard of one or two who worked as markers and distance tutors with a large and respected home study institution.

Some refugees seek qualification, or further qualifications, while in South Africa. This usually requires a sponsor, unless the refugees can pay for themselves. The most common such further qualification would be the Advanced Certificate of Education, which can be studied for by semi-distance methods.

4.3.5 Zimbabweans in South Africa

Zimbabweans are in South Africa because of regional affiliations, similarities of language and culture, and the fact that a qualified Zimbabwean teacher does not generally need certification or requalification. Under normal circumstances, i.e. without a push factor, they would not be called refugees or forced migrants but simply migrant labour.

Box 4.2 Case study of Saidi: Trained Congolese teacher in South Africa; not teaching by choice

'Many Congolese left Congo as qualified teachers, but few teach. That includes myself. I only got that qualification to proceed with my education to the next level. Experience showed that few qualified teachers want to exercise the job because [it] is paying very less (40 to 60 dollars a month and up to 100 dollars at some private schools); a driver can get 10 to 20 dollars a day; so many small jobs pay better than teaching at primary school in Congo.

'I have learnt that once you are a refugee in South Africa, you have to explore every potentiality that you have in order to survive. After failing to become a teacher or a nurse, I have put myself into an IT venture and I have survived seven years now fixing and selling computers and electronics stuff.'

Box 4.3 Note on DRC qualifications

The first and commonest qualification to teach in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the 'D6-Pédagogie'. This is a 12th grade, end of secondary diploma, also known as EXETAT (l'Examen d'état). The training is integrated into the three upper secondary years.

This qualification is intended to include some teaching practice before leaving school. On leaving school, students are automatically qualified to teach at the primary level. There is no probation. Holders of other D6 qualifications may also apply to be teachers. Similarly, many students take the D6 in order to go to university (or another similar institution).

Not all of the Congolese respondents in the study who said they were teachers were actually qualified teachers when they left DRC. One interviewee expressed annoyance that a private school wanted to see his documents, affirming that he 'knew how to teach' and implying that no one had the right to disbelieve him.

The authors observed that despite numerous complaints, refugee teachers from Zimbabwe are better integrated into the South African education system than those from elsewhere. They have the advantage of there being similarities between the Zimbabwean and South African education systems; they also have a good command of English.

Many of the Zimbabweans interviewed said that they were finding more difficulties working in the government schools compared to the private ones. They mentioned the issue of the government failing to put them on the payroll, unlike teachers who are citizens, and yet they do the same work. They also mentioned that in Eastern Cape Province, many refugee teachers are being dismissed – even those on temporary contracts – under direction from provincial officials. Later the authors established in

Cape Town that this was true in Western Cape also, and the situation is subject to test case litigation led by an NGO to oblige the authorities to recognise asylum-seekers' rights.

Box 4.4 Case study of Timothy: A qualified teacher from Zimbabwe, who is in South Africa but is not teaching

'I am a 32-year-old Zimbabwean teacher named Timothy. In 2001, I left my country for South Africa due to [the] bad economic situation and political atmosphere.

'I had taught for two years in Zimbabwe before leaving. I arrived filled with hope for a change of fortune – better life … I then went all out attempting to get admitted into the South African education system, but it was to no avail.

'The set conditions coupled with financial constraint meant I had to shift my focus and look for other work to survive.

'There was no choice, so I took every job that came my way from building, painting to gardening. It was the xenophobic attacks that really inspired and motivated me to do something of value in the future – because I don't belong here! I therefore approached a local computer company to take me on [a] work and learn basis. I then gained ample vital skills, knowledge and experience in computer hardware and software, maintenance, repairs and sales.

'Furthermore, I enrolled for formal [information technology] IT certification with a local accredited institution, where I am at an advanced level. My vision now is to run my own IT centre back home with assistance or in collaboration with willing NGOs. I wish to inspire and impart education in a different way through information and communication technology.'

The authors note that Timothy's refugee experience has stopped him being a teacher, resulting in a net loss to the teaching force in both countries, even though he has gained other skills.

4.3.6 Ugandans in South Africa – refugee status can end

Many Ugandan refugee teachers came to South Africa during the conflict in the northern part of Uganda. However, now that the conflict is over, the South African government has stopped recognising these people as refugees. They therefore find it difficult to obtain refugee permits, which would enable them to seek employment. Even those who had refugee papers before now find it difficult to extend them, because the government now views Uganda as a stable country capable of looking after all its nationals.

The authors met five Ugandans – four of whom stated they were qualified in Uganda and showed their apparently genuine certificates of post-secondary training (Diplomas

in Primary and Secondary Education). Most had just arrived at the end of 2011. They were not at all knowledgeable about their options. They did not know that only mathematics and science teachers are even allowed to apply in most provinces; they failed to realise that their teaching subjects were not in demand.

4.4 Uganda

The extensive review of the Uganda refugee situation conducted for this study found a largely sympathetic government structure that was not intent on deliberately imposing obstacles. The basic reality is that teaching jobs are badly paid in Uganda and there are plenty of unemployed Ugandan teachers. Indeed, the domestic surplus of Ugandan teachers helps fill the schools in South Sudan and Rwanda.

4.4.1 Refugees in Uganda

Refugees in Uganda come from all its neighbours, except Tanzania. South Sudanese came back as refugees in the early 1980s, having already been refugees (but not generally in camps) in the 1960s. They have tended to come as a response to massive events at home, usually related to wars. Refugees have come as whole families and villages. They integrate well in Uganda, rarely causing many complaints from the host population.

Rwandese refugees have alternated between different ethnic groups according to the situation in their homeland. Congolese (DRC) refugees come back and forth generally according to local and temporary conditions. Though there is always a large population of Congolese in camps, many live in the main cities of Uganda and are not always fully recognised as refugees. There is also a small number of Kenyans following the post-election violence of 2007–2008.

4.4.2 Becoming a teacher in Uganda

It is not easy to find employment without qualifications in the Ugandan system. To become a qualified secondary teacher in Uganda, it is necessary to have either a degree, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or grade 5 (Advanced Level + 1) education. To teach at the primary level, it is necessary to have at least a grade 3 qualification (Uganda Certificate in Education + three years' training). In all cases it is required to have completed four years of secondary school (Uganda Certificate of Education).

If a teacher's qualification is not a Ugandan or other East African qualification, then it is necessary to obtain the 'Equivalence'. This must be translated if necessary (at a cost) into English and validated by the responsible institution: the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), though a Makerere University validation or an Education Programme for Sudanese Refugees (EPSR) validation would often suffice.

4.4.3 Policy on employment of refugees in Uganda

On interviewing some of the government officials from the Directorate of Refugees (DoR), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the authors established that registered

refugees have the right to employment in Uganda. The directorate described Uganda's refugee policy as being liberal, and this seems to be the case.

There is no specific policy from the DoR on *how* a refugee should be employed, nor is there a proactive stance to search for employment on behalf of a refugee. This is seen as the refugee's own responsibility, helped in many cases by NGOs or churches.

The Ministry of Education and Sports Uganda (MoES) has no specific mandate for refugee teachers. It announces teaching posts that have been approved by the Ministry of Public Service through the Education Service Commission, which is directly involved in recruitment. For primary school at least, such announcements are made at district level.

The Director of Secondary Education said that a refugee teacher can look for a job as an individual, and that negotiations are carried out between the two parties depending on qualifications. He reported that this process works well with private schools.

The OPM has offices in the field in the towns nearest to the camps, and these deal with refugee issues. Government officials working in these offices, such as the Senior Protection Officer at the refugee desk in Hoima (a town in Western Uganda), confirmed this position, as did the Hoima District Education Officer.

Refugee teachers who manage to find employment as teachers tend to be employed by private schools. Their employment may be part time (often paid by the day, or even the lesson) or full time.

Generally, refugee teachers are poorly paid (within an environment of already very low pay in Uganda). Sometimes even that low pay is subject to deductions, such as for social security that is unlikely to be collectable before the refugee returns home. Even with the deduction, refugees do not have the same benefits as a Ugandan national. The authors were told that 'refugees are unlikely to complain'. The illustration in Box 4.5 is typical.

Box 4.5 Experience of a refugee teacher

'I am a Diploma hold[ing] Congolese refugee. I arrived in Uganda February 2010. I was in the teaching service for two years, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, teaching sciences. I managed to get a teaching job at a private school in Kampala, teaching mathematics and French on a short contract, while doing a short course in English at [a] Refugee Law project… [I]t was irritating since the pay was very bad, getting payments in small bits. The head teacher taking me for granted as I was a refugee, besides not having an appointment letter. Money was not of value. Since then, I [have] failed getting another teaching job. Now I am earning a living by loading and off-loading commodities from trucks in one of the big markets in Kampala.'

4.4.4 Sampling

This study was based on interviews and research conducted in:

i. Office of the Prime Minister (Department of Refugees);

ii. Refugee Law Project (Kampala);

iii. Kakira Sugar Works in Jinja District, home to many South Sudanese who came to work on the sugar estates and became de facto refugees when their home country descended into war;

iv. Kyangwali/Kiryandongo Refugee Settlements in Western Uganda;

v. OPM Refugee Desk Office, Hoima, Western Uganda;

vi. Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Kampala; and

vii. Hope of Children and Women Victims of Violence, a community centre that serves refugees living in the Ndejje area of Kampala.

4.4.5 Kyangwali refugee settlement

Kyangwali refugee settlement is situated in the western part of Uganda, in Hoima District, 79 km from Hoima town. Most of the refugees come from the Democratic Republic of Congo; however, some are from Rwanda and a few come from Sudan. The sampling was done from three of the five schools within the settlement.

A number of refugee teachers teach in the schools in the settlement. Half of these teachers were trained in Uganda, either through government teacher training colleges (full training) or NGO training (a series of short courses). The other half of those sampled were not trained as teachers to the standards of the teacher training curriculum of the Uganda MoES. When the schools were taken over by the government, some of these refugee teachers lost their jobs because of this.

4.4.6 Kiryandongo refugee settlement

Kiryandongo refugee settlement is situated in Kiryandongo District, about 200 km north of Kampala. Most of the refugees here were South Sudanese refugees. There are also some displaced from Northern Uganda as a result of the war against the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army. Most of the refugees in Kiryandongo refugee settlement have repatriated to South Sudan, though they often retain an economic interest in Uganda such as a piece of land or a small shop. Often family members continue to go to school in Uganda. In the three former refugee schools (out of five) taken over by the government, remaining refugee teachers are paid by UNHCR since the Government of Uganda at present has no concrete policy on employing even well-trained refugee teachers.

As in Kyangwali, some of the teachers are refugee teachers qualified from recognised institutions, like Kyambogo University (Uganda) and its affiliates. Others were trained by NGOs such as NRC, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and African Action International, by means of a series of short courses. Refugee teachers

Figure 4.2 Map of Uganda showing the Kyangwali and Kiryandongo refugee settlements

Source: Based on UN map East African Community, no. 4248 Rev. 1, June 2012

who find employment within refugee settlements are fully employed, but do not receive the same benefits as Ugandan national teachers since they are paid by various organisations or by the community.

4.5 South Sudan

South Sudan has provided an excellent study area for what happens to returnees. This population lived for almost a whole generation in Uganda, and teachers have been trained from their own school population as they left the refugee or national secondary schools.

Table 4.1 Refugee teachers who participated in the Uganda study

Country of origin	Male	Female	Total
South Sudan	15	4	19
Interviewed in Sudan (returnees)	5	0	5
Democratic Republic of Congo	12	3	15
Rwanda	5	5	10
Burundi	1	–	1
Total	**38**	**12**	**50**

Box 4.6 Case study of Christopher: Sudanese returnee teacher from Uganda

Christopher, 31, was a South Sudanese refugee in Uganda since childhood and is now a returnee in Sudan. He was educated in English throughout and is highly articulate.

As a refugee, he attended three different secondary schools in Uganda.

Christopher taught in primary schools in Uganda after secondary school, while still a refugee and unqualified. His mother is still in Uganda, and his father is in Sudan. He is unmarried, but supports two nephews in school. He expects to marry in a year or so.

As a returnee, Christopher went back to South Sudan in 2004 and taught at Yei Girls' Secondary School. He was sponsored by JRS to return to Uganda to take the two-year Diploma in Secondary Education at National Teachers' College, Muni in Arua, Uganda. The system is sufficiently tolerant and flexible that his return to Uganda as an ex-refugee and ex-returnee caused no problems.

On return to South Sudan, he was employed by an educational NGO as a tutor in the Intensive English Language Programme, which schools Arabic-trained teachers to use English as the language medium in class.

He says he 'fell into teaching' and came to like it. Of the twelve people he knows who followed roughly the same trajectory (only two of whom are female) he is one of only two still directly involved in teaching (in his case teacher training). He does not want to work in government service because of the low salary offered. Although he should be on the 'grade 9' salary appropriate to his diploma-qualified status, he was offered only the lesser 'grade 12' salary appropriate to a secondary school leaver.

In a paradox referred to elsewhere, the schools of South Sudan are now often staffed by Ugandans and Kenyans. South Sudan does not pay teachers enough, so those who are suitably qualified join the police or civil service, which pay much more but are available only to South Sudanese nationals.

Notes

1 In some cases 'stranded students' waiting to get back onto their education ladder.
2 It is noted that when South Africans were in exile in countries such as Nigeria or Tanzania, they preferred the words 'in exile' to being called refugees.
3 Irene Waweru, JRS East Africa, personal communication.
4 Refugees, or their families at home, no longer wait for months to receive the famous Red Cross Message, a standardised, unsealed, short pre-printed note, with boxes to be ticked about where they are now and who is with them, allowing no room for personal details or emotional content.
5 In 2011, Ivorian refugees in Liberia found out directly from their home villages what conditions were like and made the regular 'missions from the home country by ministers' unnecessary.
6 Port Elizabeth, Durban, Cape Town and the Musina Refugee Reception centre at the Zimbabwean border. According to the latest information they will all be moved nearer to the borders shortly.

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