An Analysis of Equitable Educational Opportunities for Refugee Primary School Students in Uganda: Case of Yumbe District

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I. Summary

1. English Summary

This field research tried to clarify the current situation of the educational opportunities for South Sudanese refugee pupils in the Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District, Uganda. The field research was conducted twice in September 2017 and in March 2018 as a participant in the Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa. Preliminary findings of the field research, especially about “schools”, “lack of school facilities”, “teachers”, and “peace education”, are shown in the findings sections.

This report tried to summarize the preliminary findings of the field studies conducted in the Bidibidi refugee settlement. The author will conduct a more in-depth analysis of the data collected as a participant in the GLTP and write the masters thesis using the result of the analysis.

Uganda is experiencing the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world and has seen a dramatic increase in the number of refugees arriving from South Sudan. Uganda has one of the most progressive models of refugee protection, management, and resettlement in the world. However, the formal educational opportunities that refugees have in Uganda are little or no better than in their countries of origin. South Sudan became an independent country in July 2011, however, this country plunged into a civil war in December 2013. About 1,000,000 South Sudanese refugees have fled to Uganda since 2013.

From the point of view of SDGs, an international set of goals, this research contributes to the goal 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) released a report on the growing needs for children’s education, as refugee numbers increase. The publication, titled ‘Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis,’ reports that just half of all refugee children have access to primary education, and 22% have access to secondary education, compared with the global averages of over 90% and 84%, respectively. The report shows that the sheer numbers of refugees in recent years have posed a challenge for providing education in refugee camps, as

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the number of school-age refugees worldwide grew by about 600,000 annually between the years 2010 to 2015, with total numbers increasing by 30% in 2014 alone (UNHCR, 2017).

2. Japanese Summary

本研究は、ウガンダ国ユンベ県にあるビディビディ難民居住地に住む、南スーダン難民児童の教育機会の実態について明らかにしようとしたものである。著者は国連大学の「アフリカでのグローバル人材育成プログラム(GLTP)」の支援をいただき、ユンベ県のビディビディ難民居住地において、2017年9月と2018年3月の2度のフィールド調査を実施した。現時点での調査結果、特に「学校」「教材等の不足」「教員」「平和教育」について、調査結果の章で述べる。

本レポートは現時点での調査結果のみをまとめたものではあるが、著者は今後GLTPの参加者として収集したデータの更なる分析を進める。その分析結果を基に著者は、修士論文を書く予定である。

ウガンダは世界で最も早いスピードでの難民受け入れを経験した国であり、非常に多くの難民が国境を越える南スーダンより流入した。ウガンダは世界的にも難民にとって親和的な難民保護・管理・再定住の政策をとる国である。しかしながら、ウガンダに流入した難民の持つ教育機会は、難民出身国のそれと比較しても、限られているのが現状である。南スーダンは2011年7月に独立国となったが、独立後間もない2013年12月より紛争が始まった。2013年以降、およそ100万人の南スーダン難民がウガンダに流入している。

本研究は持続可能な開発目標(SDGs)の中でも特に、「目標4：すべての人に包摂的かつ公平で質の高い教育を提供し、生涯学習の機会を促進する」に貢献すると考えられる。国際連合難民高等弁務官事務所(UNHCR)は、世界における難民の数が増えたことを受け「Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis」というレポートを公開した。このレポートでは難民の子供たちのうちおよそ半数しか初等教育にアクセスできないこと、22%しか中等教育にアクセスできないことが述べられている（世界平均ではそれぞれ初等教育が90%以上、中等教育が84%）。またレポートによると近年難民の数が大幅に増加し、彼らの多くが教育機会を得ることができないている。
II. Research Activities

As a participant in the Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa, the researcher conducted the internship at Makerere University from August 2017 to October 2017 and at the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda from February 2018 to April 2018. As an intern at Makerere University and the Ministry of Education and Sports, the researcher conducted the field research twice in the Bidibidi refugee settlement in Yumbe District with their generous support of the host institutions.

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in rebuilding conflict and crisis-affected communities and in preparing residents for a peaceful future. World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) identified conflict as a central barrier to meeting education needs, especially for displaced populations including refugees. Conflict represents a major impediment to the realization of the EFA, especially for the universal completion of primary education and gender equality in primary and secondary education. UNESCO (2013) says that about 22% of the primary school-age population of the world live in conflict-affected countries (Figure 1). Moreover, 50% of the out-of-school children in the world live in conflict-affected countries (Figure 2).

South Sudan became an independent country in July 2011. However, this country plunged into a civil war in December 2013. There are more than 1,930,000 South Sudanese refugees as of 15 June 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). In addition, about 1,000,000 South Sudanese refugees have fled to Uganda since 2013.

Uganda is experiencing the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world and has seen a dramatic increase in the number of refugees arriving from South Sudan in recent months. Uganda currently ranks among the top three refugee-hosting nations in the world and is now home to more refugees than those in any other African countries (Figure 3). Uganda has one of the most progressive models of refugee protection,
management, and resettlement in the world. However, the formal educational opportunities that refugees have in Uganda are little or no better than in their countries of origin, despite the fact that the country has already adopted Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Moreover, in refugee and emergency contexts, where teaching materials, classroom space, and furniture are all in short supply, and curriculum quality is inconsistent, the World Bank (2010) notes “teachers are sometimes the only resource available to students”. Teacher quality is recognized as a primary driver of variation in student learning outcomes, particularly in refugee and emergency settings, but few studies have examined the factors that motivate or demotivate teachers in refugee and emergency settings (Ring and West, 2015). The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that influence teacher motivation in emergency settings.
2. Study Area

The field research was conducted in the Bidibidi refugee settlement that is reported to be the largest in the world, hosting over 270,000 South Sudanese refugees, twice in September 2017 and in March 2018. The Bidibidi refugee settlement is located in Yumbe district which is bordered by South Sudan to the north. The settlement covers approximately 250 square kilometers and divided into 5 zones.

In Kampala, the capital of Uganda, the researcher visited the Office of the Prime Minister which is in charge of refugee’s management of the nation and obtained the Request Letter. Moreover, the Introduction Letter was provided to the researcher by the principal of the College of Business and Management Sciences, Makerere University.

Figure 4 (Map of the Study Area)
Source: Created by the Author
3. Methodology

This field research employed a qualitative methodology involving Questionnaire Survey for head teachers, teachers, and pupils and Interviews for parents in order to investigate current situation of education matters in Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District. Some officers of Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), District Education Office (DEO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and international NGOs were also interviewed for relevant supplemental information. The detailed number of visited schools, surveyed head teachers, teachers, and pupils, and interviewed parents during the first field research (in September 2017) and second field research (in March 2018) are listed below respectively (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Field Study (Sep. 2017)</th>
<th>Second Field Study (Mar. 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visited Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Source: Created by the Author

Importantly, an assistant accompanied the researcher as an interpreter during the first field research. The research for refugees was conducted with the greatest consideration for their mental condition. Implied Consent was used to inform head teachers, teachers, pupils, and parents that participation was volunteer basis. The researcher and the assistant explained that participation was on a volunteer basis.

Moreover, the triangulation was used for the field research (Figure 5). The logic of triangulation is based on the assumption that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations (Patton, 1999; Oliver-Hoyo et al., 2006).
4. Research Findings

Through the field research, the current situation of education matters was clarified. Preliminary findings of the field research are shown below.

- **Schools in the Bidibidi refugee settlement**

  In the Bidibidi refugee settlement, there are government schools and community (UNHCR supporting) schools. The government schools were there for Ugandan pupils before the refugee crisis and started accepting South Sudanese pupils after the crisis. However, all of the community schools were launched after the refugee crisis to meet the educational needs of South Sudanese refugee pupils. Because of the facts above, 30-65% of the pupils are South Sudanese in government schools, on the other hand, 70-95% of the pupils are South Sudanese in community schools.

  Table 2 shows the schools information in Bidibidi refugee settlement which was obtained from the interview with the District Education Officers in Yumbe District in September 2017 and field study conducted in February 2018.
• **Lack of School Facilities**

Some head teachers and teachers pointed out that facilities including conditions of roofs and walls are poor. Moreover, learning materials such as textbooks, pens, and notebooks are in short supply. Many schools in the settlement used a patchwork of tattered plastic tents, many with holes, flapping in the wind. Most of the school buildings were in a poor condition (photo 1) and many of the schools do not have enough classrooms so that pupils were taking a class outside (photo 2).

![Photo 1 and Photo 2](source: Taken by the Author)

• **Teachers in the settlement**

Some teachers, mainly South Sudanese refugee teachers, are employed as assistant teachers. Their salary is half compared to that of other teachers, however, their motivation for the work is basically high. A teacher in the settlement said:

*As one of the South Sudanese refugees, I want to support children from my country. And I want them to build a peaceful country in South Sudan.*

(23-years-old teacher at A school, interviewed by the author in September 2017)

Another teacher in the settlement said:

*I want to liberate my fellow brothers and sisters from so that they do not go back to South Sudan illiterate by knowledgeable.*

(24-years-old teacher at B school, interviewed by the author in September 2017)

Even though the salary is not enough, many South Sudanese assistant teachers are convinced that they were contributing to refugee pupils through education.
• *Peace Education in the settlement*

Since most of the pupils were affected by the war in South Sudan, teachers were working with the greatest consideration for their mental condition. One pupil mentioned:

*Two (family members) remained in my country both my mother and father. I have lost them.*

Among the pupils the researcher interviewed, 74% of pupil’s family members were remained or died in South Sudan. Pupil’s psychological problem is one of the issues in the settlement.

Some teachers practiced peace education in their classes. For instance, in music classes, pupils were singing a song in English named “Song about peace and unity” which contents include peace in South Sudan (photo 3). The lyrics of the song is as below:

1- *South Sudan the youngest nation reframe from the politics of war and democracy is the way for nation-building and development.*

2- *Citizen of our young nation arise focus on education. Education brings peace for all for unity and peace shall prevail.*

3- *Government and all the people uphold peace in South Sudan. By embracing the rule of law for let us be for peace and unity.*

photo 3
Source: Taken by the Author

5. Discussion

Through the field research, the researcher collected the data related to education in the Bidibidi refugee settlement. Preliminary findings of the field research, especially about “schools”, “lack of school facilities”, “teachers”, and “peace education” are shown in the previous sections.

In the refugee settlement, school facilities were in short supply. Many pupils were learning in a patchwork of tattered plastic tents, without enough learning materials. Moreover, many teachers felt difficulties since the situation is different from usual situation in the refugee settlement.

The researcher does not put more information on this report since this report aims to show you not about the research findings but mainly “what I experienced in Africa”. However, the researcher is planning to write the thesis focusing on the education matter in the settlement by using the data collected through the field research. The researcher will conduct further analysis of the data.
6. Conclusion

This study investigates the current situation of education matters in the Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District. A lot of challenges and problems in the settlement were found through the field study. This report summarizes the preliminary findings of the field research conducted in the Bidibidi refugee settlement. Based on the data collected during the field study, the author will write the masters thesis with more in-depth analysis.

From the point of view of SDGs, an international set of goals, this research contributes to the goal 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) released a report on the growing needs for children’s education, as refugee numbers increase. The publication, titled ‘Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis,’ reports that just half of all refugee children have access to primary education, and 22% have access to secondary education, compared with the global averages of over 90% and 84%, respectively. The report shows that the sheer numbers of refugees in recent years have posed a challenge for providing education in refugee camps, as the number of school-age refugees worldwide grew by about 600,000 annually between the years 2010 to 2015, with total numbers increasing by 30% in 2014 alone. (Source: International Institute for Sustainable Development, “UN Agencies Highlight Childhood Data Gaps, Refugee Education Needs”) The researcher will conduct further analysis and continue to research on this topic.

7. Acknowledgement

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Osamu Saito, Dr. Natsuko Imai, and all staffs who organized this excellent Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa. Without their academic and financial support, it was very difficult to conduct my research in Uganda. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor at Makerere University, Dr. James Wokadala, for his continuous support and valuable advice throughout the whole period of the programme. And my appreciation goes to the officials in the Government of Uganda. During my internship at the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner, and Senior Education Officers were really taking good care of me. Moreover, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Albert Byamugisha, an advisor of the Office of the Prime Minister, who kindly arranged my internship at the Ministry of Education and Sports, and Professor Keiichi Ogawa, my academic advisor at Kobe University, who gave me continuous and generous support.
8. References


III. Reflection to GLTP

1. My Motivation to Participate in the GLTP

My motivation to participate in the GLTP was that I was very keen to conduct my field research in Uganda. My speciality is international educational development and economics of education so that conducting the field research and learning what is happening there is very important. Moreover, if I could not be accepted by this programme, it was very difficult to go to Africa due to the financial problem. Moreover, I believe that conducting an internship is the best opportunity for students including me to understand the organizations where we want to work in the future. In addition, I believe that not only knowledge I obtained at my university, but also practical working experience and field experience are important. These are why I was keen to conduct an internship at the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda.

2. Field Experiences

During the internship at Makerere University from August 2017 to October 2017, under the supervision of Dr. James Wokadala, senior lecturer at Makerere University, I carried out the following four main activities: (1) understanding the current situation and problems of education in Uganda; (2) collection and review of the papers regarding education policy by visiting the Ministry of Education and Sports and Office of the Prime Minister; (3) deepening the understanding regarding Ugandan educational support from international organizations and NGOs by visiting these organizations; and (4) presentations at Makerere University.

For the first activity, I reviewed papers among which the “National Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20”, the “Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004-2015”, and the “Education Policy Overview in Uganda” which was provided by Dr. James Wokadala. This was very useful to learn about education policy in Uganda.

For the second activity, I visited the Statistics Section in the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Monitoring and Evaluation Department and Department of Refugees in Office of the Prime Minister. I interviewed officers working there. Additionally, I obtained an introduction letter from Dr. Albert Byamugisha, a former doctoral student of Professor Ogawa Seminar and now an adviser of the Office of the Prime Minister, which made my field research in the refugee settlement greatly smooth.

For the third activity, I conducted field research to evaluate the current situation on education matters for South Sudanese refugee pupils living in Uganda. I targeted Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement located in Yumbe District. This settlement is now reported to be the largest refugee settlement in the world. I interviewed education officers in UNHCR and NGOs including Save the Children, Windle Trust, and AAR Japan. I visited three community schools and one government school in the refugee settlement and surveyed head teachers, teachers, and pupils there. Moreover, I visited households to interview parents.
For the fourth activity, I shared the activities I did in Uganda with professors and students at Makerere University through a presentation. I received a lot of valuable advice and comments which will be utilized to improve my research (photo 4).

Moreover, during the internship at the Ministry of Education and Sports from February 2018 to April 2018, I had been deployed to the Pre-Primary and Primary Education Department in the Ministry and worked closely with the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, and Senior Education Officers at the department. I carried out the following four main activities: (1) conducted a desk review of the budgets and projects reports/ supported to revise a budget plan; (2) involved in national projects with various stakeholders; (3) visited schools in rural area to conduct needs assessment and to attend events; (4) conducted a field research in the Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe District (photo 5).

Throughout this programme, I had gained a lot of experience. I could visit international organizations and NGOs which provide support to the education sector in Uganda. I obtained useful information for my research and suggestion for my career after graduation from GSICS, Kobe University since I would like to pursue my career in the field of education development and work at these agencies in the future.
3. Challenges

I got a lot of wonderful experience in Uganda, however, some of them were challenging for me. First one is the side effects of the medicine to prevent malaria. When traveling in Africa, you should avoid mosquito bites to prevent it. You may need to take prescription medicine before, during, and after your stay, depending on your travel plans, such as where you are going, when you are traveling, and if you are spending a lot of time or sleeping outside. I totally understood the importance of medicine so that I was taking it, however, the side effects of the medicine were very uncomfortable for me. I couldn’t sleep very well during my first stay in Uganda. I recommend all of the people planning to go to Africa to think about matters related to the prevention of diseases very seriously.

The second one is the communication difficulties. One of the difficulties of conducting research in Africa is the difference in culture, custom, and mindset. As we know, culture, sense of value, and how we communicate with people are totally different in Africa. I realized that “Japanese style of communication” is useless in Africa. Ugandan people cannot understand what I want to do if I do not clearly mention it. To be “self-assertive” is one of the most important things in Africa.

4. How to Make Use of This Experience to My Future Career Development

I strongly believe that I can definitely make use of this experience in Africa to my future work anywhere. In the future, I am keen to work at international organizations which value the field experience. I can emphasize the experience that I acquired as a participant in the GLTP.

5. Encouragement to Other Students

I strongly believe that you will obtain valuable experience in Africa if you participate in the GLTP. Since international society including international development agencies, the private sector, and civil society obviously add significant value in support of Africa, your experience as a participant of the GLTP must be a precious opportunity if you are interested in working as “global person” in the future. I hope your success in your research!