

**SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AMONG REFUGEES
IN AFRICA:A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION
AMONG RWANDAN REFUGEES
LIVING IN ZIMBABWE AND CONGO**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE**

BY

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2015

ABSTRACT

One of the effects of forced displacement is the disruption of education for affected people. Upon their settlement in the country of asylum most refugees struggle to resume interrupted studies. As such, education constitutes one of the refugees' basic needs and human rights. However, enjoyment of the right to education among refugees is usually affected by the limited resources allocated to education especially in Africa due to high and constantly increasing number of refugees. It also depends largely on the host government's policy and willingness to grant refugees access to public educational institutions. In this regard, refugees' survival strategies for access to education becomes of paramount importance. The aim of this study was to investigate and to document the challenges and constraints pertaining to access to education among refugees living in Zimbabwe and Congo as well as the strategies that they adopt to overcome them. The study was informed by the fact that existing literature has abundantly highlighted the challenges and constraints to which refugees are constantly subjected for access to education, yet there remains a paucity of studies and data on the survival strategies that refugees adopt to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, existing literature lacks comparative data between countries and across types of refugees' settlements. This study targeted refugees staying in refugee camps, those settled in rural areas and those self-settled in urban settings. The study was inspired by Giddens' Structuration Theory and the Actor-Oriented Approach to highlight the agency of refugees in finding solutions to the various challenges, limitations and constraints that they encounter in exile with a particular emphasis on access to education. The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to enter the refugees' world and to interact with them in their natural environment. It used structured interview, in-depth interview and focus group discussion techniques to collect data and testimonies about refugees' challenges and survival strategies pertaining to access and enjoyment of education in exile. The field research was conducted between 2009 and 2011. It reached out to 335 respondents through the survey, 22 participants through in-depth interviews and 120 participants through focus group discussions. The findings show that refugees are active agents in finding solutions to their plight. They highlight and stress the knowledgeability; the creativity and the ingenuity of refugees with regard their survival strategies for access to education in exile. The study establishes that refugees manage to circumvent the critical barriers affecting their access to education such as lack of identification papers, age limit and certification of previous studies, mostly through networking. The study proposes some recommendations for policy and decision makers to encourage and support refugees' creativity and entrepreneurship through self-help projects. It also advocates for more research interest on the refugee phenomenon and to introduce a course on forced migration in the faculty of social studies of the University of Zimbabwe.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend my sincere gratitude to my motivator and supervisor, DrSununguraiChingarande, for her invaluable academic guidance without which this work would have not been accomplished. I also acknowledge the guidance of Dr Solomon Mombeshora who accepted to take over the supervision of the first stage of this study from Dr France Maphosa whose first insightful orientation is also hereby acknowledged and appreciated. My gratitude also goes to Prof. Bourdillon for his valuable constructive criticisms to make the objectives and problem statement of this study clearly highlighted. My sincere thanks and gratitude go to Fr OdomaroMubangisi for being my mentor and enlightener. His eagerness to raise my consciousness for the sociopolitical problems in the Great Lakes Region of Africa has contributed immensely to the fulfillment of this study.

I am also grateful to my research assistants, Mr Emile Mukunzi, Mr Andre Rudahusha, MrClaverMuhayimana, MrsElianeNyampinga, Mrs and MrHabonimana, Mr Henry Ingabire, Mrs and MrBagaragaza. Without their tremendous support during the collection of the data this work would not have been accomplished.

I also owe special thanks to all respondents individually and collectively, refugees' representatives in their various capacities, as well as the various organizations and their respective managers who accepted to provide valuable information and personal comments regarding refugees' survival strategies in exile.

DEDICATION

To my wife RWAMATWARA Jeannette NIYITEGEKA and our children, to my mother and my late father, to my brothers and sisters, to the refugees all over the world, I dedicate this work. To all those who care for refugees and those who provide support and assistance to refugees in various ways I also dedicate this work.

List of Acronyms

AFDL	Alliance Forces for Democratic Liberation
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Virus
ANC	African National Congress
ARV	Antiretroviral
AU	African Union
BTS	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur
CBPR	Community-based Participatory Research
CHU	Centre Hospitalier Universitaire
CNAR	Comité National d'assistance aux réfugiés
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire)
DTK	Don't know
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaises
FGD	Focus group discussion
FONCABA	Fondation Catholique des Bourses d'Etudes pour Africains
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMI	Institute of International Migrations
IRC	International Refugees Committee
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority

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