



Learning on the Margins:

Factors that Structure the Education of Refugee Children in South Africa

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Disclaimer:

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List of acronyms

CoRMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants of South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
FMSP	Forced Migration Studies Program
LO	Life Orientations
PE	Play & Exercise
RCP	Refugee Children's Project
SA	South Africa
SASA	South African School Act
SGB	School Governing Body
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WITS	University of Witwatersrand
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission

Abstract

The exclusion of refugee children in the South African education system in the post-apartheid period has attracted the attention of non-state actors, human rights organizations and non-governmental organisations to intervene with alternative solutions to close this gap. This paper examines the factors that shape the schooling of refugee children in South Africa, as well as their experiences in accessing education in both public and private settings. This paper looks at the role played by non-state actors who fill this inadequacy gap; how responsive are these alternatives to the government discourse & practises for education of the refugee children. This study situates the Right to Education of a refugee child within the context of inclusion and exclusion approaches by looking at the experiences of the refugee children within the system. Views and perceptions of refugee children with regards to the type and quality of education they receive are analysed and the way they engage and interact within the system with their fellow learners, teachers, new environment taking into consideration the language, diversity and ethnicity. New government policies have recently been adopted to include refugees in the mainstream system; however findings highlight a social problem (xenophobia) that exacerbates the exclusion of refugee children within the system.

Relevance to Development Studies

“Globally, children are said to form the largest demographic age group amongst refugees. It is estimated that children represent half of the world’s forcibly displaced population. Since the introduction of asylum determination procedures in 1994 up until June 2005, the South African Department of Home Affairs had reportedly received a total of 6,495 ‘child-related’ applications for refugee status; these cases include both children who are with their parents or guardians and unaccompanied or separated children who would make an application with a legal representation. More than half of these child applicants come from Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Somalia. Out of these, 30% of Somali children have been recognized, 31% of Angolan children and a further 34% of Zaire/DRC children applications have been approved. There is currently no way of knowing how many child applicants arrive unaccompanied, as official statistics do not reflect this distinction” Handmaker(2008).

By the end of 2011 an estimated number of 220,000 asylum-seekers, mainly from Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Somalia and Zimbabwe, were registered in South Africa and 63, 000 more from DRC, Rwanda and Somalia, all of whom had been recognized as refugees in South Africa. (UNHCR 2011)

Table: 1 Refugees on records by end of 2012.

Country of Origin	Refugees
Zimbabwe	1,095
Angola	5,805
Rwanda	1,365
Burundi	2,365
Somalia	17,864
Ethiopia	5,538
DRC	13,394
OTHERS	17,824
Total	65,520

Source: (UNHCR 2012)

According to demographic data provided by the Forced Migration Studies Program (FMSP) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg the overall foreign population in South-Africa ranges between 1.6 to 2 million, or 3-4 percent of the total population. Further estimates indicate that there are between 1 and 1.5 million legal and illegal Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. Being a fast emerging developing country in the Sub-Saharan Africa, with her fast growing economy, stable politics and her highly developed infrastructure many people cross the borders illegally to seek refuge and/or humanitarian in neighboring as their countries suffer from political unrest, poverty, genocides and endless wars (Zimbabwe, Congo, Sudan and Somalia). All these push factors do not affect older persons only but also children who often struggle to adapt in a foreign country with a new language and for them access to government services such as education becomes a challenge.

Keywords

[Education,children,exclusion,refugee]

Chapter 1

Research Focus

Seeking belonging

Like an unexpected thunderstorm, the 'xenophobic' attacks across our country with unprecedented horror and unabated anger. The warning signs were very much in place before the full onslaught happened. But somehow we were completely unprepared as a nation for the unleashing of such violence towards some of the most vulnerable people in our midst. The image of a pleading, burning Mozambican met by laughing onlookers is etched in our memories. Is this what we have come to? (Hassim et al 1998)

“people like us are not always welcomed by South African's, they think that we are here to cause trouble but all we want is to learn , our homes are troubled by wars, thanks to LO (Life Orientations) subject at schools we find acceptance”¹

Figure 1: A happy South Africa



Source: Field work 2013

The birth of democracy in South Africa resulted in a new wave which attracted a high number of refugees and a return of ex-combatants² which resulted in a high influx of people competing for the limited resources offered by the government such as education and scarce employment opportunities in the job market, with a 23% -and rising - unemployment rate especially amongst the youth.

On Sunday evening of 11th May 2008 , a mob of young men in Johannesburg Alexander township forced their way into a hostel on London road and initiated a merci-

¹ A Congolese boy who goes to Centurion College

² South Africans who went to exile to fight for the country

less attacks on residents that were deemed to be “*makwerekwere*’s”³. Everything that belonged to foreign people was destroyed in a few days in Alexander Township’s informal settlements, shacks were burned, and people were beaten. Soon the violence had spread to Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Rand. By early June a number of people had died, hundreds of thousands suffered grievous injuries and tens of thousands had been displaced from their homes, taking shelter in community halls and police stations or fleeing in terror across the borders in anticipation of an uncertain future.

The reports by UNHRC indicated that 46 000 people were displaced and 62 were killed after the attacks including men, women and children. With structural violence like this the focus has always been on adults and how have they been affected by the attacks. Little or no attention has been paid to children who were displaced specifically from schools which is often the only place they get to be children, play, laugh and learn. Children always remain invisible and hidden behind the shadows of the adults but they suffer the same suffering and are defenceless as they cannot fight for themselves. The abovementioned attacks were said to be poverty driven as attackers were motivated by insecurity issues, claiming that refugees took their jobs⁴ and that SA people quite often had to compete with refugees for limited resources offered by the government so ‘*these people*’ must go back to their home countries. The attacks were characterised by the common fact that the foreign people who were attacked were those who lived in small and crowded low income dwellings (shack/slums) in the townships. The causes of unemployment and its social consequences lie largely with the economic choices the South African government has made and should not be blamed on refugees or on economic migrants.

UNHCR reported that SA still continues to be the highest recipient of asylum applications worldwide annually. The 1949 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Dakar Education for All frameworks, affirm the rights of all children to quality education that recognizes diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, national origin or the political affiliations of their parents. (Meda,L.Sookrajh,R. & Maharaj,B. 2012). These are the categories of discrimination that are used by states internationally to discriminate people

Between the years 1997 to 2002, asylum seekers in SA were not allowed to take up employment or study in South Africa. There was no specific policy on this but just a clause in the document issued to them during that time by the Department of Home Affairs.⁵ In response to a parliament media release a question was raised in parliament to the then Minister of Education Ms. Naledi Phando; as to what provisions her department had made to accommodate refugee children or unaccompanied minors of school-going age in the education system. In response she referred to, Section 5(1) of the South African School Act 84 of 1996 (the SASA) which provides that a public school must admit learners and serve their, educational requirements without

³ A discriminating word used by South African’s which refers to a foreigners.

⁴ http://www.erp.org.za/htm/issuepg_fugee.htm

⁵ Interview with the Project Manager – Child Refugee Project

unfairly discriminating in any way. The word “learner” as defined in the Act includes a refugee child.

This position is even more clearly articulated in paragraph 19 of the Admission Policy of Ordinary Public Schools (Government Gazette No. 1997 of 19 October 1998) where it states that the admission policy applies equally to learners who are non-citizens, complemented by paragraph 18 of the policy in that it allows the principal of a school to admit a learner even in the absence of a transfer card from the previous school that the learner attended.⁶ Furthermore, the Refugee Act of 1998 makes provisions for the right to access to education and health for all refugees in SA.

The findings of a study conducted by Consortium for Refugee and Migrants of South Africa (CoRMSA) in 2011 highlighted that in spite of the important role that education plays in the lives of refugees, access remains a great challenge. This study further suggested that refugee and asylum seeking learners often find themselves out of public education system. The South African Department of Education’s (DOE) schooling plan for 2025 stipulates a long term planning for the basic education sector which will allow for the monitoring of progress against a set of measurable indicators covering all aspects of basic education including amongst others, enrolment and retention of learners, teachers, infrastructure, school funding, learner well-being and school safety, mass literacy and educational quality. The DOE also sets boundaries for learners within specific geographical areas to attend schools within the area of their jurisdiction.

In South Africa there is a shortage in provisioning of schools to fulfill the educational needs, especially for refugee children as they continue to be a fast growing, but *somehow* still ‘marginalized’, number within South African society. It is not possible for public schools to accommodate everyone, and the manner and circumstances which refugee children arrive also pose more challenges. As a result most refugee children experience challenges in accessing the free education offered by government which is limited and sometimes far from their reach as many public schools are mostly situated in townships outside the City Centre whereas most refugees are based in the CBD areas. In fulfilling the shortage on school provisioning and assisting with challenges within schools, NGO’s, non-state actors and International organizations intervene with alternative solutions such as establishing of schools formed by NGO’S. Private schools such as Centurion College and Izenzo Kungemazwi Community College (meaning ‘*actions not just words*’) are the result of such private initiatives. This newly generated education system is mainly private and accessible at a fee. Through the help of the organizations that offer assistance to refugee children some refugees get funding and can obtain access to education.

In this paper I examine the responsiveness and inclusiveness of the overall education system by focusing on refugee children’s experiences and perspectives by eval-

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<http://www.dhet.gov.za/Newsroom/MediaReleases/MediaReleases2007/tabid/181/ctl/Details/mid/581/ItemID/2742/Default.aspx>

uating provisioning, contradictions, adequacy and accessibility of the education system, while focusing on the school going age (6-18 years) group. The South African education Act describes Basic education as the type of education that deals with Grade R- Grade 12 and adult illiteracy programs. This type of education can play a vital role in human development and childhood development.

Research objectives & questions

The main objective of this study is to examine the factors that structure the schooling of refugee children by looking at their experiences within the South African education system; its responsiveness and inclusiveness towards fulfilling the need of the right to education of a refugee child.

To accomplish this objective I ask one main question and two sub questions:-

1. How responsive is the education system in fulfilling the need arising from the right to education of a refugee child in SA?

Sub-questions:

- a) What are the experiences of refugee children within the South African education system?
- b) How do they value the type of education they receive, barrier's i.e. language and attitudes faced with when accessing education?

Rationale & Justification of the study

Root of the problem

For one to understand where South Africa is today as a country it is imperative that one knows where we come from. As a young, SA researcher still categorised as youth. I have a partial experience of both South African reality during and post-apartheid. Over the past, these worlds have merged where they were previously separated and affected schooling lives of different individual's differently. The South African education system was unequal during the Apartheid era. The type of education received by blacks was of poor quality and learners were not allowed to attend schools that were outside their race.

The South African education system has its roots in apartheid which was a political ideology that was segregating people according to colour of their skin. Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites were not allowed to mix in any way especially at schools. Whites were receiving free quality education. Blacks had schools in townships and rural areas receiving poor quality education which was called 'Bantu Education', especially designed for them and meant to teach them only how to communicate with an employer which was a white person. The policy of separate development served as a structural solution for apartheid's planners, who wanted to turn South Africa into a white republic in which Blacks did not feature as citizens. This "Bantustan' policy

was designed to assign every black person to a 'homeland', according to their ethnic identity. Ten homelands were created to house Black South African citizens, opening the way for mass forced removals⁷

The leaders of the homelands were unable to develop local economies, and most of the employed residents worked as bureaucrats in the homeland administrations. The few economic opportunities created were in small industries that had little effect on GNP. The homelands were dependent on South Africa for funding, and most of their 'citizens' were migrant labourers in South African cities who sent money home to their families in these reserves. At this time in South Africa citizenship and citizenship rights was something that blacks never heard of. Homelands were designed to keep blacks away from the cities through the borders that were created where a black man needed a permit for traveling, even when he was going to town or city. Around the same time political struggle against apartheid was on the rise, blacks had started fighting for what was rightfully theirs. Having little or no formal identities easily enabled combatants who were on apartheid government's wanted list to change their identities when leaving the country for exile. During this era schools became a strong common ground for aggravating discrimination and apartheid in the society. The same school set up was also used to challenge the apartheid ideology amongst learners and to change the status quo. In many societies school plays a huge role in teaching what reflects and shapes the attitudes and values of the wider society. This is how the apartheid government used schools as a space where discrimination and hate were exacerbated which reinforced the racial divide within the SA society. Thus the apartheid ideology was instilled in school children of different races.

Race was an 'issue' such that all apartheid policies were overlapping and intertwined regulations of hatred that were segregating blacks from whites regardless of their origin or nationality. This was further expressed in immigration laws that raised serious concerns to push blacks away from South African cities regardless of where they came from. The South African immigration legislation was a result of colonialism. The predecessors of Aliens Control Act were designed to serve the racist and anti-Semitic ideas of their architects. The Aliens Control Amendment Act of 1995 amends the Aliens Control, Act of 1991. The Act of 1995 amendment act contains traces of racism past in it. (Crush 1998). The Aliens Control Act did not tolerate the coming in of black's from other countries regardless of what skill or contribution they could bring to the economy of the country, black immigrants would be detained and deported immediately. Although the Act of 1995 is embedded in the Bill of Rights and South Africa is a member to the United Nations traces of racial elements are still happening in reverse i.e. xenophobic attacks which took place in 2008 and hate speech towards other African Nationals coming into the country.

In 1986 the new constitution proposed an end to free education, the consequences of which were far-reaching as parents from all races were now expected to pay school fees. (Burman& Reynolds 1986). This was around the same time when political negotiations were on-going to free political leaders. Apartheid formally came to an end and it was officially abolished in the 1990's. The country experienced its first democratic elections in 27th April 1994. This meant that blacks could go to schools

⁷ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/special-features/homelands>

which were previously reserved for whites but only if they could afford to pay the fees set. Some of these schools escalated the fee price to prevent black children from coming in, as schools have a right to set fees for themselves according to DOE regulations that leave the power invested in school governing bodies. The opening of white schools to other races was meant for positive change which was inclusive to all but ended up excluding those who were not economically fit to afford such service.

This transition in SA also attracted a number of refugees who fled their countries for refuge. With a past highlighted above SA people were neither prepared nor ready to share their hard earned freedom with refugees just yet. This reverted apartheid practise which was now directed to other African Nationals who came seeking refuge in our now political stable country. This in turn gave birth to xenophobia which has become a social problem that I closely look at in this study as it has resulted in far reaching negative consequences for refugee's livelihoods and the schooling of the refugee children. The birth of a democracy meant that the new government had to close that gap and the government had to position itself well for further changes for the benefit of all in policies that are still somehow segregating people.

Government's current discourse/position

Sayed argues that the South African government of National Unity has achieved a multiracial education system that is not racially segregating for the first time in the history of the country. Firstly, the creation of a single national department of education out of 19 racially, ethnically, and regionally divided "departments of education" was a very significant accomplishment in the early years.

The creation of non-discriminatory school environments to which access was gained on the basis of criteria other than race or religion was also another attainment of the new government.⁸ These resolutions resulted in a number of bills, policies and Acts from the parliament which recognised the right to education of refugee children.

An analysis of the responsiveness of these policies in meeting the schooling needs of child refugees in South Africa will be given in this paper indicating whether or *not* the government has committed itself to proper integration for refugees in the SA education system. Most parents who come to South Africa want to see their children go to school. Amongst other factors for consideration for my analysis are the issues of language barriers, ethnicity, xenophobia/ attitudes and acceptance of refugee children in the schools. Government policies will be considered with regard to rules and regulations for accepting refugee learners in schools.

Young as we are into Democracy (18 years) South Africans are still trying to come to terms with reality, acceptance, tolerance and learning to live in a Rainbow Nation, set up as wounds of apartheid are still fresh in people's minds . The sudden arrival of foreign nationals into our country seeking refuge and better economic opportunities has ruffled some South Africans in a wrong way especially in an environment of rising

⁸ http://www.jet.org.za/publications/research/Jansen%20and%20Taylor_World%20Bank%20report.pdf

Educational Changes in South Africa 1994-2003: Case Studies in Large-Scale reform

unemployment faced by youth. So many questions and tension were raised, where resource provisioning is a concern. This meant now that the government can only provide the very basic level of social services. Fear, tension, uncertainty of the future became a main concern with the numbers of refugees who were flocking into the country on the rise.

The country was troubled by political unrest, imprisonment of those who were openly criticizing the apartheid ideology and the banning of other political parties. At a tender age, I remember growing up during the struggle, I often heard songs that were sung by 'Comrades', songs that were singing about our heroes who gave up the comfort of their homes and went to fight for the country in Congo, Tanzania, Mozambique. I was too young to understand what were they singing about or where these countries are situated. The Congo known as Democratic Republic of Congo is the same country that is overwhelmed by political wars and its people are all over South Africa seeking refuge. These are the same people that took care and hid our political heroes during the struggle and gave them homes away from home while fighting for the country.

After a number of amendments in the Constitution and administration of basic education Department, the government has managed to declare some schools especially in the townships as non-school fee paying schools; these schools are identified using a geographical income criterion. Refugees are now accepted in schools regardless of their status. School principals have no right to chase them out of school, even if papers are still missing. Child refugees and their minders are now given a three months grace period to sort out the papers. However, the issue lies mostly with accessibility, their economic conditions automatically exclude them from the system as they mostly do not have a stable income, and the geographical location and the nature of their arrival into the country is a complicating factor. The schools which might have spaces and are non-school fee paying schools are mostly in the townships where refugees fear to go and live since the 2008 xenophobic attacks, thus creating an issue of inhibiting inclusion. According to CoRMSA reports even though there is tolerance incidents of attacks and abuse of refugees who live in the townships are still reported at least once a week.

(Sayed and Soudine 2005:15) are of the opinion that the decentralization of the post-apartheid education system in SA resulted in both forms of inclusion and exclusion. Yes it included everyone racially but managed to exclude due to insufficient school provisioning. The tension that was created by an inclusive educational policy framework through decentralisation finds contradictory expression in practice in schools in:

- ✓ Governance (the ways in which schools govern and manage their activities
- ✓ Access (who obtains access to school, how, implementation of admission policies), and
- ✓ Curriculum (the way in which school and teacher mediate the national curriculum in relation to inclusion)

In the context of the right to education it is very important to remember and understand that it is children's right to enjoy their human rights both in school and outside. Article 29 (1) "...underlines the individual and subjective right to a specific quali-

ty of education.” Compliance with the values recognized in article 29 (1) clearly requires

that schools be child-friendly in the fullest sense of the word, and that they be consistent in all respects with the dignity of the child. Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.” Education is a human right for every child regardless of the ethnicity, nationality or race, status or socio-economic background.

Education is /can also be the best form of rehabilitating children from complicated backgrounds and the best way of stabilizing them through ensuring that they are protected from being exposed to temptation of engaging in criminal activities. Education provides a normalizing routine and promotes social interaction which can help refugee children deal with hardships endured both in their country of origin and to the host country. Education must also be provided in a way that promotes non-violence in school.” Recurrent xenophobic attacks on refugees hamper their integration into local communities. Indeed, fear of attack in the townships forces many refugees to live in more expensive inner-city areas. Accommodation in shelters is temporary and only available for the most vulnerable” (UNHCR 2013).

Exclusion factors are:

- ✓ Economic conditions (Refugees don't have stable income, schools which are free they are mostly in the townships where refugees still fear for their lives)
- ✓ Geographical location (By DOE regulations children are not allowed or accepted to schools where it is more than 30km travel from home- refugees live in City centres this rule directly affects them and the issue of transport costs)
- ✓ Accessibility (Public schools in the City are always full- in the district where this research was conducted only two public schools feed a community of 74,131 in a density area of 69,000/km² (180,000/sq. mi) (Census SA 2011)
- ✓ Refugees arrive in the country at any time during the year (This poses access issue as by practice require a pre-enrolment for schools a year before and that period is usually a requirement & this period is between April – September depending on school rules and if a refugee child comes in to the country in December or January, that means they will have to wait the whole year before they can try and get space which is not guaranteed any acceptance)

Table:2 School statistics

Table 3: Number of learners, educators and schools in the ordinary school sector, by province, from 2011 to 2013

Province	Learners			Educators			Schools		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	1 963 578	1 951 523	1 938 078	68 499	67 936	66 007	5 755	5 754	5 733
Free State	658 010	661 974	664 508	24 057	24 828	24 475	1 437	1 419	1 396
Gauteng	2 022 050	2 075 387	2 129 526	71 532	73 960	74 823	2 559	2 611	2 649
KwaZulu-Natal	2 847 378	2 877 969	2 866 570	93 266	94 932	96 057	6 180	6 176	6 156
Limpopo	1 695 524	1 715 778	1 714 832	58 016	57 670	57 108	4 073	4 078	4 067
Mpumalanga	1 046 551	1 054 783	1 052 807	34 623	34 664	34 936	1 931	1 920	1 885
Northern Cape	274 745	277 494	282 631	8 899	8 864	8 972	611	580	573
North West	765 120	775 142	788 261	25 897	25 924	26 194	1 669	1 645	1 606
Western Cape	1 015 038	1 038 019	1 052 435	35 819	36 389	36 451	1 636	1 643	1 655
South Africa	12 287 994	12 428 069	12 489 648	420 608	425 167	425 023	25 851	25 826	25 720

Sources:
 2011: As published in Education Statistics in South Africa 2011.
 2012: As published in School Realities 2012.

From the figures reflected in Table 3 it can be deduced that, from 2011 to 2013, the number of learners and educators nationally increased by 1.6% and 1.0%, respectively, while the number of schools decreased by 0.5%. The Eastern Cape was the only province that experienced a drop in learner and educator numbers.

Source: (SA School Statistics 2013)

(The table shows that from 2011 -2013, the number of learners and educators nationally increased by 1.6% and 1.0%, while numbers of schools decreased by 0.5%)

These statistics show the shortage of schools while the number of learners increases which forms part of structural issues that shape the schooling of refugee children in South Africa. Due to this shortage Non-state actors like Centurion and Izenzo who act and make a change through providing private education, are usually welcomed by the government upon meeting the requirements and qualifying criteria set by the government. They will follow the education standards rules and regulations set by the DOE. The shortage and lack of government's capacity to accommodate all learners into the public school system has led to the government encouraging non-state holders by giving a subsidy to private schools after they meet certain performance standards and according to the number of learners they have, which still does not make private education system free. This subsidy can make private education affordable, even though parents who have no income can still not afford it.

The Women's Refugee Commission (2011) highlights four reasons why education is essential in refugee situations:

- Education is a human right. This was derived from the human rights laws and convention which was passed at the Geneva Convention in 1951

- Education is a tool of protection, through education, the exploitation and abuse of children can be identified.
- Education helps to meet psychosocial needs; and it promotes self-reliance and social and economic development by building human capital.
- Education provides hope, stability and a better future for refugee and asylum seeking young people displaced young people are left idle and frustrated (WRC 2011)

The UNHCR's education strategy is anchored in a renewed focus on ensuring the provision of refugee education, not as a peripheral stand-alone service but as a core component of UNHCR's protection and durable solutions mandate. Quality education that builds relevant skills and knowledge enables refugees to live healthy, productive lives and builds skills for self-reliance. At present, many refugees do not have access to quality education that provides physical protection and personal capacity development. This is particularly true for marginalised groups, including children and young people with physical and cognitive disabilities; average learners who have missed out on years of schooling; and children associated with armed forces. Refugees can also be marginalised on the basis of gender, ethnicity, language, poverty and religion Girls continue to be left out of mainstream education. The Education Strategy is framed by the 1951 Refugee Convention and relevant human rights instruments. It aims to meet Education for All targets, Millennium Development Goals and UNHCR Global Strategic Priorities. (UNHCR 2012)

Education remains a right and one of the objectives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is that of improving learning achievement for refugee children in primary schools through ensuring that 3 million refugee children have access to primary education by 2016.¹

Research Methodology

4.1. Research strategy and Data Collection Methods

How was data collected?

In answering the research question interviews with parents, teachers, learners and NGO's which assist refugee children in accessing education were conducted, further data has been collected through observation and additionally informal discussions were carried out. Secondary data was collected using past research, bills, Acts, resolutions and books.

"In essence a research methodology is *the how* of collecting data and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process" (Brynard and Hanekom 1997)

In finding answers for my research questions unstructured interviews with an intention of understanding challenges in accessing education and knowing life histories of participants in cases of refugee children, as well as observations and participatory methods were employed.

The study focus area was conducted in Johannesburg central, Hillbrow district area in two schools, Izenzo Community College and Centurion College. These schools were chosen for the study because Centurion College has a high number of refugees and it has been accepting refugees for the past 26 years, even when this was not yet allowed by the apartheid government. It became the first school to accept the children of ex-combatants who were recognised as refugees by law and could not be accepted for study in SA. Izenzo was selected because it was one of the schools that was started to assist the refugees when they had problems accessing education. The school had many complications due to non-existence of policies that regulate and make accessing education for refugees easier. Participants were randomly selected through snowballing approach and

Twenty five in-depth and unstructured interviews were conducted. Participants of the study were randomly selected through referrals and through their involvement with refugees such as Refugee Child Project. To understand the experiences of the children both SA children and refugee were interviewed from Grade 11 class. The teacher identified children who were refugees and the other learners were randomly selected to give a wider selection which is not influenced either by their outspoken nature or shyness. Refugee children also referred me to their parents through giving me telephone numbers to set up a telephone interview or through meeting in the afternoon when they came to school to collect their children.

This resulted in the following interviews:

Project Manager for the Refugee Child Project

Two principals from two public schools

Principal from Izenzo Community College

Administrator of Izenzo Community College

Six teachers (four refugee teachers and two South African teachers)

Nine learners (five refugees & four South African learners)

A telephone Interview with Mr. Currie who is an ex-combatant

Four parents (parents of children who are refugees)

Even though my sampling was around two schools which has high numbers of refugee children in Johannesburg Central. My route to field work was passing through Prichard street where the Central Methodist Church offers free shelter to refugees who have no place to stay. After finishing my Interviews at Centurion and Izenzo. I further observed for a few days activities that were taking place in the surroundings of Methodist Church. I noticed a few children who seemed not to be at school. I only asked them one question, "*Why are you not at school*"? The answers they gave me were either that their parents don't have money to send them to school or they just arrived a few weeks ago so they were still new in the country waiting to be connect-

ed to the NGO's that can assist. The tables below show the sample of data collected and its variation.

Table 3 – Sample characteristics

Interviewee	Organization	Position	Availability yes/no
Germaine	RCP	Project Manager	Yes
Mr. Mukhomi	Jabulani Primary (a public school in Soweto township)	Principal	Yes
Mrs. P Ramaitisa	Centurion College	Principal	Yes
Ms. Mpofo	Centurion College	Teacher	Yes
Mr. G Mazolo	Izenzo Kungemazwi Community College	School Administrator	Yes
Mrs. Meyambo	Parent	Parent	Yes
Ms. Ejeh	Guardian	Parent	Yes

Table 3.1 – Sample characteristics for learners

Name	Age	Grade	Origins	Length of stay in SA
Jonathan Kayombo	17	11	Mozambique	13 years
Happiness Ejeh	17	11	Nigeria	5 years
Phafoso Naka	17	11	South Africa	Since birth
Simphiwe Sambo	17	11	Zimbabwe	6 years

Researchers position

Wearing a researcher's hat and having been introduced to participants as a young black South African female studying abroad created curiosity among learners which made our interaction interesting. At the same time I had to be careful how I positioned myself within this multiracial-cultural community where some issues might be sensitive and stigmatization is a possibility and to avoid misinterpretations. "Positionality and reflexivity have become important issues in migration research. Reflexivity in research involves reflection in self, process, and representation, and critically examining power relations and politics in the research process, and researcher accountability in data collection and interpretation" (Sheridan 2009:126). Sheridan further argues that such ethical concerns can only strengthen researchers' commitment to carry out good research that is based on building relations of mutual respect and recognition.

As a researcher, I did not find it hard to build rapport with my participants. Refugees who are in South Africa especially in schools quickly adapt and interact with other South African teachers and learners on daily basis. This makes them comfortable within the school environment. This process didn't intimidate them as they took me as one of their South African teachers. Instead they loved the fact that people from out of their school took an interest in matters concerning them. As one Angolan boy said "*They* {parents and older people} think that they know how we feel ..."

My main concern as a researcher was to make sure not to view refugees as a homogenous group but interpret and listen to their experiences and stories in an open minded manner that would not influence neither interpretation, assumptions nor put words in their mouths because of their position. In South Africa refugees are usually perceived as notorious people who are in the country to take away South Africans jobs and get involved in criminal activities.

In preparation for my research I did extensive reading on Migration studies, conflicts in Congo and Angola, xenophobia, education and the Zimbabwean current situation to understand different reasons of why do these people cross borders and come to South Africa. Apart from genocides and wars, economic instability was also playing a huge role as a push factor of forcing people to migrate to nearest countries and in the African continent South Africa remains the country of choice due to stable political and economic condition.⁹

Scope, field work reflections & challenges

4.2. Field Work Reflections

This study was conducted using a qualitative method within an interpretive and social constructivism approach. This method was used because the study engaged with a vulnerable group of people (refugee children) therefore the qualitative approach was more appropriate because it allows the researched to express their feelings and experiences in their own words as stated by Meda *et al* (2012). In ensuring that the data is well interpretive while also going into depth on how the perceptions of refugees are socially constructed by South African's. I adopted a flexible research approach that used mixed qualitative methods allowing me to observe and engage with participants. My field work took place in a period of five weeks between 15th July and 16th August 2013 in Johannesburg City central, sampling two independent schools in the Hillbrow District, further interviews were conducted to public school Principal's to enrich this project through obtaining different views. Organisations that work with Refugee children were also interviewed. I spend most of my time interviewing learners, teachers and parents when they come to pick their children in the afternoons. I also observed and took part in class activities and some informal discussions.

The interviews and informal discussions which arose regarding my research were recorded on voice recorder and video clips. Even though participants were aware that they were being recorded, I felt that my presence never intimidated them. Centurion College is attached to the Izenzo Kungemazwi Community college where I also conducted a few interviews out of interest upon hearing how the school started which turned out to be a fruitful activity enriching my study.

Observations played an important part in my field work from start to finish. Observations are used by the researcher to keep more of an open mind about encounters in relation to what a researcher need to know (Brynam 2012). I observed learners from grade 1 -9 during lunch hour and sports activities after their teachers had helped me

⁹ Forced Migration Studies, University of Witwatersrand

identify refugee children. Observations are a best method of interpreting social interactions and relations (Ibid). As a researcher I needed to understand how South African children interact with refugee children. O'Leary (2010) argues that snowballing sampling involves building a sample through referrals. In this regard Ms. Mpofu introduced me to all grades she teaches, identified refugee children amongst them for my observation exercise to be well targeted and took me around to most teachers and requested them to assist me in every way possible for my study. During my stay at Centurion, I had the privilege to interact with learners of all levels during the lunch and break time.

Research scope and limitations

The study aimed to sample "Three to six school", which was a project that operates in the afternoon in the Sacred Heart College in the Observatory Johannesburg. The aim of this project was to fulfil the educational needs for these children, while waiting for the approval of their documents. Once the normal school ends at 14h30pm, the project utilises the empty classes at Sacred College to teach these children Mathematics and English. Some of the teachers were also refugees while some are teachers from Sacred College who offer to do extra hours. This project was funded by the Kinder Mission, Italian Bishop and private funders. Through this project children don't pay school fees, they were offered one meal a day at school, free uniforms, free books and free transport.

However, I was unable to conduct my research in the Three 2Six project. After three weeks of communication prior to my arrival, the school headmaster and project leader denied me access. They asked for my proposal, consent letter and an ethical clearance letter from the ethics committee of the institution I'm studying. I learned that ISS currently has no Ethical Committee in place as it is still under construction. I was then unable to obtain the ethical clearance letter from ISS ethics committee. They refused to consider the concern letter I had obtained from ISS without an ISS ethical clearance letter. After numerous attempts to negotiate Three2 Six denied me access. They mentioned time and timing as a constraint; highlighting that they were busy preparing for the school closure which was due to take place in August. They gave an excuse that they would be too busy to accommodate any researchers. The limitation I encountered with Three2 six resulted in me conducting my research in schools that included both refugees and South Africa learners.

Through referral Centurion College was identified as one of the schools with high number of refugee children. I was referred by the Manager of the Refugee Child Centre after an interview I had with him. While at Centurion I discovered that it's attached to Izenzo Community College which also has a high number of refugee children.

Ethical Consideration

Dealing with children from different social backgrounds and some of whom might be vulnerable (refugees) increased my sense of being responsible for my actions as a researcher and be sensitive towards their situations and different circumstances, Therefore ethical issues were taken into consideration, a consent letter from ISS was given to the Principals explaining who I was and the purpose of my study.

Even though participants were informed that participation was voluntary, it was still important to make learners be aware that participation was not obligatory regardless of the fact that the Principal and their teachers had given the researcher the permission to talk to them. I had an ethical obligation to protect participants with all possible reasonable limits from any form of emotional discomfort that could emerge from my research project. Respect for participants required that I receive consent from them to participate on my project voluntarily and a verbal consent was given to them that they may remain anonymous, choose to participate voluntarily and can withdraw from participating should they feel uncomfortable at any stage during the interview (De Vos et al 2002).

4.3. Organisation of the study

This study will be presented in Six chapters; this chapter 1 ,gave a background and present situation, the root causes of the problem and also highlighted the methodology employed in the study, with its limitations and ethical consideration.

Chapter Two gives a conceptual framework that this study will use for analysis, concepts that are employed for this study will also be explained to give background understanding of the study.

Chapter Three Gives an overview of the SA education system and situates refugee children in the South African system and organisation that brings different intervention to close the gap.

Chapter Four presents field work findings.

Chapter Five examines the factors that directly shape the schooling of refugee children examining the system and society.

Chapter Six gives a summary and conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion consists of powerful multi-dimensional processes which are driven by power relationships, revolving between social, political, cultural and economic aspects. The end result of this process is unequal access to rights and capabilities which lead to disproportion in access resources. The term relates to the lack of power to participate in daily socioeconomic activities.

An Individual is socially excluded if s/he is a geographically resident in a society but for reasons beyond his or her control cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society that s/he would like to participate in. Five dimensions are identified which are considered to represent the normal activities which it is most important that individuals participate. These are:

- a) Consumption activity (being able to consume at least up to some minimum level goods and services considered normal for that society);
- b) Savings activity (accumulating savings, pension entitlements or owning property);
- c) Production activity (engaging in economically or socially valued activities like paid work, education or training, retirement if over state pension age or looking after a family);
- d) Political activity (including voting, membership of political parties and of national or local campaigning groups) and
- e) Social activity (social interaction with family or friends and identifying with a cultural group or community) (Saith in Burchard et al 1999:227)

“Social exclusion is unequivocally more than poverty, but undoubtedly poverty is the key prosecutor, marker, or component of social exclusion. Equally social exclusion goes beyond other economic variables such as employment status and class.”(Hills 2002:62) “Social exclusion is something that *can* happen to anyone. But certain groups, such as young people in care, those growing up in low income households or with family conflict, those who do not attend school, and people from some minority ethnic communities are disproportionately at risk of social exclusion. There are also particular times when people are most vulnerable, such as when leaving home, care or education” (Report by Social exclusion unit, 2001:6). When push factors like wars and genocides force people to move out of their home countries to seek refuge in host countries is the time that most people become vulnerable and suffer exclusion due to a lack of citizenship rights.

Sen (2000) makes a distinction between passive and active exclusion where he describes passive exclusion as unintentional exclusion that might be caused by lack of awareness of needs, while he refers to active exclusion as the deliberate policies that are directed to a certain group of citizens. In SA, the apartheid legacy failed to recognise blacks as citizens, deliberate policies that were designed and imposed on blacks to purposefully exclude them from participating resulted in most multidimensional (socioeconomic and political) processes of social exclusion.

Sen's capability approach raises concern that whether or not people take the options they have, the fact that they do not have valuable options is significant and people can internalise the harshness of their reality of not desiring what is not within their reach. In essence social exclusion portrays a relationship between individual/s and a society for example xenophobia (Online dictionary defines xenophobia as fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners).

If the educational needs and rights of refugees are not met it often leads to social insecurity towards their educational needs. This leaves the government as a duty bearer to act towards meeting these needs.

Towards inclusive education

Refugee children in SA are still facing challenges in accessing "A FREE FOR ALL" education, which is a violation of their educational right as stipulated in the rights based approach of the Children's Right Convention (1989). Inclusive education is about an equal opportunity for all pupils regardless of their race, age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background; also suggesting that it should be seen as sectoral problem and not learner's problem (Sayed & Soudien 2003: 12). "Education in its universal form is both a means of social mobility and access and also means of social selection, it must include as much as it excludes" (Sayed & Soudien 2003:10). Further discussions imply that education should be about normalisation where certain groups that lack access to entitlements need to be targeted for special inclusive measures. "Without education, skills and training necessary to survive in an ever changing globalised and technological world, many cannot find a sense of belonging in a way that promotes positive inclusion in society. Inclusive policies and action are thus needed to engage the significant proportion of poor, uneducated and under-educated. Securing their educational right is a fundamental aspect of this engagement" (Okwany 2010). This right is emphasised by the UNHCR 2012-2016 strategy of foreseeing 3 million refugees having access to education. The claim is made that the aim of social policies is to contribute to social security as well as to resist social exclusion (Hämäläinen 2004/2005). In efforts towards creating inclusive education for refugee children, transformation was realised through an adoption of number of Acts/policies and Bills that will also be used in this study for an analysis:

Section 29 of the South African Bill of Rights states that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have rights and entitled to:

- Refugees and their children are entitled to all the same basic health service and basic primary education, which citizens of the Republic receive from time to time. (*Refugee Act No. 30 of 1998, Admission of Learners to Public Schools of 2001*)
- When there are no documents the school must give conditional admittance where a three months grace period will be granted while the parent obtains the required documentation; should the documents still not be available after three months, the School Governing Body in consultation with the District Officials must attend to the matter by liaising with the relevant authorities and parents. (*Section 5 of the Admission of Learners to Public Schools, General Notice 4138 of 2001*)

- A child of a person that does not have legal status may still have to be admitted to a public school as long as the caregiver or parent can provide proof that an application has been made to stay legally in South Africa (*Section 21 of the National Education Policy Act of 1996*)
- The principal and the School Governing Body must inform all parents about their right to apply for school fees exemption. The principal has the responsibility to assist parents or caregivers to apply for this exemption. (*South African Schools Act of 1996*).
- A district manager must establish fast track programmes in his/her district to accommodate learners:-
 - (i) Who have been out of school for such periods that are likely to impair their learning opportunities.
 - (ii) Have had no schooling or
 - (iii) Are three years or more above the age-norm grade (*Section 10 of the Admission of Learners to Public Schools*).
- A learner who lives within the feeder zone of school A must be referred to the neighbouring school B if school A is full. If school B is full, the Head of Department must find an alternative school within a reasonable distance. If that is not possible, school A must admit the learner. (*The Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools*)
- Support the learning and teaching of all other languages required by learners, used by communities in South Africa, including languages which are important for international trade and communication. (*Section C of the Norms and Standards for Language in Public Schools*)
- Languages other than the official languages can be offered as school subjects. (*Section D of the Norms and Standards for Language in Public Schools*).
- It is against South African law to deny any child an education, foreign or national.¹⁰

The Department of Basic Education has committed itself towards the building of an Inclusive Education system at all levels as outlined in Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education System (2001) thus allowing refugee children to exercise their right to education.

Conceptualising a refugee

A refugee is someone who flees his/her home country in fear of persecution. The 1951 Convention relates a refugee as someone, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, people fleeing conflicts and generalised violence.

One of the most crucial principles laid down by the 1951 Convention is that refugees should not be expelled or returned “to the frontiers of territories where (their) life or

¹⁰ http://www.erp.org.za/htm/issuepg_fugee.htm#intro

freedom would be threatened.” It also outlines the basic rights that states should accord to refugees (UNHCR). In terms of the Convention for one to be identified as a refugee h/she must satisfy the criteria within the Convention’s definition. Refugee differs from asylum seekers, as asylum seekers leave their country of origin formally and put forwards an application of asylum seeking in the foreign country. Furthermore, the UNHCR makes a distinction between a refugee and an economic migrant where it defines an economic migrant as someone who normally leaves a country voluntarily to seek a better life; should he or she elect to return home, they would continue to receive the protection of their government. Refugees flee because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely to their homes in the prevailing circumstances. These definitions also apply in a South African context.

Children, childhood a socially constructed phenomena

The South African Children’s Act, (Act 38 of 2005), is the primary piece of national legislation that details provisions on the protection and wellbeing of children in the Republic of South Africa. The Act defines a child as any person under the age of 18, irrespective of nationality, thus qualifying any person younger than 18 years who is within SA borders as a child. Childhood carries different meanings to different societies as it is treated as a social construction that produces different experiences of children’s lives in a diverse cultural as well as in different historical moments”. O’Neill and Willoghby (2000).This construction and deconstruction is made by societies who define and make it.

Childhood is defined as the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and extended community of caring adults. It is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. Childhood means much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child’s life, to the quality of those years. Childhood is both a biological reality and a social construct. It is defined not only by biology, but also by a particular society at a particular time in a particular way which represents the view that society has of childhood. Therefore there can be no static universal conceptualisation of childhood for example a child how is not at school and is already a wife, or heading a home nor even out of parents care? (UNICEF)

“Children and youth are pushed, pulled and coerced into various actions by encompassing structures and processes over which they have little or no control: kin, family, community , education, media , technology, the state and its decay, war , religion, tradition and the rules of the global market” (Honwana 2005: 3). The argument Honwana makes is how current situations can be used to shape the future regardless of how negative it might be. Societies are makers and breakers of our youth. This is also important as it stands not to think of children as ‘people in the process of becoming rather than being’ as they are perceived.

“According, to international standards Human Rights agreed that they should recognize and protect the dignity of integrity of every individual, without any distinction”. For the refugee children from different backgrounds that might be completely different the childhood has different meanings to the meanings of childhood as they are socially constructed by societies and circumstances they live under “our children have only known war” (Chiney 2007). Some refugee children escaped from hardships and complicated situation having to run away from home cause it’s not safe

although this does not mean that they should be treated homogeneously. Some South African communities perceive refugee children as a burden in the society.

As much as the refugee children have to endure circumstantial challenges in a host country, one must not forget that they are still children who deserve a normal and stabilised childhood and school is an environment where this can be achieved. The Oxford dictionary defines schooling as a process of obtaining a skill or knowledge through being educated and developed, for children this process takes place well in school.

The apartheid era created unequal education opportunities for all. In order to leave its divided and unequal past behind the government of National Unity developed a new comprehensive education system that does not racially segregate. In terms of the Schools Act and Children's Act, every child who is within a school going age (under the age of 16 or under Grade 9) must attend school. It is a criminal offence not to send a child to school. In order for a child to be enrolled to a public school, they need a Section 22 or Section 24 permit from the Department of Home Affairs; proof from a state hospital that the child obtained all the compulsory immunisation; and to complete the school application form. In the event that a child does not have a Section 22 or Section 24 permit, they can use their parent's Section 22 or Section 24 permit to apply for enrolment to a school.

This study will use social exclusion as a framework for analysis later in the study to explain xenophobia and examine factors that shape the schooling of refugee children in South African. Legislative processes that have been adopted by DOBE towards the promotion of inclusive education will be put under scrutiny as it will also form part of my analysis. The notion of childhood as a social construct will later be revisited to apply a lens to understand the contextualization of refugee children and childhood in general.

The next chapter analyses refugee children who are within the system, the type of education they access and how they do access it.

Chapter 3

Situating refugees in SA education system

Introduction

This chapter situates refugee children who are within the South African Education system. It looks at the type of education they access and who offers these interventions and how, at what costs, and how do these shape the schooling of refugee children. Organizations that play a role in intervening to close the gap created by the shortage of schools will clearly be outlined of who they are, what do they do and what types of intervention do they offer and if these interventions responds to the educational needs of the refugee children.

Refugee children are just like any normal children and should be treated as such. Around a billion children live in urban areas urban children are generally considered to be better off than rural children: healthier, better housed, receiving better education and with access to a wider range of services and opportunities. Cities can indeed offer these advantages, but the reality is that hundreds of millions of urban children live in deep poverty, their rights neglected, and their needs unmet, their prospects damaged by conditions that threaten their health and undermine their development. (INNOCENTI DIGEST 2002).

There is an enormous influx of people migrating from rural areas and from outside - South African borders to find better opportunities in the City of Gold as Johannesburg is famously called after the discovery of gold in 1884.¹¹ Accessing government basic services is often problematic as people are competing for scarce services offered by government and if one has no income it becomes even more of a problem to afford alternatives offered by the private sector. For most refugees who come seeking refuge, their points of arrival are city centres (CBD) where there is the perception of a better life and security. Many refugees feel unsafe in the townships because of the xenophobic attacks that took place in 2008¹² and there are no shelters that accommodate refugees. They rely on NGO's who are based in the CBD to assist them and refer them to shelters that are also around the City Centre and can only give home to a few lucky ones. The ones who don't have money to pay for shelter, as some shelters charge a minimal fee per night, usually find themselves on the street and they are then accommodated by the Central Methodist Church in Prichard Street, in the Johannesburg City Centre which provides them with free shelter and blankets.

This study was conducted in Johannesburg, Hillbrow district, which is characterized with high number of refugees and low income, crowded and dirty residential areas where most people live as squatters. This is a popular point of arrival for most refugees and in most cases it turns out to be their permanent home, as it is cheap and moving to townships is not considered a safe option. Organizations that assist refugees are usually located in the City Centre which makes it a convenient "choice" under the circumstances. The sampling of participants was taken amongst learners

¹¹ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/discovery-gold-1884>

¹² <http://jas.sagepub.com/content/43/6/586.full.pdf+html>

from Centurion College and Izenzo kuNgemazi Community College and both these schools have high numbers of refugee children. In the whole Hillbrow district there are only two public schools that serve a community of about 74, 131 children. These two public schools are unable to service the whole district and as a result they are always full. Getting access to them is always a challenge. This represents schools scarcity while there is a rise in demand for schools everyday as statistics in the previous chapter indicated.

Meeting the Rights of the Poor

“The ‘Right to Education’ and Education for all (EFA) discourse has been taken by many governments but has not been realised. EFA goals include high-quality universal schooling for all children as a right, to ensure capability enhancement and acquisition of socioeconomic skills ...” (Okwany 2010). The challenge usually lies between ‘universal’ and ‘quality’ as most governments who adopt the discourse often lack capacity to provide universal quality education which often results in poor quality universal education or inaccessible because of a lack of capacity. The question of how it is to be provided in South Africa within the context of the on-going legacy of apartheid; the wider demands on the government budget and the practicalities of implementation continues to be the topic for debate, expressed in policy plans and new legislations (Motala 1997).

In South Africa education provision has followed a pattern of racial inequality and social injustice through a form of economic inequality where marginalised groups have had their rights violated and have been unfairly discriminated. The last resort for the parents is to opt for private education for their children to learn, but in reality not all refugee parents can afford to take their children to private schools as most of them do not have regular income. For the DOBE to be able to fulfil its EFA policy, the public school system has been revamped to accommodate all social classes in SA through dividing schools into “non-fee” and “fee charging”. Schools were categorised into five categories called “quintiles”, and each category contains 20% of all learners. This is done according to the location, the wealth of the community which is measured by household incomes, number of dependants and household education level and also taking into consideration the condition of the schools and crowding. The government pays most of the teachers’ salaries and bigger building costs, and makes some contribution, per learner, to pay for equipment and running costs. This government contribution per learner is supposed to be an average amount of R554 for each learner in 2007, increasing to R581 per learner in 2008, and R605 per learner in 2009.¹³ This, however, only resolves part of the equation as the issue is not only affordability but accessibility as well as the government schools are not adequate for all. This issue is resolved by interference of non-state actors who start independent schools to close the gap.

¹³ School fees: Your right- www.law.wits.ac.za/cals

These schools are privately owned by individuals or organizations, setting their own fees as agreed with their SGB (School Governing Body) while following the curriculum set by the DOE. Independent schools are ones that close the shortage gap of schools but usually refugee parents cannot afford the fees for private schools as they generally do not have a regular income when they first arrive in SA. I arrived at Centurion one morning a few days after the end of the month and there was a queue of learners who were being denied access to get inside the school because they had not yet paid the school fees. Amongst these children I spotted some of the children that had been identified by the teachers to me, for the purpose of my project, as refugees. In Izenzo the school avoids this by working with NGO's like RCP, as these organisations can source funding for learners via NGO's that support refugees in SA or request fee waiver from schools on behalf of parents. The government's failure to provide for refugees resulted in the establishment of schools such as Izenzo KuNgemazwi Community College and Three2Six schools. Some of the old independent schools such as Centurion College decided to take a stand against some rules with UN support and break this barrier; while organisations such as Child Refugee Project continued to negotiate with government on behalf of refugees.

Non-state organizations Involved:

Izenzo Kungemazwi Community College

Izenzo was established in 2005 in line with its Director's vision, who felt that refugees, who were seeking citizenship in SA were not receiving a warm welcome in South African schools. The school started in 2005 and was later registered and recognised by the DOE in 2006 as an independent school. During an interview with the administrator of the school he highlighted that the operational nature of South African public schools never allows refugee children into the system. South African public schools open and close at a certain time of the year whereas one can never know when to expect a foreign child into SA as they arrive at any given time due to push factors that force them to come to the country. This means there can be a long wait for refugees to get access to public schools which are always full as the registration for the next year usually takes place a year before. This is a DOBE regulation to assist schools to manage influx. To comply with the regulations by the government of operating a school, Izenzo also accommodates SA children but the majority are refugee children, which form 67% of the total enrolment within the school.¹⁴

Centurion College

During the apartheid era blacks had no citizenship rights. While peace negotiations in the 1990's were in progress; pressure was put on the apartheid government to release political prisoners combatants who were in exile started coming home. When these people left they had no citizenship rights and when they left they had to change their personal details for security reasons. This was done so that they are untraceable by the government they were fighting, as most of them were labelled

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. G Mazolo, the administrator of the school, giving a brief history of how and why the school started

'terrorists'. This meant that upon their return they were not recognised as South Africans and they were coming back with their families. Their children could not be accepted in any South African schools as the apartheid government was still in power and at the time the Aliens Control Act was not allowing any blacks who entered the country to take up any form of employment or study. Verification processes were conducted with the assistance of international organisations that intervened¹⁵.

Centurion College became the first independent school which accommodated children of ex-combatants, who were treated as if they were coming home with "foreign children". With the advocacy of international donors who were assisting the former political prisoners and the UN these learners were accommodated at Centurion and given funding, so their fees were paid and they were also provided with text books and uniforms from the international funders. Since then Centurion has been accommodating refugee children till this date. It first opened its doors in 1985; as it turned 27 years in September 2013 priding itself with that rich history of being the first school in South Africa to open doors for Refugee children when the Department was still forbidding the acceptance of Refugee children in schools.

Child Refugee Project (RCP)

One of the organisations that played a role in advocacy for refugee children is the Child Refugee Project which has been in operation in SA for the past 11 years. Its main focus is to help refugee children to access basic services such as health and education. RCP has worked closely with the Department of Education to assist the children who are of school going age to access education. RCP works to facilitate the integration of refugee children through ensuring that they get proper education, protection, healthcare, food, equip their families with proper skills training, and learn about their home culture. RCP is working to save their lives; promote their rights, and improving their future through long term and sustainable programs. RCP programmes make a big difference to the lives of refugee children living in a vulnerable situation in Africa.¹⁶ The RCP receives its operational funding from private donors such as Mandela Children's Fund, UNICEF etc. Another prominent role of RCP is to assist refugee parents in applying for a fee waiver.

In this chapter I situated refugee children in the SA education system and gave a descriptive analysis of the organisations that intervene to close the shortage gap. The Ministry of Education issued a White Paper on inclusive education arguing for mainstreaming. Yet there are a number of concerns about efforts to increase social inclusion. The next chapter presents the field work findings.

¹⁵ Telephonic Interview with Mr. Raymond Currie, an Ex-combatant who went to exile in Tanzania.

¹⁶ http://www.rcpsa.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79&Itemid=53-

Chapter 4

Paving the way through education

Introduction

During the apartheid era the government used schools as a space where discrimination and hatred were exacerbated. The school environment was the same platform where blacks used to challenge the teachings, attitudes and apartheid ideology. This shows that schools can be a platform where children are made to believe what they are being taught is appropriate for current practical situations.

Beyond the Social Dilemma

“Moving beyond the statement that children are socially constructed James et al (2004) argue that the cultural politics of childhood requires that we be concerned with precise ways in which it occurs in any society specifically on a social context” Within the South African context the construction of refugee children happens mostly in the communities they live in by adults choice and perceptions that they give to refugee children in the presence of the children. No one expected that a country famous for their first black president Mandela who is a Nobel peace prize awardee and a World Peace Icon could have xenophobic attacks. That era marked what I termed as *the terror of hate* while some South African scholars termed it as “reinvention of apartheid” Hassim et al (2008). During this era children remained in the shadow of adults as much attention was directed to adults. In a South African context childhood is perceived as a time for a child to be at school and at play, but some South African communities perceive and construct refugee children as a burden to society. I found myself going to fieldwork with curiosity to find out how has these affected the schooling of refugee children.

Figure 2: Pictures showing their nationalities



Source : Field work 2013

The 1st thing that caught my eye the moment I walked into the classroom was the beautiful pictures of all learners which were pasted on the wall in front of the classroom stating their ethnicity and country of origin of each and every learner in class including the one of their class teacher and next to the pictures was the map of the world. *“You see here learners know that we are all Africans only separated by borders, this was a class project”*.¹⁷ She pointed out as we were waiting for learners who were changing periods moving from one class to another.

Upon my arrival and after an interview with the Principal, Mrs Ramaitisa, she requested me to come back the following week and introduced me to Ms. Mpofu, a Grade 11 teacher, whom I spent most of my time with during the weeks of my data collection in her class.

Ms. Mpofu’s warm, personality and her love for her work and learners made my field world very interesting. I spent my days both as a teacher and a learner wearing a researcher’s hat. At times I ‘forgot’ that I was doing field work as I would often find myself engaging in class discussion, during Life Orientation (LO) class. Ms. Mpofu explained LO to me as an engaging subject, a subject that was making learners understand the world better, where issues are discussed that affect us directly, she emphasised. LO period was basically a time to criticise, understand, analyse and question things and life in general, where learners opened up and spoke about things that directly affect them and the communities they live in and mostly a time to change perceptions and negative attitudes about anything.

I also used this time to engage with learners about my research subject which they delightedly responded and answered all questions posed to them with confidence

¹⁷ Ms. Mpofu, explaining the beautiful pictures on the wall.

while challenging my thinking as well. Being amongst those learners engaging, observing and interacting with them reminded how the world can be changed through education, just another poster on the wall at the back of their classroom suggest *"The World in Our Hands"*

This process reminded me of myself as an International student where at one stage I had struggled when I first arrive at ISS as I had to try and interact with my colleagues learning and understanding different cultures and accents. Watching these children (South African's and non-South African) interact with ease, chatting and laughing. I saw no traces of hate our country once experienced that was directed to refugees.

The invisible people of South Africa:-

*"I've been in South Africa, for almost six years now. The situation in Zimbabwe is unbearable; my father was a prominent member of the opposition party at the time and he was in danger of being assassinated as they were seen as a threat and it put my father's life in grave danger as he was alerted that he is on a 'wanted' list. He had to flee the country; he first left then sent for us [mother & siblings]. So we came to SA. I could not get accepted in any Public schools, I almost lost a year when I first came in SA, until my mom was referred by a friend to Centurion. I don't pay attention to what people say, I'm only happy to be at school ... For me it's a matter of an attitude if we could change people's attitude the world could be a better place for everyone"*¹⁸

*"LO [Life Orientations] and History has taught us so much about refugees and wars in East-West African countries, and accepting them. I don't understand why we [South African's] hate foreigners they can't go back to their home cause there is war...we are one 'Africans. Here in school we know no borders".*¹⁹

Jonathan who's Mozambiquan narrated to me, how they got to SA *"My parents tell me there was war in my country {Mozambique}, they came in SA in 1990, I was born here, I grew up he here, my friends are here and I don't know anyone back at home, we have never been there since the civil war stopped and I wouldn't want to go back. My life is here, I would be frustrated. "*

When the war broke out in Congo in 1994, it left a number of people dead and displaced. A Congolese boy tells how they travelled by foot & trains escaping Congo war his parents move to South Africa seeking refuge. He didn't recall much as he was very young when they came and he practically grew up in South Africa. Even though he could not speak any vernacular language he mentioned that he can hear what they say but he cannot respond and the school's medium of instructions is English and teachers have been banned from explaining some things in vernacular languages in class.

¹⁸ Field work interview with a Zimbabwean girl.

¹⁹ Comment by a South African girl ,on a field work discussion

As days were passing by, interacting with these children while observing and using participatory methods to engage with them. We laughed, we played, they spoke, I listened, I asked they answered and I felt love, I felt like I belonged to the diverse community of Centurion family and these words come alive:

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart...Mandela (1994)

School has taught these children how to love despite the circumstances outside school environment that still make refugee people to be uncomfortable but in schools they find love and acceptance through education. As each day passed by interacting with a number of these learners in many different ways it made me realise that South Africa is soon to realise a happy South Africa free of xenophobia and hatred if love is instilled to the young people as one of the posters in their wall suggests.

Figure 3: Social interactions



Source: Field work 2013

Social interactions & finding acceptance

Moving beyond the notion that refugee children are socially constructed by SA, communities as a burden and a threat to the society these children still deserve the normal childhood defined by UNICEF. Education becomes the only way to give them stabilised childhood and where a seed of hope is planted.

On a Thursday afternoon it's a day to play and exercise (PE) for the young ones, (Grade1 -5) who don't participate in any formal sports at school. During this time these children laugh, play and they look happy as they run around taking instructions of the next game or exercise. With the help of their teachers, they identified the refugee children for my observation exercise for that day. As we were walking down to the sports park where these activities takes place running and shouting as they all wanted to pose for a photo.

One Angolan girl was shouting trying to say something to his friend in Zulu (an official South African language). To my amazement they corrected her instead of laughing. *"We teach them not to laugh when someone tries instead they must correct him/her"*²⁰ their teacher confessed.

My curiosity grew, I wanted to know if public and private settings were the same when coming to language challenges on foreign learners. In confirming these facts upon my interview with Mr. Mkhume who is a South African & a Principal in a public school located in the township. In making me understand the situation he told me a story of a Somalian boy who is in a Grade R (a preparatory phase before a child starts Grade 1) whom upon his arrival could not utter a single word in English Language. He continues to tell me how teachers had find it challenging teaching the boy they had to use signs and pictures as they struggle to communicate with him in the beginning of the year. He mentioned that because of that challenge with the language; that child was usually isolated. The teachers made it their responsibility to protect this boy from being isolated to an extent that they used pictures cut from magazines to help him and today he hears English, even though he still struggles to respond but now he can utter a few basic words and at times they called in the parent to come and sit with him and translate some words for him so that he can catch up. *"Regardless of these challenges encountered in making this boy fit in, no one has right to expel him from school because of language...that the mandate from the Department"* Mr. Mkhume further emphasised.

The next chapter looks at the factors that directly shape the schooling of refugee children examining the system and society.

²⁰ Mr. Masukme the PE coordinator's quote

Chapter 5

Barriers to Inclusion

Introduction

Legislative efforts have been used by the SA government as an instrument to include refugee children in the system. In the past legal status citizenship requirements was the main issue. This was due to the clause that was put by DOH in their temporal citizen papers between 1997 - 2002, which was stating that, they cannot take up any type of formal employment or study. At this point in time two government departments (DOH & DOE) which were functioning autonomously were contradicting each other, as the Bill of Rights (1998) was granting a "Right to education" which meant that schools were allowed to accept refugees with temporal legal stay or study permit; while the legal papers for temporal stay were stating they cannot study. Citizenship approach excluding refugees violating their rights was practised constituted by lack of awareness. Although legislation and new policies that have been recently passed were designed to be fully responsive towards educational needs of refugee children. This could have been working effectively if there weren't any structural issues such as school shortage and external issues. This means that xenophobia still constitutes exclusion of refugee children in the system in question.

An inadequate provisioning and exclusionary public education system is still a controversial issue amongst the stake holders. The system now fully recognises the participation of refugee children but accessing the service is challenge especially in townships where their safety is in question. Hillbrow district only has two public schools servicing the community of over 74 000 people and thus pushing refugee to opt for private education that comes with a tag '*inclusion at a fee*'.

Problematic inclusion

Educational inclusion does not guarantee an unproblematic integration in or a automatic notion of community (Sayed & Soudien 2003:12). The notion of inclusive education in SA has been guided by a transformative process that adopted principles of access, quality, equity and redress as articulated by paragraph 19 of the Admission Policy of Ordinary Public Schools (Government Gazette No. 1997 of 19 October 1998) where it states that the admission policy applies equally to learners who are non-citizens. Paragraph 19 is complemented by paragraph 18 of the policy in that it allows the principal of a school to admit a learner even in the absence of a transfer card from the previous school that the learner attended. Complementing, the Refugee Act (1998) which emphasises a right to education to refugees in SA. The DOE regulation makes it very clear that no refugee child is to be denied access to education regardless of their status and documents they can't produce.

This position is further articulated by the UNHRC. However is this realised in this regard? Where there is a shortage of schools and only means is through opting schools which are economically inconveniencing to the refugee parents?

Interviewing the administrator of the Izenzo Community College, he clearly indicated that a number of refugee learners have difficulties in paying their school fees, which is the reason they constantly work with NGO's, embassies and seek for donors that can lend a hand where possible to get sponsorship for the most vulnerable learners. He further expressed that the preference is usually given to unaccompanied children who have no legal guardianship but this does not mean that those who have guardians are better off. A confirmation on this regard from the interview with the Centurion Principal that independent schools mostly rely on school fees to operate well; all parents are obliged to pay fees there are no fee waivers nor free education unless prior arrangements on special cases where embassies for refugee children's countries offer to help. The government offer a minimal grant to independent schools depending on the performance rate and number of children the school has.

The government has also articulated its role very well in promoting inclusive education through supporting and collaborating with non-state holders by improving its partnership with organisations locally and internationally that intervene to address the issue as the government lack the capacity to provide education accessible to all. This includes recognition of registration of these schools under the DOE as it is a requirement for registered legal school in SA; giving subsidy and maintaining uniformity on the curriculum that is offered by the government schools thus maintaining the same standard and quality of education. All refugee children respondents expressed contentment when asked if they were happy with the quality of education they were receiving. *"I'm happy to be at school the first time I attended computer lessons in Grade seven was the most exciting lesson, in my country there were no technology classes and education here is better"* (Angolian girl).

' paying is not an easy task as I do piece jobs but we are obliged to what can we do? , in my country I was an educator, I feel happy when I check my son's books and know that when I put a signature on them I have no complains besides there is an open platform where we can come to school and discuss the child's performance with the class teacher where serious concerns are addressed.... (Informal discussion 2013)

Soudien and Sayed (2003) argues that for an education to be inclusive, it has to include as much as it excludes. But this can never guarantee a smooth unproblematic inclusion which are encounters still experienced by South Africa as they are striving for EFA.

Xenophobia

For the South Africans it became hard to easily accept the influx of refugees coming into the country in large numbers as the long awaited economic freedom has been not yet been realised. High unemployment rate and scarcity of resources made it look like refugees were in SA to claim what rightfully belonged to South African's. The 2008 xenophobic outbreak proved the bitterness that SA, people still had over apartheid regime. Although the anger appeared to be towards foreigners but the reality was that the anger was against the government failure towards fulfilling its empty promises. Xenophobic attacks raised concerns and the government is creating platforms to address the issue.

The conceptual framework adopted for the analysis of this study makes a clear distinction between social exclusion theory and educational exclusion. Hills (2002) em-

phasises that social exclusion can happen to anyone, where he identifies people at risk of being social excluded. He highlights young people at care, low income households, minority ethnic communities and people who leave home care. This study sampled young children who are within school going age (less than 16 years) as described by the South African Children's Act. In this study I conceptualised children as a socially constructed phenomena shadowed under the wings of the beliefs & perceptions of those who care for them (adults). Society as makers and breakers of the childhood as Honwana (2010) argues that children are pushed & pulled into various actions encompassing structures and processes that they have little or no control over. Children are put in positions where they are labelled as "they need protection" Or "they know nothing"; thus failing to recognise that the future is in their hands and they want a happy South Africa as the posters in their classroom wall suggests.

Children are capable of learning, adapting and changing perceptions in school environment thus they should be given voices. The DOBE system is failing to recognise cultural diversity the country now has with the growing numbers of refugees in our communities who access education. It has treated the children as homogenous and failed to connect the link for smooth integration. The system has now created the platform in schools where children to be able to express themselves. If we give voice to our children, a world would be a better place; the data collected upon this study bring this to surface.

Minority ethnic communities such as refugees who leave their homes run a risk of being exposed to socially exclusion. They may become part of the new communities but they find themselves being unable to participate beyond reasons out of their control. The chief prosecutor of this is poverty; leaving your home country fleeing war/genocide, coming to a host country with nothing and no income and they end up surviving below the poverty line of less than 1\$ a day as described by World Bank. Under those circumstances they cannot participate in any economic activity and have no bargaining power, relying on what's available. At times these circumstances push them into extremes for survival or accessing what they can have. New language, culture also becomes a challenge as they can't identify themselves with any cultural group and this exposes them to social exclusion and xenophobia.

Contradictions within the system

A challenge to access resulted in the formation of schools like Izenzo Community College which was founded to assist refugees to easily access education. The government refused to have the school set up mainly for a particular group as this was abolished when SA gained its independence after 1994. The government allowed the operation of the school only if SA, children were also going to be accepted by the school. (Mazolo 2013). South African schooling regulations stipulates that no child should attend school where they are further than 30km from home to avoid late coming and other problems associated with learners travelling which might result to poor performance and inconsistency attendance. Schools that might have space for refugee are in the townships but this regulation excludes refugees who live in the

City Centre. At the same time the policy further stipulates that no child who is within the school going age should be out of school but how If there's scarcity of schools?

A learner who lives within the feeder zone of school A must be referred to the neighbouring school B if school A is full. If school B is full, the Head of Department must find an alternative school within a reasonable distance. If that is not possible, school A must admit the learner. (*The Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools*). One parent who also struggled to get space for his child to be admitted in a public school in the area mentioned that once you are told its full there's apparently noting you can do as a parent it's up to you to explore other options you are left with for your child to be at school.

Language (s) As a Barrier

Although refugee children do adapt to SA, languages easily but there are challenges associated with language. In South Africa there's Afrikaans which is one of the official languages and forms part of the compulsory curriculum. Refugee learners expressed frustrations regarding this language. Mr. X expressed great concern for high failure rate for this language.

“only if the Department could consider making one or two International languages compulsory and make Afrikaans optional for learner's e.g. French he further emphasised. (Anonymous, teacher)

Seemingly this is the only language that refugee children struggles with as findings proved that they quickly adapt to other languages especially English which is the medium of instruction. The school Act regulations stipulates that there should be languages other than the official languages that can be offered as school subjects. (*Section D of the Norms and Standards for Language in Public Schools*). But this has not yet been realised it could have resulted in a smoother language integration for refugees.

Survival strategies

In the previous section I highlighted cost of inclusion issues where access to free public education is a challenge. The social construct by South African communities of these children often push some refugee parents to take drastic and illegal survival strategies to protect themselves and to have their children in school.

Upon my interview with Mr. Mkhumi , a principal at Jabulani Primary school in Soweto which is a public school when I asked him about the figures of refugee children in his school he mentioned that there were only seven whom were openly known but there are those who are in 'hiding'. I further questioned what he meant. His explanation was that refugees who risk being in townships to access free public education; when they get there they somehow manage to change their names into South African names to 'protect' themselves. This is associated with corruption that is within the DOH.

In 2010, Independent Newspapers reported about 7 000 fake marriages to foreigners where a woman will agree to marry a foreigner in return for money and at a later stage denied the marriage if the agreement is not honoured and have it annulled. Due to this, The South African Citizenship Amendment Act, which came into effect in January 2013, will impose stiff penalties on both the foreigner and any South Africans helping them to obtain citizenship through illegal marriages of convenience. Some foreigners seeking asylum will come and rent a wife/husband and after a while they qualify as South African citizens and once you are living with A South African then it's easy to get along as you belong and this is somehow believed to lower risks of being ill-treated as a 'kwerekwere'. Once this is successfully done the children can be easily changed to new names as step-children and they can access education in local schools.

A Glimmer of Hope

Having acknowledged the efforts done by DOE to bring and instil change through education in schools. Just as their slogan of the DOE says that "Every child is a nation's asset". "The global aim of Education For All (EFA) is seen as closely intertwined with development, and as crucial in order to reduce poverty, promote welfare and to improve the quality of life for everyone independent of where he/she is living" Kjørholt (2013). One of the goals of UNHRC is to integrate refugees into local communities and they get permanent citizenship and settle in the host country while their children obtain proper education to achieve the 2015 long term strategy of having a million refugees' children in school. This can be realised if local communities can work with the government and stop blaming refugees for our government's failure to service delivery. This study highlights that the government's effort of inclusive education proved to be a turning point for refugee children but the issue lies with access as schools are always full.

Programs that promote integration of refugees to South African communities must be executed. This can be done through educational programs in the communities. International organisation like UNHCR has introduced programmes in collaboration with the South Africa government such as World refugee day which takes place on the 20 June but this has not yet received full public's attention.

Introduction of LO has responded well as children now understand who refugees are, why they are in our country and that they need to be accepted as part of 'us' But experiences of refugee children in schools show that the government should consider broadening the curriculum on language. South Africa has a large number of refugees who are Portuguese and French speakers. If these languages can be added in schools as part of the curriculum as an extra language this could help the teachers to be able to handle problems such as those of refugee children who come into the country and they can't utter a word in English and it can improve smoother integration into the system. In its 2020 strategy the DOBE has committed itself in building more schools by 2020 so that more than 1 million children can have access to school

Children as Agents of change

Honwana (2005) argues that constructing children as becoming's and citizens to be in the future, children's rights to participation and influence as stated in the UN CRC, are increasingly accentuated. CRC thus represents particular images of children that are claimed to be universal. Education can be used to change the social structure. A need to move beyond social boundaries has been identified and the present social relations can be changed. This cannot be an individual effort but that of groups such as school setup (teachers & learners working together) working as creative agents to affect change in the social structure setting.

The DOE has already started to use schools and include subjects that can make change and perceptions in school. The children have much more to say about the issue but not given a chance to, should children's voices be used as agents of change. I believe there could much more difference as they have accepted & embraced their fellow refugee learners as indicated in findings. South Africans could gradually open up accept and embrace the process as they have embraced the birth of rainbow nation.

My next and final chapter presents a summary of this project and concludes it.

Chapter 6

Summary & Conclusion

This project arose from curiosity of examining factors that shape the schooling of refugee children in South Africa. It sets out to answer how responsive is the education system in fulfilling the educational needs of refugee children. Sub-questions intended to have in-depth understanding of experiences of refugee within the system and if they valued the quality of education they are receiving.

This project revealed that the political transformation process that has been in progress, fully recognise the *Right* and a *Need* for a child refugee to learn. The abolishment of administrative obstacles that were preventing refugee children to access education in the past such as legal documents is no longer a problem as they can be accepted without these documents. Even though accessing the free education that is offered by the public schools remains a challenge due to low capacity of these schools to handle the Hillbrow influx of refugee coming in every day. In building strong partnership with organizations that bring solution; the government is showing commitment that they acknowledge the problem of school shortage. In this regard, I consider the system to be responsive but as stated by Soudien and Sayed that the inclusion may still result in another form of exclusion as it is seen in this paper. Having a regular income is another challenge that makes accessing extra options problematic. While administrative requirements creates flexibility to access but the system has failed to recognize diversity i.e. extra language provision.

Government as a duty bearer has committed itself through the political process passing of Bills, Policies and regulations that allow them to access education but resources are limiting the practice and implementation. A number of public schools have been declared non-school fee paying by government's new rule but as highlighted above that it still remains a challenge for refugee children to access public school, with community integration programs this could change.

The research showed that experiences of refugee children within the system slightly differ as they all had a different story to tell as they come from different backgrounds and experiences. It brought to surface that once they are in the system, they appreciate the acceptance they find, tolerance and embrace they receive from their South African peers and teachers and the quality of education they receive.

It seems as if the DOBE strategy of incorporating subjects such as LO into the school curriculum is overturning the xenophobia wheel in schools. Through making schools a platform for changing attitudes and helping children move beyond social construct of refugee children. Government must consider looking into enhancing the skills and capacity of the teachers through introduction of different languages to be added as optional choices in the curriculum e.g. Portuguese, French, Shona etc. This could make this integration process smoother, teachers will be equipped with necessary skills to face this challenge some are already experiencing with children who need introduction to English as a new language hearing it for the first time in their lives. "In the fight against poverty education is our weapon" (Mandela 1994) what the government today is implementing was what Centurion did 25 years.

The study showed that the factors that shape the schooling of refugee children are economic, geographical and xenophobia. Even though efforts are being made for them to access education but there are costs involved such as school fee, books and uniform. Organisations that assist in this regard it is practically impossible to help everyone. Refugees are mostly in the City Centre for the reasons mentioned above and the schools that might have access to free education are in townships which makes it hard for them to go there as they are not safer there. Thus making a geographical location to access education an issue as well as stipulated in Schools Act.

Despite challenges refugee children face in accessing public education system which is always full; this project has proved that refugee children have find acceptance in educational. Should integration of refugee communities into townships become a reality a happy South Africa free of hate and xenophobia can be realised.

This study proved that transformation process and formation of policies in recognition of refugee children's educational needs has been successful. The structural factor such as shortage of schools is being addressed through collaboration with non-state actors to provide alternatives. For universal education to be completely universal, accessibility should be the main point, it should also be flexible to the current situation and adaptable. SA lacks one or two of these mentioned which is why the government has welcomed the extra provisions by non-state holders to compensate for this gap.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: South African school Act



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

No. 1867. 15 November 1996

NO. 84 OF 1996: SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT, 1996.

It is hereby notified that the President has assented to the following Act which is hereby published for general information:-

ACT

To provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation; and

WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa;

(English text signed by the President.)


(Assented to 6 November 1996.)

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, as follows:-

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATION OF ACT

Definitions



UNHCR Operation

in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland

Fact Sheet | 1 September 2013

UNHCR operational highlights

- The mixed migration flow of people into South Africa is high. Many apply for asylum as the only means of regularizing their stay. This has resulted in an extremely large number of asylum applications. Since 2009, South Africa has received the highest number of asylum applications in the world, although in 2012, this figure decreased significantly with 85,000 new applications registered. **UNHCR continues to provide technical support to the Department of Home Affairs to review their systems and to make improvements.**
- UNHCR maintains a presence in Musina at the border with Zimbabwe in order to address protection needs of Zimbabweans and other asylum-seekers. Basic humanitarian assistance is also provided. UNHCR continues to hear reports of gross human rights violations at the unofficial border crossings including rapes, theft and violence by various elements which is a serious concern. The increasing number of unaccompanied minors is also a major challenge.
- Xenophobic incidents, particularly those aimed at shop keepers continue sporadically throughout the country. UNHCR has public information campaigns using community radio and education materials to promote co-existence. UNHCR also chairs the Protection Working Group which is working closely with the South African Police Services to try to provide timely intervention to prevent and respond to xenophobic attacks.
- Refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa have the right to work, freedom of movement and the right to access social services. There are no refugee camps in South Africa. Refugees are expected to become self-reliant. Due to challenges with the implementation of these rights as well as difficulty finding employment in a country with already a high unemployment rate for its own nationals, many refugees and asylum seekers struggle to earn a living. **Due to limited**


Refugees in South Africa¹
(by country of origin) as of end 2012

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Refugees
Zimbabwe	1,095
Angola	5,805
Rwanda	1,365
Burundi	2,365
Somalia	17,864
Ethiopia	5,538
DRC	13,394
Others	17,824
Total	65,520

The number of asylum-seekers is estimated to be some 230,000 – both pending at first-instance and pending appeal. The majority originate from Zimbabwe, Somalia, Ethiopia, DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.

- In **Lesotho**, there are some 37 refugees who are largely self-reliant. UNHCR continues to advocate citizenship to be granted these refugees who have been in the country for five years or more. UNHCR undertakes monitoring missions from South Africa when required.
- UNHCR covers **Swaziland** from the Regional Office in Pretoria. The majority of the 900 refugees are locally integrated and live in urban areas. The remaining, some 250 refugees, reside in Malindza reception center, located approximately 50 kilometres from Manzini. They originate from Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, Somalia and Zimbabwe. Education, health and other services are provided by UNHCR's implementing partner, CARITAS.

¹ Figures from Department of Home Affairs



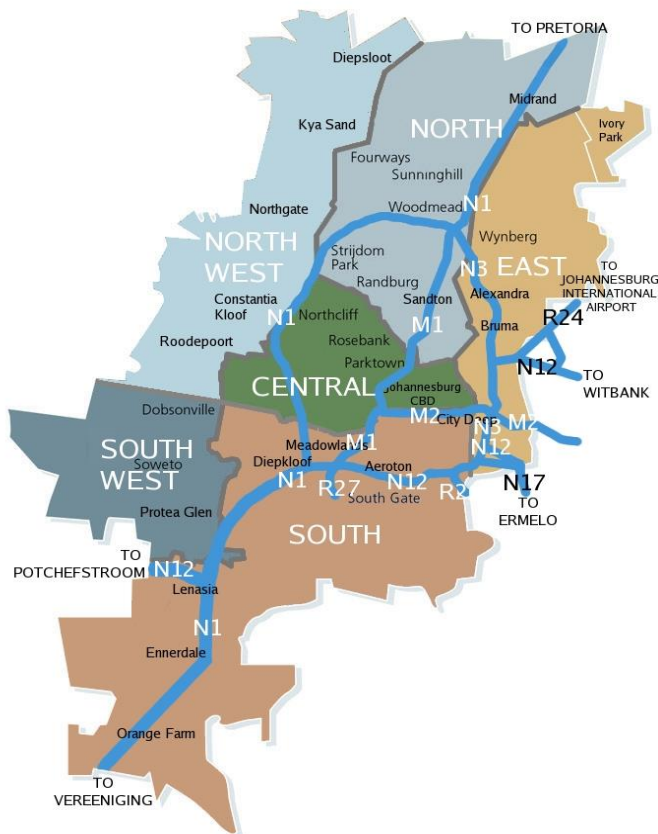
Appendix 3: Maps

Study location Hillbrow map1



Source: <http://workingthecity.wordpress.com/location-of-the-study/>

Map 2: Johannesburg map showing the neighbouring towns



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION 295

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28 /[08/2007](#)

(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 29-2007)

Mr TM Masutha to ask the Minister of Education:

What provisions has her department made to accommodate refugee children or unaccompanied minors of school – going age in the education system?

NO 1979E

REPLY:

Section 5(1) of the South African School Act 84 of 1996 (the SASA) provides that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. The word “learner” as defined in the Act includes a refugee child.

This position is even more clearly articulated in paragraph 19 of the Admission Policy of Ordinary Public Schools (

Government Gazette No. 19377 of 19 October

1998) where it states that the admission policy applies equally to learners who are non-citizens.

Paragraph 19 is complemented by paragraph 18 of the policy in that it allows the principal of a school to admit a learner even in the absence of a transfer card from the previous school that the learner attended.

The SASA defines a parent as –

(a) the parent or guardian of a learner;

(b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or

(c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraph (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school. This definition is wide enough to include any person, who accompanies a child to school, as a parent of that child.

Source:

<http://www.dhet.gov.za/Newsroom/MediaReleases/MediaReleases2007/tabid/181/ctl/Details/mid/581/ItemID/2742/Default.aspx>

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