

# Refugee Livelihoods Network (RLN)

## January 2006

### In This Issue:

- Education
- Key publications and reports:
- Vocational training for refugees: A case study from Tanzania
- The role of peace education in refugee communities
- Children and Adolescents in Sahrawi and Afghan refugee households
- Asylum seekers' skills and qualifications audit pilot project
- Learning and Good Practice
- Windle Trust International

### Featured Links:

- [Livelihoods Connect: Education and Livelihoods](#)
- [Education in Emergencies: Learning for a Peaceful Future \(FMR 22\)](#)

### Education

'Education for All' is amongst the Millennium Development Goals, as 'every human being should have an opportunity to make a better life for themselves'. Education increases people's level of agency as well as their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Whereas the link between education and sustainable livelihoods is very directly made in the Millennium Campaign, the effects of war and the vulnerable position refugees are often in, is hardly referred to. And yet, it is estimated that half of the 104 million children not attending primary school live in countries in, or recovering from, conflict. The role of conflict as an obstacle to the achievement of this millennium goal is clear. Conversely, education is increasingly seen to have a role to play in mitigating and/or exacerbating conflict as well.

For refugees in neighbouring countries as well as in resettlement countries, education is vital in rebuilding their livelihood. Whereas some may have received higher education, they often have to function in jobs below their qualifications due to lack of (accepted) documentation to prove this. Then, often the displaced are faced with having to learn new languages, which puts them at a disadvantage in schools and in the labour market. Furthermore, the skills that some people have gained may no longer be applicable in the new context; requiring them to engage in vocational training to develop more appropriate livelihood skills. This RLN issue addresses these and related points.

The February issue of the RLN will focus on refugee and IDP livelihoods in Sudan. The March issue then discusses participatory approaches to refugee livelihood projects. Contributions are sought in the shape of policy documents, research reports, project descriptions, interesting websites etc. Please send your contributions before 25th of February and 27th of March to the RLN moderator at [REF.NET@inter.NL.net](mailto:REF.NET@inter.NL.net).

- [Reshaping the future: Education and Post-conflict Reconstruction \(Worldbank\)](#)
- [Youth speak out \(Women's Commission\)](#)

Suggestions for themes for upcoming issues and feedback on previous issues are also always welcome.

[Click here for UNHCR's 'Refugees and Education' site](#)

### **Key publications and reports:**

Educating refugees in countries of first asylum:  
The case of Uganda

This article by Sarah Dryden-Peterson discusses the way an innovative new method of delivering education is seeking to provide for the future security of refugee families in Uganda. It suggests that the current model of international assistance in refugee camps and settlements tends to focus on meeting refugees' immediate and short-term needs, neglecting longer-term goals and needs for stability and future security. In some instances refugees will attempt to meet those needs themselves, through such strategies as seeking education for their children in settings which are more secure than those provided by the United Nations. The article examines one initiative to bridge this gap between relief and development, the multi-sectoral 'Self Reliance Strategy' (SRS) being piloted in Uganda through a collaboration between the Ugandan government and the UNHCR. This programme attempts to deliver services like education in an integrated way so as to meet three core needs of refugees: personal security; means of livelihood for the family; integration with stable national populations. The author concludes that, despite worthwhile aims, the programme fails to ensure these three needs are met, providing an analysis of the reasons for this failure.

[Click here to link to this 'Migration Information Source' article](#)

### **Vocational training for refugees: A case study from Tanzania**

A paper from the UNHCR by Erik Lyby evaluates ongoing skills training programmes for Burundian

refugees. It assesses the scope for expanding them into a wider training programme based on the concept of education for repatriation – developing and enhancing skills that will be of use on return from exile.

Formal training currently on offer and supported by scholarships only reaches very few of the refugees – mostly those who have been in Tanzania for a long time or were born there and who have English-language and Kiswahili skills. Non-formal training is carried out by skilled refugees in the form of group training. Trainers are not paid, which is a source of resentment as they could otherwise spend their time and skills on income-generating activities. The evaluation found that the quality of activities is often low, and highlights the need for enterprise-based training. Selection of candidates must be improved with emphasis on their potential for entrepreneurial activity. Trainers should be provided with greater incentives and micro-entrepreneurs offered tools and materials in return for taking on apprentices. A training centre should be established in each camp to strengthen theoretical instruction and offer upgrading courses to craftspeople.

[Click here to view Erik Lyby's paper](#)

## **The role of peace education in refugee communities**

Research by Marc Sommers for UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, examines peace education concepts, assumptions and programmes that are being conducted by international humanitarian agencies for refugee populations. Field research indicated that the UNHCR peace education initiative for refugees in Kenya and Uganda appeared to be generally positive, even while some officials expressed skepticism and a limited commitment for the programme. The author finds that the programme promotes refugee empowerment and self-sufficiency and helps bridge the cultural gaps between refugees; has a practical orientation and set of objectives that connect to the objectives and values inherent in refugee protection and education; and is popular with refugees. Refugees in the programme not only continued but also

sometimes expanded the programme themselves. The report also indicates a number of weaknesses relevant not just to UNHCR's programme but the broader peace education field, including: a tendency to focus on training leaders to address serious violence, while leaders often lack credibility with and access to the primary perpetrators and victims of violence; the limited participation of marginalised 'drop-out' youths, young women and wider community members; limited co-ordination between different development agencies; and the possibility of peace education becoming counter-productive when it is taught to children and not to their parents or guardians.

[Click here to access this paper by Marc Sommers](#)

## **Children and Adolescents in Sahrawi and Afghan refugee households**

This study aims to bridge the theoretical and applied divide which is common to much of the research directed at children and adolescents. It examines the ways children and adolescents in Sahrawi refugee households in Algeria and other parts of North Africa as well as in Afghan refugee families in Iran live with the effects of prolonged conflict and forced migration. It shows the value of Participatory Research Approaches for identifying the priorities of refugee youth and for creating a sense of agency and ownership. The report concludes that policies affecting refugee youth should reflect a holistic and participatory approach; recognise the importance of oral history and memory; encourage self-reliance, self-expression, and empowerment; and prioritise education and vocational training. The impact of education on the lives of young refugees was a recurrent theme throughout the research. The data suggest that education, both formal and informal, is used as a tool in nation-building; it shapes individual identities and collective memory. It has a key role to play in rights-awareness, citizenship, and politicisation. The degrees and certificates granted through formal education may impart self-confidence and thus encourage individuals to contribute and

participate in their communities and the larger society. However, refugee youth, especially in the Sahrawi and Afghan cases, confront a number of barriers that prevent them from putting their degrees and skills to use.

[This RSC study can be accessed here](#)

### **Asylum seekers' skills and qualifications audit pilot project**

This report by Fiona Aldridge and Sue Waddington audits the skills and qualifications of about 440 asylum seekers in Leicester and assesses their potential contribution to the local and regional economy before they gain permission to work. This is a time when referrals to preparation, education and opportunities can promote their chances of employment. The research found that 85% of the asylum seekers had some education or training qualification and 80% had been in paid employment in a range of occupations 'reflecting the national picture'; e.g. 5 were doctors, 14 were teachers, 5 were engineers. Nearly half those not in employment had been students when they fled their countries of origin. The authors recommend that portfolios describing skills and previous work experience could help asylum seekers find jobs, but they would also need specialist careers guidance, access to government funded training, and access to funded assistance to enrol at Further Education colleges. Also, a national scheme for the integration of overseas qualifications and bridging courses should be developed.

[Click here to read this NIACE paper](#)

### **Learning and Good Practice**

Education Action International provides education and training for refugees and people affected by conflict. Formerly known as the World University Service (WUS), Education Action International supports a wide range of education projects including teacher development in war zones and post-conflict regions like Sudan, Sierra Leone, Lebanon and Palestine. The organisation

pioneered a new 'family learning' programme in Uganda that is transforming whole communities and it runs an innovative Insight scheme taking UK teachers to schools in Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, the organisation provides practical advice and training to help refugee doctors, engineers, teachers and other professionals to re-qualify to work in the UK and Europe and find work placements and business courses for them.

[Click here to learn more about Education Action](#)

### **Windle Trust International**

The Windle Trust aims to equip refugees and others affected by conflict in Africa to meet the challenges of development through providing access to education and training. It promotes access for refugees to education at school, vocational and university level, and to language training. By supporting young Africans of talent and commitment, the Trust believes that a foundation can be laid for future progress. Graduates make up a body of qualified people who serve their communities in many different ways. Activities of Windle Trust include: sponsorship of refugees and internally displaced people at vocational institutes and universities in Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia; English language teaching programmes in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, as English is the language used in the schools and vocational training centres in these camps; postgraduate sponsorship of refugees and internally displaced people from the Horn and East Africa at universities in the UK. More information can be found when accessing: <http://www.windle.org.uk/>

#### **Refugee Students Assistance Program**

The California Department of Education is looking for applications of Local Educational Agencies to establish supplemental programs and services for refugee students and their families. The program's funding objectives are to increase the proportion of refugee children who make progress toward meeting grade level academic standards and graduation requirements, narrow the achievement gap, and enhance the self sufficiency efforts of refugee families through collaboration with

Country Refugee Coordinators, voluntary resettlement agencies and other community agencies.

[To learn more about the Refugee Students Assistance Program, click here](#)

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The Refugee Livelihoods Network is an initiative of UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit. (EPAU) The views expressed by contributors to the Network and in documents electronically linked to the Network are not those of UNHCR. For issues other than refugee livelihoods, EPAU can be contacted by e-mail at [hqep00@unhcr.org](mailto:hqep00@unhcr.org)