Disabled Refugees Included and Visible in Education (DRIVE)

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A Learning in Crisis project in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda, funded by the British Academy

Our Partnership: towards inclusivity and empowerment

Juliet Thondhlana, University of Nottingham

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Our study was enriched through working with diverse partners including academic partners as co-researchers and NGOs as advisors. In planning our partnership we engaged with the concept of participation through a critical consideration of who participates and what is the level of this participation, drawing on ideas that White (1996) advances. In this regard North-South partnerships have been traditionally marked by imbalances with partners from the North identifying as white; holding power; leading on funding and controlling the budget; responsible for setting targets and managing the production of outputs; and leading knowledge creation and distribution in a clear show of power. Conversely, partners from the South have been defined as "the Other"; powerless; funding sharing but having no control of the budget; doing the "work"; being sources of information; being knowledge recipients and consumers of the same. Our experiences working in North-South project teams had shown us that such a model was not productive for all involved and we were seeking a more inclusive and empowering model that would foster a collaborative environment that would enable us to cultivate more fulfilling and long-term relationships with our partners as expected of collaborations.

In this scenario South identities may be silenced or marginalised in practice to the extent that the concept of partnership is distorted in their case and it was therefore our intention to consider how through an adoption and application of White's framing questions we could aim to do more than simply and vaguely 'involve' South colleagues in our study. Our aim was to ensure 'that they participate in the right ways' (page 14). In order to achieve this we aimed to consider 'on whose terms is the current agenda and whose interests are really at stake?' (ibid). White demands that we critically reflect on planned projects of participation through the lens of three questions. First, is the recognition that participation is a 'political issue' and that we need to consider on whose terms we were asking South colleagues to be involved in the study. Second, White's framework enables us to critically analyse the ways in which we are framing the interests of those invited to participate, and third, it draws attention to the need to recognise the power relations in our partnership design. White's (2010) work on holistic wellbeing was deemed important for our project because, like her previous work, it draws on the capacity to aspire as a framework for empowerment and inclusivity. Her work reminded us of the influence and interconnection of social-cultural constructs. As we put together our expansive research team which included a UK principal investigator (PI) and three UK co-investigators (Co-Is); a co-investigator (Co-I) and research assistant at each of the three African sites (South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and NGO partners, we observed these interconnecting subjectivities and recognised the complexities of relations through lived exposure to different socio-cultural practices.

We considered that our South colleagues were not passive but knowing and agentic taking into account White's work on critical and holistic inclusivity as an important addition to the development of our team and project. We aimed to partner and interact with our South colleagues in a transformative way that would allow for power sharing in all aspects of the project. In doing so we were however also aware of the limitations and complexities imposed by donor funding dynamics which would not allow for South leading in matters of project lead role and responsibility for the budget. Nevertheless we made significant strides towards achieving equity as explained below.

STEPS TAKEN AND REALITIES ON THE GROUND

- By having Africa-based sites driving the project on the ground we transferred/shared power to/with them. However, UK Co-Is who were attached to each of the sites inevitably appeared to be monitoring the activities of the site co-Is;
- While the overall budget was managed by the UK principal investigator, South partners managed their own site budgets while reporting expenditure to the UK PI. This again helped to release significant control and power to South partners.
- Knowledge was co-created and distributed with South partners having a free hand to decide outputs and outlets. They engaged with participants, NGO partners and policy makers in ways they deemed appropriate thereby giving them substantial control over what could be done, how and when.
- There was significant solidarity building with virtual meetings allowing for inclusivity and the fostering of a shared voice.
- Local NGO partners played advisory roles thereby allowing for more South-North power sharing.

Overall, while the North still had significant control, it is clear that our efforts enabled meaningful disruption of inequalities on this project. It should be noted that all except one of the North partners were members of the African diaspora in the UK. Questions can therefore be raised about the role of the diaspora effect on this project. It would also be interesting to investigate how the team found the chosen partnership style.

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White, S. C. (2010). Analysing wellbeing: a framework for development practice. *Development in practice*, 20(2), 158-172.

Disabled Refugees Included and Visible in Education (DRIVE)

A Learning in Crisis project in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda, funded by the British Academy

The challenge of pictorial representations in research outputs

Elizabeth Walton and **Jo McIntyre**, University of Nottingham

The British Academy funded DRIVE Project is about disabled refugees being visible and included in education in Uganda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Visibility has been an important concern in this project, with **previous research** showing that disabled refugees tend to be invisible in policy. Visibility is about being seen and not being ignored. Many of the disabled refugees we interviewed welcomed the fact that there was interest in their specific experience of educational inclusion and exclusion.

Writing about the educational experiences of disabled refugees for policy-makers, teacher educators and other stakeholders is challenging in many ways. These challenges include describing the complexity of different contexts and the range of different experiences. Another challenge is the expectation that we provide pictures to accompany written text. Stakeholders want to see what we say. That is, make our message visible.

Research shows that individual pictures are not well suited to capture issues of educational justice, equity and inclusion. Refugees and disabled people are not always well represented visually. Images of refugees often "depict ragged people behind barbed wire fences or on a shaky boat heading to shore" (University of Helsinki, **2020**). Crowther (**2020**) explains that stock photographs of disabled people usually rely on stereotypes.

We encountered various problems when searching for images in free to use sites like **Unsplash** and **Pexels**. Our search terms are 'refugees' 'disability' 'education' and 'Africa', but nothing matches all four of these together. So we tried 'refugee education Africa' and 'disability education Africa'. These yield results, none of which are satisfactory. Problems include:

– The term 'Africa' triggers animal and landscape shots in Unsplash, reinforcing the narrative that Africa is wild and untamed.

– Pictures of Africa on globes and maps are offered in both Unsplash and Pexels, serving as a visual metaphor for something that is distant and foreign.

– Education is abstracted in both sites through pictures of books, pencils and classrooms. This erases the humans involved in teaching and learning.

– Both sites have a small number of pictures of African children in classrooms or in a school playground. We do wonder if the children in the images have given consent for their photographs to be made freely available. Pexels offer pictures of white people in well-resourced libraries and classrooms. The contrast is stark: Education for African children is in crowded classrooms, sitting in regimented rows. Education for white people (adults and children) is individualised, engaging, it makes people happy and is supported with books and technology.

We did not want to choose pictures that reinforce negative stereotypes of Africa as exotic and distant, and the continent's children as poor and pitiable. We finally chose this picture (**https://unsplash.com/@alexradelich**) to accompany our international policy brief. It comes with the tags Africa, Uganda, African boy.

We had some reservations:

– The context (Uganda) is only evident in the photograph's meta-information. The picture itself has little to identify where it was taken and so it becomes a picture of everywhere and no-where. This decontextualisation is a way to minimise scrutiny of historical and geographical patterns of oppression and exclusion in education.

– Education is not explicit in this picture. Often signifiers of education are absent in images used to convey inclusive education (Walton & Dixon, **2021**). Additionally for this project, we need to convey who is included in schooling. In Africa, not all children are in education. **UNESCO** says,

"Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth between the ages of about 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school."

Our research shows that disabled refugees, especially girls and women, often find it difficult to access education. Once in school, they do not always get the support they need, and sometimes they experience bullying and discrimination. Many disabled refugee students leave school early and have no pathways into further educational opportunities and work. A picture without education makes it difficult to 'show' what we are saying about their access into and through education.

But there was a lot that we liked:

– The focus on the individual child. His disability and or refugee status isn't apparent from the

visual information given. Our research shows that it is important not to essentialise, that is, to assume things about people because of some aspect of their identity.

– This is a medium shot and the child looks directly at the camera, forcing the viewer into a relationship with the child and his world. This is in contrast with some of the wide angle distant classroom shots, where the viewer can gaze dispassionately on a class of children.

– The fact that it is taken in Uganda, one of our project sites.

– The twine 'cat's cradle', which is an indigenous game in many places, including Africa, is foregrounded, and we think this offers a useful visual metaphor for the complexity that we need to convey. The road in the background reinforces the journeys that refugees have taken.

Click **here** to read more about the research in each site and the policy briefs that have been developed

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Policy engagement workshop in South Africa: Why we need many voices in the same room.

Nicole De Wet-Billings, University of the Witwatersrand

On the 15th of September 2022 we held a hybrid workshop to present the results of our research and to request engagement on our proposed policy recommendations. We were joined by representatives from the education sector, non-government organisations and researchers. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Tanya Bekker, from the Wits School of Education whose presentation on inclusive education provided a background to the education landscape in South Africa as well as highlighted the challenges and causes of the difficulties in achieving inclusive education in the country. This keynote address gave ample and thoughtful insight into the plight of children, parents and educators in general in the country. This also generated a discussion among the participants on the difficulties that migrant families experience and the role of the state in providing quality education experiences.

We then had a presentation of our research findings by Dr. Khuthala Mabetha. The presentation covered the project overview, methodology, some of the descriptive statistics from South Africa and then an extensive discussion on the themes resulting from the fieldwork. In detail, the barriers to inclusive education for refugee children with disabilities was covered. Dr. Mabetha's presentation ended with our proposed recommendations for discussion.

The final part of our workshop was the open floor discussion on the themes. We were given extensive feedback which included unpacking our recommendations, ordering the recommendations by importance and capturing the need for policy to be better communicated,

understood and practiced. With our colleagues from the Zimbabwe site in attendance, we also had a discussion about what the differences and similarities are between the two countries and had a brief discussion about what we could learn from each other moving forward.

From both the presentations and the discussion it became clear that in order to achieve inclusive education for refugee children with disabilities in South Africa, more is needed. Our main challenges relate to staff, teachers and parents not being aware of the national policy nor the requirements for refugee children to enrol in schools in the country, xenophobia and the additional costs to parents for special schools, among others. We needed to present these results to a wide-ranging audience of teachers, parents, academics and even lawyers who work with refugee and other vulnerable migrant populations because the experience and expertise of these individuals assisted our study in two ways. First, the various nods and expressions of agreement validated our research results and we discovered that we were in fact reflecting the experience of refugee children with disabilities exclusion to quality education in South Africa. Secondly, having these voices in the room allowed us to relook at our research recommendations and make these more meaningful, practical and relevant to the lived experience. With the assistance of the group we were able to reorder our recommendation be more astute in our phrasing of what needs to be done by government and civil society to improve the access and experience of education for refugee children with disabilities in South Africa.

Major considerations for policy resulting from stakeholder engagement:

1. Access and experience of education are not separate and should both the borne in mind in equal measure when discussing the learning needs of refugee children with disabilities
2. The policy on inclusive education as well as the rights of refugees is not well-known to parents or teachers in the country. Therefore, efforts to increase visibility and understanding of the policy need to be made.
3. To assist with the above, efforts to reduce xenophobia and create a more inclusive environment for refugees in the country is needed. That is, at all levels of government and civil society, positive attitudes, perceptions and behaviours toward non-citizens needs to be improved.
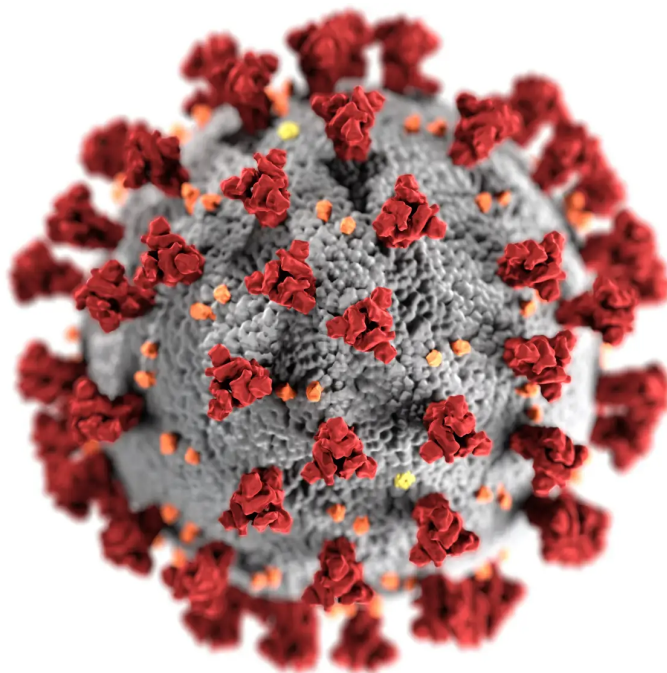
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The Impact of COVID on the DRIVE Project

Dr Roda Madziva, University of Nottingham

The practical and ethical challenges of conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic have been well **documented**. We encountered various challenges as part of The British Academy funded **DRIVE** project, undertaken in Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Below we document some of the challenges encountered.

Restriction on international travel

The DRIVE project, which is made up of a team of international researchers (three from the UK and three from Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe) was originally designed to allow team members to get together at different points and in the different countries during the life course of the project. However, with the emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, cross-border mobility was identified as a significant factor in COVID-19 transmission, leading to the adoption of restrictive travel measures, including the banning of international travel. These restrictions had negative impacts on the delivery of the DRIVE project. Thus, as a result of COVID-19, all project planning and team meetings were done virtually, via Microsoft Teams.

Local movement restrictions and social distancing measures

In line with **decolonisation migration scholarship** that promotes the localisation of knowledge production in the context of North–South research partnerships, we ensured that data collection was undertaken by locally based researchers in all three countries who themselves are co-investigators and Research Fellows on the project.

As part of its research design and methodological approach, the DRIVE project was designed to allow face to face interaction with a range of actors including policy makers, education practitioners, NGO workers, and disabled refugee students and their families. However, with the introduction of Covid-19 lockdown measures in the three research contexts, gaining access to some of the actors proved to be extremely difficult. While telephone and video conferencing interviews, text-based chats and e-surveys were **identified** as alternative means for collecting primary data during the COVID-19 period, in our research, virtual data collection could only be done with participants who had access to digital technologies, particularly key stakeholders. In this way, COVID-19 exposed the issue of digital exclusion, which is a reality for refugee children and their families.

In all three contexts, research teams found it extremely difficult to remotely reach disabled refugee children and their families as they lacked digital literacy or access to digital technologies, due to their economic and social status. Even where families had access to mobile phones, they lacked the financial resources to purchase mobile data. Furthermore, language barriers made conducting research with refugee families via mobile phones impossible.

The strengths and weaknesses of working in partnership with non-academic partners

 The DRIVE project involved working in partnership with civic organisations and practitioners with close links to refugee children and their families. Working with non-academic partners during the COVID pandemic proved very useful as it provided access to families, especially in settlements (particularly in Uganda and Zimbabwe). However, the downside was that, this slightly unbalanced what our researchers were hearing as they were engaging with families that had been identified and were being supported. With the easing of movement restrictions, teams were able to gain access to refugee families that were not being supported, allowing them to gain meaningful engagement with children who were not in school and with different lived experiences and needs.

However, researchers in all three contexts observed that some families were sceptical as well as being worried about the possibility of contracting the COVID-19 virus through physical engagement with researchers. So ethically, our teams had to take special considerations and precautions for the safety of research participants and themselves. This included observing COVID-19 guidelines on social distancing in each of the three countries, making use of protective clothing and conducting interview meetings in open spaces.

In spite of all the challenges highlighted, teams were extremely innovative and managed to collect very rich data.

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Uganda DRIVE Project Site Visits, August 2020

In May our research team headed up to Adjumani for four days where we conducted courtesy visits to local politicians, education officials, teachers, camp administrators, and NGOs working with refugees with disabilities. It is noteworthy to mention that this was well timed with the beginning of the Mango season, and the road, which is still being worked on but which is much improved, was lined with buckets and buckets of mangoes. Needless to say, we took full advantage and returned home with sacks of Mangoes to share with family and friends. We also ate our fill while we were there.

A view of the beautiful Countryside near Adjumani

Our visit was of course much more than a culinary tour. The prime business at hand was to introduce ourselves and our research agenda to local politicians, camp administrators, teachers, and a number of NGOs working in the field of education. We came to share our work, receive feedback on what research may or may not be possible – especially considering the COVID pandemic, and get a feel for who we may want to engage with as we move forward. Finally, we wanted to get to know each other, and we used the occasion to sit down together, in situ, and really work through our research plan and timeline.

It was a long drive, but we took the opportunity to catch up, and took off our masks for a picture!

Our research was very well received and very much appreciated, which was encouraging to our whole team, and tells us that we are doing some much-needed work. We explored a variety of options for data collection and compiled some strong field notes to guide our research. We spoke with officials and organisations that mostly are working with refugee families, and while we noticed varying definitions and practice around "inclusive education" some practitioners create separate schools for people who are disabled, and others integrate them and provide support within existing schools. A learning piece that came up for us was the lack of pathways and transition support for Refugees and people with disabilities. The focus seems to be on primary school education and there is very little opportunity for refugees to enter secondary school, let alone refugees with disabilities. There are also not a lot of adult learning programs- so you can find someone who is 16 in grade 1 for example. The government together with implementing partners is apparently working to adjust to this a little. But still, after primary there is a tendency for people to be pushed to Vocational Education and Training, with little attention given to the quality of the VET programming, and the needs of students with disabilities within these VET programs. This attests to a lack of understanding of both professional VET and the dreams and capabilities of refugees with disabilities-something that the VET Africa 4.0 Research project has highlighted recently using critical capability theory. Another clearly emerging point is that girls and women face compounded exclusion.

Still we must note that the schools are already overtaxed, and that Uganda hosts the third largest population of Refugees in the world, while attempting to shift into a middle income country status and meet the needs of its own population. The efforts of the local communities need to be commended.

Long days of reflection, stakeholder mapping and thinking about the significance of what we are doing.

Finally we note initially that as with policy analysis findings, there is a discrepancy between work with people with disabilities and work with refugees. It seems that there are broad categories that are supposed to cater to all, but not a lot of intentional programs or policy for refugees with disabilities.

There are however, a great number of people who are trying to work under very difficult circumstances in their own lives to improve the lives of others around them. The policy of Uganda to integrate refugees in local communities rather than segregate them in camps, is progressive and caring. We were particularly taken by the generosity and genuine efforts to welcome and include refugees. And while there remain very difficult hurdles to overcome, we feel that they can be overcome. We hope that our research will be part of the practical elements of informing and improving the lives of the people we met, and we look forward to working with them in more depth.

Adjumani itself is a lovely town, which appears to be in a development phase, with lots of newly constructed homes, and a thriving agricultural sector. Colleagues from Gulu University Faculty of Agriculture and Environment had in fact just been in Adjumani less than a month earlier (before the Mango season started), to do some consulting and research around sustainable agriculture and agribusiness.

From an ethical perspective we have been thinking about participatory research methods, and authentic community engagement a lot as a team and we have been working hard to engage and listen to the community. This is why our advisory board has played such a close role in this whole research process, and we hope it will generate better results. To this end, there are two substantial possibilities that we can work towards at Gulu University, and which our stakeholders have asked

us to do. First, there is the opportunity to pursue a research chair at Gulu University for Refugees and Displaced peoples, which we are pushing hard to win. The second element has to do with developing a program for learning and teaching for refugees and for people with disabilities. In fact, there already are a number of refugees studying and working at Gulu university- many in the faculty of Education and Humanities, and Gulu University, through the TESCEA project has been working hard to shift professional teaching practice across the institution through the development of a teaching certificate for lecturers in Gender Responsive Pedagogy and Transformative learning. There is a newly established *centre for innovation in teaching and learning,* and together with the expertise of our advisory board we will be developing a program aimed at integrating and including and supporting refugees and people with disabilities on campus.

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Universities, research, social Learning ecosystems

David Monk, Gulu University

Universities as research institutions are increasingly being scrutinised in relation to the impact they have on the communities where they work. Reflection on research becomes even more pronounced and needed when thinking of international research. Sarah White (2019), writing from the UK context has called for increased accountability in relation to power and participation in communities where research takes place.

As this research comes to a close, I thought I would reflect a little on our own research processes. Elsewhere, I (Monk et al, 2019) have made a case for community based participatory approaches to research, and called for universities to facilitate relationships of mutuality with the communities in which they are embedded in order to contribute to solving practical problems established by the communities, with the communities. The idea being that universities are part of a learning ecosystem, with healthy epistemic and social relationships based on mutuality and reciprocity. Universities can mediate diverse knowledges, forms of knowledge expression, and thus work together in multiple ways- including through relevant research- to benefit society.

This is not always easy to do, especially when external funding and funders often dictate the terms and conditions and parameters of research. However if the university is embedded in a healthy social learning ecosystem (here I am borrowing from Hodgson and Spours, 2016 concept of Social Skills Ecosystem) it is able to work within its networks to ensure that the research is beneficial. Using the social Skills ecosystem model, Wedekind et al. (2021) suggested that Gulu University is an important anchoring institution in the Northern Region of Uganda. Here I think it is worth noting that Gulu University is also embedded in broader international learning networks and plays an important integrating role between and within learning communities and networks. Thus Gulu University has an important role in research integration, contextualisation, and translation in order to deepen knowledges, add to the social learning ecosystem and contribute to society. It is in this multidimensional context that the DRIVE research finds itself.

In what follows, I engage in a reflexive exercise about what kind of impact we have had in Uganda with the DRIVE Research, and how it has fit into the many dimensions and layers of the social learning ecosystem. Here, the social component is a particularly important consideration, because it reminds us that research is about learning and learning is for people and (hopefully) other species living well together. Research and learning, in my opinion, are deeply entangled in the other facets of the complex lives we live. In a healthy arrangement of living and learning (social learning ecosystem) research will therefore be contributing towards a deeper knowledge base and have practical impact for all involved. In my reflections I am mindful of Lynch et. al (2022) who conduct participatory action research in Uganda in the field of disability studies and caution that participatory approaches to research can be difficult to gauge in terms of power and governance and who is participating. Thondana et al. (2021) draw attention to epistemic injustice in research, which they claim is prevalent in research that is either unable or unwilling to understand multiple knowledges and knowledge cultures, thus undermining and excluding different knowledges and experiences. Such practices form the basis for social injustice whereby people are talking about others without them, epistemic ignorance and inaccurate and incomplete research. Participatory

approaches attempt to mitigate these issues through authentic inclusion of lived experiences and knowledges of participants. Healthy social learning ecosystems therefore are essential in order to decide what needs to be researched, and how it needs to be researched. So it generally comes down to relationships of living- the social component- that gives meaning, purpose and value to the research.

Participatory elements of the research: Entering an ecosystem

The research was initiated out of a perceived need derived from work in the UK. It was not building on existing relationships, so in terms of processes, on the ground in Gulu, we were focused on entering into an existing social learning ecosystem. In orer to enter into relationships in a good way we had to do a good deal of listening, mapping, learning, engaging, and relationship development for the longer term. The development of the research proposal in Gulu was done in partnership with people experienced and immersed in work with refugees in multiple dimensions. This helped to frame the parameters of the research in such a way that enabled a useful study in the local context- however it was limited to secondary stakeholders. We recognized this epistemic shortcoming in the design and intentionally created space for integrating the experiential knowledge of experients- through the creation of an advisory committee. Unfortunately, COVID 19 and the related lockdown measures, reduced our access to settlements and primary respondents, so our advisory board remained a diverse group of people who work in the field of disability, inclusion and society, and with refugees. These included academics, curriculum designers, and NGO workers. As we moved forward, we added a teacher and a representative of a parents association. We invited the team to engage in the research at all levels, and they did- including in initial site visits to refugee settlements where I made informal inquiries and introductions with education officials, teachers, schools, and NGO field officers. While 'in situ' we formulated a more specific research plan. The advisory committee also played a role in conducting and reflecting on the interviews. We used semi structured interviews with a lifegrid as a guide- to try and capture lifewide and intersectional experiences, and asked participants to draw pictures and tell stories. We also asked the people we spoke with, what they thought would be important to look at in more depth- in recognition of their experience and capacity to analyse their lives better than we can. We hosted several rounds of interviews with regular reflexive sessions after each set, which allowed us to adapt our questions and pursue new leads. One example of the impact of

At the end of the funded component of the research we brought together core stakeholders from the research to share their opinions in a policy brief which we designed as a regional forum to bring various actors in the ecosystem together. The majority of the participants were refugee children with disabilities and their families. This was not easy or cheap to do, but we had developed enough relationships with people who could help facilitate their movement that we managed to pull it together. Their participation was fundamental both for sharing their knowledge, giving weight to the policy brief and confirming some of our observations, as well as pushing an agenda for the community of government, international NGOs, unions, refugee councils, and academics to act on. Following the forum, we received feedback from the families- who travelled long distances to be there- that it was essential that they were included, and that they were glad having made the trip. Various members of our team were asked to come and visit schools (by students and teachers). Likewise, several academics approached me at the end admitting to being astounded by the depth of the contribution that the families made to the program.

Impact and relationships

As a component of this research, we have engaged a number of stakeholders to think more deeply about education for disabled refugees, particularly girls. The forum was an important point of entry for Gulu University as a facilitating institution in an ecosystem. Participants were brought together strategically because of their involvement in the ecosystem. The process of the research has

therefore begun to develop a community of learning and practice that we hope to sustain through Gulu University initiatives-an areas that we can directly influence. We have already started to act on other findings. One key finding was the lack of teachers with the particular skills to work with refugees and their families with disabilities.

We therefore engaged with students of education in Gulu University in a series of workshops on inclusive teaching each semester. The Faculty of Education and Humanities has also approved and initiated the development of a Bachelors and Masters program in inclusive education, including courses specifically on the intersectional challenges of refugee and displaced families, and . Another department currently under development in Lifelong Learning, has included courses and research opportunities related to shifting habits of perception and developing inclusive communities for refugees, people with disabilities, and teacher skilling courses for university lecturers. We have also partnered with initiatives of our advisory board in the community and in academia- for example an upcoming community inclusion festival. Perhaps of more importance, we have heard some very important advice and warnings from our stakeholders. First, stigma associated with families and parents of students with disabilities in relation to their ability to learn and contribute to society is mostly a fabricated narrative based in epistemic ignorance and arguably injustice, whereby third party actors fit their observations into preconceived categories without challenging the structural conditions that conveniently create the manifestation for the categories. This is an entirely different discourse, that requires significantly more depth than is possible to introduce here. The stigma and misconception is in fact initiated by those creating the structures, most likely not on purpose, however when it comes to epistemic injustice theory, the motivation is not of concern, rather the opportunities available for contribution to knowledge bases is centred. Another, related, observation of our participants was that there are no pathways, transition opportunities or provisions for livelihood opportunities for refugee students with disabilities. This now, opens up an important area, identified by experients for more research and action.

Reflections

So what does this all mean, really? Research, conceived as individual and time bound projects, is often restricted to very small pieces of broader phenomenon and lived experiences of whatever is being studied. This fundamentally limits the results of research, no matter how participative it is. The core findings of this research demonstrate significant intersectional and life wide challenges facing refugee students and their families with disabilities. We have advised that challenges need to be addressed more holistically- for example recognising health and economic factors that play a role in learning opportunities. It is the same with research processes. What we can learn from this, is that university research is one small area of potential contribution towards healthy societies and communities. For this potentiality to be realised, it must be oriented within broader ecosystems of living and learning. In this particular research, we began as outsiders. Recognising our own, and in particular my own (as co investigator), epistemic ignorance helped us to engage in active listening, feeling, relationship building. It helped us to enter an ecosystem of learning not as supposed experts seeking confirmation of our egos and knowledge, but as participants and neighbours, and cohabitants interested in expanding our epistemic and social horizons. Universities and researchers within universities hold significant epistemic and social influence and have immense power and resources as a result. If we develop healthy relationships, and consider universities and the related research and learning initiatives as participants within an ecosystem, driven by the diverse ecosystem needs, the potentiality to facilitate learning and living well is as boundaryless as the ecosystem itself. As such we have the opportunity to engage in power as *pouvoir faire (ensemble),* rather than power as *puissance.*

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Zimbabwe Policy Workshop Report

Agenda

TIME	SUBJECT	FACILITATOR
09:00 – 09:15	Registration	Prof Garwe E.C., BUSE
09:15 – 09:30	Opening Remarks and Introduction	Prof. Mwenje, VC, BUSE
09:30 – 09:45	Inclusive education in Zimbabwe – focus on refugee learners with disabilities	PED, Manicaland
09:45 – 10:00	What inclusive education and access means	Refugee child with disability Parent of child with disability
10:00 – 10:30	DRIVE Project Overview and Objectives	Prof Garwe E.C., BUSE
10:30 – 11.30	Project findings	Dr C. Nyoni, BUSE
11:30 – 12:00	Health Break	All
12:00 – 12:30	Plenary Session (Q&A)	Advisors
12:30 – 1300	Policy brief Presentation	Dr C. Nyoni, BUSE
13:00 – 13:20	Way Forward	Prof Thondhlana, UoN
13:20 – 13:30	Closing Remarks	Prof Garwe E.C., BUSE
13:30 -13:35	Vote of thanks	Mr J. Mhlanga, Camp Administrator

Introduction

The DRIVE Policy Workshop for Zimbabwe took place at the Rainbow Towers Hotel, Zimbabwe and simultaneously on Zoom on the 26th of September 2022. This was a validation forum that provided feedback to respondents that participated in the study as well as to provide policy feedback to stakeholders regarding how to approach inclusive education in a meaningful way that

ensures access, participation and achievement of disabled refugee children.

The workshop was attended by 45 participants (41 face-to-face and 4 online) from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda and the United Kingdom. The number of participants representing each category is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Number of DRIVE Policy Workshop participants per category

Participant	Number
Ministry of Public Several Labour and Social Welfare (responsible for refugees)	1
Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (Head Office)	1
Acting Vice Chancellor BUSE	1
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Head Office, Provincial Education Officers, District Schools Inspector, School Heads and Teachers (both primary and secondary)	10
School Development Association	1
DRIVE Advisory Board Members	5
Tongogara Refugee Camp administrator	1
Refugee children, male and female (including disabled refugee children)	5
Refugee Parents (with children in and out of school)	4
NGOs operating in Tongogara refugee camp	4
Academics represented by three universities	3
Religious leader working in Tongogara Refugee camp	1
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	1
DRIVE Team from South Africa & UK	3
Democratic Republic of Congo Tongogara alumni refugee student	1
Research lead and Assistants	3
TOTAL	**45**

Proceedings

The workshop featured welcome remarks from the Vice Chancellor for BUSE and a keynote presentation from the Provincial Education Director on "Inclusive education in Zimbabwe – focus on refugee learners with disabilities." The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development and the UNHCR also weighed in on their vocational and university sponsorship programmes. The objectives of the DRIVE project, the methodology, findings and draft recommendations were presented by the project Team members from the Zimbabwean Chapter. The workshop provided a great opportunity for participants to discuss and provide feedback on gaps in the findings as well as to co-design recommendations that best reflect

and communicate the views of refugees and their wards. Some workshop photos are shown below:
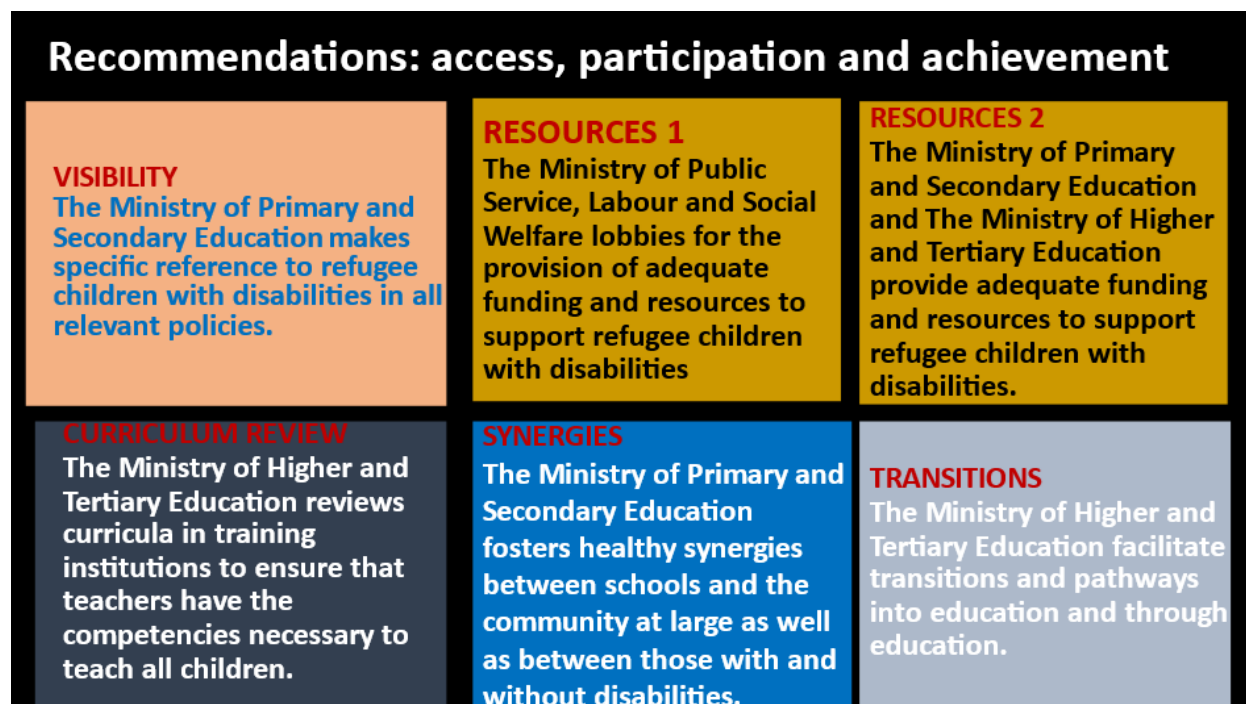

Outcomes

Participants deliberated on the following:

1. Refugees appreciated their involvement in co-creating solutions to the education of their children particularly those with disabilities.
2. Although many policies exist that favour the inclusive education and welfare of refugee children including those with disabilities, there was no explicit mention of these specific beneficiaries in the policies thereby leaving room for their "exclusion."
3. Awareness and capacity building programmes were necessary to change the rampant negative attitudes towards children with disabilities particularly by their parents, and families but also to a large extent by teachers, institutions and organisations that are involved in their education and welfare.
4. Access to education was inadequate if it is not backed up by participation and achievement.
5. The need to facilitate the transition from one grade to the next (for special classes), secondary education to tertiary as well as school to work for refugee children with disabilities was discussed at length.
6. The issue of limited resources available to disabled refugees was also flagged particularly to do

with assistive technologies and special education teachers.

7. Language (including a harmonised sign language) barriers was another cause for concern requiring capacitation of teachers, children, authorities and parents. To this end, home-school synergies, the use of interpreters, and cultural mediators was suggested.

8. Transition into Higher and tertiary Education for refugees received attention with observations that while the opportunities were available, these were not very magnified and there was need to enhance the opportunities. Vocational and technical education was deemed a critical component that needed to ensure full participation by refugees children.

The poster shown in the figure below synthesises illustratively the recommendations presented, amended and endorsed for inclusion by workshop participants in the final policy brief.

Figure 1: DRIVE Zimbabwe Policy Recommendations

Recommendations: access, participation and achievement

VISIBILITY
The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education makes specific reference to refugee children with disabilities in all relevant policies.

RESOURCES 1
The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare lobbies for the provision of adequate funding and resources to support refugee children with disabilities

RESOURCES 2
The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education provide adequate funding and resources to support refugee children with disabilities.

CURRICULUM REVIEW
The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education reviews curricula in training institutions to ensure that teachers have the competencies necessary to teach all children.

SYNERGIES
The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education fosters healthy synergies between schools and the community at large as well as between those with and without disabilities.

TRANSITIONS
The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education facilitate transitions and pathways into education and through education.

Co-revised policy recommendations

Conclusion and Way forward

The workshop was critical for addressing issues that bedevil the education of refugee children with disability. The policy brief received a huge buy in from the government ministries with the Ministry of Education promising to take up on board on critical observations that relate to legal framework and provision of resources for refugee students. The Ministry of Education highlighted that a lot of issues could be addressed right away and invited us to make submissions on a current review of legislation that the Ministry of Education is making to enable that the recommendations are captured for further debates and auctioning. The resultant policy brief will be earmarked to provide advocacy at the local (Tongogara Refugee Camp), national and international contexts.

At the academic and DRIVE study level, it became crucial to pursue further research earmarked at investigation issues relating to vertical and horizontal transitions.