

**BORDERLESS HIGHER EDUCATION FOR
REFUGEES (BHER)**

**The Provision of Higher Education for Refugees
in the Dadaab Camps, Kenya**

**Pedagogical Thematic Area Draft Report
(Research carried out on Dec 2011-April 2012)**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AVSI	-	Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale
CARE	-	an implementing agency in the camp
DAFI	-	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organisation
NRC	-	Norwegian Refugee Council
PTA	-	Parents Teachers association
WUSC	-	World University Scholarship of Canada
YEP	-	Youth Education Pack

Table of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	2
1.0 General Introduction	4
1.1 Research Methodology	4
2.0 Pedagogical Theme 1 – Potential Tertiary Education Programmes.....	5
2.1 Main Findings and Observations	5
2.2 Discussion and Main Recommendations	8
3.0 PEDAGOGICAL THEME2– PROGRAM DELIVERY MODE	9
3.1 Introduction.....	9
3.2Main Findings and Observations	10
3.3 Discussion and Main Recommendations	12
4.0 PEDAGOGICAL THEME 3– TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES	13
4.1Introduction.....	13
4.2 Main Findings and Observation.....	13
4.3 Discussion and Recommendations.....	14
5.0 Theme Four – Required Resources.....	15
5.1 Introduction.....	15
5.2Main Findings	15
5.3 Main Discussion and Recommendations	16
6.0 THEME 5– YOUNG PEOPLES CHOICES AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE	17
6.1 Introduction.....	17
6.2 Main Findings and Observations	17
6.3 Discussion and Main Recommendations	19
7.0 THEME 6: CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD IN IMPROVEMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN DADAAB	20
7.1 Introduction.....	20
7.2 Main Findings and Observations	20
Suggestions for Urgent Considerations.....	22

1.0 General Introduction

This report is based on analysis of the data on pedagogical themes of the study carried out in within Hagadera, Dadaab and Fafi areas in Dadaab International Refugee Camp in North Eastern Kenya. The sections in this report examine main findings, observations made and recommendations in different thematic areas including potential education programmes for the refugees and host communities in Dadaab; relevant delivery modes, appropriate teaching and learning approaches, relevant teaching resources for schools and tertiary institutions; young people's choices and prospects for the future and finally the conclusion and suggestions for immediate actions. Effort has been made to identify relevant direct citations of the informants in different thematic issues.

1.1 Research Methodology

The data collection techniques involved individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) facilitated by community researchers (field research assistants) identified among the refugees and the local host community in Dadaab and Fafi. Further information was obtained through in-depth interviews involving one Principal of a local secondary school, male teachers, women and youth leaders, students and persons with special needs in Dadaab. During the interviews effort was made to ensure gender balance in getting respondents to our questionnaires and in FGDs sessions among the categories of refugees and local community leaders, teachers and persons working with NGOs. Secondary data to compliments the primary data was gathered through reviewing existing literature from libraries, resource centers and internet sources to shed light on some issues related to the study.

2.0 Pedagogical Theme 1 – Potential Tertiary Education Programmes

2.1 Main Findings and Observations

The study revealed that there are virtually no tertiary education institutions within and outside Dadaab Refugee camp. However, it was noted that there are some opportunities offered to very few lucky school leavers by some Humanitarian agencies and well wishers for studying in tertiary institutions in Kenya and abroad.

Some limited scholarships are given to some school leavers every year to take short courses within Dadaab by organizations such as Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI). Incidentally the study found that the short courses offered on basic knowledge on community development are alleged not to be marketable because they lack advanced and comprehensive knowledge and skills required in the contemporary job markets. Ironically competition for the same DAFI programmes was very stiff and only few people benefit out of very many applicants every year. One respondent said;

“We are honestly stating here that there are no readily available tertiary education programmes currently in the Camp, but some people are assisted by well-wishers like NGOs operating in the refugee on cost sharing basis . The problem is that most of the courses they sponsor are Community Development courses (which are not)... Marketable...”

Male Incentive Teacher in Hagadera 14/1/2012

Regarding non availability of Universities near Dadaab another respondent talked about the absence of a tertiary institution in the area and observed that;

“There is no single University in North Eastern Province. And we don’t like travelling long distance like to Nairobi where you know nobody (to sponsor us) and weather is very cold which affects our health”

Youth Officer in Fafi, 20/3/2012

The study found that a basic professional primary school teacher education certificate also called Primary Teacher One (P1 course) offered by an organization called Associazione Volontari per il Servizio (AVSI) was not equivalent of what is offered in other colleges in Kenya. This is because the student teachers enrolled in AVSI programme are trained for a period of six months yet their counter parts take two years in other Primary School Teachers Training Colleges in Kenya. It was also found that there are other vocational training courses available for school leavers which include carpentry, hairdressing, electrical technician, computer application courses offered by an organization called Youth Education Pack (YEP) Center sponsored by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). These are appreciated but do not meet the needs for those aspiring for higher education. One respondent commented on courses offered by NRC and said;

“Currently there are no institutions of higher learning existing here in Dadaab except for a Technical College established by NRC which offers basic life skills courses...”

Youth Chairman, Dadaab Town, 16/3/2012

The study also found that majority of the respondents’ preferred market driven courses like business management, professional counseling and medical related professions which were missing in the camp. One respondent stated that;

“I prefer managerial courses because the society needs skillful leaders who can mediate and manage conflicts and other leadership related situations” **Religious Leader- Fafi, 07/04/12**

The study also found that many respondents had ambitions of pursuing careers in the fields of medicine and argued that if such courses were offered they would realize their dreams of helping their fellow refugees. One of the responses was;

“I would like to pursue medical courses because the community does not have enough trained medical practitionersyou look at the hospital majority of those

working as Medical Assistants are Primary School Education leavers who are not trained ...” **Male Incentive Teacher at Hagadera 14-01-2012**

The informants appeared interested in courses which would provide employment within the camps. One other respondent said;

“We want courses like Business administration, human resources, logistics, nutrition, counseling psychology, community development and in general courses that provide jobs in Dadaab.” **Youth Chairman- Dadaab 16/3/2012**

It was noted that although many respondents said that Teacher Training programs were important, they were concerned that refugee teachers were not paid well. This demoralizes them.

The study also found that most respondents would like to take diplomas and degrees courses in the fields of among others; political science, Social work and community development particularly projects monitoring and evaluation, engineering, strategic management, animal husbandry, financial management, human resource development and early childhood education. Most of these professional fields were seen to be relevant to their lives in Dadaab and later on returning to their countries of origins. Those who would like to take political science argued that it would help them to appreciate and determine the best solution to political crises in the Republic of Somalia.

It is evident from the above observations that background education, socio-economic, political and current livelihoods of the refugees in Dadaab are directly influence their career aspirations. The need for higher education is very high and should be addressed by all relevant Humanitarian Agencies in Dadaab. This is evidently one of the guiding considerations of the BHER programmes.

Some informants lamented that they felt either marginalized or restricted in accessing education in Dadaab yet according to the UN Charter for Human Rights of 1948 all persons have a right to education and equal treatments including those in refugee status.

The study revealed that refugees find it hard to access Tertiary Education outside the camp because there is restriction of movement as well as financial constraints. The high costs of fees, accommodation and subsistence upkeep of students in private and public Universities in Kenya and abroad was limiting to most qualified candidates. Consequently all those who access Tertiary education depend on full scholarships.

2.2 Discussion and Main Recommendations

The following is a brief discussion and recommendations based on the observations made above in regard to provision and accessibility of higher education programmes in Dadaab.

The main challenges to accessing tertiary education were found to be lack of institutions offering higher education within the camps; financial constraints and lack of scholarships. The need for higher education among the refugees in Dadaab was seen to be very high. Some argued that they would like to study and become successful and good role models for their children and other young people in the community.

In cases where scholarships are available some respondents reported incidences where there are irregularities in award of such opportunities. It was explained that corruption and unfairness in

awarding scholarships is seen when some less qualified students benefit at the expense of the most qualified.

The courses which most prospective students in higher education would like to study are those in market-driven careers where they can get jobs within and outside the camps. Such courses in order of popularity are medicine, business courses like economics, financial management and accountancy; psychology and counseling, education, social work and projects management, political science and education.

The study found that most respondents would benefit highly from opportunities to do these courses under different modes of study. Some felt that it would help them achieve individual dreams to become useful members of the community, and hopefully on returning to their home countries.

Based on above KU Odel, YU, AVU, UBC and other partners in BHER should strategize to establish certificate, diplomas and degrees programmes targeting to bridge the gaps of inaccessibility to higher education among the many qualified secondary school leavers in Dadaab camps and host community.

3.0 PEDAGOGICAL THEME2– PROGRAM DELIVERY MODE

3.1 Introduction

The following is a discussion on important observations in regard to the preferred mode of delivery of higher education programmes among the refugees and host community at Dadaab.

Discussion is also made on obstacles to successful delivery of tertiary education in the targeted region and finally some recommendations on possible interventions and suitable location of learning centers.

3.2 Main Findings and Observations

The study found that there was an overwhelming inclination and preference for the face to face mode of teaching and learning. The main reasons appeared to be long period of inclination to traditional methods of teaching where the teachers in schools are the focus of teaching and learning. There also lacks exposure to alternative modes of study.

However, some respondents appeared to be aware of some advantages of offering higher education through e-learning and open learning modes of study in places like Dadaab. In this regard the study found that e-learning and distance learning mode could help solve the problems of movement restrictions of refugees and other related challenges of insecurity within camps. These indeed affect girls and women more because they are more vulnerable in Dadaab.

Some informants noted that introduction of e-learning and distance learning mode of offering higher education in Dadaab would encounter some challenges which need to be addressed before its adoption. One respondent response was that;

“I preferred face to face (I mean actual class attendance) than any other mode, because in e-learning the student can experience many problems in using computers to access information...”
Chairlady, Dadaab Town 17TH Jan 2012

Lack of competence in use of computers, availability of the computers and localities where they can be conveniently set up and used were seen as practical limitations in regard to successful e-learning and teaching. Some informants noted that there was lack of electricity connections in most parts of the Dadaab camp.

Other informants reported that insecurity would be a major constraint of girls and women's participation in evening classes under any mode of study. One lady said this in regard to girls participation in evening classes;

“No. I don't think I can attend classes at night because of insecurity ...a gangster can rape or kill me..., I don't think any lady can be willing to attend evening classes after darkness because in our community girls are not allowed to go outside at night...”
Senior Primary Teacher (female), April 12/2012

Lack of electricity both in the camp appears to be one of the challenges to be addressed in planning and establishment of centers for delivering online education programmes. However, it was noted that some businesspersons had petrol or diesel powered generators currently used in Cyber Cafes in residential areas within the camps. This provides easy access to internet although not many people easily afford internet connectivity.

Unreliable internet connectivity was also reported as a possible limitation of setting up on-line programs within the camps. This needs to be overcome together with the provisions of computers which are necessary in the online delivery of education programmes.

The study found that the respondent preferred the location of on-line centers to be as near as possible to their homes due to security concerns. Another reason for this consideration is that during rainy seasons flooding occurs that may hinder easy movement of students within the camps. This explains why some respondents observed that Dadaab town was the most secure and convenient location in the area. One respondent said;

“There were so many security problems in the camp such as assassinations, defilement and robbery. It would therefore be safer if girls don't travel long distances”

Hagadera Youth Leader 12/4/2012

3.3 Discussion and Main Recommendations

Most respondents underlined that the preferred mode of study was face-to-face teaching and learning. This is evidently due to long orientation to traditional classroom teaching environment under the guidance of their teachers and lack of or inadequate exposure to ICT and e-learning programmes.

However, due to the lack of tertiary institutions and limited scholarships to pursue higher studies outside Dadaab, e-learning learning mode was still considered to have many advantages to most people (including girls and women) at Dadaab. This was particularly the case because it would also cater for the concern of traveling long distances and insecurity within camps.

There is need to consider strategies of overcoming the limitations of lack of electricity connections, computers and unreliable internet connectivity when setting up e-learning centers. Perhaps we should begin with the most strategically located centers like shopping centers and local schools and social halls. This should be considered during implementation of the selected programmes targeting different categories of students within Dadaab and local community.

To overcome limitations of ICT skills and e-learning mode of study there is need to have comprehensive training of the groups of students on fundamental skills in computer application and e-learning pedagogy. This should be followed by provision of shared computers in some already set up e-learning, open learning/ tutorial centers with competent staff members to coordinate the programmes to be offered.

Some examples of relevant models of pre-university and tertiary education programmes which have succeeded in other parts of the world include (a) the programmes offered by National Institute of Open Schooling in India under the Ministry of Human Resource Development established in 1989; (b) Distance Learning for Capacity Development in Bangladesh Refugees Camps (with over 20years experience) and (c) Tertiary Education for Refugees along the Thai-Burmese Border Camps provided by Australian Catholic University (ACU) from 2003. In the light of this KU and AVU Odel programmes should also be tailored to meet the unique situation in Dadaab though our BHER project activities.

4.0 PEDAGOGICAL THEME 3– TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

4.1Introduction

This section discusses the main techniques of teaching and learning that were preferred. They include teaching and learning methods used that would make content delivery more effective. The research findings show the responses given on the questions in this thematic area were very close to those asked on the modes of delivery discussed above. Main techniques discussed are confined to traditional face to face and the proposed e-learning and online/ distance learning.

4.2 Main Findings and Observation

The study revealed that the most popular methods of teaching and learning in tertiary education was teacher centered (face to face methods of teaching and learning) also called heuristic techniques. This shows the reluctance of the respondents to embrace expository techniques which are students centered. The later was favoured by minority. One respondent said:

“Face to face teaching and learning with the teacher standing in front is the best and convenient learning approach.” A Person Living with Disability, Dadaab 14/4/2012

Some others preferred the face to face teaching and learning though the school based mode of study. This was especially for those in the teaching profession.

“I (like) school based ...as...teachers who teach the children so they have time in the holidays ... to my perception school based is (the best)”

Incentive Teacher Hagadera 14/01/2012

Incidentally there were some respondents who stated that they would like to adopt OdeL mode of study which is students centered. One respondent said that;

“As one of the incentive teachers and given that during the holidays we have other commitments like family... I could have suggested either we have distance learning or Open learning...” Incentive Teacher Hagadera 14/01/2012

4.3 Discussion and Recommendations

As noted above there is a strong inclination to heuristic approached of teaching and learning through face to face mode of study as opposed to the expository methods through the e-learning and distance learning among most the prospective students in Dadaab. There is therefore need to address the strong inclination (attitude and perception) towards students centered methods of teaching and learning.

The concern over reluctance in embracing the students centered techniques of teaching and learning should be addressed during the preparatory stages of inducting the students into online/ e-learning modes of study. However to ensure all inclusiveness e-learning/ distance modes of study should be introduced alongside tutorial sessions.

5.0 Theme Four – Required Resources

5.1 Introduction

In this section covers the observations made regarding the available facilities and teaching resources in education institutions. Main findings are discussed and suggestions are given on required improvement of facilities and resources in education institutions in Dadaab. Finally recommendations are provided on important considerations for increasing access and quality education among the refugees and host community.

5.2 Main Findings

The study sought to find out what the respondents thought was the way education provision could be improved in the region. Most respondents observed the need to expand education facilities in existing schools as well as building of more primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Congestion in most schools was reported in both primary and secondary levels of education. This strains the existing latrines, library and classrooms. Building more laboratories and classrooms in secondary schools appears to be an urgent requirement.

One respondent lamented that;

“Secondary schools have a lot of challenges: there are either very few or no science laboratories in most schools. In other cases students do not use them because science teachers are not qualified to facilitate some science experiments... in other cases the class rooms are too congested... the teacher can’t attend to them all...”

Male Incentive Teachers Hagadera, 14/1/2012

In regard to teaching resources there was an outcry of limitation of basic text books and other relevant teaching aids in most levels of learning in schools within the Camp. One respondent summed it by saying;

“We honestly need more trained teachers and get books for those students who cannot afford it”

Hagadera senior teacher- 12/4/2012

Lack of electricity was also noted as a big problem in some schools where setting up e-learning centers may be a big challenge in the proposed tertiary education programmes. This might require installation of electrical fittings and purchase of diesel powered generators.

The above scenario shows a situation where the education institutions in Dadaab are faced with a serious strain of the basic infrastructure, teaching and learning facilities/resources. The problem is exacerbated by the influx of refugees from Republic of Somalia due to the ongoing civil wars and international interventions against the Al Sabbab Militant groups. As the number of refugees increase in the camps the more congestion is experienced in schools and ultimately the demand for higher education.

5.3 Main Discussion and Recommendations

Overcrowding in primary and secondary schools is a big concern should be addressed as a matter of urgency. To improve education in Dadaab camp and host community ways have to be found to establish more schools and or increase the facilities and teaching resources in the existing schools. These should begin with laboratories, classrooms, latrines, text books and other teaching aids.

More trained teachers should be hired. Untrained teachers and incentive teachers should be the first to be considered in any form of in-service training programmes including the BHER programme.

Accessibility to electricity power supply within the camp and Dadaab community is a priority for successful establishment of Odel centers.

In view of the current congestion of the existing classrooms in schools within Dadaab the proposed e-Learning/ Odel centers could make use prefabs class/tutorial rooms. Alternatively some classrooms can be used during the school holidays and evenings.

It also became evident that most students in Dadaab have no computer literacy skills. There is a dire need for preparatory courses for such students before they undertake their education through e-learning (OdeL) mode of study as envisaged in our BHER project.

6.0 THEME 5– YOUNG PEOPLES CHOICES AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

6.1 Introduction

The study explored what career choices respondents make as they go through school or when they are out of school. These choices are whether to go to tertiary institutions after secondary school or how to earn a living after leaving primary or secondary schools.

6.2 Main Findings and Observations

While boys appeared more ambitious and with wider options of career choices most girls rely on their parents to decide their career options. Unfortunately majority of girls rarely pursue higher education. This was a concern for most respondents who felt that education should be seen as a right for both girls and boys. One respondent said;

“I think ... (according to Human Rights boys and girls have equal rights to get education but in my community (Somali community) they go against that and they only educate boys and leave girls at home” **Senior Teacher-Female Hagadera**

The study revealed that in Dadaab the numbers of school drop outs and out of school youth are very high. Many young people do not get higher education. Majority of the young people are employed in small private businesses within the camp after completing primary or secondary schools. Some of such businesses include; shoe shining, loading lorries; selling in retail shops, small hotels and kiosks along the road sides. One informant noted;

“Young school leavers get very petty jobs except for those with professional courses like diplomas and degrees. Others do small business. She said (many) girls drop them are married and become mothers” **Women Leader Fafi:” 20/3/2012**

While some school leavers are lucky to get jobs as Incentive Workers it was noted that such opportunities are very competitive. As reported earlier, it was explained that sometimes corruption is applied hence many qualified school leavers miss such jobs. Ironically some respondents argued that Incentive Workers are also exploited through underpayment. This demotivates them and some young people among them have been reported to have opted to join militant groups in Somalia. One respondent argued that;

“Here in the refugee you will only get incentive job that pay very little and it won’t help you. Yet we know in Somalia rebel groups are paid in dollars... Some consider joining warlords or pirates where they are paid a lot ... Otherwise we need attention from **BHER” Youth Leader, Hagadera 12/04/2012**

The study also found that many other form four leavers become idlers, abuse drugs and also easily join criminal activities in the market within Dadaab. Others choose to become illegal immigrants in neighboring countries. There are many cases where some youth have been found sneaking out of the camps to illegally migrate to other countries.

The study also found that some students who were awarded scholarships left the camp and did not comeback to work after their education. This is because some NGOs and UN agencies pay refugees graduates very poorly arguing that UNHCR has a “policy” that puts a limit on the pay refugees can get within the refugee camps.

Some respondents felt that they needed passports and work permits so that they can be free to move either in the country of asylum or to other countries. They also argued that other refugees in other parts of the world have these documents. This shows the levels of frustration the refugees experience within the camps.

6.3 Discussion and Main Recommendations

The study revealed that although all both girls and boys have limited opportunities for accessing higher education girls face more constraints in accessing higher education. This is partly because of parents’ tendency to marry them as soon as they reach puberty or after finishing their primary or secondary school education.

Only a few of highly qualified and gifted school leavers benefit from scholarships to pursue high education in tertiary institutions. The other few lucky bright school leavers end up being

engaged as incentive workers and to assist in small businesses within the camps where they are also paid very low salaries.

It also become apparent that lack of opportunities for higher education and high levels of joblessness push some youth into life of idleness, immoralities and crimes around the camps while others seek opportunities as illegal immigrants or go back to Somalia to join other warring groups.

Consequently in all the above cases the talents of the youth who do not pursue tertiary education are left untapped. It is therefore clear that BHER education opportunities would greatly increase the career prospects of some of the many school leavers, incentive workers and potential criminals.

7.0 THEME 6: CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD IN IMPROVEMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN DADAAB

7.1 Introduction

The study recollected some of the informants opinions on how the education system can be improved and opportunities expanded for refugees and local host community to accesses tertiary education.

7.2 Main Findings and Observations

The study revealed that respondents were not happy with how education was run especially at the camp because they felt that donor agencies were responsible for employing untrained teachers yet very little effort was made to train them. This is a major area of concern.

To solve the problem of congestion in schools, the study recommends for more primary and secondary schools be built. In the meantime the teaching facilities and resources in the existing schools should be expanded. This is a major challenge for the UNHCR and Humanitarian agencies within the camp who have been overstretching the available resources to cater for the basic needs of the ever increasing refugees in Dadaab.

All respondents underscored that almost all school going children have ambition to access the elusive higher education to increase their prospects of getting well paying jobs in future. One respondent cited that;

“I would like to tell people outside this community ... (we are) very thirsty for education (and) we need people who can quench this thirst for education ... for example the young girls who finished secondary education years back have missed to go for tertiary education ... so they (get) married ... Boys are paid as incentive workers, their ambition for higher education has ended ..., they need people who (can) help them”

Male Incentive Teacher, Hagadera 14/1/2012

Another respondent reiterated the need for assistance to pursue higher education;

“We... need their (BHER) project assistance and support (because) people are aspiring to get higher education but because of financial constraints the problems are too challenging ... restrictive. As refugees, we are requesting to be supported to be given assistance to learn. BHER Project should empower us in terms of education, we welcome you ...”

Senior Female Teacher 12/4/2012

Some respondents underscored the need for affirmative action in setting criteria for admission into the University programmes. The entry cut off points should be lowered. Their argument was that they study under extremely challenging conditions and hence cannot be compared with students who go other schools in the rest of the Country. One respondent said;

“Entry points (criteria for admission into the University) is too high (too) compared to other parts of Kenya because the environment (in which) we learn is different as them they have all required materials and facilities. This condition should be a reason to lower the grades”

Youth Officer Fafi, 20/3/2012

Suggestions for Urgent Considerations

The main priority for improvement of the higher education in Dadaab is to focus on training of many Untrained Teachers in schools; expansion of schools and teaching facilities.

To enable students with average grades access higher education there should be some pre-University courses and preparatory programmes for those qualified to join University through the Odel mode of study.

BHER Project should begin with application of multiple approaches in teaching/learning including face to face, distance and e-learning where applicable.

The implementation of the tertiary education programmes should be carefully done and systematically to avoid causing unnecessary anxiety, excitements hope to every school lever which cannot be fulfilled by our BHER programme.

BHER should begin with the many untrained/incentive teachers in Primary and secondary schools. Later all other categories of qualified school leavers (both girls and boys) should be given fair and equal opportunities in different programmes. These should include certificate, diploma and degree courses.

There should be an affirmative action to ensure as many girls as possible get the opportunities to take different careers in Odel programmes. In this regard all relevant stakeholders should be involved in ensuring the BHER is successful.

Some programmes to be considered should be the programmes and models applied in Thai -
Burmese Borders Refugees Camps; Models developed by the CRS- YU, KU ODel and relevant
AVU programmes.