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THE BORDERLESS HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES PROJECT: ENABLING REFUGEE AND LOCAL KENYAN STUDENTS IN DADAAB TO TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Wenona Giles

ABSTRACT

This field note examines some of the challenges experienced by students living in and near the Dadaab refugee camps in northeastern Kenya who were making the transition from secondary school to university programs. The students were enrolled in courses offered by two Kenyan and two Canadian universities that were partners in the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees project. The context of Dadaab and the structure of the pilot project are also explored.

INTRODUCTION

This field note is a preliminary analysis of the transition from secondary school to university made by two cohorts of refugee and local Kenyan students who were living in and near the Dadaab refugee camps in northeastern Kenya. The university programs were offered through the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) development project. Until recently, the refugee students were not admitted to university degree programs, except for the very few who received scholarships each year from the World University Service of Canada and the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund, both of which required that recipients leave the camps and sometimes also the host country.

The article begins by describing the Dadaab camps and some aspects of the primary and secondary schooling offered there. It then describes the BHER project, which was created in response to a request from residents of the Dadaab camps and nearby Dadaab town for their young people to gain access to a university education. The students in the camp schools confronted several challenges as they prepared to make the transition from secondary school to the university programs, including mistrust of their teachers' effectiveness and commitment to their learning, inadequate preparation for university, and gender inequality. While there are no easy or across-the-board solutions to these and other related education issues, I argue that doing away with camp-based education and instead welcoming primary and secondary school refugee children into local schools would be a step in the right direction. The paper concludes with some proposals for future research.

THE DADAAB CAMPS[1]

The population of the Hagadera, Dagahaley, and Ifo camps located near the town of Dadaab in northeastern Kenya (see Maps 1 and 2) is currently about 270,100 people.[2] Of these, 249,144, or 92 percent, are Somali nationals (UNHCR 2017a, 2017b). As described elsewhere in more detail (Hyndman and Giles 2017), the number of camp residents has waxed and waned over the two decades of the camps' existence; however, it grew radically in 2011 to more than half a million people who were escaping increased violence and environmental degradation in Somalia.

Since the first camps were established at Dadaab in 1992, many academic and NGO researchers have studied and written books, scholarly articles, and policy reports about the Dadaab camps (e.g., Hyndman 2000; Agier 2011b; Horst 2006;

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1   Research was first carried out with colleagues (Dippo, Orgocka, and many graduate students) who were engaged from 2011 onward, as we advanced toward the formation of the BHER project. A 2011 feasibility study written by several of us who now lead the BHER project concluded that refugees want quality education that produces cognitive learning outcomes that will increase their chances of procuring gainful employment (Dippo, Orgocka, and Giles 2013). This research was accompanied by interviews videotaped in 2012 with parents and young people in the camps and in the nearby town to ascertain their views on access to higher education (Murphy 2012). Further videotaped interviews with students and professors who were engaged in university courses coordinated by the BHER project from 2014 to 2016 explored some of the students' perspectives on the university programs and their future aspirations (Murphy 2016). Data on the challenges experienced by both students and professors are also contained in reports by university professors who directed courses that are being delivered to students in the Dadaab camps, as well as evaluation and funding reports.

2   As of April 2017, the Kambioos refugee camp had closed and its buildings were handed over to the Government of Kenya. The Ifo 2 camp was still open as of June 2018 but is expected to close.

Horst, Giles, and Hyndman 2008; Crisp 2000; Abdi 2005; Adelman and Abdi 2003; Giles 2012; Rawlence 2016). As Hyndman and I have written elsewhere:

> The camps have been variously described as sites deeply rooted in violence and insecurity (Crisp 2000); as "non-communities of the excluded" (Hyndman 2000, 221); as home to refugees whose livelihoods are transnational, rooted in but connected across many countries of asylum and settlement (Horst 2006); and as a transitional humanitarian space (Agier 2011a). (Hyndman and Giles 2017, 50)

Map 1: Refugee Migration to the Dadaab Camps
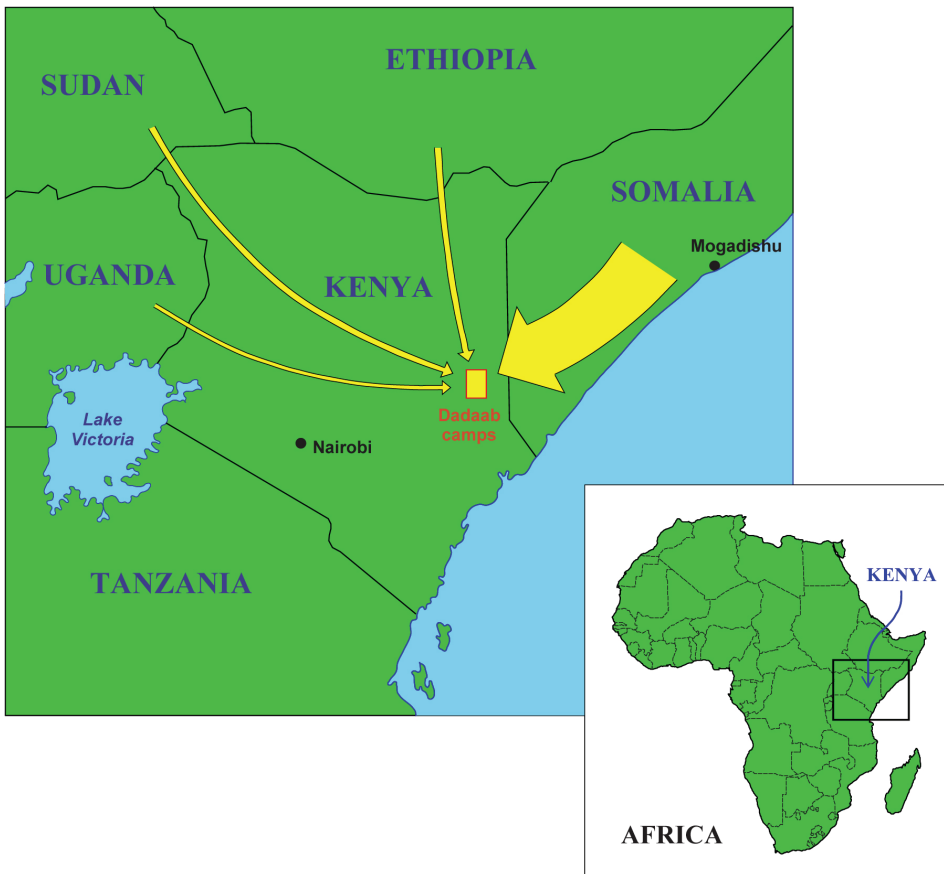
SOURCE: Courtesy of Joseph Mensah and Carolyn King, York University

Map 2: The Town of Dadaab and the Dadaab Refugee Camps in Kenya
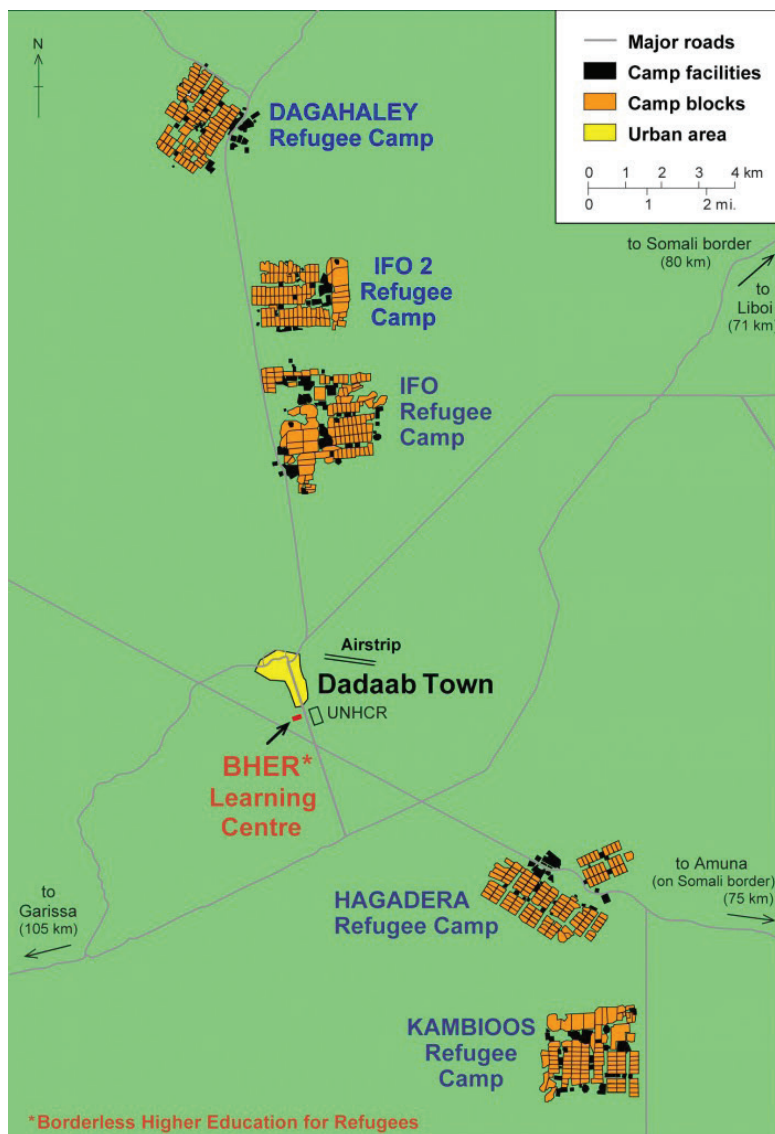
SOURCE: Courtesy of Joseph Mensah and Carolyn King, York University

NOTE: Kambioos camp is now closed and Ifo 2 is expected to close soon.

A life of uncertainty plagues people who become labeled as refugees. In Kenya, for example, there are periodic announcements that all refugees must leave the country: in July 2013, Kenyan cabinet secretary Francis Kimemia announced that "Kenya has to be freed of the 600,000 refugees from next year" (Fortunate 2013). Such declarations became much more forceful after the Westgate Mall attacks in

Nairobi in September 2013. Just a few weeks later, on November 10, Kenya signed a tripartite agreement with UNHCR and the Somalian government to return refugees to Somalia, despite the continuing violence there. On April 9, 2014, Reuters reported that Kenyan officials had deported 82 Somalians and rounded up and detained hundreds more.[3] Joseph Ole Lenku, the former interior cabinet secretary, is reported to have said, "The process will continue until we do not have illegal aliens and those found to have refugees [sic] documents are taken to refugee camps" (Reuters 2014; Hyndman and Giles 2017, 48). In May 2016, the Kenyan government voiced additional and more urgent calls for the repatriation of all refugees living in Kenya; more recently, the Kenyan government stopped registering new arrivals from Somalia or processing asylum claims (Moulid and McVeigh 2017).

Dadaab is currently considered a high-risk area for a number of reasons: retaliation by various militia groups in response to the Kenyan military's incursion across the nearby border with Somalia; the activities of the jihadist fundamentalist group Al Shabaab and other gangs in northeastern Kenya; the mix of foreigners and Kenyans who make up the refugee "industry" in Dadaab; and the extreme poverty not only of the displaced people but of the local and often marginalized Kenyans living in this very desolate part of the country. Since the Dadaab camps opened, they have hosted nationalities from the Horn of Africa and from the Great Lakes and East regions, but the majority of the camp population is Somalians; other nationalities are considered minorities, as they constituted less than 2 percent of the camps' population in 2011 (see Map 1; UNHCR 2011, 9).

Primary and Secondary Schooling in Dadaab

Education has been important to Somalians since the early days of the Dadaab camps and it continues to be so. One of the first priorities of those who moved into the camps 25 years ago was to organize camp schools that followed a Somalian-language curriculum, with a view to preparing for a return to Somalia.[4] However, within a year of the first refugees' arrival, UNHCR and the Kenyan government offered instead to support a Kenyan English-language curriculum in the camps, rather than a Somalian-language primary and secondary curriculum. By 1998,

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3   The term "Somalian" refers to nationals of Somalia or those who are the children of nationals, living either inside or outside Somalia. This avoids confusion with Somali Kenyans, with whom most Somalians share "Somali" ethnicity (Hyndman and Giles 2017, 27).

4   This is what we were told by some of those interviewed in the Dadaab camps for the 2013 BHER project feasibility study. The extent to which a Somalian curriculum actually existed at the time in a Somalia that was fractured by war and violence and had no functioning education ministry is questionable. It certainly would have been difficult for Somalian students to access primary and secondary accreditation under the circumstances.

a Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education exam and a Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education exam could be taken in the northeastern Kenyan towns of Garissa and Dadaab and were therefore available to children and youth attending school in the camps. However, the Kenyan government did not or could not direct much to the camps in the way of educational resources, thus most teachers in the camps were graduates of the camp high schools and had no university degrees or teaching credentials. Moreover, UNHCR or NGOs paid them only low "incentive wages" to teach.[5]

None of the reports examined for this article explains why a Kenyan English curriculum was introduced into a non-Kenyan community. Although a Kenyan English education was more likely to give refugee students a desire to live and work in Kenya, this did not appear to be what Kenyans or their government wanted; it is worth noting that the curriculum decision was supported by a government that historically opposed the presence of Somalian refugees and Kenyan ethnic Somalis within its borders. The decision to offer only a Kenyan English curriculum helps to explain the low attendance rates in the Dadaab camp schools and the serious lack of Somali-language reading and writing skills among their graduates (UNHCR 2015). In 2012, a BHER community researcher who was carrying out interviews in the camps said the following during a meeting in Nairobi, at which it was discussed whether classes should be taught in Somali or English:[6] "We appreciate your efforts to be respectful and not to perpetuate the colonial legacy, but get over it. You want to offer us tradition. What we want is a future" (Giles and Dippo forthcoming).

Quantitative data on education in the Dadaab camps are sparse, different agencies collect various types of data, and conditions change often, thus it is difficult to make comparisons across years. The data presented here were collected from various sources and provide only a partial picture. In October 2011, when we began to consider implementing an education project in Dadaab, the camps had 35 primary schools and 9 secondary schools, most of them UNHCR-supported (UNHCR 2011, 11). Recent information gathered by BHER staff in Dadaab indicates that little had changed as of March 2017; there were still 32 primary

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5   An incentive wage is about one-tenth what a Kenyan would earn for the same job. Dadaab refugees are limited to these jobs and to others in the informal sector because they cannot obtain work permits in Kenya.

6   These were refugees from the Dadaab camps who worked on the BHER feasibility study (Dippo et al. 2013).

schools and 7 secondary schools in the camps (Giles and Orgocka 2018).[7] The percentage of youth attending secondary school did increase from 4 percent in 2011 to 10 percent in 2017 (UNHCR 2011, 11; Giles and Orgocka 2018). However, fewer young women than men were accessing higher education in 2016: of the 91 students enrolled in tertiary education, 13 were female and 78 were male (Giles and Orgocka 2018).[8] Gender disparities, which begin at a young age in the camps, have been of great concern in reports on the status of education in Dadaab.

BHER University Education in Dadaab

BHER is a development project comprised of a consortium of two Kenyan universities (Kenyatta University and Moi University) and two Canadian universities (University of British Columbia and York University) that offer accredited university courses to refugees in the Dadaab camps and to some Kenyans who live in Dadaab town. It was formed in response to a 2010 request from two NGOs—Windle International Kenya and the World University Service of Canada—for access to higher education for the town and the camp communities. A complex and challenging preparation period (2011-2013) ensued that included the following:

- Fundraising

- Development of a partnership among the four universities to ensure that an adequate number of courses and programs would be available and that each university would recognize the others' course credits

- Agreement by all partner universities to a tuition-free model

- Negotiations with prospective students from the Dadaab camp and the town about the types of programs to be offered

- The construction of a local learning center in the town of Dadaab, which had computer labs and classrooms (see location on Map 2)

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7   The age group served by secondary schools is 14-21 years of age. UNICEF uses Education Management Information System (EMIS) data to maintain school data. Philemon Misoy, the BHER project liaison in Dadaab, gathered these data for us in April-May 2017 through communication with humanitarian agency workers in Dadaab. The EMIS-derived data are thus tentative and are rapidly changing as the camps close and children and youth move out.

8   These data have been compiled from telephone conversations between BHER field staff and the scholarship point people at the local universities that offer diploma and degree programs.

After the Kenyan Ministry of Education had approved the university partnership and accreditation issues had been resolved, we negotiated with local Kenyan members of parliament, Kenyatta University, and the Dadaab townspeople to acquire space to build the learning center on land occupied by Kenyatta University. The project partners then began to develop tuition-free on-site and online university courses, which were first offered in August 2014 to a cohort of 200 students; a second cohort of 200 students began their studies in 2015. The first phase of the project, funded by the Canadian government, ends in October 2018; Open Society Foundations will continue to fund the project going forward.

A feasibility study conducted in 2011-2012 with the potential refugee and local Kenyan students and among the partner institutions helped to determine what type of university programs the students desired and the universities' capacity to offer these or other acceptable certificate, diploma, and degree programs. Many of the online university courses offered through BHER are part of the regular curriculum of the partner universities. For financial and pedagogical reasons, we did not want to develop entirely separate (in other words, exclusive) programs for the students in Dadaab, thus fee-paying Canadian and Kenyan students have been taking courses and interacting with the tuition-free online refugee students. This pedagogical approach brought Dadaab students into discussion with students living elsewhere, but this practice functioned better in Canadian courses than in Kenyan courses, due to the greater flexibility in the delivery of the former, and significantly benefitted the learning experience of both the Canadian and Dadaab students. The BHER-facilitated online learning model is primarily built around face-to-face courses in years one and two of a degree program, and mostly around online courses by year four. BHER students in Dadaab are supported by teaching assistants from the various universities, who work online (Canadian universities) and on site (Kenyan universities) with the students; technological assistants facilitate access to unstable Internet connections. The assistants enable the BHER students to catch up and keep up with the regular fee-paying students in Canada and Kenya. Kenyan course directors and teaching assistants visit the BHER Learning Centre regularly, and the three BHER Kenyan administrative staff, who live in Dadaab, work with the students daily.

Seventy percent of the BHER project students are residents of the camps and 30 percent are Kenyans from the local area; these numbers reflect the approximate breakdown of the population of refugees and Kenyan citizens in Dadaab. The curriculum and modes of delivery that have been developed for the BHER project have been influenced by requests from potential local students, the capacity of the universities and professors to address these desires, unreliable communication

technology (WiFi, Internet, bandwidth), and the political insecurity of the region, especially since 2011. Some of the tensions embodied in these decision-making processes are explored in more detail elsewhere (Giles and Dippo forthcoming; Giles and Orgocka 2018).

While the BHER project has experienced many of the same challenges faced by programs offered at the primary and secondary levels by UNHCR, CARE, Save the Children, and UNICEF, among others, BHER has the freedom to address them differently. This is because it was inserted into the local Kenyan higher education system through a partnership with Kenyatta University and Moi University and offers courses through York University and the University of British Columbia in Canada. The involvement of universities outside of the host country is important for a population of foreign students classified as refugees, who may be ousted from that country at any time, as is currently happening in Kenya. If the refugee students have to leave Kenya and/or Kenyan universities are no longer able to service Dadaab refugees, the students will have to rely on the academic partners outside the host country to deliver university courses online. Since 2013, some BHER students have been resettled in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Somalia. It is interesting that the BHER students who settled in Somalia or other parts of East Africa have been more likely to stay connected with their university courses. Those who settled in the global North tend to lose touch with the BHER program due to the rigors of resettlement, despite the attentive efforts of individual course directors and BHER staff in Canada and Dadaab to assist them.

By the second year of course delivery for the BHER project, it became apparent that students needed more than access to computer labs in the BHER Learning Centre; they also needed tablets to read course material, make notes, and draft essays. This was especially important for the women students, who could not leave their homes after dark to venture out to computer labs in some of the camp schools. Moreover, the camps go into lockdown if there is a security threat or violent incident, and since the BHER Learning Centre is in Dadaab town, the computer labs are sometimes inaccessible to the refugee students. The tablets also have proven to be a crucial tool for students who resettle and want to continue their university courses through the BHER program.

Figure 1: BHER Model

Phase 1
InSTEP
non-credit, 3 months

Managed by Windle International Kenya
200 students per cohort

Phase 2-A
Certificate in Educational Studies (Elementary)
30 credits, 12 months

Offered by York University
80 students per cohort

Phases 2-B and 3-B
Diploma in Teacher Education (Secondary)
60 credits, 24 months

Offered jointly by Moi University and the University of British Columbia
80 students per cohort

Phase 3-A
Diploma in Teacher Education (Primary)
30 credits, 12 months

Offered by Kenyatta University
60 students per cohort

Phase 4
Bachelor's Degree
60 credits, 24 months

Offered jointly by Kenyatta University, York University, and Moi University
100 students per cohort

BSc Community Health Education Moi University

BEd Education (Arts) Kenyatta University

BEd Education (Primary Teacher Education) Kenyatta University

BA Geography York University

NOTE: The number of students varies at each level to account for student dropout and retention.

As the BHER model (see Figure 1) describes, the program is structured so that each level that is completed successfully provides a university accreditation that is accepted in Kenya (except for the non-accredited Phase 1), which permits a student to move to the next level. Thus the BHER students, who are themselves mostly unaccredited teachers who graduated only secondary school, begin with a certificate or a diploma program and move on to a diploma and/or degree program. The structure and content of these university programs is prepared by

professors who have been asked to keep in mind the interests and needs of the Dadaab refugee and local Kenyan students. This may include using a variety of social media (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype), weekly tutorials, a course teaching assistant who solely supports the refugee and Kenyan students, remedial work, and special workshops on specific issues or topics (e.g., plagiarism). Course delivery remains flexible enough to address constant challenges, several of which are discussed briefly below. The Dadaab students' transition into university programs has been affected by a number of difficulties, including mistrust, inadequate preparation for university, and gender inequality.

Mistrust

Frequent insecurity in and around the camps often curtails visits to the Learning Centre, and the camp curfew limits the hours students can work in the computer labs. The unpredictability of security in the camps flies in the face of what a refugee camp is supposed to offer its residents. It is well known that Dadaab is not a safe place to live and work, and Kenyan teachers frequently expressed their fear about this by not showing up in the camp primary or secondary school classrooms to teach:

> There is insecurity in the camp. Even the few trained teachers we had in every school, they didn't reported [sic] to work because of security issues, and that will have an impact on the education; so in the camp there is an unpredictable dynamic situation. (Block leader, Hagadera camp, January 15, 2012; Dippo, Orgocka, and Giles 2013)

Not knowing whether one's teacher is going to show up to teach on any given day diminishes students' trust in their teachers and has negatively affected learning outcomes for primary and secondary school students in the Dadaab camps. Thus it was not surprising when they first met their university professors in on-site or online classrooms in August 2014 that, while hopeful, the students did not place much confidence in BHER plans to offer university programs. As a student-teacher interviewed for the feasibility study in 2012 told us:

> There is no tertiary education programs currently in the camp, but some people are assisted by well-wishers . . . [but] most of the courses they sponsor are community development courses, [which are not] . . . marketable. (Male student-teacher, Hagadera camp, January 14, 2012; Dippo et al. 2013)

The BHER experience indicates that education for refugees at all levels cannot be implemented without the support of the local community and the host country government. However, despite the 2011-2012 feasibility study mentioned above, as well as many meetings with parent-teacher associations and numerous visits by BHER staff, the BHER students' prior experience with education in the camps dampened their belief that the project would actually offer university courses, and they also doubted that, if offered, the courses would be useful. In this initial period, when courses were delivered by Kenyan and Canadian universities, students questioned the validity of the Canadian university courses, as they had never heard of either York University or the University of British Columbia. They challenged the four years it was going to take to earn an undergraduate university degree—although this was no different from most universities anywhere in world, it was very unlike the short NGO training courses they were familiar with and which they criticized for not leading to good jobs. When distribution of money for food and transport to the BHER Learning Centre in Dadaab town was late, the largely impoverished students who were used to being paid to take NGO training courses went on strike—twice in the first year of the BHER program. This took precious time away from the intensive mode of course instruction.

Lack of Adequate Preparation for University Programs

An important effect on students of long-term living in a refugee camp is that most who are now taking courses from the four universities associated with the BHER project were seriously under-prepared for both Kenyan and Canadian university courses/programs, despite having a Kenyan English high school graduation certification. Few students who complete primary and secondary school in the camps enter university, especially girls. As one Kenyan woman teacher described to us in 2012, there is a critical dearth of facilities in the camps for the number of students in the secondary schools, which creates challenges for teachers and students alike:

> The classes are not enough for the pupils . . . no textbooks in the schools or exercise books . . . in secondary education—a lot of challenges when it comes to facilities . . . not enough laboratories, libraries. (Senior woman teacher, Hagadera camp, April 12, 2012; Dippo et al. 2013)

The BHER program begins with a non-accredited transition year called InSTEP (see Figure 1), which as it turned out was insufficient and problematic as a preparatory stage for students. This is in part because they had little interest in a program that did not offer university accreditation and because we seriously underestimated their lack of preparation for university learning and culture.[9] When they began, the students were barely able to conduct academic forms of online communication, as many were learning for the first time how to attach a document to an email, to communicate beyond simple Facebook-type greetings, or to access Moodle course sites. They also did not know how to comport themselves in a university classroom and, instead of listening to lectures, some would chat or take cell phone calls during on-site courses in Dadaab. For some time, women would not speak in the classroom. Moreover, the Kenyan rote-learning approach left both male and female students at a loss when asked to offer their own opinions and views on course readings and in essay writing. Despite their Kenyan secondary school certification, most refugee students wrote and spoke non-standard English. The majority were working full-time as teachers or for NGOs in the camps and thus were greatly disadvantaged in keeping up with course reading and assignments. As mentioned above, university lecturers from the BHER consortium of universities spent the second year of the program and at least some of the third year doing their best to upgrade the BHER students' ability to participate more equitably with the Kenyan and Canadian university students who were in some of the same courses as the refugee students. Remedial work was and is carried out concurrently and continuously with the ongoing teaching of on-site and online courses and is an important part of our facilitated online learning model.

Gender Inequality

Few women in the Dadaab camps are currently eligible for Kenyan university programs, mainly because they have been unable to achieve an overall C+ on their secondary school exams. However, eligibility requirements vary by university in Kenya and Canada, with more flexibility in the latter. In order to achieve a goal of 30 percent female representation in the university programs, the project staff worked extremely hard to locate and notify women about the program, including the lower entrance requirements, the mentoring provided, the fact that non-academic experience would count, that space would be provided near the classrooms for them to nurse and care for their children, and that they would be allowed to repeat courses when were absent from too many classes in order to deliver their babies. Remedial work specifically directed at the women by teaching

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9   Students said they did not want to waste any more time acquiring more NGO certificates for training courses, which they said were often useless in finding employment in Kenya, Somalia, or elsewhere.

assistants and the constant attention by the BHER staff in Dadaab for women who were absent from class more than once has made courses more accessible to women who did not originally meet the entry requirements. By doing this we have achieved an 83 percent retention rate for women students in a degree program.

The oft-repeated and under-analyzed cultural argument some NGOs and international agencies use to explain the low enrollment rates of girls and women claims that the low rates are due to household gender relations, menstruation, and early pregnancies. Sexual violence and the associated psychological and physical trauma, fear of sexual violence, and early marriage are other reasons young women and girls and their parents use to avoid school (Jones and Naylor 2015, 43). UNHCR has argued that most parents and young people do not consider school strategically important enough to substitute for household work, including animal herding and care of younger siblings or one's own children, or to risk women's honor in Somali culture by exposing young people to non-Islamic, "imperialistic values" (UNHCR 2011, 12). But this type of thinking about gender relations leads to a stalemate and does not tell the whole story. The aforementioned are symptoms of the hyper-masculinized camp environment that seriously devalues women's lives, but they are not the cause. Sequestration and isolation make it easier for communities to create and maintain this type of gendered space, and lack of access to education supports it by keeping populations under-educated, with inadequate knowledge about their rights and no voice to air their concerns. One clear outcome of this extreme gender inequality and segregation is that women's secondary school attendance in the camps is very limited. This undermines their pre-university accomplishments and leaves most young women much less ready than men for university, and by extension severely limits their employment and livelihood possibilities over the long term.[10]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has presented some initial ideas about implementing higher education for refugees living in a long-term encampment. Our experience with the BHER project points to the importance of addressing the need for quality and equitable primary and secondary education in local regions where displaced populations have found refuge. This need must be addressed in order to ensure that refugee

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10   It is worth noting that, in a recent communication with several senior professors and administrators in the education faculty at the Somali National University in Mogadishu, I was told that the men rather than the women at the university have more difficulty maintaining good grades and graduating on time or at all. Gender relations are very different in Somalia from in the Dadaab refugee camps, which raises questions about the impact of exile and sequestration in a hostile country.

students have a chance to access higher education opportunities and to succeed once accepted into a program of study. Isolating primary and secondary education, and thus knowledge transfer, within the bounded and insecure area of an encampment does not prepare students to adapt successfully to on-site and online university courses, as the challenges confronting BHER students from the Dadaab camps demonstrate. It is not much better beyond the camps: Garissa County in Kenya, the remote and poor region where Dadaab is located, ranks as the third-worst-performing county in the country in terms of education outcomes (BHER 2017). Important research could be done on the potential impact of enabling host communities to use development funds directed to refugee settlements to improve the quality of local schooling to be more inclusive of refugees. Depending on the outcome of such research, the integration of refugee children, youth, and young adults into local host community schools could follow. This could in turn facilitate the entry of both local Kenyan and refugee secondary school graduates into universities in the host country and elsewhere.[11] While students who are impoverished and sequestered in camps may find local schools challenging for a number of reasons, they likely stand a better chance of successful learning with certified and well-paid teachers at the helm of the classroom. Since Kenya has recently begun to integrate some refugee students into local schools, follow-up comparative research on the outcomes of students there who are attending both types of schools (camp and local region) would be valuable.

The BHER project is a development project, not a research project, although in-depth anthropological and geographical research led to our understanding of the need for this project.[12] Numerous areas for further research arise from the experience of this project, and I suggest several possibilities below. First, the impact of a university education on livelihood and employment outcomes for people who have been exiled, as well leadership roles in rebuilding the homeland (e.g., Somalia), could provide important validation (or not) for access to higher education for refugees. Such research also could provide recommendations for diploma and degree programs other than those offered by the BHER project. In other words, we should look at what types of employment or livelihoods

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11   Refugee students are attending Kenyan universities, but they are either among the few scholarship students or they pay international student fees.

12   The only formal research on aspects of the BHER project itself was funded by a research grant for the feasibility study and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant to our partner, the University of British Columbia, both of which were received prior to the project implementation. During the implementation stage of the project (2015-2018), funding for research on various aspects of the BHER project has not been available to core members of the project team at York University, as we have been deemed by SSHRC, for example, to be in a position of conflict of interest. However, we have been able to gather some data and carry out some interviews (approved by university ethics committees), mainly for project evaluation, and for fundraising and funding reports.

graduates have gained by virtue of the BHER project. We also should consider what other university programs could or should be offered at other sites. We now have some anecdotal evidence of the paths the first cohort of BHER students, who graduated in spring 2018, are following. Some of these students who hold degrees in public health and geography and diplomas and degrees in education are already showing signs of entering into productive and satisfying livelihoods. One student with a geography degree has just been hired by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization in Nairobi, partly due to his new knowledge of Geographic Information Systems. Another has opened a primary school in Jubaland, Somalia, and is hiring some of his classmates to teach there. Several others have found jobs with civil society (nongovernmental) organizations in Baladweyne, Kismayu, Baydhabo, and Mogadishu in Somalia. One male student who has just graduated with a York University degree in geography said:

> Before we joined this program of BHER, you can imagine we had only secondary education. Secondary education in the current world is a big problem to get employment . . . we were "low"—we had a lower level of English, a lower level of thinking, even a lower level of writing. After joining BHER, I can tell you, today, our English is improved. I can say that this program was very important for us because we can think how to assist and lift up other people who are in need.

Another student said, "The knowledge that we are gaining in the BHER project today will help us tomorrow. After I graduate I am going to try to save some money and enroll in a master's program." In their recent presentation at the 2018 BHER Annual Partnership Meeting in Nairobi, a BHER student leader said, "With the completion of the undergraduate courses, we expect many more students to find job opportunities locally and internationally." The majority of students who were admitted to the BHER university programs in 2013 were teachers in the camps and local area who, while studying, continued to work as uncertified teachers in the jobs that were so crucial to the children and youth of the camp. However, with the completion of their certificates, diplomas, and degrees, other possible livelihoods and geographic locations are opening up for them. As a female student told us:

> After graduation, I hope I will be helping my community as a woman and a leader to mobilize other women to go to school and to learn. I want to help my community to be self-reliant. If I can go back to Somalia, I will work to fulfill my dream to be

a leader in the new Somalia, as a minister in the government
and this degree is going to be helpful to me.

Second, there is little information available on gender relations among those who access higher education in a refugee camp or on gendered outcomes. Such studies could include gendered refugee experiences of accessing university programs, the gendered university classroom in exile, the impact of refugee camp sequestration on women's participation in higher education, and livelihoods chosen after university graduation. If funding timelines permit, it would be worthwhile to consider a lighter course load for women students, whose lives are more complicated than those of the men students due to pregnancies, childcare, and other household responsibilities. Third, valuable research could be carried out on how populations served by refugee students have been affected by those who earned degrees in the four areas of the BHER project—health, education (arts), education (primary), and geography; by those who left the program early after acquiring a teaching certificate or diploma; and by those who dropped out without completing any accredited program. These populations may be located inside or outside of camps, in the homeland, or in exile elsewhere. Finally, research is needed on what the BHER staff call enabling support. For the BHER project, this has included transportation to the Learning Centre from a student's home in one of the camps, which may be 20 kilometers away; funds to buy lunch on the days a student is at the Learning Centre (BHER refugee students are poor, even when they work for incentive wages); tablets for course reading and carrying out assignments; and ongoing online and on-site remedial support. All of these and other enabling supports are as important as the delivery of courses, but it is difficult to predict what will be needed and thus some were greatly underestimated in the initial stages of the BHER project.

In addition to the above research possibilities, there is much to be explored in terms of social justice-oriented partnerships between global North and global South academic institutions and the tensions therein. The bureaucratic and pedagogical cultures of the BHER-related universities in Canada differ, but the disparities between Canadian and Kenyan institutions are much greater and include the tragic impact of colonial legacies (see Giles and Dippo forthcoming). Flexibility and constant communication between staff in Canada and in Dadaab, as well as regular monthly meetings of the partners, including UNHCR, Windle International Kenya, and the four universities, have been essential in keeping the project on track. As a final point, funding agencies and institutions that have supported the BHER project have shaped the delivery of university programs in various and important ways, and this project provides possibilities for further critical research into such relationships.

This seven-year pilot project (two years of development and five years of implementation) will enter a new phase in October 2018, when many of the first cohort of students will have completed one of four degree programs and many of a second cohort will have completed all but one year of a four-year degree program. Second-stage funding from the Open Society Foundations will support the second cohort's completion of BA/BSc degree programs. The project has experienced both successes and failures, as would any pilot project of its magnitude and complexity. The BHER model also has been revised repeatedly to address constantly changing circumstances in the camps and in the university partnership.[13] The BHER partners are considering various alternative models, including one that relies on universities to permanently embed tuition-free education for people living in camps into specific faculties that have the capacity to do so. However, based on our experience with our Kenyan partners, this model may prove to be easier for partners in the global North to adopt than for those in the global South. There is still much to be learned from this project.

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13   We are currently developing a BHER wiki platform with computer and engineering colleagues at York University that will provide detailed information and tools for other academic institutions that want to develop a model similar to the BHER-facilitated online learning model.

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