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# Teaching in a Kenyan Refugee Camp: A Critical Ethnography of the Impact of Teacher Preparation and Cultural Experience on Pedagogy

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Teaching in a Kenyan Refugee Camp:  
A Critical Ethnography of the Impact of Teacher Preparation and  
Cultural Experience on Pedagogy

by

James Adiok Mayik

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction

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Portland State University  
2024

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## **Abstract**

This research involved an investigation of the classroom experiences of formally unprepared refugee teachers in Kakuma Refugee camp. The purpose was to understand how refugee teachers with no preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of Kenya Teacher Service Commission (TSC) perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and cultural relevancy in their daily classroom experiences with students in a refugee camp-based school in Kenya. What informed this study was the view that refugee teachers bring with them their respective and diverse cultural knowledge—ontology, epistemology, and axiology. To gain better understanding of the experiences and perspectives of these educators, the researcher interacted with them dialogically in the field within the cultural context of the classrooms and schools. Critical ethnography was chosen as the research methodological approach. During the summers of 2022 and 2023, four teachers of Kakuma Refugee Secondary School and three Windle Trust Officers were interviewed. Data collection also involved researcher observation of the teachers in their respective classrooms, followed by two concluding focus group discussions. Field notes, including informal conversations with teachers and environmental observations, were other methods of data collection. Tribal critical race theory served as a framework for understanding how refugee teachers experience the gaps of power and minimal professional development, and the impact on their PCK. The study found that refugee teachers were often overwhelmed by students' lack of discipline and were subjected to put-downs by local teachers due to their refugee status. These

experiences affected the teachers' continuous growth in PCK and limited the potential impact of their cultural insights as refugees.

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## **Chapter 1: Problem Statement**

The lack of meaningful preservice and in-service professional development of teachers with refugee backgrounds serving in Kenyan settlements for refugees is impacting the educational resources and support children living in refugee camps can access. Nobody becomes a refugee by choice. Rather, the fragility created by war, government repression, and persecution against individuals and groups of people, which happen every day around the world, have driven the refugee crisis (Kumin, 2017). There are many responses to such atrocities, including fleeing one's own country. When refugees flee their original home countries in their hundreds or even thousands, they are settled in a temporary space often called a refugee camp by any willing body driven by humanitarianism, benevolence, politics, and necessity. After living in the camps, often for an extended period, the refugees can be settled permanently in their first host countries. Alternatively, they are resettled in a third willing country with more opportunities to meet their needs. That means that a refugee camp is more of a temporary hosting of persons of concerns while settlement is a permanent integration of people (Schmid, n.d.).

The United Nations (UN) defines a refugee as a person of concern who has been forced to leave their home country because of persecution, war, or violence (USA for UNHCR, 2019). With this definition, it is important to note that people who are displaced internally from one part of the country to another part of that country are not called refugees but Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

This study was conducted to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and cultural relevancy in their daily classroom experiences with students in a Kenyan refugee camp school. Most teachers in refugee camp-based schools such as Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northwest Kenya have not been prepared pedagogically or certified as required by the TSC. The average student-teacher ratio in Kakuma Refugee Camp is 96:1 at the primary level, UNHCR claims (Mendenhall, 2018). Moreover, 73% of the teachers in primary schools are not certified (World Bank Group, 2017).

I was a refugee student in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp from the early 1990s to the early 2000s. I became a refugee as a child following one of the many civil wars that wrecked the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region in the early 1990s, resulting in the displacement of thousands of Sudanese citizens at the time. I was resettled at the refugee camp for nearly a decade before being resettled in America where I became a teacher. Therefore, my position as a person of African heritage and a former refugee in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya and currently a middle school science teacher in the United States, are pertinent to the lens that I bring to this study. Therefore, I bring my own positionality and relevant history to this study as an indigenous African from South Sudan, a former refugee in the Kakuma Camp, and now a middle school science teacher in the United States. In Chapter 3, I explore my positionality and reflexivity in greater depth and the lens that it brought to this study.

Sammy and Kiprop (2014) noted that Kenya's Education Ministry demanded that all teachers within Kenya must be highly qualified in PCK. The Kenyan government has claimed, since the country's independence in 1963, that it has committed itself to providing adequate, professionally prepared, and motivated teacher workforce. This teacher workforce understands the disadvantages of colonial education system in Kenya (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2005). In line with that commitment and policy framework for teacher education, Kenya's Education Commission report of 1964, other education reports, and policy documents, have all illuminated the criticality of matching teacher preparations from many training institutions with the teaching needs of local educational institutions (Mulinya & Orodho, 2015). Furthermore, the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on education and human capital development for the next 10 years and beyond emphasized highly qualified teacher development (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Therefore, to understand the problem of formal preparation of the teachers of refugee children, I need to unpack the meaning of quality education, the colonial legacy in Kenyan education, and the significant policy and historical issues that frame the problem. I begin by examining the historical context for this problem.

### **Historical Context**

The UN's fourth Sustainable Development Goal is centered on high quality education (Concern Worldwide US, 2019). The UN expands on this goal noting that 'quality' means to ensure education is inclusive and equitable, contextual, rigorously relevant, and conducive to lifelong learning opportunities for all. The same Sessional



Paper No 1 of 2005 also put more emphasis on effective educator development and deployment. Besides matching teacher supply with the local demand, Kenya's commitment to mass preparation of teachers has often been anchored on the speculation that given the emerging peace in the region, teaching services would be exported to the neighboring countries where teachers of English pattern-instructions are of high demand. Such countries could be South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia. Since the end of colonialism around 1950s, those countries have faced enormous internal conflicts and instability. These societal disruptions indicate that the European colonizers left behind many problems in these countries.

### ***Colonialism and its Aftermath***

It is common knowledge that Anglo Europeans colonized most African countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Colonization of Africans was based on the Europeans' assumption that their civilization was immensely superior to anything Africa had produced or could produce (Settles, 1996). Yet, hardly before their colonies were even established, Europeans' illusive convictions began to be challenged by so many factors, ranging from economic challenges back in Europe to local resistance by the African peoples. With such many obstacles, the intention of the colonizers began to falter. As a result, local resistance succeeded and gained momentum. Some colonizers left without putting up a fight after many years of oppression, but others had to be forced out at gunpoint.

The calls for decolonizing education first emerged in Africa as part of the struggles against colonialism during the bout of 1950s and 1960s (Santos, 2014). These calls were based on a negation of colonial education, which was based on organizing tenets centered on modeling the colonized into colonial subjects. Colonial education ultimately stripped learners of their indigeneity and potential.

After the European colonizers left Africa, the word postcolonialism was coined to describe the continuous struggle of Indigenous people who suffered under colonial administrations (Chilisa, 2019, p. 9). This struggle involved many attempts to restore the disoriented cultural philosophies of the indigenous peoples. Foucault (1971-72/2019) once observed, “What we know and how we know it are grounded in shifting historical human practices” (p. 151). What this means is that during the reign of colonialism, a Euro-centric hegemony was projected as superior to Afro-centric agency. Everything that was historically African was shifted and replaced with Eurocentric values, which were mistakenly thought to be more superior to anything of indigeneity. Decolonization, therefore, defines what Philip Higgs (2003) described as the transformation of educational discourses in Africa. These discourses require a philosophical framework that respects diversity, acknowledges lived experiences, and descends Western hegemony, which had been established as the universal ideal norm.

Fataar (2018) argued that the knowledge provided in colonial universities or schools paid little attention to indigeneity, knowing of the indigenous workers, or the literacy practices of Black women in urban settings. Knowledge in the songs, oral fables,

and tales told to children by the evening fire after dinners. The irrelevance of colonial knowledge goes in tandem with literacies of refugees who are running away from political violence in their home countries. According to Fataar, the colonial education regime in general favored the Western canon and the only beneficiaries were mostly highly assimilated Kenyan urban dwellers. Fataar argued that the foundation of colonial education was limiting access of modern Western knowledge by non-Western populations. This separation suggested the pervasive social constructs in Kenya that assumed modern knowledge would help instantiate modern ways of life. This is because becoming a modern man or woman was assumed the fulcrum of colonial education on the African soil. After Kenya's independence in 1963, this view became controversial and a series of attempts to decolonize the education system ensued.

### ***Kenya's Education Framework***

In 1985, the former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi introduced the 8-4-4 system of education. This program adopted 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and 4 years of university education. The proponents of the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya argued that a new curriculum relevant for the human development demand of the nation was required because the old mundane curriculum did not meet the national needs of producing individuals who become self-employed and self-reliant (Ambaa, 2015). The school curriculum adopted for 8-4-4 included learning opportunities intended to provide students with a suitable basic education for the world of

work to meet the country's economic and labor needs and develop a respectable and dignified labor force (Eshiwani, 1993).

To ensure quality, in terms of rigor and cultural relevance, the Government of Kenya undertook to provide adequate and relevant facilities for all teachers and learners within its boundaries. Through the policy framework, the government was also committed to upgrading in-service programs for teachers, especially for basic education teachers and applying alternative methods to decolonize education to achieve cultural relevance.

Olubayi (2011) claimed that a national culture of unity is emerging in Kenya because 50 ancient ethnic cultures of Kenya intermingle with each other daily for mutual socio-economic interest. This emerging national culture acts as the glue that holds the 50 ethnic groups together in one nation state. A cogent example of the Kenyan government's efforts to decolonize the national education system is the compulsory teaching of the Kiswahili language in all public schools. Part of this commitment to enhance basic teacher education included a continuous review of the teacher education programs to improve their relevance to the evolving labor force needs of the country and align them with the latest international teacher education standards.

With this well-articulated policy framework for teacher education in mind, it is reasonable to question why the refugee teachers teaching in schools located in refugee camps within the jurisdiction of Kenya, are excluded from decolonization of the education policies. Why are refugee teachers excluded from such policies when the

underlying assumption of the Kenyan government is that certification signifies improved skills? While this assumption can be debatable within the context of best international practices for teacher preparation, it is key to the policy framework reflecting the context and agency of Kenya as a nation.

The changing learning context, the increased demands of new technological complexities, and the changing dynamics of the workplace in Kenya drive the approach to teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, proper teacher development to meet the increasing demands of the local economy is essential to student achievement during and after completing school. Teacher preparation programs have consistently remained a critical and symbolically important for the progress of the field of education in every corner of Kenya. Kenya's human and economic development lies in the hands of its professional educators. Regardless of how effective the curricula are, in the end, only the educators can make a big difference in the preparation of the students. However, the biggest challenge to the prospective learners is that Kenya's teacher education seems to imitate the Western education system, and this approach often alienates the knowledge of the local people. According to Kafu (2003), European Christian Missionaries were the first group to introduce a formal teacher preparation program in Kenya in the 19th century. However, that program was designed according to the educator training models of Western European and North American of the early 19th century. Although such imitation missed the point of culturally relevant education in Kenya, teacher education

has not even kept at a constant phase of change with the progressive improvement of North American teacher preparation in the subsequent years (Karanja, 1995).

As mentioned previously, the 1981 Mackay report recommended reforms in Kenyan education, leading to the introduction of the 8-4-4 system, which was presumed to help students with the knowledge that would enable both students who leave school before completion and graduates to be self-employed or employed in positions of their profession. Yet, in 2013, some 32 years later, Kenya was still implementing sweeping reforms in its education system.

### ***Teacher Development and Sustainability***

Kenya has ratified the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Teaching Service Commission, 2020). Strategic Development Goal 4 (SDG) requires member states to promote inclusivity, equity, and quality in education for the youth and lifelong learning opportunities for all their people. According to the TSC (2020), one of the ways of effecting this Strategic Development Goal is to ensure that by the year 2030, the supply of qualified teachers is substantially increased. This will include promoting teacher development in other developing countries through international cooperation. The goals of SDG number 4 are projected to be achieved within the context of a revisited Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Member states are expected to advance this process palpable policies and actions. The challenge, however, remains.

Comparatively, the pathways to become a teacher both in Kenya and elsewhere, especially in countries where imitation is a common blueprint, remains unreconciled. In

the light of a common global economy and civilization, professional teacher preparation in the world should be guided by similar goals, including the rigor and relevance of culturally responsive content and pedagogy. The Kenyan TSC's Strategic Plan (2019-2023) is an intentional effort by the Commission to strengthen the teaching practice for quality learning consistent with the local development vision and mission. TSC has designed a broad objective to align its reform agenda with the national priorities.

Kenya's development agenda has prioritized improving four key sectors mostly known as "the Big Four Agenda," which include food security, universal health coverage, low-cost housing, and manufacturing (U.S. Department of State, 2017). These priorities will depend greatly on skilled labor as the primary driver. Refugees in the Kakuma encampment, the site for this research, have stayed in Kenya for around 30 years (Ambaa, 2015). Most of the children who attend schools in the camp were born in Kenya, although many of the teachers are refugees who were born elsewhere (Ambaa, 2015). The Big Four agenda is supposed to encompass them in terms of inclusive human development.

Kenya is part of the global economy, a reality that touches the livelihoods of citizens and refugees alike. As the global economy, technology, and social dynamics are increasingly becoming sophisticated all over the world, the way that teachers teach the younger population must change synchronously to meet de facto service demands locally and further afield (Ingvarson & Rowe, 2008). This is one reason why lack of teacher preparation in one part of the world must be seen as a common problem of international

practices. The evolution of teacher preparation worldwide has been driven, in part, by the need to help younger generations tackle the constraints linked to the surge in the world's populations and shrinking resources. Therefore, why are the teachers of refugee children not included in Kenya's teacher education framework, despite living and working in Kenya? In emergency contexts such as Kakuma Refugee camp, the lack of quality in terms of rigor and relevance or the absence of teacher preparation is an injustice issue. To understand the complexities of living in Kenyan refugee camps further, I turn next to the political context.

### **Political Context**

In the Convention of the Organization of African Unity (currently the African Union), the term refugee is defined using the same wording found in the United Nations Refugee Convention. In the second paragraph, additional information is provided:

The term 'Refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part of the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality (African Union, 1994, p. 3).

Furthermore, a person who is born to refugee parents will inherit the status of his or her parents, meaning that the child will also be a refugee (African Union, 1994). Therefore, children born in refugee camps automatically become refugees themselves if their parents are refugees. The Kenyan Refugee law of 2006 refers to the UN Refugee



Convention, the Protocol, and the OAU Convention and adopts their definitions (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Under this Act, the Kenyan authorities classify refugees into two categories: statutory and prima facie refugees. Statutory refugee category, by de jure, applies to persons who have a legitimate fear of persecution due to race, religion, sex, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. On the other hand,

Prima facie category, by de facto, relates to persons who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in any part or whole of their country of origin or nationality are compelled to leave their place of habitual residence. (O'Callaghan & Sturge, 2018, p. 5)

The Kenya refugee operation can be regarded as an example of a protracted refugee settlement considering that traditional refugee encampments have been around for almost 30 years (UNHCR, 2015). However, UNHCR reported that this operation has been undergoing challenges due to refugee influxes from Kenya's neighbors, especially South Sudan, Sudan, Congo, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Somalia, which are undergoing a change and transformation in terms of collaboration, innovations, and assistance delivery. These challenges range from increasing hardship in raising funds to support the traditional encampment model to the unsustainability of the approach used in the past. These challenges are exacerbated by the complicated security environment in Kenya because of the political instability in Somalia. All these challenges combined have led to the dwindling of humanitarian spaces in Kenya. With that in mind, the devolution of

State powers to the counties by the 2010 Constitution has availed new avenues and possibilities for a different refugee management model. Kenya and the United Nations have begun dialogues with members of the hosting societies in Garissa and Turkana counties, which have both benefited and suffered from the impact of the presence of refugees for more than two decades (UN Habitat, Turkana County Government, and UNHCR, 2016).

### ***Refugee Containment***

Kenya's current traditional refugee policy does not allow refugees to travel outside the camp and prevents them from taking up formal and salaried employment (Horn, 2010). This policy makes encamped persons of concerns largely dependent on aids. Some of the refugees who are employed by the UN agencies only work for meagre incentives compared to the local Kenyan citizens doing the same jobs. Per the 2006 Refugee Act, Kenya introduced and implemented an encampment policy in the 1990s when concurrent civil wars forced many vulnerable families, mostly women and children, out of Somalia and Sudan (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Since then, the Kenyan national government is obligated, in collaboration with the County authorities, to designate pieces of land in which to encamp refugees.

A briefing compiled by the Norwegian Refugee Council (2018a) revealed that Kenya's refugee encampment law restricts refugees to refugee camp spaces. This applies to Kenya's two refugee camps of Kakuma and Dadaab. Even so, as of April 2014, more

than 50,000 urban refugees lived and worked in Nairobi (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018a).

From its creation, the 2006 Refugees Act, the primary piece of domestic law regulating refugee issues in Kenya, stipulated that refugees should live in “designated areas” (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Since then, law enforcement officials have keenly enforced a policy of encampment. This makes it difficult if not impossible for aspiring teachers to attend the local universities located away from the camp unless through a movement permit prepared by the county authorities. Venturing out of the camp is without a movement permit from the County authorities is a violation of this law punishable through a fine of up to 20,000 KSH (\$200 USD) or a 6-month in jail term, or both.

The Norwegian Refugee Council briefing (2018a) disclosed that the offence of residing outside the camp as a statutory designated area where refugees must live had been included in the 2006 Act, but only went into legal effect following the designation of the camps in 2014. Such restriction limits the number of refugees who want to move and live outside the camps (Aduwa, 2011). However, it is not clear whether these legal limitations are some of the reasons why teachers who identify as refugees are not given opportunities to attend local universities outside the camps. The most demeaning disincentive for refugees to move out and live outside the camp is the absence of humanitarian assistance. This disincentive is demeaning because the local authorities understand that refugees are poor and may not leave the camp if it is the only place where

humanitarian services are made available (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Policies like these and many other variables have forced many refugees and their families to live inside Kakuma Refugee Camp for a protracted period. However, it remains to be understood why humanitarian services such as basic education stipulated in the United Nations Charter are not provided to the right quality comparable to the local services outside the camp.

### ***Teacher Quality in Refugee Camps***

A lower quality teacher education in the camp schools compared to local schools is well-known locally and a visible trace of inequity against the refugees. To many refugee families, this inequity means sending one's children to schools in the camps, where most teachers have not been prepared in accordance with the TSC. This portends a likely bleak future for their children.

In Kakuma Refugee Camp, there are two main categories of teachers teaching refugee children: (a) teachers who are refugees themselves and (b) those who are Kenyan nationals. According to Richardson et al. (2018), little is known about the background preparations of Kenyan national teachers who also teach in the Kakuma refugee schools. The Kenyan teachers who teach refugee children were not included in this study. The teachers who were previously refugees themselves are categorized further into two subgroups. The first subcategory are those teachers who were educated, prepared, and taught in schools back in their original home countries before being displaced. The second subcategory of refugee teachers includes those who completed secondary schools within

Kenya's school system and became teachers in the refugee settlements without any formal training. The latter category was the focus of this study.

In the Norwegian Refugee Council Briefing, Fleming (2017) noted real structural barriers to improving both the capacity and population of teachers in the Alternative Education Program of Dadaab Refugee complex, the other main refugee settlement in Kenya. The incentivized pay scale set by the Kenyan government in collaboration with UNHCR stipulates the maximum pay for refugee teachers in line with Kenya's encampment policies. This policy, as pointed out by Amnesty International (2012), is discriminatory. It poses two disadvantages for teachers of refugee students, especially those who are refugees themselves. First, refugee teachers (those who are refugees themselves) are not permitted to teach outside the camp in any public schools in Kenya. However, they are allowed by UNHCR and the Kenyan government to teach inside the refugee camps in an incentivized voluntary role, as stipulated in the NRC briefing. That means they are not paid salaries, pensioned, or protected under the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). This makes their work complicated, as they are only considered volunteers who are only paid incentives by UNHCR even though they do the same work as teachers who are recruited locally in Kenya.

With these restrictive policies, some refugee teachers, although qualified to teach, find it hard to remain in the profession without salary. All these local policies and politics violate refugee children's right to quality education under Article 13 of the UN charter (UN, 1989). Moreover, freedom of movement is a human right per international law and

treaties that Kenya has ratified, particularly, the United Nations' 1951 Refugee Convention, which is related to the Status of Refugees (UN, 1951). These restrictions of refugee movement in Kenya are grave infringements upon the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966), and the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (also known as the Banjul Charter of 1981, 1981, and 1986).

Although the policy of encampment championed by the Kenyan parliament in 1990, the genesis of segregating refugee school systems from Kenya's national system was proposed by UNHCR. According to Dryden-Peterson (2011), the UNHCR promotes a parallel education system for the refugee children on the pretext that education for displaced persons should mirror that in their country of origin. This premise assumed that the school-going refugee youth would have begun their education in their countries of origin and may likely continue with learning while in the camps and once they are able to return home. This approach purported to maintain consistency based on the presumption that the camps were temporary holdings for refugees.

As the global migration increases and displacement becomes protracted across multiple generations, the educational needs of refugee youth must change to give them skills, which will enable them to engage in social and economic ventures of any societies outside their original countries. In the light of this context, all policies surrounding the education of refugee youth need to be reformed. During 2012, the UNHCR introduced a new refugee education policy with the goal of integrating refugees into the local

population, which is a shift from the views of maintaining consistency with countries of origin to fostering their access to the host nation's education systems (UNHCR, 2012b).

The following question, however, remains unanswered: What are some of the strategies being applied to shift this decade-long policy from viewing refugee camps as temporary holding homes for refugees to frontiers of integrating them into the host country's populations? The policy shift envisions refugee youth's education as being of higher standard, protective, sustainable, and less costly. This reform entitles refugees to access to established national systems and resources, including curricula, teacher preparation, and teacher retention under the national teachers' unions, government assessments, and accreditation. How would meaningful integration occur if the refugee camps' teacher workforce is still underprepared, segregated, and incentivized in terms of compensation?

This situation does not indicate a brighter future for the refugee children in Kenya whether they eventually integrate into the local societies or return to their home countries. Education for younger learners and older youth affected by conflicts and displacement has since fallen in the abyssal gap between humanitarian and development assistance (Kirk & Winthrop, 2007; Sinclair, 2001). For many years, education has been the responsibility of development partners, although often absent in times of civil crisis and violence which follows an emergency, whereas the humanitarian assistance addressed the needs of food, water, housing, and health. Of late, however, education has gained more attention in the humanitarian assistance sector even though it still accounts for less than

2% of the global humanitarian budget (UNESCO, 2015). In the Kakuma refugee educational context, pedagogy, especially a teaching methodology, which is culturally relevant to the children's backgrounds filled with traumatic experiences, does not receive sufficient attention. The indifference of the UN agencies and Kenyan authorities to prepare refugee teachers through the TSC is a phenomenon that warrants better understanding. As Schweisfurth (2015) noted, "pedagogy is a neglected priority in global discussions of educational quality for refugees" (p. 259).

Refugee teachers constitute most of the teaching workforce in Kakuma Refugee Camp. As presented earlier, they represent more than 80% of the teacher cadre (UNHCR, 2017). However, despite the huge presence of refugee teachers, professional development opportunities are minimal in the camp. Many of these teachers do not benefit from on-the-job mentoring, coaching, workshops, and accredited preservice and in-service training. The best pedagogical preparation for the refugee teachers in places like Kakuma Refugee Camp is one that can help them cope with overwhelming challenges they face in the classrooms. These challenges range from overcrowding, overage students, multilingualism, limited teaching resources, fewer furniture than the number of students, and learners' academic and psychosocial needs (Mendenhall, 2017). Higher quality and continuing education is needed in these contexts.

### ***Education as Integration?***

Currently, there is little understanding of the teachers' preparation background, and even less is also known about the education of refugee children. However, there are



ongoing studies to gauge the potential abilities of camp-based refugees to integrate into the local Kenyan communities. In this context, integration means supporting refugees to become part of the Kenyan population so that they can work anywhere in Kenya and be paid a salary. A critical factor that must be considered for any integration of immigrants in a host society to be successful is the ability of both ends to accept each other. At the Kakuma refugees' end, the key driving factor for a speedier integration is the quality and cultural relevance of formal education, which can enable every person to compete for scarce local economic opportunities.

In a recent study of Kakuma, for example, the World Bank analyzed several policy scenarios on the refugee integration and their impact on the economic welfare (Alix-Garcia et al., 2017). The term 'integration' is defined as a process through which different groups are blended into a unified society, particularly when this is designed as a deliberate policy. This process means converging based on mutual acceptance of each other by all members of the different groups to be involved. The study focused on three scenarios. First, limited integration of skilled refugees only, including teachers who are refugees. This limitation defines the ability of the host society to embrace refugees' integration. Second, full integration of all currently encamped refugees. Third, if the preceding scenario becomes successful, full integration of all refugees will result in the decampment of camps. This will eventually lead to the closure of camps and subsequent repatriation of those refugees who may not become integrated and wish to return to their countries of origin.

Logically, the condition of being a refugee is not permanent. In practice, the refugee eventually either returns voluntarily to their country of origin when the conditions that forced them to flee have been reversed or a lasting solution has been found within a new community either in the country of first refuge or in a third country that can be willing to resettle them. The United Nations' 1951 Convention, related to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, placed a considerable importance on the integration of refugees (Zetter & Rudel, 2017). The Convention ascertains social and economic rights aimed at assisting to aid integration. Article 34 of the UN calls on member States to facilitate the "assimilation and naturalization" of refugees (UN, 1951, p. 246). The Kenyan government could use rigorous and culturally relevant formal education as a tool to facilitate change. The process of refugee integration in Kenya can be complex, gradual, and even challenging, given Kenya's already existing fragile ethnic, political, and social dynamics. The integration process entails a distinct but inter-related legal, economic, social, and cultural realm, all of which are crucial for refugees' universal ability to integrate genuinely as fully included members of the host communities.

The World Bank study found that partial or full integration of Kenya's encamped refugees seems remote if not impossible (Alix-Garcia et al., 2017). These findings indicate shifting views informed by new understanding of refugee management towards greater self-reliance of refugees from South Sudan (UNHCR, 2016). In response to these new findings, Kalobeyei, a refugee settlement located 10 kilometers from Kakuma, is a relatively new extension. In my opinion, this is part of innovative approaches to heighten

liberalization of refugee management. It is a new and significant departure from the status quo, which existed before 2012. Another new development is the 2010 devolution in Kenya, which has heightened county-level negotiations to pave the way for an agreement with the Turkana County authorities for integration dispensation. This new dispensation, I have been told by my friends in Kakuma, is designed to grant plots of Turkana communal land to an estimated 60,000 refugees (UN Habitat, Turkana County Government, and UNHCR, 2016).

In June 2015, the Turkana County authorities allotted 1500 hectares of their land, situated approximately 15 Km to the west of Kakuma town, in the Kalobeyei area, to the UNHCR and the Department of Refugee Affairs. One of the strings attached to this land allocation by the Turkana County Government and the people of Turkana was that the land would be transformed into a settlement as opposed to an encampment. These deliberate efforts are intended to facilitate gradual integration, and that humanitarian and development organizations would not only support the refugees but also the host community.

Without the Kenyan Government's formal and structural involvement through parliamentary legislation, structural integration of refugees into the host communities may be difficult if not impossible. The restrictions in the host country's legal framework not to allow refugee professionals, teachers included, to work and receive salaries outside the camp, could limit the needs of refugee teachers to meet the local standards, such as TSC standards. These restrictions, however, contradict Kenya's commitment to

international statutory obligation to provide humane services to refugees. Kenya ratified the 1951 Convention in relation to the Status of Refugees, its protocols, and the African Union (AU) Convention in 1963, 1982, and 1992 respectively (Aukot, 2003). The current African Union was then known as the Organization of African Unity. Aukot (2003) further highlighted that Kenya has also ratified other human rights covenants, up to and including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; UN, 2015). With all these statutory contracts, in addition to other axiological traditions to which its people are bound, it is critical to underscore that Kenya has legal and moral obligation to protect refugees physically, socially, psychologically, and economically.

The argument by the Republic of Kenya in defense of its lack of interest to respect international statutory commitments has always been that these covenants must first be incorporated and adopted into the legal framework through Parliamentary act. However, because this critical local legislation had always been absent, it is argued that refugees are currently managed per ad hoc policies (Aukot, 2003). Lack of local legislation to allow teachers to work, receive salary, and get employment tenure protection from the Kenya National Union of Teachers has made working as a teacher in Kakuma refugee camp quite complicated, if not difficult. As was mentioned earlier, Article 13 of the 1966 UN convention obligates Kenya to make high-quality higher education available. Its failure to provide quality teacher education for teachers of refugees begs several questions, which need answers. Interdependently, the lack of high-quality teacher preparation for teachers of refugees ultimately translates into unacceptable

learning outcomes in the camp schools. That means, providing effective primary and secondary education to all eligible children is dependent on having qualified and well-prepared teachers.

The demography of Kakuma Refugee Camp fluctuates annually due to the influx of newcomers and refugees who leave for resettlement elsewhere. According to UNHCR's Education Strategic Plan for 2012-2016, the provision to implement an inclusive and high-quality education framework for children and youth remain a key priority (UNHCR, 2012b). In that context, education has, therefore, been prioritized in the Kakuma refugee camp. In line with that strategy, as of 31 December 2015, the Education Program in Kakuma refugee camp had been designed in the following categories: 13 pre-schools, 21 primary, and five secondary schools. These schools have refugee children's enrollments of about 56% in pre-primary, 92% in primary, and 6% in secondary schools. Enrollment is selective in consideration of space limitations and family situations.

### **Significance of the Problem**

Cerna (2019) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the Education Working Paper No. 203 argued that refugee students come to schools with different kinds of learning, social and emotional needs that often ought to be addressed before integration into the host societies can be successful. These needs include disrupted education, safety fears, communication limitations, low sense of belonging, identity confusion, overcoming loss, and trauma. Most, if not all, refugees

living in Kakuma Refugee Camp had fled from protracted violent conflicts in the countries neighboring Kenya such as Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

Teachers teaching schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp, with their own refugee background, are predominately males, mostly from South Sudan and a few from other East African countries. Some of these other African countries include Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda (Mendenhall, 2017). Their educational backgrounds often depend on the timing of their arrival inside the camp. Most of these teachers were born, grew up, and schooled in or around the camp. Others came from their original home countries as adults with or without any training. What is clear is that there is little known about refugee teachers' educational backgrounds.

Kenyan teachers who are locally recruited make up 20% of the total teaching workforce in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools. Equally important, Mendenhall and Chopra (2016) revealed that refugees comprise more than 80% of the teaching workforce in the schools in this camp and are relatively underprepared to deal with the multiple service provisions. First, they manage enormous class sizes at an approximate ratio of around 96:1 or more students per teacher. Second, they provide psychosocial support to diverse learners dealing with complex forms of trauma. Third, they handle multiple local and host country national languages spoken by the learners every day. Finally, they must grapple with the rarity of learning and teaching resources, up to and including desks, technology, and textbooks. Furthermore, Mendenhall and Chopra (2016) reported that

only 31% of the refugee teachers in Kakuma schools have received any form of teacher preparations or in-service professional development. These experiences could be as little as one day. In addition, for the most part, continuous on-the-job professional development is literally absent. Mendenhall and Chopra went on to argue that high quality teacher preparation, which includes preservice and in-service support, could have a significant impact on teachers' classroom instruction. However, the available teacher preparation initiatives in Kakuma refugee camp are typically short and one-time workshops conducted occasionally. These workshops do not provide significant time to master intended pedagogical content skills nor enough time for teachers to practice hands-on and apply what they learned in their own classrooms. Mendenhall et al. (2018) showed that teachers master skills better when they receive multi-modal professional preparations. Multi-modal preparations may include a combination of on-site workshops, opportunities for peer learning, as well as intensive in-service mentoring (Mendenhall et al., 2018). These opportunities are not available to Kakuma refugee teachers.

My study sought to inform the host country's policymakers and the United Nations refugee service providers that teachers teaching in an emergency environment such as Kakuma Refugee Camp are at the heart of essential student learning. In support of the African Union Commission, it is stated in the agenda number 2063 that Kenya has since implemented portions of the aspirations by providing free primary and day secondary education and through the 100% transition from primary school to secondary school initiative by the TSC (2019-2023). Moreover, TSC contemplates increasing the

number of highly qualified teaching workforce by at least 30% with more emphasis on Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). This is an ambitious goal. Because the refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp are mainly from the East Africa region, I suggest including formal preparation of the refugee teachers for this agenda to be successful.

Refugee teachers provide critically needed life-saving knowledge and know-how that promise alternatives to child labor, early marriage, or recruitment into the armed forces, all of which the refugees had often fled. Refugees living in Kakuma Camp are mostly vulnerable families fleeing violent armed conflicts in places like South Sudan (1992–Present), Somalia (1990–Present), Democratic Republic of the Congo (1990–present), and Uganda due to atrocities of Lord’s Resistance Army of Joseph Kony (1987–Present).

Mary Mendenhall et al. (2015) presented their findings in summarized statistics. Kakuma has an increasing and a disproportionate youthful population, most of whom have never seen peace throughout their lifetime. It is estimated that 60% of the refugee population is currently aged below 18. Of the school-aged population, 78,902 are within the age range of 5–17 years, comprising 35.7% who dropped out at the primary school level. These estimates indicate that 95% of these children drop out at the secondary level, typically because of the high fees required that refugee families cannot afford.

Most research concerning refugees living in Kakuma, Kenya, and elsewhere have primarily focused on basic service provision, funding, and physical security. However, in



my literature research, it is increasingly emerging that refugees generally consider education a priority for their families (Ferris & Winthrop, 2010; Winthrop & Kirk, 2011). In fact, most refugee families from South Sudan, Somalia, and Sudan ran away from their home countries due to high rate of illiteracy as schools have been closed amid wars and insecurity. Their overarching rationale in bringing their children to Kenya is that education can help restore a sense of normalcy for their children whose lives have been disrupted by external forces. Specifically, education imparts critical life skills, protects children from violence, exploitation, and contributes to future reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in their home countries when they return (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004; Shields & Paulson, 2015; Winthrop & Matsui, 2013). Achieving this priority demand for educational quality depends heavily on availability of teachers, how much they are prepared, and the level of their pedagogical knowledge. However, in the most recent reports available, it is argued through observation and careful studies that the quality of education available to refugees in the camps, including Kakuma, Kenya, has been extremely low in terms of rigor and cultural relevance (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; OECD, 2009; Robinson, 2011; A. Smith, 2009).

High quality schooling, as opposed to low quality schooling, includes encouraging learners to construct knowledge, culturally responsive teaching, and highly qualified teachers with the requisite content and pedagogical knowledge. Without relevance to cultural knowledge, educational competence, and emphasis on healing from challenges of refugee experiences, younger refugees can easily find their way back into

armed conflicts. A publication by Save the Children (n.d.) indicated that refugee children who are out of school feel inferior and are likely to become troublesome. Conversely, in the same literature, it is argued that “if children are educated and put on the right track, they will become good citizens in their societies in the future” (Save the Children, n.d, p. 8). When educating a child, the goal should be on teaching not only the content but also the whole child. For that reason and many others, civil wars, which have generated many refugees, may become protracted due to the presence of many illiterate and unemployed youth. These conflicts can become a common global threat to sustainable peace, security, and the economy.

Mendenhall’s (2017) research with teachers in various refugee contexts recognized that communities would face challenges if refugee children were not developed through education. Many of the teachers whose interviews were reviewed, especially those with refugee status, noted with emphasis that refugee children are the “leaders of tomorrow.” Providing them formal living skills while they are displaced is essential because they will be the key to restoring peace and stability in their home countries. Some teacher interviewees also noted that most refugee children would feel inferior when they are not in school and without purpose.

The teacher participants’ observations in the Save the Children’s research findings are supported by a UNESCO report. It is argued in the UNESCO report (2015) that access to quality education contributes tremendously to peace and security, as well as it equally mitigates factors which may lead to conflict and displacement. On the contrary,

UNESCO contended that low levels of access to education, high levels of inequality, or both, in education in turn heightens the risk of violence and conflict, creating a vicious cycle of lost educational opportunities, conflict, and displacement. This research also noted that for more than 21 years, countries with extremely low average rates of education had a 50% chance of starting civil wars. Conversely, UNESCO (2015) indicated that higher literacy levels leads to more peaceful coexistence and reduces the likelihood of conflict.

The teacher certification pathway in Kenya is conducted through Kenya's TSC (Kubai & Owiti, 2022; Republic of Kenya, 1988). After passing through the TSC, local Kenyan teachers are recruited, deployed to schools, and legally protected under the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). However, some local teachers who teach in Kakuma refugee camp schools are never prepared through the TSC certification pathways, and some are never employed or protected under the KNUT. Given the assumption that teaching while formally unprepared in content and pedagogy is a problem, it is worth considering the background of Kakuma Refugee Camp, as it informs the overall focus of my study.

While a lot of information ought to be known in connection to this problem, the current literature indicates that teachers who teach in the Kakuma refugee contexts are constrained by the following challenging circumstances: (a) limited teaching and learning spaces; (b) overcrowded classrooms; and (c) classrooms without teaching and learning technology, including unreliable electricity and access to digital materials. According to

Mendenhall et al. (2017), it is contended that despite the challenge of overcrowding in the classroom, as one teacher teaches over 100 primary school students, schooling in Kakuma Refugee Camp still happens. Good teachers are envisioned to think creatively about teaching methods they could use to engage all learners. What remains to be known, however, is how refugee teachers without prior formal preparations and protection of any union perceive and respond to the challenges and possibilities of their work in schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of the TSC perceive and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in Kenyan refugee camp schools. Since its grounding in the 1980s, PCK has emerged to become both a much-contested concept as well as an accepted academic construct (van Driel & Berry, 2010). PCK is thought to be the amalgam of teachers' knowledge of teaching methodologies and understanding of content, which influences them to adjust their instruction to best enable students' learning and understanding. PCK, as researched by Adela Solis (2009), is a special integration of content and pedagogical methods based on teachers' professional knowing how to teach and understanding of their specific core content. It is also known as craft knowledge. In a compacted detailed definition, PCK is accumulated over the years of preservice preparation, teaching practice, understanding of how various learner's cognitions develop at different rates, and explicit knowledge of the curriculum content.

Refugee integration into new cultures of their host countries is the current strategy of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2012a). The process of such integration comes with its own challenges. With that in mind, teaching should be viewed as imparting capabilities to participate in new cultures and social environment, while sustaining indigenous and heritage culture and knowledge. Therefore, pedagogical methods that are culturally relevant could help deliver the content and ensure the content's relevance to the learner. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2014) described culturally relevant pedagogy, which she developed in the early 1990s. She argued that instead of fixating on the learning challenges of African American learners, it is imperative to view learning from a positive angle by asking what is right with these students and what works well in the classrooms of teachers who seem to succeed pedagogically with them. Zaretta Hammond (2014), on her part, compared culture to a tree. She argued that a tree, belonging to a larger ecosystem, shapes and affects its own growth and development. Hammond (2014) presented three comparative analogies. She contended that shallow culture is comparable to the trunk and branches of the tree. Surface culture is like the observable fruit on the tree, whereas deep culture can be likened to the tree's root system (Hammond, 2014). Surface and shallow culture are changeable, shift with time with the movement and interactions among social groups, and evolve through intermarriage between ethnic groups intermarry, leading to a cultural blending similar to the transformation observed on branches and fruit in response to seasonal changes and environmental stresses.

A deeper understanding of these teachers' experiences can inform advocacy for appropriate policies that can alleviate the burden faced by refugee teachers who constitute 86% of all the teachers in Kakuma schools. Though the camp's population fluctuates every year, Mendenhall et al. (2018) stated that Kakuma houses 177,798 refugees as of 2018. These refugees come from 20 different African countries, some of which use different languages for formal educational instructions back home (UNHCR, 2017).

Understanding the instructional experiences of the underprepared educators in the refugee context will hopefully impel the UNHCR and the Kenyan government to rethink the current refugee education policy structure. This is because, as mentioned earlier, Kenya has ratified numerous UN charters. Palmqvist (2006) observed that The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 20 November 1989 after 10 years of careful drafting, was domesticated by Kenya on July 30, 1990. Palmqvist (2006) also claimed that the UNCRC is the most globally recognized human rights instrument in history and has been ratified by 192 countries (as of today, only the United States has not completed ratification).

UNESCO (2018) clearly stated that professional educators in schools for refugees most times deal with the toughest classrooms in the world every day. In Kakuma Refugee Camp, for example, one classroom may accommodate several students who have watched their homes burned and their relatives mistreated, injured, or even killed. Some may have disabilities, either from birth or because of the memories of violence they

experienced back in their countries of origin. The children themselves could have participated in the wars, committed crimes of unimaginable horrors, survivors of abuse of all kinds, or children whose siblings were not lucky enough to escape to a safe place as they did. Their education could have been disrupted for weeks, months, or even years. As aforementioned, most teachers in Kakuma refugee schools are themselves refugees and have often experienced the same types of traumas as their students. Therefore, a teacher preparation program professionally managed through the standards of the TSC could address the psychological needs of such teachers to help them grow professionally and gain the resilience to provide a safer environment for the refugee children. Kenya has the statutory obligation to make secondary and tertiary education available to refugees.

Given that the refugee children come from an environment of violence, their educational needs must not be limited to mere academic content. Teachers teaching in these emergency contexts ought to be intentionally prepared to offer psychosocial support to the refugee children who need it and be able to handle multicultural learning styles and languages spoken in the classroom. They should also be prepared to cope with a scarcity of resources, including desks, technology, and learning materials. This research focused critically on the knowledge and capacities that these teachers draw on in their work.

### **Research Question and Methods Overview**

Mendenhall (2018) observed that teachers who are entrusted to guide the learning of children and youth are also expected to attend to their students' diverse learning needs, support them emotionally, and meet the expectations and daily demands of learners,

families, colleagues, school leaders, and the larger education system. These expectations, as described in the problem statement outlined earlier, stretch the capabilities of teachers who teach in Kakuma refugee schools. With that in mind, the research problem investigated in this study was that given the context of teachers teaching in Kakuma refugee schools, teaching without formal preservice pedagogical preparations must be a challenging undertaking. Burns and Lawrie (2015) pointed out that teachers in war-affected and encampment contexts are regularly expected to deliver quality instruction with little or no preparations, support, or materials.

The following research question guided this study: How do refugee teachers, without prior formal Kenyan preservice preparations, perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools? This study involved data collected on the professional experiences of four refugee teachers in the same school over the course of six months through ethnographic field notes, including informal conversations and observations in the classroom and school, interviews with each teacher participant, and a final informal focus group gathering. I gained more understanding of the cultural and political factors at play in the school by interviewing three officers of the Windle Trust/Kenya, which operates the secondary schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp

This study was conducted inductively as a systematic procedure to analyze qualitative data. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that a deductive researcher



“works from the ‘top down,’ from a theory to hypotheses to data to add to or contradict the theory” (p. 23). In contrast, the two theorists defined inductive research as working from the “bottom-up, using the participants’ views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes” (p. 23). Both the theoretical framework (Tribal Critical Theory) and methodology (Critical Ethnography) were used to guide this analysis. Details of the two approaches are provided in Chapters 2 and 3.

As a study methodology, ethnography is a type of social and educational qualitative research that prioritizes studying at firsthand what people do and say in a cultural context (Hammersley, 2006). In this qualitative research, I drew on the methodological approach of critical ethnography to deconstruct and unmask the existing relics of Eurocentric hegemonies used as point of departure in the Kenyan teacher education system. These Eurocentric hegemonies and many other held beliefs could be impeding the host country’s decisions to prepare and integrate the refugee teaching workforce into the local systems. I could be wrong in this assumption, but I sought to understand how these refugee teachers view themselves and their practice within the Kenyan system of education using the multiple methods to collect data. Qualitative data were collected, interpreted, and analyzed with a critical lens. This analysis of the teachers’ experiences is intended to facilitate the readers’ understanding of the nature and role of formal preparation, the impact of the lack of such preparation, and the role of factors such as prior cultural experiences and contexts relevant to schooling.

## **Conclusion**

Refugee teachers teaching children in the Kenyan refugee camps are not prepared in accordance with the national TSC. Kakuma Refugee Camp houses refugees who have fled violence from all over East Africa since 1992. Given its relatively resilient political, social, economic systems, and porous borders in a region engulfed by protracted wars, Kenya has become a convergence hub of refugees since 1960s (Abuya, 2007). Until the 1990s, Kenya's refugee regulations were often skewed towards local integration. However, given the massive influx of vulnerable Somali and South Sudanese women and children whose, presumably male adults remained behind to fight in wars, this integration policy was reversed in the early 1990s by an act of parliament.

Since 1992, the massive refugee influxes into Kenya through several points have resulted in policies, which are designed clearly to discourage and eventually limit the opportunities for integration. Such policies are focused on permanent containment of refugees inside the camps with expected repatriation even in the glare of protracted encampment. These refugee policies have given the Kenyan government a chance to assume control over refugee populations that are often perceived as posing an inherent physical and economic security risk. On the contrary, such policies have had a number of side effects such as fears, which have minimized opportunities for the refugee populations to integrate voluntarily into the host community, thus conspicuously heightening the hope and possibility of eventual repatriation.

The protracted and complex nature of refugee crises in the East Africa region, in my opinion, demands that humanitarian assistance not only consider, but also prioritize education for the thousands of children and adolescents displaced by wars from their countries of origin. There is, therefore, a moral obligation on the part of the host countries to make sure that the national education authorities and partner organizations must provide the long-term and sustainable support that is normally required to provide quality education. As highlighted above, it is critically important for the government and humanitarian and development actors to work in tandem with each other to ensure that the right to education for every child, a right engrained in human rights laws and conventions, and is supposed to be strongly safeguarded during emergencies and conflicts (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Kirk & Winthrop, 2007; Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003).

Both children and teachers who have experienced violent conflicts and displaced by the humanitarian impacts may need more special assistance such as language support, bridging education and curriculum coaching, mental and psychosocial support. They may also require life skills preparations pertinent to their new environment. Given this understanding, I sought to find out how refugee teachers without prior preservice preparation experience teaching. In conclusion, the results of this research could inform recommendations on how teaching in emergency contexts could be improved. In the following chapter, I present a review of the literature to synthesize the existing scholarly research on refugee teacher education.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, most teachers teaching refugee children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp are not professionally prepared for their educational role in the classroom and school. With 86% of the teachers in the camp being refugees themselves, newly recruited educators to the teaching workforce are relatively not prepared to manage large class sizes, which, on average, stand at a ratio of one teacher to 96 pupils (UNHCR, 2017). In addition, teachers in the refugee camp context are expected to provide psychosocial counseling to students, navigate many languages, which are spoken in the classrooms, and deal with rarity of teaching resources such as desks, books, pencils, and even classroom spaces.

With this background, the purpose of this research was to understand the differing pedagogical knowledge and practices of teachers teaching refugee children in Kenya, specifically, teachers who are refugees themselves and without formal preparation in accordance with the standards of the TSC. Considering that most teachers are formally underprepared pedagogically in the refugee camp, it is critical that teacher educators, policy makers, and funders understand the instructional experiences of these teachers.

Literature review can be conceived as the beginning of data collection” (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2015). In the review, I explore the following three areas of critical importance: theoretical framework, the teacher/teaching context, and the methodological literature. The theoretical framework is grounded in Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) – a form of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which debunks the relics of

colonial power dispensation – and Tribalism engendered by power struggle among indigenous elites who wanted to fill the vacuum left behind by colonialists– a tool used by the colonial powers to divide, weaken, and keep the colonized Africans repressed. The ethnic and cultural aspects of refugee teachers’ interactions and the postcolonial relics in the Kenya’s education system made the choice of Tribal Critical Race Theory an ideal lens through which I could negotiate and construct relevant meanings from the refugee teachers’ experiences.

In the review of the teacher/teaching context literature, I examine teaching and learning in the refugee camp, teacher preparation for working with refugee students, teacher preparation in Kenya, the challenges of teaching refugee children, and teaching immigrant children who have experienced a disrupted education. Research on the transfer of formal knowledge and understandings of societal norms to the next generation suggests that youth are largely influenced by the contemporary dominant social institutions in their environment (Youniss et al., 2002). One of the most prevalent of these social institutions used for transfer of societal norms is school. In schools, teachers are the true backbone of learning and human development, regardless of whether they teach in fancy buildings of the world’s best cities, in the tents of refugee camps, or under trees in remote villages with limited economic and educational resources. This literature review delves into what it means to be a well-prepared teacher who can work effectively with refugee students and what it means to be unprepared while doing the same job.

To conclude this review, a discussion of methodological literature is provided with a focus on the critical ethnography approach used in this study. Ethnography is a form of qualitative study, which helps readers to understand the interactions of participants not only with other individuals but also with the culture of societies in which they reside (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When the word “critical” is added, a new meaning is constructed in that critical ethnography starts with an ethical duty to address a narrative and culture of power imbalances or injustice within a particular lived domain in a society. Therefore, this study sought to understand the lived experiences of the refugee teaching workforce and how they interact with post-colonial Kenya’s education system without receiving a preservice education in pedagogical knowledge like their local counterparts. The next section dives into the theoretical framework.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Critical race theory (CRT) is an academic concept, which has been in existence for more than 40 years now. The central idea is that race is a subjective social engenderment, and that racism is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice but is also embedded in the legal systems and institutional policies of the land, including education, law, and health. The tenet of critical race theory claims that racism is part of everyday life. This means that people who may not intend to be racist can still make choices, which, explicitly or implicitly, fuel racism.

This study draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT) to frame and understand the challenges and experiences of the schooling context of refugee teachers who have been

excluded from formal preparation to meet the Kenyan teacher standards. Kenya is a former British colony, and its teacher education system and curriculum is designed on the premise of Western epistemologies. By using English as the standard language to measure quality and quantity of local people's knowledges and skills, racism is virtually and indirectly fueled and that gives way to neocolonialism. Neocolonialism is defined as the continuation of colonialism through indirect control of former colonies' resources by former colonialists. CRT was articulated in the mid-1970s as a response to the shortcomings of Critical Legal Studies (Delgado, 1995). Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2001) referred to CRT as a movement or activists' framework for studying racial politics with the intention to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power.

Although CRT is founded on similar concepts in a conversely racialized society in the United States, I chose to specifically draw on TribalCrit as a contextual modification. TribalCrit offers a more relevant framework in which to understand the real problems faced by African refugees in an African country. Kenya is a unique ethnicity-based political and social system where tribalism is still normalized in public spaces and, in part, a reflection of the continent's history of power struggle among Africans and ongoing entanglement with relics of colonization.

### ***TribalCrit***

TribalCrit, which emerged from CRT, is deeply anchored in the multiple, nuanced, and historically and geographically based epistemologies (nature of knowledge)

and ontologies (nature of realities) found in indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2006). According to Brayboy (2006), TribalCrit was developed to offer a framework for unmasking, exposing, and confronting neo-colonization within educational contexts and societal structures of Native Americans. From the generalizability and application standpoint, this theory can also be utilized to unmask and problematize what L. T. Smith (2022, p. 21) calls imperialism and the history of colonialism, as found in writing and grounded theories of Western researchers. TribalCrit can also be used to transform similar contexts and structures for indigenous peoples of Africa who often find themselves trapped in refugee camps due to violent political conflicts in their home countries. Most of such conflicts are triggered by historical, political, and structural problems left behind by former racist colonial administrations. By using TribalCrit to problematize refugee teachers' experiences of being othered in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools, I seek to encourage UNHCR to center their voices, authentic knowledges, and presence in the development of refugee youth who share similar experiences with them.

Brayboy (2006) outlined nine tenets of TribalCrit, which are summarized as follows:

1. He argues that colonization is endemic to societies, which were colonized.

Although Brayboy (2006) developed this theory in the context of Native Americans, this tenet also applies to Africans as discussed in this review. Native



Americans were subjugated as neocolonialism refugees are subjugated by their host governments and citizens.

2. United States laws toward Indigenous Peoples are rooted in dismantling legacies of imperialism, White supremacy, superiority, and a desire for material gain while othering minorities, immigrants, and people of color in general. In the refugee context, the citizens of host countries tend to benefit from refugees in a one-way conduit. The refugees are looked down upon and treated like lower class people. This is part of a bigger neocolonialism often seen across Africa. The elite Africans who were used by former imperialists to perpetuate neocolonialism (Babatola, 2013) often continue to hold Eurocentric views. The policies of the African modern states are still deeply rooted in the culture of former imperialists.
3. With these prior tenets in mind, all Indigenous Peoples of Africa are made to occupy a liminal space between their own elites and former imperialists who return to Africa as donors and aid workers.
4. Indigenous folks wish to obtain and create tribal independence, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification. Indigeneity in the context of this study, as conceptualized by George Sefa Dei (2015), is creating spaces in academia to discuss indigenous knowledge. These discussions should constitute political acts centered on processes of decolonization.
5. The concepts of culture, cultural knowledge, and urgency take on new meaning when examined through an indigenous lens. Kakuma refugees come from various

ethnic groups with different cultural agencies and different scars of imperialism in their lives. Creating spaces in academia for a political affirmation of the relevance of their past and present cultures, traditions, as well as challenging relics of imperialism is critical to their adaptation.

6. Governmental and educational laws towards Indigenous folks are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation into Western thinking and epistemologies. Maintaining cultural authenticity helps us learn from different worldviews. According to Zareta Hammond (2014), the only way to get students to open to teachers is to show them authentically that their original identity matters. Building a culture of care and diverse worldviews in the classroom is critical in transitioning dependent learners to become independent learners.
7. Ethno philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are not only central to understanding the lived realities of indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups. As mentioned earlier, refugees come into camps with diverse cultural beliefs, which are valuable to them and should be preserved and harnessed in the growth of their children. This tenet should be understood in the light of my exploration in the next section about “tribalism” in the African context.
8. Narratives are not distinctive to theories; they make up theories and are, therefore, real, and legitimate foundations of data and ways of life in societies and particular

cultures. Likewise, critical ethnography will foreground the stories and perceptions of the teachers with refugee histories in this study.

9. Theories and practices on the other hands are connected in deeper and more explicit ways such that decolonized knowledge of scholars must be applied to change societies' power dynamics and put equality in the center.

Together, these tenets emphasize that neocolonialism is still endemic in African societies while also recognizing the role played by tribalism in systems of governance. Neocolonialism is the use of resources by the former imperialists to manipulate governance and politics in their former colonies. A lot of what TribalCrit deconstructs as an analytical lens is a new and more culturally detailed ways of examining the lives and experiences of tribal peoples since their first contact with Europeans over 500 years ago (Brayboy, 2006). TribalCrit as a theoretical lens can be applied to redress the range and variation of experiences of individuals who are encamped for many years in a foreign country.

### ***Tribalism and Neocolonialism***

Through the lenses of TribalCrit, I want to be incredibly careful with the use of the word 'tribe' in the African context. Calestous Juma (2012) of the British Broadcasting Corporation had this to say, "There are those who argue that tribalism is a result of arbitrary post-colonial boundaries that forced different communities to live within artificial borders" (p. 3). This was the pretext for colonialism itself because Africa was considered (by the colonizers) a no-man's land. Within the context of post-colonial,

cultural relics of colonial governance, and neo-colonial statehood, tribalism is perceived as a colonial derivative based on matriarchal or patriarchal connections forged in the distant past and used by an ethnic group or elite families as a defensive and an offensive weapon against other marginalized groups (Maio & Posner, 2022).

The stance of some of those who view tribalism as the main backdrop of Africa's present social, political, and economic predicament follows a familiar pattern of thinking. The former colonial powers tried to create nation-states out of various groups of so-called "antagonistic" and "uncivilized" African tribes. However, they could not succeed because their goal was not to help the Indigenous Africans, but themselves. The African tribes under a colonial State, therefore, never merged as nation states voluntarily, but were forced together and controlled. The colonialists' imagination continues to unfold that various tribes had age-long hatred for one another and as soon as the colonial powers left the continent, the natives reverted into barbarism, maiming, violent conflicts, and killing each other (Cocodia, 2008).

The word 'tribe' to this day still bears the connotation that to live in a tribal state is to reside in unsophisticated and simple traditional settings. The assumption is that there is little if any or no change in Africa at all. To make the matters worse, African countries are economically stunt and often dubbed as third world or underdeveloped due to the continent's historical legacies of slavery and colonialism (Nunn, 2008). Westerners (the Global minority) sometimes conclude that Africans have remained much the same over the centuries, and that poverty has effectively become a symbol of cultural and social

conservatism. This interpretation of present-day Africa as bunch of tribes whose daily living just unfolds naturally without formal plans reinforces the image of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

It is true that Africa's economic health in the second half of the 20th century has not been pairing well with the rest of the outside world. Nunn (2008) argued that one informal explanation for Africa's stagnant development is its historical exploitation by the colonial powers. This exploitation is symbolized by two events: (a) the slave trades and (b) colonialism. Bairoch (1993), on the other hand, wrote, "There is no doubt that a large number of negative structural features of the process of economic underdevelopment have historical roots going back to European colonization" (p. 8). In addition, Manning (1983), although he focuses on the slave trades, echoes Bairoch, stating that slavery was corruption because it involved theft, bribery, and exercise of brute use of force as well as ruses. Thus, slavery could be viewed as one symbol of precolonial origins for modern corruption.

Just like the White colonialist whose main goal was economic exploitation, the African middle class, which took the mantle of authority after colonial reign, also did not fail to realize the usefulness of ethnicity and subsequent tribalism which came with it in the struggle against the African populations (Babatola & Ajayi, 2013). Just like racism in Europe, tribalism was a divide and rule tactic to deflect anger of the African elites from the neo-colonial master's and directing it at other members of the working class. To put it differently, tribalism was the most convenient tactics for the capitalist who took

economic surplus from the working people and poverty-stricken masses. The perceptions of the African neo-colonial master's towards the colonized states inherited was not that of dismantling and radically metamorphosing the extractive relations of production but rather that of a desire to inherit the colonial state apparatus and seek accommodation with international support in exchange with extraction of economic surplus from the working people. While African poverty is partly a result of internal dynamics of African societies, it is obvious that this was caused by the legacies of external slave trades and colonial politics, which deliberately divided communities to enforce successful indirect rules. Kenya is no exception to these historical tribal problems.

Just like most other African countries, Kenya's education system is a relic of colonialism whose pace of change has been terribly slow and inconsistent. Lopez and Rugano (2018) argued that the quickly changing social and educational environment requires a continuous preparation of school leaders (teachers) to empower them to acquire culturally relevant knowledge and skills fit for their complex roles in their local schools. It is critically important to emphasize that countries such as Kenya need to generate school instructional leadership armed with knowledge, theories, and practices grounded in their contexts. Lopez and Rugano contended that these leadership skills and knowledge must be based on a decolonized and social justice worldview that draws on the lived experiences of schoolteachers. I strongly agree that indigenous ways of knowing in diverse African contexts must take precedence for a deeper understanding of the contexts in which students learn.

TribalCrit can be used as a lens to dissect broader post-colonial perspectives on economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious assumptions of the people in a society about issues to do with tribalism underlying neocolonialism. For instance, TribalCrit, as a theoretical lens, could help readers view the lack of interest by the Government of Kenya to prepare refugee teachers in accordance with the TSC as political. With this understanding, Kenya's intentional exclusion of refugee teachers in their preservice preparation programs is based on ethnic ontology, which seems to be coated with a subtle xenophobic tuft.

Ethnicity has historically been, and continues to be, a significant issue of critical national foundation of the Kenyan society since independence from the British. Kenya's ethnic communities or 'tribes' lived side by side relatively peacefully until the British arrived and turned it into a colony. Colonialism was the policy of some European countries, which sought to extend or retain their authorities over other people or territories, generally with the aim of economic dominance (Bayly, 2016; Chakrabarty, 1992). In the process of colonization, colonizers imposed their religion, economics, and other cultural practices on the local peoples. In that context, colonialism came alongside Christianity. Christian Missionaries built most of the current schools in Kenya.

After colonialism ended by de jure in Kenya in 1963, neocolonialism, a system in which the former British colonizers through the help of some tribal Kenyans who benefited educationally and materially from colonialism propagated, took the center stage (Lang'at, 2008). Lang'at further argued that there are remnants of the former White

Settler colonial imperialists who still own large farms and firms in Kenya even at this point, while larger populations of the locals remain squatters on the same properties. Besides these remnants of colonialism, there are members of certain tribes who have continued to amass wealth either through legal means created by themselves or by way of kleptocratic governance. Neocolonialism has created a liminal space in which the former colonial political system degenerated into tribalism. Tribalism is a phenomenon where a group of people who speak the same language use tribe as the center of loyalty, and in return they confer the security of belonging. After Kenya got independence in 1963, tribes became badges of identity, not necessarily of thoughts.

Although Kenya has remained relatively peaceful since its independence on December 12, 1963, tribalism has been a concerning predicament in the center of national social, economic, and political evolution. Tribalism was the cause of the post-election violence, which engulfed Kenya in 2008 after the 2007 general elections (Masakhalia, 2011). Masakhalia (2011) contended that tribalism is responsible for underdevelopment, corruption, rigging of elections, and the subsequent frequent post violence in Kenya. Although such violence, which fall short of a civil war that several independent African countries have experienced because of factors ingrained in national political, economic, and socio-cultural characters, ethnicity is a real problem, a time bomb, which must be taken seriously in terms of academic scholarships. Therefore, the assumption that lack of interest to prepare refugee teachers in accordance with the existing national teacher-preparation standards as rooted in a normalized pre-existing tribalism is not a



miscalculated hypothesis. In the field of education, tribal inequality is prominent in the areas of access, opportunity, and outcomes. This ethnic inequality in terms of economic and human development is even more acute in the country's periphery, including areas such as Turkana County, where the refugees are encamped.

L. T. Smith (2022) in her seminal book titled *Decolonizing Methodologies* provided guidance on the careful consideration and critical thinking of reading, writing, and research when one engages with decolonization. According to Smith, decolonization does not imply totally rejecting all research, all theory, or Western knowledge. Instead, decolonization entails centering the worldviews and concerns of Indigenous peoples and then coming to know and understand theory and research from Indigenous perspectives and for Indigenous purposes. In other words, decolonizing research signifies centering worldviews and concerns of non-Western individuals, and respectfully knowing and understanding research and theory from the perspectives of individuals who were previously "other(ed)" (L. T. Smith, 2022). The critical pedagogy of decolonization requires people to transform their colonized views and hold alternative knowledge. Thus, as the researcher in this study, I focused on the worldviews and concerns of refugee teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp, as they are a marginalized population group, and sought to understand their perspectives for their benefit.

### ***Conclusion***

With all the laid out preceding background, Kenya's decentered inequality in terms of economic and human development can be best and contextually framed using

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy's theory (2006), TribalCrit introduced earlier. As mentioned previously in this chapter, TribalCrit, just like CRT, is intended to deconstruct, unmask, and decenter narratives and hegemonies, which had long been constructed against the colonized. Although the two theories differ depending on time, space, place, societies, culture, and individuals, it appears there are commonalities in ontologies and epistemologies. I will use TribalCrit to understand these commonalities while simultaneously recognizing the range and variation that exists within and between communities and individuals in both the refugee camp and the host nation of Kenya.

In the next section of this review, I explore literature on the teacher's contextual experiences while teaching refugee children in more detail. This review uncovers the link between the theoretical framework and intrinsic literature, which speaks to the heart of this study – refugee teacher education. Refugee teacher education puts more emphasis on culturally responsive teaching. On the other hand, culturally responsive teaching depends on the values of teachers. That is because teachers' values and views towards refugee students plays a critical role in providing a safe and welcoming environment (Cummins, 2000; Frater-Mathieson, 2004).

### **Review of the Teacher-Teaching Context Literature**

The separate education system designed for children who are refugees in Kakuma is structured within the context of educational alignment of the host country, which is Kenya. The Kenyan government introduced a Universal Kindergarten to twelve (K-12) Education system in 2003 and 2008 respectively. Against that backdrop, the 2010

Kenyan Constitution further strengthened and protected the right to education for all children residing within the boundaries of Kenya, regardless of their citizenship status (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The elimination of tuition fees in primary schools and subsidization of secondary school fees led to increased enrollment. But still, children's right to education, particularly at the secondary level, continues to be directly hindered in some instances due to imposition of (illegal) school fees charges, or indirectly constrained through costs associated with boarding, transportation, and school supplies, which are procured strictly through the schools (Lucas & Mbithi, 2012; Oduor, 2016). Like many other countries where fee-free schooling was recently introduced, children from the poorest parents are the most affected and are often less likely to be enrolled in schools than those from wealthier households (Lewin & Sabates, 2012). In addition, rural areas' children lag further behind than urban areas in learning outcomes (Uwezo, 2016).

While refugees are all grounded in the camps from the centers of power in the Kenyan county governments, the local populations of Turkana to whom they (refugees) are geographically closest are also marginalized. In the Turkana County, where Kakuma Refugee camp is located, has some of the most enfeeble poverty, illiteracy, and lowest rates of access to education in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and Society for International Development – East Africa, 2013). With these compounded challenges, the geographical proximity of refugees to local populations who are marginalized has led to a UNHCR policy which authorizes that communities hosting refugee populations, such as the Turkana people in the case of Kenya, must also benefit from services provided to

refugees. Although there are misunderstandings in Kakuma between refugees and Turkana, the benefit of their geographical proximity outweighs the risks of conflicts (Aukot, 2003). The establishment of Kakuma Refugee Camp has engendered increased access to education, social, and economic opportunities for host community members, who had been historically excluded from Kenya state provided services in their own country.

In the following section of the review, teaching and learning in a refugee camp context is explored. The specific focus is on the teacher-refugee children's relationships in terms of teaching and learning. Researchers argue that teachers' perspectives towards refugee schoolchildren play a very important role in providing a safe and welcoming environment (Cummins, 2000; Frater-Mathieson, 2004). However, often, schools and school employees such as teachers are so underprepared that resolving the unique psychosocial, linguistic, cultural, and educational needs of refugee students become a challenge due to lack of adequate preparation time given, training on working with refugee children, and deficit perspectives of refugee students (Roy & Roxas, 2011). Rummens and Dei (2010) noted that professional educators have the capacity to include or exclude refugee students by either seeing or not seeing them through their day-to-day practice. The best teaching practice and especially in a refugee camp is when student-teacher relationships play an important role in how refugee students navigate the school environment.

### ***Teaching and Learning in a Refugee Camp***

Regardless of the international community's call to ensure inclusive teaching and education for all young people around the world, many continue to be marginalized (UNESCO, 2015). Among the most vulnerable and marginalized are refugee school age-youth who endure exclusion at global, national, and community levels. As a refresher on the definition provided in the preceding chapter, refugees are people who have fled civil war, political violence, community conflicts, or persecution, and have crossed their own country's border to find refuge and safety in another country. In the wake of a new global educational agenda which seeks to leave no child behind in terms of equal access to quality formal learning, education for refugee children and youth has emerged as a main area of critical concern for international humanitarian and development assistance actors (Education Cannot Wait, 2017; Education Commission, 2016; Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018).

Refugee children are many times more likely to be out of school than their non-refugee counterparts, and those who do access schools, if any, are likely to spend their whole academic career displaced (UNHCR, 2016). A major cause of exclusion during displacement encompasses the discursive invisibility of refugees in policy and research (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Other causes are the lack of political leniency and xenophobic outlook within the host countries, weak institutional structural system within the education sector, and most importantly, lack of preservice teacher preparation and in-service professional development (Mendenhall et al., 2017).

While a number of studies have recommended the need to provide teachers with quality preservice preparation and in-service professional development, in environments where resources are low such as refugee camps, quality support to teachers is extremely minimal (Burns & Lawrie, 2015). This is particularly true in the contexts of places where there are violence conflicts and displacement. Teacher professional development in these places is intermittent, its quality is variable, its duration is limited, and support or follow-up for teachers who participate is almost non-existent (Burns & Lawrie, 2015).

With the minimal support, teachers who are refugees must struggle with various problems, ranging from managing large classes with overage students while balancing an ethnically diverse student population, providing psychosocial help to children who are traumatized, to learning different curricula of the country in which they being hosted without support for their physical, emotional health, and professional development (Mendenhall et al., 2015). Compounding these complex challenges points to the fact that many of the refugee teachers enter the profession for the first time (Winthrop & Kirk, 2011). Most of them if not all could be recent secondary school graduates or perhaps the ‘most educated’ in their communities (Winthrop & Kirk, 2011).

Having examined the dynamics of teaching and learning in the context of a refugee camp, in the next section of the review, I examine teacher preparation in this context. For refugee children, school is one of the first critical tools they all wish to have to put them back into a ‘normal’ life. Scholars argue that schools with teachers who are prepared in culturally responsive pedagogy provide a welcoming, safe, and predictable

environment (Coelho, 1998). Teachers play a critical role in enabling this stable environment.

### ***Teacher Preparation for Working with Refugee Students***

For a lot of refugees, school is a healing sanctuary from the displacement and confusion they experienced. At the same time, however, refugee students also deal with feelings of grief and loss and may find it difficult to do well in school (Coelho, 1998). Feuerverger (2011) contended that refugee students often carry with them hidden but “enduring scars of painful experiences that influence all aspects of their educational lives” (p.360). In the end, the school experience can be a difficult transition for refugee youth.

Traumatic endurance that the refugee youth might have gone through or witnessed in their preceding lives may be shown as negative behaviors at school (Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). These behaviors include extreme anger that is not appropriate to the situation, testing school rules and regulations, problems with authority, inappropriate underage behaviors, inability to concentrate in learning, withdrawal from learning, and lower academic achievement (Blackwell & Melzak, 2000; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008).

Although teachers may not meet all the needs of learners who are refugees and with refugee backgrounds, knowledge and understanding of their experience is a great step. Classroom teachers should be aware of these factors and specifically when given the correct resources and preparations to best support their learners to become successful in

school. Teachers are generally expected to be trauma-informed so that they can be able to provide the necessary support by ensuring that every student in their classrooms feels valued and gains a sense of belonging in a new school environment (Clinton, 2015).

Currently, there are more than 16 million refugees worldwide under UNHCR's mandate (Grandi, 2016). More than half of them are children, including six million children of primary and secondary school-going age. Of the six million primary and secondary school-age refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 3.7 million have no school to attend. Many children are not in school in the economically under-resourced countries of the East Africa region, whether they are refugees or not, but refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children (World Bank Group, 2021). Compounded with this increasing inability of the United Nations to provide access to quality education to refugee children, most of the refugees come from the poorest countries in the world. Even though political fragility, civil wars, and/or natural disasters are often the forces driving disruption of formal learning of most refugee children, poverty is another barrier in some emerging countries, which prevents most of the children from going to schools.

As compiled by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015), UNHCR (2015), and UNHCR's (2016) global trends of forced displacement, the following facts are important: (1) most of the world's refugees (86 per cent) are hosted in the Global South countries and (2) more than a quarter of the (refugees) are in the world's least economically developed countries. UNHCR claims that more than half of the world's refugee children



who are out of schools live in just seven countries: Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey. The governments of these seven countries have already been struggling to enroll their own children in schools even when they are at peace and politically stable. Like Kenya, their tribal rural populations are often severely affected. That means, finding learning spaces, professionally prepared teachers, and learning tools for the tens or even hundreds of thousands of newcomers becomes a challenge. The incoming refugee children often do not speak the local languages of instruction and often have missed an average of three to four years of schooling.

Roxas and Fruja (2019) highlighted the challenges frequently faced by refugee youth as they transition from their original home countries to their new host countries. Although the authors expressed these challenges in the context of refugee resettlement in the United States, it is fitting to problematize such principles in the context of an emergency environment such as refugee camps in the developing nations, where large numbers of refugees are encamped. Roxas and Fruja (2019) noted that working with refugee youths is often mis-conceptualized in three ways. First, there is an oversimplification of refugees' struggles to detach themselves from their original home cultures. Second, post-encampment plights of refugees are often cloaked in narratives, which often view provisions of refuge in another country as a form of celebratory triumph. Lastly, there is a greater focus on refugee youths' individual challenges, which impedes structural and sociocultural integration into host communities. Change often

begins with the younger generation. This means preparing teachers of refugees in ways that help them utilize their understanding of what challenges refugees face to inform their teaching practices.

After uncovering some of the dynamics of preparing refugee teachers, the challenges teachers face in teaching refugee children is explored in the following section. Changes in a teacher's attitude engender changes in teaching practice. This leads to the instructional domains, which requires teachers to use resources, strategies, and activities that are sensitive and culturally responsive differences as well as the experiences which are specific to children with refugee background. These backgrounds include loss of a homeland, violent conflict, trauma, not being with family members, and prolonged stay in refugee camps, just to mention but a few.

### ***The Challenges of Educating Refugee Children***

It is claimed that more than half of the seven million school-age refugees who were living in displacement camps around the world in 2019 were not in school (World Bank Group, 2021). As aforementioned in Chapter 1, education engender important knowledge and skills, and a sense of normalcy and predictability for displaced youth. It contributes to human capital development and provides opportunities for people's earnings and employment to support essential needs such as health and food. For families, educating their children provides a sense of hope for the next generation. For those who live in refugee settlements, education of children improves social cohesion

with host communities and comes with the hope of providing essential durable solutions to existing economic, political, and social problems.

Intrinsically, quality formal education is a very important public good driving economic growth, innovation, civic engagement, and reduced poverty. After being displaced, the medium-term benefits of education for refugees include the knowledge and skills that can enable the emergence of stability, reconstruction, and peace upon returning to their countries of origin. However, the general cost of hosting refugees remains the biggest known challenge in the education of refugees. Over half of all school-age refugees are hosted by low and lower-middle income countries that themselves face challenges in delivering education services to their populations (World Bank Group, 2021). It is becoming increasingly obvious that integrating refugees in national systems is the only durable solution to addressing both the educational needs of refugees and the amplified needs of the host communities.

Education in emergencies is not only a humanitarian problem but also a developmental crisis with a lot of refugee children spending their whole schooling life cycle in displaced settings (UNHCR, 2023). Such description fits the education in Kakuma Refugee Camp. These refugee environments are often already stretched to deliver quality education services. As stated earlier, 85% of the world's displaced persons are hosted in low and lower middle-income countries, which compounds the challenges even more. Where refugee camps are situated in the border or rural regions such as in Kenya, inclusive education systems can direct resources to previously underserved areas

in host countries. Inclusive national education systems in countries where refugees are hosted could promote a streamlined response to the large immigration of refugees by building resilient systems which benefit refugees and host communities alike. Such a model can create a model for the international community to consolidate efforts and share the collective burden and responsibility of refugee education. The Kenyan parliamentary Refugee Act of 2006 argues that every refugee child residing within the boundaries of Kenya should have access to equal quality education (Republic of Kenya, 2006). On the hand, Kenya also recently ratified the Djibouti Declaration, which states that every refugee, adults included, and their host communities must have access to quality education in a safe learning environment without discrimination.

Educating refugee children and youth often poses unique challenges. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that refugee children miss an average of three to four years of schooling due to forced displacement (World Bank Group, 2021). Because of inevitable intermittent disruption in their schooling as they move around through various refugee camps, refugee children are likely to be older than their non-refugee peers. With that understanding, it is assumed that refugee children and youth suffer discrimination and stigmatization by both teachers and peers. In host countries where they are enrolled according to their age, they do face academic difficulties commensurate to the length of time they were interrupted in their schooling.

Refugee children and youth are usually likely to suffer psychological trauma because of violence and conflict they experience before seeking refuge from other places

(Barghadouch et al., 2016; Levi, 2019). This may overshadow their ability to participate and learn in a typical classroom with a regular teacher. Refugee children might come with physical disabilities from birth or due to the violence they had gone through in their home countries. They often have only one or no adult caretaker at home with them and are sometimes, not all the time, forced to work and engage in income-generating activities. This means, the opportunity cost of their education can be extremely high in comparison to their non-refugee counterparts. Besides that, their education is further affected by the host country's language of instruction if it is different from that of their country of origin (UNHCR, 2016). In addition to these challenges, refugee children also face several constraints ranging from enrolling to remaining in school. These extra challenges include other high costs associated with education (like transportation and materials), extended interruptions to their education, and refusal of some educational institution to enroll refugee children. Additionally, they face a high risk of gender-based violence either due to cultural practices in their communities or while traveling to school, poverty, and pressure to work (prevalent among older children, especially boys), and lack of awareness of available education programs or the complexity in registering for them (UNHCR, 2015).

### ***Teacher Preparation in Kenya***

Teacher education in Kenya, just like in the whole of East Africa, was greatly disrupted by the end of colonialism. Frances Vavrus (2018) claimed that in addition to the limited number of Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in the whole of East Africa

region, qualified staff was lacking to continue teaching in the TTCs after independence. Perhaps, due to inherent racism in the colonial administrations, teachers of African identity were hardly prepared and deployed in schools. That means that most of the teaching workforce was of British identity. This group chose to return home during independence. In Tanganyika, for example, it is claimed that it was only 150 out of some 1,700 British civil servants, including teachers and tutors, who agreed to stay in their posts beyond the first two years of independence (Hempstone, 1961). Besides that, by 1964, the TTCs across East Africa that prepared primary and secondary school local teachers still had fewer than 50 Africans tutors with the required qualifications to teach students.

It seems like colonial system was highly restricted from Africans. That highly restricted colonial education system which created this dearth of African staff, in line with the exodus of qualified British teachers and tutors, was particularly problematic because, as argued, secondary schooling had grown tremendously in the 1950s by approximately 350% all over East Africa (Evans, 1962). Teacher Education in East Africa (TEEA) programs (hereafter “the TEA programs”) were popular educational development program funded by the United States. In addition, British college graduates in East African schools intervened to fill the gap. In brief, the TEA programs, which were founded in February 1961, symbolized one of the first international initiatives of President Kennedy government intended to support the post-colonial authorities. These programs were designed to prepare college graduates—some with PhDs and others had

no background in education —to teach in East African secondary schools and TTCs. These efforts were necessitated by the shortage of instructors at these institutions following the departure of skilled British professional educators and tutors in the years surrounding independence in Kenya and other East African nations in the early 1960s (Evans, 1962).

TEA (for secondary schools) and TEEA (for TTCs) programs concluded 10 years after independence. By this time, more than 600 Americans had taught in schools and TTCs across the region (Teachers for East Africa, 2002). In terms of teacher preparation, the TEA programs had a significant impact on education in East African countries, including Kenya. Approximately 62% of the primary school teachers who attended TTCs during the 1960s were taught by Teacher Education in East Africa tutors. Many of these tutors and their former students helped design new degree programs, develop curricula and textbooks, and promote new teaching methods in these newly independent nations (Graham, 1972). Despite all these efforts, however, more problems continued to persist in teacher education development in East Africa.

Based on these historical accounts, which carefully showed the difficult transition from colonial teachers of British identity to African teachers who were not well prepared after independence, it is evident where the real problem began. Interpreting the present phenomena using only the tools of empirical statistics, positivist data, predictive, and pure social science often leads to the characterization of education, most notably in African countries, as static and bound by tradition (Kazamias, 2001). However,

comparative studies using historical quantitative data for the Teachers for East Africa Program are examined demonstrate that formal education was affected fundamentally by colonialism and its legacies. The effect of colonialism continues to affect postcolonial and geopolitical relations to this day.

According to Kisaka et al. (2015), inaccessibility and a lack of exposure to the modern resources, inadequate innovation skills, large classrooms, and student/teacher ratios, as well as societal demands controlled by test/examination-oriented thinking are the main drivers of these trends of teaching traditions. Kenya's education system, in both teaching and learning, is examination oriented, which, as Mackatiani (2017) argued, do not address the acquisition of practical skills, values, and attitudes in learners. These approaches merely concentrate on passing of national examinations by children and are sometimes marred by cheating.

The quality of knowledge the learner gains after 8 years of primary or 4 years of secondary education is less critically examined as assessment is primarily focused on memorization. The UNESCO (2015) quality agenda on education advocated the incorporation of relevance, consistency, practicality, and sustainability in ensuring that quality of the curriculum process; therefore, teacher preparation should strive to embrace these attributes. These attributes are meant to ensure that teachers have the requisite skills to teach the 21st century learners.

Current preparation practices in teacher preparation institutions in Kenya depend largely upon the quality of the teacher. That means teachers who come into the teacher



institutions with more literacy background in the subject content benefit from the institution. Education scholars have also found that the current trends in teacher preparation practices in Kenya are dominated by the behaviorist approach (Kisaka et al., 2015). This approach is mostly teacher centered. Behaviorism, as articulated by Skinner (1974), focuses on behavior modification through stimulus and response, with learning seen more as a passive process with a focus on the role of the teacher. With this method of teacher preparation, the learning platform in Kenya is mainly dominated by the competencies, knowledge, and skills of the teacher, with no input from the learner. It seems that Kenya's education system is stuck with an outdated colonial system of teaching, which could be philosophically deduced as didacticism. Didacticism or lecturing is an approach where a teacher, positioned in front of a classroom, delivers instruction about a subject in which they are an expert. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970/2018) called didacticism the "banking method" because teachers serve as bankers depositing information in the learners' minds. Many educators view this type of teaching as more appropriate to classrooms with large numbers of students and few resources.

Whereas didactics, as a discipline, focuses on the science of teaching and instruction in a field of study, pedagogy is focused more specifically on the strategies, methods, and various techniques for delivering that instruction. Pedagogical knowledge enables a teacher to match theoretical foundations or concepts with practical methods of knowledge transfer in education on language-related problems, while being responsive

and adapting to the learning strategies of their students (Leon-Henri, n.d.). Leon-Henri (n.d.) concluded that didactics is mainly educator-centered and based on the totality of a teacher's theoretical knowledge and practical experience. In comparison, pedagogy, which could include lecture as one of many strategies, centers on the learner because teaching is adapted to respond to the complex strengths and needs of the student. Lecturing alone, according to Freire (1970/2018), impedes a dialogue between teachers and students. Instead, he proposes a "problem-posing" approach in which the teacher seeks to guide students in critically exploring content of relevance.

The following section delves into the challenges of teaching immigrant children with disrupted education. Teachers who teach in new immigrant destinations, places experiencing rapidly increasing numbers of immigrants, are often forced to address a host of unexpected issues. Some of these issues include immigrant students' unique socio-emotional needs, community conflict, a wider range of skills in English, and a lack of a common language for communication with parents.

### ***Teaching Immigrant and Refugee Children with Disrupted Education***

Teaching former refugee children comes with extra responsibilities. Most former refugee children, according to Save the Children (2015), suffer from undiagnosed psychological or emotional distress caused by of their traumatic past, and are in need of specialist help. In the public eye, refugee children and youth are perceived as survivors of with traumatic experiences that forced them to move from the original home countries (Kanu, 2008). The public, however, underestimates the

refugee's ability and drive to find meaning and purpose in their new environments is under-estimated. Refugee children's experiences should be viewed through the lens of recovery and resilience, starting with the assumption that at puberty, they are likely to face more will meet new challenges with agency, not merely as victims of their past (Kanu, 2008). Kanu (2008) also contended that although all war-affected refugees may be victims of multiple traumatic experiences, African refugee youth are more likely than other refugee children and youth to be forced into becoming child soldiers, reliving the traumatic memories of committing or incurring terrible atrocities, or to become sex slaves as they carry the scars of their past.

Globally, an unprecedented increase in the number of refugee and immigrant students of African origin in major cities has occurred in countries around the world, especially the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia (Biles et al., 2006). This research, however, indicates that such increase has generally not been accompanied by appropriate educational and other specialized support. Specialized support should be provided to assist refugee immigrants in their process of acculturation, integration, and school success, especially for students who are from war-affected, disrupted schooling backgrounds and those with different culture, ethnicity, language, and religion from those of the mainstream in the host countries.

Sporadically available in some schools are generic refugee support programs that are uninformed by input from the refugees themselves or research on the effectiveness of these programs for groups of refugee students. This lack of informed

and targeted educational support, along with various forms of documented discrimination against African refugee students in host countries (McBrien, 2005) may, in my own opinion, account for the dramatic school dropout rates and social alienation observed in this group. A high dropout rate will significantly reduce the economic and social opportunities available to them in their new countries.

Including and prioritizing psychosocial support and socio-emotional learning approaches in their curricula and providing adequate teachers preparation may aid in the recovery of many refugee children within the school environment. By simply being in school, refugee children are safe from harm associated with conflict and displacement, including trafficking, early marriages, and forced labor or recruitment into the armed forces. According to the Department of Education, State of New South Wales, Australia (2020), refugee students have greater educational and support needs than most other newly arrived migrant students because most of them experienced disruptions or have limited education when they arrive in their host countries. Some are illiterate in their first language or may have complex health problems, including mental health issues triggered by their traumatic experiences. Schools can provide a safe environment for refugee children and young people and help them settle in their new community. Teachers play an important in helping young people recover from refugee experiences.

**Teaching in Kakuma Refugee Camp.** The work of teachers in Kakuma Camp is a complex undertaking (Lutheran World Federation, 2015). Two main reasons

undergird this complexity: the barrier of language of instruction and national identity. Regarding the language of instruction, the education service recipients (students) in the Kakuma Refugee Camp come from Kenya's neighboring countries in which English may not necessarily be used as the main language of instruction. Many of the refugees come from South Sudan and Somalia use Arabic was the main language of instruction. Although South Sudan, unlike Sudan, currently uses English as the main language of instructions, most of the South Sudanese children hail from rural tribal villages where schooling is non-existence (Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, 2018). On the other hand, Somali refugee students were instructed in Somali language prior to arriving in Kakuma.

Understanding teaching from multicultural lenses requires broadening a critical look and research into settings that are yet to be explored. Although research on the teaching of English in Global North/Western countries is abundant, Global South countries and emergency contexts such as the refugee camps have received little research attention on English language instruction (Wiens et al., 2018). English is a "foreign" language to all teachers of refugees. Although my study looks at other professional experiences of the Kakuma refugee teachers, the use of English to deliver content is centered on as a crosscutting issue throughout this research. A teacher's expressed comfort level with the English language influences the choices they make for instruction, depends on their training, and impacts their career satisfaction. However, given the long history of the Kakuma Refugee Camp, a credible streaming of

refugee teachers into the Kenyan teaching workforce through the TSC could have created opportunities for the mastery of English as a language of instruction.

Although Kakuma refugee teachers often do benefit from sporadic professional development projects, most of these projects are temporary research ventures, which are temporary. For example, the professional development project called Teachers for Teachers piloted by the Teachers College of Columbia University was a short-term activity. Mary Mendenhall, Associate Professor and the Program Director at Teachers College of Columbia, had the following to say in response to my email inquiring about the impact of Teachers for Teachers on children in Kakuma Refugee Camp: “Our Teachers for Teachers project has come to an end in Kakuma, though they (UNHCR and education providing agencies) continue to use the model in some current programming there and in other places in the world” (M. Mendenhall, personal communication, December 30, 2019).

In a separate rapid assessment conducted by Lutheran World Federation (2015) to assess the barriers many children face in accessing quality education, the following findings were illuminated:

1. Half of the teachers in Kakuma’s primary schools lack relevant qualifications, which impedes their capacity and interest in managing large class sizes, with limited resources and inadequate infrastructure.

2. Schools struggle with retention of experienced teachers, particularly qualified teachers who indicate less demanding work and higher pay as a key reason for leaving, as well as sickness, resettlement, or interest in starting a small business.
3. The low retention of teachers primarily not only impacts the students' continued learning for students but also contributes to weakened management structures and insecurity. Students rated bullying and abuse as a top barrier to participation in education. That means the neglect of the schoolteachers at the Kakuma Refugee Camp is deeply rooted in so many variables, which this study may bring to light.

The second reason undergirding the complexity of teaching in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, is national identity. Postcolonial scholarship has demonstrated that Western education was never simply received by colonial subjects. Instead, hegemonic knowledge and ideas were actively negotiated. As a result, the colonial powers left unintended effects, some of which continue to destabilize local societies today in Kenya (Vora, 2015). Similarly, categories of thought in contemporary curricula still bear the legacy of European imperialism (Willinsky, 1998). They could also be subject to locally informed interpretations, appropriations, and contestations to reconstruct Kenya's national identity (Chatterjee & Maira, 2014). However, the conceptualization of knowledge as "Anglo-European" or "Western" reveals a problematic cultural essentialism. All these social constructs have trapped Kenya, if not the whole of Africa, in a position of stagnancy. I used TribalCrit as a theoretical lens to express the alternative view that knowledge is never stable or delineated and cannot be essentialized into one

identity such as Kenyan or Western; but rather it should be subject to interpretation by local actors.

In this study, the local actors were refugees, Kenyans, and the humanitarian actors serving refugees in the Kakuma Refugee Camp. Before 2012, the education providers in the Kakuma Refugee Camp aimed to educate camp residents so that when they return to their home countries, they would be productive citizens of their respective nations with more progressive worldviews. As noted previously, this perception changed when UNHCR's new strategic policy of refugee education was refocused on enabling successful integration of refugees into the host countries (UNHCR, 2012a). Because of the Kakuma Refugee Camp's complicated national and ethnic diversity, the UNHCR turned to framing the learning programs for refugee children in the context of Kenya's education system.

Refugee teachers themselves come from different ethnic, sociocultural, economic, and political backgrounds. Compounded with cultural diversity within the Kakuma refugee population, teachers' professional integration into Kenya's home cultures without intentional preparation has always been a challenge (Mendenhall et al., 2020). Besides cultural diversity portrayed in the form of different languages of instructions in the refugees' countries of origin, many refugee students attend schools in lower grades while overage. Bellino and Dryden-Peterson (2018) found that, historically, the UNHCR had maintained the implementation of parallel education programs for refugee populations in Kakuma Refugee Camps. This structure, according to Dryden-Peterson (2011), is in line



with the notion that education for displaced people should mirror as much as possible the curricula in their country of origin. Although the intent is to create consistency in the development of refugees' younger generations, new challenges have often emerged with the needs for structural and sociocultural integration into the host communities of Kenya.

When trying to build inclusive societies, teachers can build social cohesion or harm it. That is why they need continuous professional support so that they can gain the ability to play the role of effective social cohesion builders. Teachers not only interact with the young people but also provide psychosocial development of the children, according to the parents and families' expectations. The way teachers handle those situations and conversations, the values that they impart in those transactions, the way they teach their classes, and the way they promote what is happening at school can be a critical link in thinking about social cohesion. Teachers need to learn how to check their own biases, know how to help students with different backgrounds in their classrooms, and be able to have constructive and meaningful conversations about differences and similarities. That knowledge is critically important especially because after school, those children take all that back to their families and their larger communities.

### ***Summary***

Child refugees come with numerous unique circumstances and needs that must be considered. While in the refugee camp or resettled permanently in their new home, they struggle with trauma from witnessing violent crimes, language difficulties, and previous schooling and family disruption, and have to adjust to the host culture. These struggles

are compounded by developmental challenges associated with childhood and growing up. To effectively teach refugee children with intermittently disrupted schooling and violence-induced trauma and who are overage with low reading abilities, it is critically important to prepare their teachers appropriately through the host country's teacher standards. Sometimes, mingled with the job demand politics, the host country finds it easy to recruit some of their own unassigned prepared teachers to serve refugees. The Kakuma refugees are struggling with this problem, which needs to be understood. Could this be the reason why refugee teachers are not given opportunities of preservice preparations?

Although quality local teachers who are prepared in accordance with the host country's teacher preparation standards have been deployed to serve refugee children who need quality academic content, the parent community finds it difficult to deal with them in terms of relationship buildings. Most of the refugee parents wish to have their children taught by teachers who understand their historical and present pains of refugeehood. Some of these parents had been students in the same camp's education system and would wish to have the same jobs as teachers if well prepared through TSC. For this reason, I sought to understand how refugee teachers experience teaching refugee kids without any prior preservice preparations. This understanding was constructed through classroom observation, formal interviews, and informal conversation with the teachers.

## **Review of the Methodological Literature**

Qualitative research methodologies are inductive, as they focus on meaning (Jones & Smith, 2017). Jones and Smith (2017) argued that qualitative approaches are diverse with different purposes and reflect differing ontological and epistemological underpinnings. Pointing to roots in sociology and anthropology, ethnography is one of the early qualitative approaches concerned with learning about people, as opposed to studying people. Traditionally, ethnography is characterized by the in-depth observation of groups of individuals, while being cognizant of the influences of historical and cultural contexts on social interactions. Ethnography, as defined by Creswell (2007), is a research inquiry involving data collection from an intact cultural group in its environment, primarily observational and interview data, over an extended period.

My study drew on a critical ethnography approach to qualitatively reconstruct how refugee teachers, without formal preservice preparation, perceive their teaching experiences regarding their PCK and understanding of cultural relevancy. In this study, I viewed this unique teaching context as a coherent cultural context evidenced by the teachers' lives in their classroom and schools. The following section offers a more in-depth discussion of critical ethnography as a research methodology.

### ***Critical Ethnography***

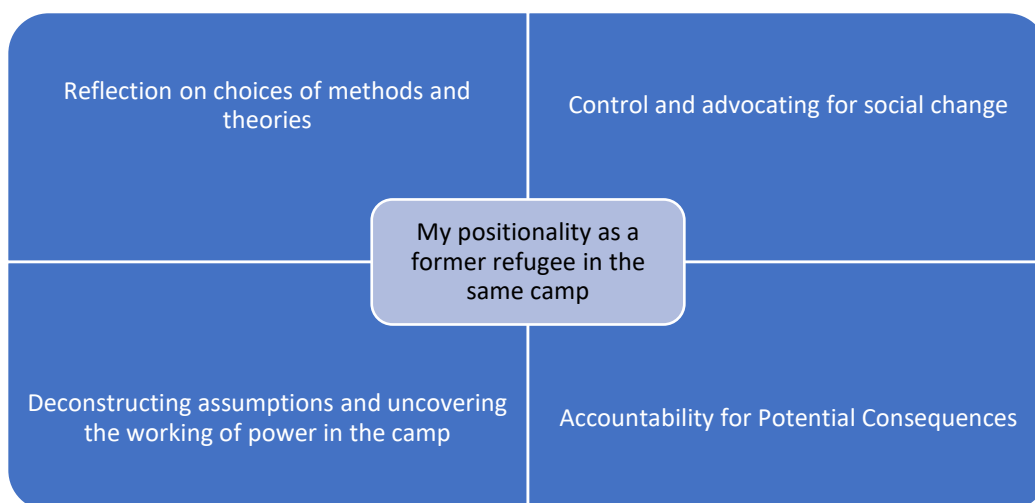
Critical ethnography is generally aimed at engaging, interpreting, and recording various aspects of the social setting, including social values and structures embodied within a particular domain, setting, or area of human interactions (Madison, 2019).

Similar to conventional ethnography, critical ethnography encompasses fieldwork and an interpretative approach to qualitative data. Ethnography differs from critical ethnography, which is conducted with a political purpose aimed at addressing a particular social injustice based on a misconceived and socially constructed ideology. Refugee teachers in Kakuma refugee camp are marginalized simply because of their foreign national identities. This, in my view, is a socially manufactured injustice. Therefore, critical ethnography is best suited to understand this issue.

In another context, Mike Allen (2017) defined critical ethnography as traditional ethnography research that involves a political goal. This explicitly implies that conducting critical ethnography involves deconstructing and uncovering normalized socially entrenched injustice and inequality through the research process. Therefore, in critical ethnography, the researcher applies critique, or critical theory in their research procedures. For instance, education for refugee children and youth has often consistently remained both a humanitarian issue and development assistance focus. Education has been the exclusive role of development actors, often absent in times of crisis or emergency, whereas the humanitarian sector has only focused on food, water and sanitation, housing, and healthcare (Kirk & Winthrop, 2007; Sinclair, 2001).

In critical ethnography, the researcher makes methodological choices with their political consequences in mind (Madison, 2019). Madison (2019) argued that ethnographers must reflect on political concerns related to their choices of theories and methods, be accountable for any potential consequences of a research and their

positionality, deconstruct assumptions to uncover the workings of power and control, and advocate for social change. In Figure 1, I have adapted Madison's analysis of the political concerns of research as my conceptual framework that acknowledges the unique concerns of my study.

**Figure 1***Breakdown of Political Concerns for Using Critical Ethnographic Methodology*

The refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp and the local community in Kenya can be described collectively as postcolonial Indigenous Africans. Their stories, realities, and experiences in Kenya must be told in their perspectives through a paradigm shift from the views of those who dominate them to their own views, regardless of any potential political concerns. Bagele Chilisa (2019) called this a “postcolonial indigenous research paradigm” (p. 23). This paradigm articulates shared ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological aspects of the colonized or the victims of socially constructed concepts of domination, such as the incentive (refugee) teachers. Chilisa (2019) defined ontology as the body of knowledge that focuses on the essential aspects of what it means to exist—the nature of reality, epistemology as the nature of knowledge

and how it is acquired, and axiology as the analysis of participants' values to understand the meaning of their knowledge, characteristics, origins, purposes, and authentication.

A person develops an identity by integrating basic ideas of space, time, and social relations (Erikson, 1956). The uprooting, disruption, and insecurity associated with forced displacement affect psychological and social development; as a result, individuals' identity formation becomes a balancing act between two or more sets of cultural notions and values. I drew on the methodology of critical ethnography to frame and implement this research, as well as in how I transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted the data collected.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, for the Kenyan government, education is a basic human right that is critically important for human and national development (Children Act, 2001; Government of Kenya, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2006). The government has exerted consistent efforts to improve the accessibility, equity, quality, and cultural relevance of education. Unfortunately, these efforts of human development have not been extended in the right quality to the refugee population living in the camps within the Kenyan territory. For the researcher, this disparity in access to quality education between the refugees and locals represents an injustice, which needs to be understood.

Kenya is a signatory to UN, gaining UN membership on December, 16<sup>th</sup>, 1963, and subsequently serving on the Security Council in 1973–74 and 1997–98. At the national level, commissions of education have periodically been set up to review educational provision. The government implemented interventions such as the free

primary education and free day secondary schools to enhance access. In addition, curriculum reviews have been undertaken to address cultural relevance, recognize local knowledge, and ease overload on the learners. Public-private partnerships in education have been encouraged, increasing individual and community participation in the education sector. The ministry of education continues to receive the highest allocation of the recurrent expenditure. However, Kenya remains reluctant to extend these services to refugees living within its boundaries.

Despite all these efforts, it is understandable that the education sector is still muddled with many challenges. One intriguing challenge this research sought to investigate is the exclusion of the refugee teachers who are refugees themselves from these human development efforts, including preservice teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention under Kenya's TSC. Teachers in schools that host refugees always walk into the toughest classrooms in the world. Kenyan refugee teachers are the best examples of this kind of resilience and endurance. With that understanding, this research was designed with the intention to understand the experiences of the refugee teachers who are not prepared in PCK. I believe these are not regular teaching experiences but unique experiences, as the teachers serve refugee children who come to the camp with many challenges. A single classroom is overcrowded with many learners, some with severely traumatized childhoods. Others witnessed the destruction of their homes, their relatives injured, or even killed. Some may still have disabilities, either from their birth in villages



without proper medical attention or because of the violent conflicts in their home countries. Even worse, they could be former child soldiers or survivors of sexual abuse.

As most refugee children and youth have already spent years and may spend their whole childhood as refugees, the education provided in their host countries, including Kenya, will be their main formal learning in their prime life. Since Kenya's independence in 1963, arid regions in northern Kenya, including Turkana County, where the refugees are located have experienced significantly lower access to education, student participation, completion, and achievement rates (Sifuna, 2005).

In the next chapter, I describe the methodology for the study. This study was designed to draw on critical ethnography to uncover insights from the teachers regarding their experiences and perceptions of the culture of teaching through interviews, observations and other fieldwork on site, policy document review, and by talking with members of a local refugee agency.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of Kenya's TSC perceive and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in refugee camp schools in Kenya. This study was designed to collect qualitative data from the field to answer the following research question: How do refugee teachers, without prior formal Kenyan preservice preparations, perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools?

I used critical ethnography to unpack refugee teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching multinational refugee students in a Kenyan refugee camp. Teachers are important players in reforming the any educational system to deliver quality. Bunyi et al. (2013) of Kenyatta University asserted that the quality of an educational system mirrors the quality of its teachers. The aim of this study was to describe and understand the challenges and particularities of teaching refugee children in a refugee settlement and the possibility that refugee teachers without formal teacher training bring different qualities and experiences to the demands of schooling into this complex setting.

In this chapter, I begin by discussing my positionality as the researcher and then I describe the methodological approach I used to focus on the teachers' PCK and cultural relevancy. By examining my own identities and roles as a researcher in relation to the

purpose of this study, I sought to be more aware of how my own power, privileges, and biases might impact my relationships with the study participants. Subsequently, I share the details of the design of this study. In addition, I unpack the political context and the details of the study site, participants' identities, and the procedures I followed in data collection.

### **Researcher Identities and Roles**

The question of positioning between the researcher and the interlocutors is a much-discussed issue within qualitative research, especially within ethnographic approaches (Roberts, 2001). Therefore, qualitative researchers must recognize and reveal their social identities, background, political ideologies, and assumptions. Scholars often argue that this awareness is realized when researchers need to document their own stories while seeking to understand the stories of others (Carter et al., 2014). Considering the vulnerability of storytelling, researchers must reflect on an authentic means of telling their narratives within academic settings. Here is my authentic story, identity, role, and self-reflection in connection to this study.

It is critically important to reveal the facts that I bring with me lenses of being a former refugee student in Kakuma Refugee Camp into this study. I was a refugee student in Kakuma Refugee Camp from 1992 to 2001 (see Figure 2). Between 1991 and 1998, the civil wars in the Horn and the Great Lakes region of Africa brought people from multiple nationalities to live among the people of the Turkana tribe in Kenya. This resulted in the establishment of Kakuma Refugee Camp in 1992 to cater for the plight of

about 30,000 to 40,000 Sudanese “walking boys” or “lost boys” who were forced returnees to Sudan following the fall of the Ethiopian regime of Mengistu in 1991. I happened to be one of those “walking boys” or “lost boys” who were first hosted in Kakuma Refugee Camp before being resettled in the United States 8-10 years later. I went to primary school within the camp. Although the quality of the teaching workforce has remained low since the inception of that camp, I was fortunate enough to secure a scholarship with the JRS to attend a Kenyan boarding secondary school. Because of the high poverty rates in the Turkana region of Kenya, refugees are seen as a threat by the local populations (Aukot, 2003).

## **Figure 2**

*Kakuma Refugee Camp*



*Note.* Photograph credited to Winglift.com (n.d.).

Growing up while attending primary and secondary schooling around Kakuma Refugee Camp for nearly 10 years, I still maintain a few relatives, friends, and folks I knew back in my home villages of South Sudan. The quality of the teaching workforce in the Kakuma refugee schools appears to be still as ineffective as what I experienced as a student 30 years ago. In the year 2000, the U.S. government began to accept about 3,800 of us to resettle across the American cities. I was resettled in Jacksonville Florida in June 2001 where I stayed for 5 months before relocating to Portland, Oregon in November that same year. In Portland Oregon, I went to college and eventually became a certified public-school teacher where I currently teach. With that background, it is also critically important to uncover that I bring my teacher identity, privileged to be prepared in the United States, into this research.

With that knowledge, I was able to establish a non-profit public charity called South Sudan Youth Education Program (SSYEP) in the summer 2020. This non-profit corporation was incorporated in Oregon, United States of America as primarily a scholarship grant for South Sudanese refugees living in Kenya and the surrounding countries. SSYEP has offered scholarships to more than 10 refugee students who are talented and gifted to attend different Kenyan public boarding schools. During my preliminary trip to Kenya in the Summer break of 2021, I had the opportunity to visit each of SSYEP sponsored students in each of their boarding schools (see Figure 3).

### Figure 3

*SSYEP Sponsored Students Celebrating their Holiday Break with Me in Kakuma Town*



*Note.* Photograph credited to Kakuma Guest House cook (2021)

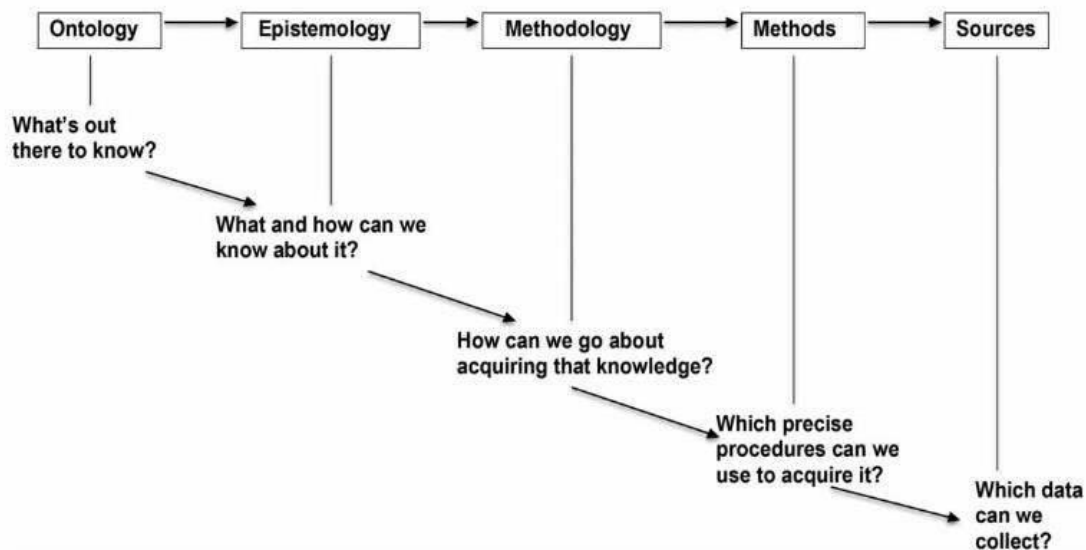
I recognize my subjectivity in this research. Although I am not a current insider, I bring an insider perspective and various assumptions. This is largely due to my identity. Generally, my identity as a former refugee student in Kakuma Refugee Camp might impact my research journey from inception to conclusion as I already hold certain assumptions regarding how teachers in this refugee camp view and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in their day-to-day experiences with refugee learners in the classroom.

Currently, I am in the United States and work as a licensed middle school teacher. I am also completing doctoral work in the United States. Furthermore, I both share similarities and differences with the refugee teachers who were recruited to take part in this research. For example, just like the teachers, I was also a refugee from a country that neighbors Kenya and I resided in Kakuma Refugee Camp for several years. However, a

notable difference between these teachers and myself is that I got an opportunity to get out of that camp and move to the United States and work, which is an opportunity that many of them wish to have considering their challenging working conditions at the camp. In the following section, I discuss how I used critical ethnography, a qualitative methodology to gain deeper understanding of the teachers' experiences.

### **Critical Ethnography**

As explained previously in the literature review section, qualitative research is subdivided into more specific approaches and techniques depending on the phenomena being investigated. As a researcher, I explored how teachers interpret their experiences, construct their world, and make meanings of their teaching role. More specifically, I sought to understand how refugee teachers who teach in Kakuma Refugee Camp without preservice preparation both conceptualize and enact their teaching experiences. In this study, I drew on critical ethnography as an approach to unpack refugee teachers' teaching experiences in a refugee camp located within the political boundaries of Kenya. The conceptual framework in Figure 4 shows the building blocks of this research that I used to contextualize and weave critical ethnography into my study, beginning with broader questions of ontology and epistemology and continuing through to specific methods for data collection.

**Figure 4***Building Blocks of Research*

*Note.* Reprinted from *The foundations of research* (Grix, 2010, p. 68).

Critical ethnography, an ethnography approach founded on critical theory, is used to deconstruct the political norms entrenched to benefit a section of a social establishment. As defined in the Chapter 2, the aim of ethnography is to gain understanding of how individuals interact not only with others but also with the surrounding culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Critical ethnography, on its own terms, involves exploring implicitly expressed values within ethnographic research, including unknown biases related to such implicit values. In some contexts, critical ethnography encompasses reflexive inquiry as a part of the methodology. Reflexive ethnography, according to Madison (2019), is the researcher's self-awareness, self-critique, and self-



questioning to deconstruct his/her own cultural contexts, experiences, and views in relations to those of the interlocutors.

Unlike conventional ethnography, which is both a process of studying participants' perspectives and a descriptive product of the same, critical ethnography digs deeper to uncover possible ways to disrupt the tacit power relationships and perceived social inequality. Critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address the underlying causes of unfairness or injustice in a specific context (Noblit et al., 2004; Thomas, 1993). Ethical responsibility refers to displaying a moral sense of duty and obligation that reflects the ethical principles of human freedom and well-being and being compassionate for the disadvantaged in society. The conditions for existence within contexts of the camp's teaching force are deplorable for most refugees. Therefore, I am morally obligated to contribute toward changing those conditions to promote greater freedom and equity between the local and refugee teachers.

Critical ethnography is comparable to conventional ethnography, as it strives to elicit the participants' meanings and grasp their viewpoint. Nonetheless, it differs from conventional ethnography because its ultimate goal is not the probing of the participants' meanings (Madison, 2019). The respondents operate within a socio-historically specific milieu and are dependent on structural factors. Although their meanings might appear to be group-centered, they are mediated by structural concerns. Critical ethnography requires staying alert to these structural aspects (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022). Critical ethnography, as Madison (2019) pointed out, is a method that is aimed at exploring and

understanding dominant discourses, which are considered as being the right way of thinking, seeing, talking about, or enacting a certain situation or action in society and recommending ways of re-dressing social power inequities. This research approach explicitly seeks to critique oppression, hegemony, and asymmetrical power relations to promote social change between the refugee teacher workforce, local authorities, and their counterpart local teaching workforce. Although critical ethnography works to integrate the power structures and reveal inequities that marginalized communities endure, Fitzpatrick and May (2022) mentioned that some critical ethnographers work directly with members of the community by engaging in participatory research and ongoing dialogue with the people who are being researched.

Drawing on a critical ethnography approach with its essential fieldwork takes me and the audience beneath surface appearances and disrupts the underlying status quo and neutral positions and ignored assumptions by clarifying the underlying and obscure operations of power and control of the refugee community. I did not have the time and resources to conduct my study over an extended period of a year or more, as typically used in ethnographies. However, I was able to visit the research site in Kenya for one summer to build contextual knowledge and relationships and returned the following summer to collect data daily over the course of three months.

This methodological technique is not limited to formulating and asking in-depth interview questions but includes developing rapport with the participants to be able to get into their spaces and know through their thinking. By working side by side with the

teachers in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools, observing, and interviewing them with critical lenses, I articulated the refugee teachers' perspectives, experiences, and stories inductively. Inductive reasoning begins with specific questions about the teachers' experiences in the classroom and critically expanding their responses to a deeper understanding of the host country's education policies. An inductive researcher first explores empirical observations, aiming to find patterns in those observations, and then theorize about those patterns.

This study used TribalCrit as a lens through which Kenya's precolonial, and postcolonial teaching is looked at critically. L. T. Smith (2022) argued that education in the colonized societies during colonialism was used as one of the tools to dismantle indigenous knowledge. According to Smith, imperialists' intention in designing curricula was to suppress indigenous cultures, value systems, and expressions. With the oppressive colonial systems of boarding schools which is pervasive in the Kenya's education systems, racist imperialism still lingers without the white folks enforcing it on the indigenous population. Linda Tuhiwai Smith advocated for the adoption of a decolonizing research methodology. According to Smith, a decolonizing research methodology is utilized in challenging the Eurocentric research methods that undermine the local experiences and knowledge of people that have been marginalized. For research to be pertinent and improve the quality of life of marginalized population groups, it is important that that research is driven by indigenous cultural values, worldviews, and a language that is pertinent to the marginalized group with whom the research is

undertaken. Moreover, Smith posited that colonialism is not yet a finished business. Smith argued that decolonization is merely a euphemism describing the official transfer of the instruments of government, when in fact it has to be a lasting process that involves the psychological, linguistic, and cultural divesting of colonial parameters. Therefore, in this study, I focused on the perspectives and views of refugee instructors, who are a marginalized group residing in the periphery of their host country in a region where ethnic inequality in terms of economic and human development is widespread.

Western culture often regards itself as the ethnocentric center of legitimate knowledge. Nonetheless, L. T. Smith (2022) critiqued the predominant Western discourses of objectivity and knowledge by showing the way that Western stories and ‘regimes of truth’ are situated within a specific sociocultural system that has to be decolonized. Western research encompasses certain values and conceptualizations of knowledge, gender relations, subjectivity, space, and time. It is generally encoded in colonial and imperial discourses that influence the researcher’s gaze (L. T. Smith, 2022). Through the construct or concept of decolonization, I sought in this study to reject colonial paradigms that marginalize indigenous groups and that fail to recognize their knowledge and belief systems. Specifically, my goal was to recognize the belief systems and knowledge of the marginalized refugee teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp who have no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of the TSC. This enabled me to begin to understand how these educators perceive and interact with PCK

and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in Kenyan refugee camp schools.

TribalCrit, as advanced by Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (2006), is rooted in the CRT. CRT was introduced in 1994 as an analytical framework for assessing inequity in the education of the United States and other developed countries (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Brayboy (2006), on the other hand, used TribalCrit to uncover, highlight, and confront continued colonization within educational contexts of the Native Americans' societal structures. However, to contextualize TribalCrit as a theoretical lens to advance a decolonization agenda in the African systems of education, it is important to look back at a similar history of colonialism. Africa's underdevelopment and conflicts are traceable to the European invasion and the era of slave trade in that continent (Enaifoghe, 2019). Later in time, the history of many African nations, including Kenya, was hijacked, and pillaged by the European colonialists in collaboration with the missionaries of Anglo-European identities. Therefore, it is imperative for Africans to go back, learn, and reconstruct their history before the invasion and colonization. Africanization, as an ongoing discourse, alludes to a restored concentration on Africa's ways of knowing and urgency. It involves the recovering of what has been taken from Africa such as the system of education, which has substantial values.

Because the goal has always been to decolonize transformations of those contexts and structures for indigenous peoples, I find critical ethnography in the lens of TribalCrit as relevant to understanding the dilemma of Kakuma refugee teachers. This is because

the home African countries of the Kakuma refugees and Kenya itself (host) are still structured with clear and visible ethnic lines like those manifested under colonial governments (Enaifoghe, 2019). In the following section, I discuss the connection between the methodology of critical ethnography and the study's focus on the teachers' PCK and use of culturally relevant teaching.

### ***Focusing on Teachers' PCK and Cultural Relevancy (CR)***

Teacher competence can be conceptualized in terms of PCK, understanding of child development and cultural contexts, and reflective practice. PCK is a type of knowledge that makes science instructors teachers and not scientists (Shulman, 1986). As conceptualized by Shulman (1986), PCK can also be defined as how teachers interpret and apply subject-matter knowledge to foster student learning. It has six key elements: (a) content knowledge, (b) understanding the learners' conceptions of the subject and the learning and teaching implications linked to a particular subject matter, (c) general pedagogical knowledge, (d) curriculum knowledge, (e) knowledge of educational contexts, and (f) knowledge of the purposes of education. More succinctly, PCK is a synthesis of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge—knowing how to represent and formulate the subject matter (Yalley, 2017). The concept of PCK was chosen in order to understand the refugee teachers' knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning. It will allow the researcher to understand the type of knowledge that is unique to these teachers at the refugee camp, which is based upon how the instructors relate their

PCK/what they know regarding teaching to their subject matter knowledge/what they know regarding what they teach.

Culturally relevant (CR) teaching is understood as a pedagogy founded in the recognition of the significance of including the cultural references of the learners in every aspect of learning (Bunyi et al., 2013). As a result, the learners can see themselves in what they are learning, rather than just the White, dominant world (Bunyi et al., 2013). The learning is typically hands-on and experimental. The goal of CR teaching is to resist assimilation, which would be the refugees becoming fully Kenyan and to lose their heritage culture such as language culture. Moreover, CR teaching means that the curriculum and pedagogy are responsive to the child's heritage culture/language. The goal can be for the student to be bicultural; that is, be able to participate in the dominant society but have a strong sense of their heritage culture and ways of being. The rationale for choosing the concept of CR instruction was to understand how the refugee teachers in the camp implement culturally relevant teaching practices that help learners uphold their cultural identities.

Despite wide agreement that teachers are important in student learning and the enhanced efforts to improve teacher quality, there is still uncertainty on how this improvement of teaching quality is developed (Republic of Kenya, 1964). Given the background of refugee communities in the camps as people of concern, culturally responsive teaching is a critical key to unlocking their educational and emotional strengths and needs.

Gay (2010) defined cultural relevancy in teaching as using the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles” of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for the learners. In line with this definition, Gay advanced six tenets of culturally responsive teaching, as subsequently summarized:

1. Culturally responsive educators establish high social and academic expectations for student success.
2. Culturally responsive teachers exhibit multidimensionality by using students’ cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives as a basis on which to build learning.
3. Culturally responsive teachers endorse the cultures represented in a classroom to bridge gaps between school and home through diversified instructional strategies and multicultural curriculum content.
4. Culturally responsive teachers exhibit competence in social, emotional, and political domains, enabling them teach the whole child emotionally, academically, spiritually, and physically.
5. Culturally responsive teachers aim to transform their schools and societies by leveraging students’ preexisting strengths to guide instruction, assessment, and curriculum content design.
6. Culturally responsive teachers focus on emancipation and liberation of students from the past or existing oppressive educational practices and ideologies.



Using a combination of these tenets to frame PCK, culturally responsive teachers can be able to expose presumed Eurocentric absolute authority from conceptions of scholarly truth typically taught in public schools across the African continent. Through culturally responsive teaching, instructors can utilize the perspectives, experiences, characteristics, and customs of the students as tools for better classroom instruction. This sort of teaching will help enhance the learners and their communities' sense of belongingness to schools and other academic spaces, resulting in more engagement and success.

In this study, I explored how refugee teachers with no formal background preparations, perceive and engage with their role in the schools. Effective teaching practices depend on reflective use of instruction techniques. Teaching is a complex process requiring a great deal of different knowledge.

In practice, a refugee will either return voluntarily to their home country when the conditions that displaced them have been reversed or resettle within the host community, either in the country of first refuge or in a third country. Therefore, this study was anchored on cultural relevance in the context of Kenya. While the education of refugee children has some unique challenges, preparation of refugee teachers should not be fundamentally different from the way Kenya as a country prepares its teachers to work with the cultural diversity of children in Kenya as a whole. Overall, the goal of CR is to resist assimilation, which, in the context of this study, would be the refugees becoming fully Kenyan and to lose their cultural heritage including their language. The curriculum

and pedagogy should be responsive to the refugee students' cultural heritage and language. The goal should be for the students to be bicultural; that is, be able to participate in the dominant society but still have a strong sense of their cultural heritage and ways of being.

Becoming bicultural requires concerted efforts from all parties concerned, including refugees who need to be prepared to adapt to the host society while still holding onto their own cultural identity. In addition, host communities and government agencies must be willing to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population. Therefore, it is important that teachers in refugee camps possess PCK and practice CR teaching, as this will help the refugee students to successfully become bicultural and contribute actively to the host country.

### **Design of the Study**

In this study, I drew on the qualitative approach of critical ethnography to frame the data collection and analysis approach. In the following sections and subsections, I describe how this study was conducted. The specific content covered includes the study site, participants, approval and recruitment, data collection tools, and trustworthiness of data.

#### ***Study Site and Setting***

I conducted this study in a school, and specifically, classrooms serving refugee children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp of Kenya. On 25 March 2022, Windle Trust International in Kenya cleared my request to conduct research in Kakuma Refugee

Secondary Schools. Although it was not yet obvious which secondary school I was going to be working with since the choice would depend on each teacher's consent, the clearance was intended to serve as a formal permission to enter the school premises, recruit participants, and conduct research as proposed. In my communication with Windle Trust International director, Phyllis Mureu, who was based in Nairobi at the time, she suggested Somali Bantu Secondary School, which is in Kakuma 3. I knew little about Somali Bantu Secondary School in terms of specific teacher to student ratio. As mentioned earlier, Windle Trust International in Kenya is the organization that oversees strategic and operational aspects of secondary schools in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps. That meant my study must be conducted in a secondary school.

Kakuma Refugee Camp has seven secondary schools with an enrollment of more than 13,000 students. The Trust's website ([https://windle.org/secondary\\_education\\_programme.html](https://windle.org/secondary_education_programme.html)) claims, as described earlier as well, that such management activities involve recruiting, employing teachers, and ensuring learners have access to learning materials like textbooks, exercise books, technology, learning spaces, teacher accommodation, and safe latrines. In 2016, the total enrollment was 63,872 learners in 21 primary schools and only 6,179 in the seven available secondary schools (Odhiambo, 2016). The teacher to student ratio was 1:104 in the primary schools and no similar data were available for the secondary schools. What was clear was that students from a wide range of age groups attend the schools for refugees in Kakuma camp. According to Odhiambo (2016), the enrollment of overage

students in both primary and secondary school is gradually rising, which denotes how refugees are increasingly becoming aware of the benefits of acquiring education as many have missed schooling during the crisis, which ousted them from their home countries. The dynamics of the camp's population movement in and out makes the enrolment and teacher to student ratio to fluctuate elusively.

The Kakuma refugee camp was established in 1992 on an arid land with an average temperature of 35 degrees celsius (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018b). This location is dry with limited access to water and frequent dust storms. Kakuma is in Kenya's northwest corner of Turkana County—one of the poorest and remotest parts of the country and home to the largely nomadic Turkana ethnic group. Besides Kakuma camp I, II, and III, the Turkana County government allocated land for the establishment of Kalobeyei in 2015. This new camp is also a refugee settlement intended to decrease overcrowding in Kakuma refugee camp I, II, and III. Kalobeyei lies 25 kilometers northwest of the Kakuma camp and is designed to be an urban center. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council (2018b), Kalobeyei is designed to set an interface for a possible future integration of the refugees into the local Turkana populations.

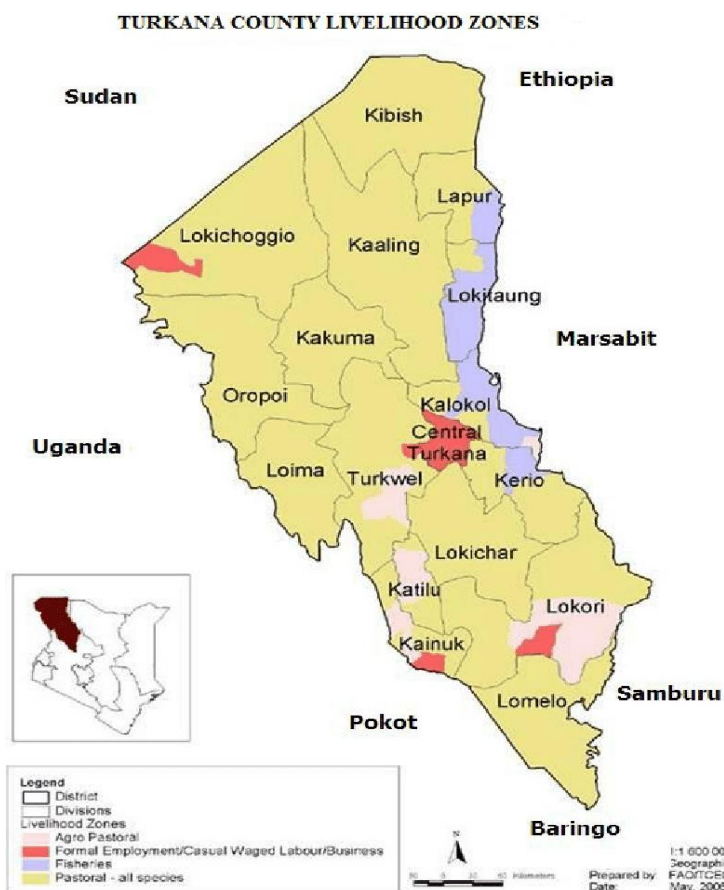
Despite the planned integrated settlement model, in practice, movement of Kalobeyei refugees is still restricted as that of the refugees living in Kakuma refugee camp. Refugee teachers who are not prepared through the Kenya Teacher Standards Commission also teach children in Kalobeyei camp. As of July 2018, more than half of

Kakuma's population consisted of South Sudanese refugees, about a fifth were refugees from Somalia, and the rest from 18 other countries (UNHCR, 2021).

A Turkana County Food Security Master Plan sheds some light on the synoptic geography of the Turkana community (Mbuge et al., 2012). According to that plan, Turkana County is situated in the Northwestern part of Kenya (see Figure 1). It is the largest county in Kenya, covering an area of 77,000 Km<sup>2</sup>. That area includes Lake Turkana, which forms the eastern boundary. Turkana County area covers about 42.4% of the Rift Valley region in land mass. Mbuge et al. (2012) explained that Turkana was split into three districts, namely, Turkana North, Turkana Central, and Turkana South districts. However, during the 2008/2009 financial year, three more districts were created from the districts. Those new districts are Turkana West consisting of Kakuma, Oropoi, Lokichoggio, and Nanam divisions; Loima, which was composed of Turkwel and Loima divisions; and Turkana East, which included Lokori and Lomelo divisions. On the other hand, Turkana North district remained with Lokitaung, Kaaling, Lapur, Kaikor, Kataboi, and Kibish divisions, whereas Turkana Central remained as it was before with Kalokol, Kerio and Central divisions. Turkana South comprised Lokichar, Katilu, Kainuk divisions (see Figure 5 for a map).

**Figure 5**

*Map of Turkana District with Administrative Divisions*



*Note.* Adapted from *Sida's support to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2012* by Sida, 2012.

These geographic highlights are meant to lay out a paradigmatic ethnography and socio-economic structure of the Turkana community where the refugees are hosted. By paradigmatic ethnography (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016), I mean the cultural model of the Turkana tribe. The socio-economy is how the Turkana people feed, shelter, clothe, and entertain themselves. That means in brief that Turkana's environmental disadvantages

must be considered as some of the limiting variables in this study. Although it is a vast county in size, the arid nature of the climate has led to widespread poverty and influenced the settlement structure of the population. Turkana people are cattle keepers and most of those living the rural areas are nomads.

Regardless of the hardships caused largely by perpetual drought and resulting in nomadism, parents are often willing to take some or all their children to school. Some of the Turkana parents have long realized that schooling is better than livestock keeping (Krätli, 2001). However, the environmentally induced poverty forces most Turkana children out of their own non-refugee schools when they cannot afford to pay for miscellaneous items required for children to enroll. Ng'asike (2011) of the University of Nairobi revealed that children often run away from schools often due to a dire food situation for them as well as teachers. I am not sure if the teachers' punitive behavior towards children is caused by inadequate preparation, economic problems, political differences, or a combination of these factors. Some of the children Ng'asike interviewed pointed out that teachers spank them in schools. Children who drop out consider school a waste of their time because they spend many hours in school without learning and teachers, dropouts claim, are not friendly. Above all else, there is not enough food in school for them to eat.

All these limitations affecting the populations of the Turkana County can also affect the refugees living in Kakuma Refugee Camp indirectly or directly. Kakuma Refugees are mostly made up of South Sudan's members of the Dinka, Nuer, Didinga,

Toposa, and the Murle ethnic groups. On the other hand, there are Zagawas and Nubians from Sudan's Darfur and the Nuba Mountain, respectively. Apart from the Somalis, most of the groups from South Sudan who make up many refugees are members of the River Lakes and Plain Nilotic groups to which the Turkana ethnic group belongs. In fact, the Toposa, Murle, and the Turkana speak a common language with little accent variations. This similarity in the lingua franca of tribes separated by imaginary political boundaries tells a different narrative. It indicates that, for example, the Toposa and Turkana shared a common cultural heritage. These common heritages were, assumptively, disintegrated by the historical tragedies of colonialism when European powers scrambled for tribal lands of Africa (Dimico, 2017).

In the Scramble for Africa, national borders were arbitrarily drawn, which resulted in alienation of a significant part of the population from its ethnic group. The result was political borders that do not reflect preexisting tribal institutions (Englebert, 2000). Members of different ethnic groups are now forced to live together in artificial states (Alesina et al., 2011). The disconnect between pre and postcolonial institutions has led to illegitimacy (Englebert, 2000), civil conflicts (Fearon, 2006; Fearon & Laitin, 2003), and ethno-political mobilization (Posner, 2004), rather than collective policies (Miguel et al., 2004). That answers the question why Turkana land, as it was deemed to lack economic value during and after colonialism, was chosen to encamp the refugees. On the same token, cultural similarities made TribalCrit an appropriate theoretical



framework to understand exclusionism, which looks like tribalism disguised in nationalism.

### **Participants and Recruitment**

Participant selection is an important activity in qualitative research. This process needs to be handled in an ethical manner. As ethnographic data collection mostly occurs through researcher interactions with participants, selected participants should be willing to share their experiences. Thus, finding a potential participant who had experienced the phenomenon under scrutiny and willing to share their thoughts was at the heart of this study. The best topic in the world requires willing participants to be explored (Agar, 1980).

Collecting data from participants in a refugee camp outside of the United States required me to engage in a complex and lengthy process of establishing access to the site and participants. Importantly, I had to first gain the trust of these participants, who may feel vulnerable within the hierarchical structures and resource-scarcity of the school and camp. This section describes the approval and recruitment process I undertook before continuing with a description of the participants.

#### ***Approval and Recruitment Process***

Earlier in 2019, I was able to meet with Dr. Staci Martin, a PSU graduate, who had conducted her Ed.D. doctoral research in Kakuma Refugee camp about 6 years ago. Dr. Martin's dissertation (2018) entitled, *Co-creating spaces of critical hope using a psychosocial peacebuilding education course in higher education in protracted refugee*

*context: Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya*, was compellingly inspirational and encouraging. Martin (2018) argued that youth are driven by hope to persevere through intolerable conditions. She went on to contend that basic education in conflict areas is seen as a protective factor that inspires hope and promotes psychosocial well-being of children and youth. Martin explained all the processes I needed to undertake to conduct research in Kenya, and specifically at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. The various steps I undertook to access my participants are detailed in the following sections.

**Pre-Study Trip (Summer of 2021).** Recruiting participants for a research study may seem like a daunting task, but one does not necessarily need to do it alone. Collaboration involves working with an alliance of volunteers who are interested in the study and are willing to become participants themselves or help in finding other participants. This is exactly what happened on my arrival in Kakuma Refugee Camp during my pre-study visit in the Summer of 2021. I was privileged to the camp to have a personal interaction and informal experience without any pressure to conduct a study. In addition to my personal experience as a refugee in this camp as a child, this pre-study visit gave me the opportunity to begin to enter the culture of the study site and develop contacts and trust.

During this trip, I observed that the motivation to teach youth, who face what Dryden-Peterson (2017) called “unknowable futures,” continues as it used to be 30 years ago when I arrived there as a refugee myself. The following pictures feature classes

taught by Somali Bantu Secondary School teachers, some of whom I happened to build personal relationships with during my visit (see Figures 6 and 7).

**Figure 6**

*Mr. Miading Luong's (pseudonym) Class*



*Note:* Photograph credited to unknown person, 2021.

In particular, I got to know Mr. Luong (pseudonym), who is one of the formally unprepared refugee teachers employed by Windle Trust International. Mr. Luong came to Kakuma as a refugee youth himself from what is today South Sudan to find an opportunity to go to school. After graduating successfully from Katilu Boys High School, a well-established Kenyan public school outside Kakuma Refugee camp, Mr. Luong returned to Kakuma where he became a secondary school teacher without any pre-service preparation opportunity in pedagogical knowledge. His monthly salary was around USD \$70 and he taught classes packed with 80–100 students. Although Mr. Luong benefited

from his better schooling outside the refugee camp in terms of high school academic content, it still needed to be understood how he made such content accessible to a class packed with 80–100 refugee youngsters seen in the preceding pictures.

While in Kakuma Refugee Camp on this visit, I was able to meet and make friends with several local Kenyan nationals who worked in the refugee camp and with the Turkana County education systems. I held several meetings with some of these folks to discuss my research proposal. Most of these people seemed very interested to become volunteer participants. The following photograph features some of Luong's own refugee colleagues who are teaching at Somali Bantu Secondary schools. He sent the photograph to me as a symbol of their readiness to collaborate in my study (see Figure 7). At the time, Mr. Luong informally accepted to become a study participant and agreed to reach out to organizations, fellow teachers, and local administrators he worked with in Kenya.

Unfortunately, when I arrived a year later to begin data collection, this recruitment had not eventuated, and Mr. Luong was no longer available. Instead, Windle Trust directed my research to a different secondary school, Kakuma Refugee Secondary School. One of the realities of conducting research in a refugee camp is that access to teachers and schools is often transitory. Still, even though this recruitment strategy was not successful the experience was extremely useful to me as an ethnographic researcher in becoming more familiar with the people, classrooms, schools, and the cultural context I would encounter in my study.

**Figure 7**

*Teachers at Somali Bantu Refugee Secondary School, Kakuma Refugee Camp*



*Note: Picture taken in 2021 by Riak Awany.*

**Securing Approvals.** Before setting foot in Kenya to begin my data collection, I first applied for a research permit license with the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). On arrival in Nairobi, Kenya in June 2022 for my first data-collection trip, I also began making a connection through the Ministry of Education with a partner professor, Dr. Anne Achieng, at the University of Nairobi (UoN). After obtaining authorization from the UoN, Windle Trust, and NACOSTI, I travelled to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County to commence the study.

**Study Trip, Summer 2022.** Once on the ground in Kakuma Refugee Camp, my focus was to identify the teacher category of participants. I recruited and studied four teachers who taught in the refugee schools through interviews, observations, and a focus group. To recruit and identify participants appropriately, informal conversations were used to identify participants who met the requirements for the study.

First, I secured permission from the school principal to contact the teachers through their email addresses and phone numbers. I then contacted the teachers and had a meeting with each one individually. For those who were not available in person, I recruited them by contacting them through telephone calls or email messages. Even so, I eventually managed to meet with every teacher individually in-person and got their signature on the consent form. It was in the meeting that I informed the teachers that I wanted to recruit them as participants in the study. Moreover, I shared the purpose of the study, any possible risks, and benefits associated with their participation, and told them that they have the freedom to withdraw their participation at any time without being penalized. These disclosures, which are considered by the federal regulations and the Internal Review Board to be the beginning of the informed consent process, were most likely the first information teachers had seen about a study. Thus, it was imperative that the information I provided clearly and accurately represented the research.

The participants did not want to be audiotaped or videotaped, hence data collection involved taking notes with the use of paper and pen. A consent letter explicitly explaining their role in the study was issued to each of the participants so that they could

append signatures for their consent (see Appendices A, B & C). As an extension from the central research question, I conducted some engagements with the leaders implementing refugee education in the camp at Windle Trust to understand the main issues facing the refugee teachers. I employed a purposive sampling technique to select only people with the following characteristics for the sample: teachers who were refugees and officers who worked with Windle Trust. Although I collected nearly all the data during my Summer 2022 visit, I subsequently visited Kakuma again in summer 2023 to complete an interview with one of the teachers and to hold another focus group discussion with the available teachers.

### ***Teachers with Refugee Histories***

In this study, the primary participants were four schoolteachers with refugee backgrounds at one secondary school at Kakuma Refugee Camp, who had been teaching for at least a year without preservice preparation. These teachers taught one or more subject areas, including English, math, chemistry, history, and Christian Religious Education (CRE). They were all originally from Sudan but moved to Kakuma Refugee Camp as refugees. They were refugee teachers with no prior formal Kenyan preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of Kenya's TSC. According to the UNHCR, most refugee teachers are from South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia, and Sudan and represent 85% of the teacher cadre (UNHCR, 2017). Their employment is incentivized, not salaried and they are never tenured or protected by the KNUT. This means that they are not on government payroll and do not earn a monthly salary like their

non-refugee counterparts who employed under TSC. Rather than a salary, they are paid incentives of less than \$200 each month, which are much lower than what Kenyan teachers earn every month in the form of salaries.

### ***Agency Representatives***

A secondary category of participants was three Kenyan-born officers from the Windle Trust International branch of Kenya (WTIK) agency, contracted by UNHCR to run the camp's secondary school system in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee camps. The management function of this agency encompasses recruitment and hiring of teachers and availing learning materials such as textbooks, exercise books, information technology equipment, and stationery to students. Most importantly, WTIK is charged with constructing new physical classrooms, living quarters for teachers, and safe latrines for learners. The officers included in this study were previously teachers with formal Kenyan preservice preparations. Each of them had been at WTIK for a period of at least three years. I am not aware of why the WTIK officers lacked formal training in teaching despite being Kenyan nationals.

### **Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

The data collection tools used in this qualitative research can be classified in three broad categories of fieldwork. These were interview and informal conversations, observation, and a focus group. They were all intended to capture the experience of participants.



### *Observation*

Observation is a qualitative data collection method commonly employed in fieldwork in ethnographic studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ethnography encompasses participant observation in which the researcher is an active participant in the research who passively observes their subjects (Murchison, 2010). In ethnography, active participation and observation reinforce each other to ensure accurate data are gathered from the field. Observations can be distinguished from interviews in two ways. First, the phenomena of interest, in this case, refugee teachers, are observed in their natural environment rather than moved to a designated location as done in the interview. Second, observational data is extracted from the firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest, in this case, participants being observed, rather than the secondhand account of the world as it is done in the interview.

I began my time in each of the four classrooms with two days of participant observation (over the course of six weeks). During this time, I established rapport with each teacher and became known to the students. This time also served as an opportunity to document the classroom and school environments, learn the schedule, and gain a general understanding of the curriculum.

Each of the four teachers was observed for a minimum period equivalent to two full days over the course of several weeks inside their own classroom. Participant observation requires intensive work and time as the researcher needs to become accepted as a natural part of the culture of the classroom. While this study drew on the traditions of

ethnographic research, I was unable to spend a lengthier time in the classrooms due to limited resources, the complexity of the refugee camp setting, and time availability.

### ***Informal Conversations with Teachers***

As the researcher, I had informal conversations with the participants in preparation for the semi-structured interview. These conversations occurred from the onset of recruitment of the four teachers with the discussion freely moving from subject to subject, often without following a written list of questions. These informal conversations were only meant to build rapport during the recruitment. When ethnographic research begins such as this, it is important to recognize that participants can be curious about the project (Alasuutari, 1995). These informal conversations were utilized as opportunities to answer countless questions from the teacher participants about this research study. Some of these questions focused on how I conceived the idea to organize the study, what the application of the project was, the rationale for choosing this audience, and why I chose to conduct the study at Kakuma Refugee Camp rather than another camp. These interactions helped to build confidence and enabled the participants to choose whether to sign the consent form or opt out of the study all together. After the informal conversations, consent forms were signed, and semi-structured interviews were conducted afterwards.

I also engaged in informal conversations with the teacher participants throughout my time in the school to gather background information for the study. These interactions are what Madison (2020) described as “conversational partnership” (p. 45). According to

Madison (2020), the conversational quality, which later evolves from the previous interviews, is more substantively meaningful and aids in building a rapport through active thinking and sympathetic listening developed from the first conversational partnership. Madison (2019) pointed out that these interactions are an important part of ethnographic research as participants can be wary of being recorded when sharing difficult experiences.

### *Semistructured Interviews*

A research interview is defined as a well-structured conversation that has a purpose (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Leona Okakok (1989) made the following observations:

We all know we can go through life convinced that our view of the world is the only valid one. But if we are interested in new perceptions, however, we need to catch the glimpse of the world through other eyes. We need to be aware of our own thoughts as well as the way life is viewed by other people. That is the gist of interviewing. (p. 248)

In this study, I used in-depth semistructured interviews, also known as qualitative interviews, and the most common interview format in ethnographic work. Using this format, the researcher can ask probing questions that arise in conversations, seek clarification, and allow participants time to give unique and detailed stories (Blackstone, 2012; Griffiths, 2017). Semistructured interviews seek to obtain narratives, not numerical data; not just how many or how often, but how did that feel? Or what happened after

that? The benefit of semistructured interviews is that they allow the interviewer to access the narrative most important to the interviewee using open-ended responses (Blackstone, 2012). Such interviews are organized using open-ended questions, which seek in-depth explanations of the participants' traditions, experiences, and opinions.

The main aim of interviewing is generally to understand the meaning of the information shared by the interviewees. Because this study used critical ethnography to understand the power dynamics of cultural intersections, I emphasized open-ended questioning. Open-ended questions allowed me to access the participants' subjectivity. Such questions differ from closed-ended questions, in which participants are restricted to answer in a particular way (Creswell, 2012; McNamara, 1999). In contrast, an open-ended question allows participants to give detailed responses. Semi-structured interviews in this study were aimed at eliciting in-depth feelings of the participants.

The most significant challenge in developing an open-ended interview is how to ask questions that encourage the informants to talk expansively on the interviewer's topics. Unlike everyday conversation, the open-ended interview often begins with main question and proceeds in what some scholars have dubbed as the funnel shape beginning (Spradley, 1979). This is when interviews start with broad questions and trickle down to narrower questions for detail. Spradley (1979) argued that interviews should begin with a grand tour or broad question. In this study, the grand tour or broad question for the category of teacher participants was as follows: could you, please, describe how your teaching day looks like? For the WTIK Managers, the grand tour question was as

follows: do you experience or observe any differences while working with both refugee and local teachers?

Creswell (2012) argued that oftentimes, audiotapes allow more consistent transcription. In this study, I could not audiotape the semi structured interviews because during the preliminary informal conversations, the participants did not agree to taping due to concerns about how their words might be construed by others. Again, citing the same concerns as the teachers mentioned previously, the WTIK staff declined to be audiotaped for confidentiality reason. Therefore, notes were taken in the old-fashioned way using pen and paper both during and after the interview sessions.

**Teacher Interviews.** After the classroom observations, I conducted one-on-one semi structured interviews lasting an hour, or more, with the four teachers at a hotel convenient to the participants, with the final interview conducted during my Summer 2023 visit (see Appendix D for interview protocol). These interviews were all completed before the final focus group discussion in summer 2023.

**Windle Trust Officer Interviews.** The semi structured interviews with the WTIK staff members were the final step after the focus group discussion with teachers. Interviewing WTIK staff members was intended to gain better understanding of the refugee teachers' context and bring in a different perspective on the refugee teacher experience. Each interview lasted for 50-70 minutes and was guided by a protocol of questions (see Appendix D).

### ***Focus Groups***

During the Summer 2022 visit, I conducted a focus group discussion with the four teachers after completing all field work and interviews with three of the teachers. This discussion was a guided interaction of participant ideas and stories. Focus group discussions are frequently used in qualitative research to gain in-depth understanding of social issues in a particular social setting (Nyumba et al., 2018). A focus group method entails initiating a discussion by asking pre-selected questions in a small group consisting of participants from a target population that meets the characteristics relevant to the research topic (Knodel, 1995).

Specifically, these discussions took the form of mini get-together celebration to end our conversational partnership with a more semi-structured engagement with the participants as a group. This four-hour group discussion was characterized by a spirited exchange of ideas and included time for recap. We had some beverages such as soda drinks during the session. We focused on a relatively narrow set of topics to infuse more meaning into the data obtained during informal and semi-structured conversations with each individual teacher and the classroom observations.

Although I participated directly in the discussion as a participant, I also assumed the role of a moderator of this discussion using pre-prepared guidelines. First, I introduced the concepts for the discussion, posed the open-ended questions to initiate the discussion, encouraged participants to share interactively, and directed the discussion. I was also the note-taker. The aim of focus groups is to elicit deeper conversations than

simple question-answer sessions (Knodel, 1995). An important aspect of this technique is that participants must be involved in some level of discussion rather than simply respond to direct questions asked by the facilitator. Even though the application of this method in conversation research has been extensive, there are no critical assessments of the application of the technique. An advantage of well-organized focus groups is that they generate discussion among the participants (Knodel, 1995, p.8). Comments by one participant can stimulate others' thoughts about the topic, causing them to respond, driving the conversation forward.

A second focus group was held in Summer 2023. Unlike the first focus group of summer 2022 that four teachers participated in, this second focus group discussion only involved three teachers. However, it was a more detailed discussion with the refugee teachers and more focused data were gathered from the teachers. We explored various topics in greater detail than in the first focus group, in part because I had already engaged in a preliminary analysis of the Summer 2022 data. The data obtained in both focus group discussions were combined and later analyzed together to identify themes.

### ***Document and Artifact Review***

Document and artifact collection and analysis are an important ethnographic research tool. This method particularly helps in understanding the context for data collected through interviews and observations (Nyumba et al., 2018). In this study, I attempted to collect and review several documents, including lesson plans of teachers and reports and newsletters about the school at Kakuma Refugee camp, which would have

helped me understand the context for the data that I had previously collected through interviews, informal conversations, observations, and a focus group discussion with teachers. Nonetheless, the availability of the lesson plans, reports, and newsletters was very limited, and others were non-existent and not accessible to me. Therefore, I did not collect and review lesson plans of teachers as well as reports and newsletters about the school. Moreover, as the principal researcher, I made efforts to access additional documents such as relevant documents from Turkana County Government's Ministry of Education and the United Nations offices in the county. However, I did not manage to have access to those documents owing to time constraints hence I did not review them.

### ***Timetable***

The timetable in Table 1 indicates the time that was taken to complete each project activity between June 2022 through August 2022. Some activities depended upon the completion of another project while others were done concurrently. For example, it was impossible for me to transcribe the notes taken during earlier interviews before conducting the remaining interviews. Therefore, the two activities were not concurrent or parallel. There was often no electricity for my devices and so most of the formal documentation of data and analysis had to wait until I returned to the United States.



**Table 1***Activities That Happened and When They Happened – First Data-Collection Trip*

Activity	June–2022	July –2022	August–2022
Connected with partners at the Nairobi University	20–24		
Traveled to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, Kenya	25–26		
Recruitment of participants	27–	1	
Held unstructured, informal conversations with participants to build rapport (Warm-up)	26	20	
Conducted classroom observations		21–29	
Held individual teacher interviews/semi-structured interviews		30–5	
Conducted semi-structured interviews with Windle Trust International managers			8–9
Contacted Turkana County Government’s Ministry of Education officials			10–12
Reflexive interview with refugee teachers (Focus group discussion)			15–16
			17–19
Coding Process Begins			22– Returning to USA

*Note.* This table shows the activities that occurred during the initial data collection trip.

After the first data-collection trip to Kenya in the Summer of 2022, I subsequently returned to Kenya in the Summer of 2023 to collect more detailed data from the participants (see Timeline in Table 2). One of the many challenges of collecting data in a

refugee camp is working with the unexpected and last-minute changes in teacher availability for interviews and observations. This second data-collection trip included additional interviews and a more successful focus group discussion and afforded me the opportunity to follow up with teachers based on my initial analysis of themes in the data.

**Table 2**

*Second Year Follow Up – Second Data Collection Trip*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>June-2023</b>	<b>July -2023</b>	<b>August – 2023</b>
Traveled to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, Kenya (second trip)	22 – 29		
Identified and gathered participants from the first trip		2-5	
Held unstructured, informal conversations with participants to build rapport (Warm-up)		6-10	
Conducted one interview with the teacher missed in the summer 2022 visit		12-19	
Conducted a focus group with three teachers		23-26	
Returned to the United States			3-4

*Note.* An interview with one teacher and focus group discussion with three teachers were conducted in the second trip.

### **Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data**

Trustworthiness is the accuracy of the data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a given research study. It can also be defined as the truthfulness, authenticity, and quality of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morrow, 2005). This research is an intervention in people’s lives. Therefore, being able to trust the research findings is especially important in the professional community (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used the quality indicators articulated by Brantlinger et al. (2005) to help establish trustworthiness in my data collection and analysis (see Table 3).

**Table 3***Quality Indicators Used as Tools of Verifying Validity and Reliability*

<b>Semi-structured Interviews</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate participants were purposefully identified.</li> <li>• Questions were reasonable.</li> <li>• Adequate mechanisms were used to record and transcribe interviews.</li> <li>• Participants were represented sensitively and fairly in the report.</li> <li>• Sound measures were used to ensure confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observed participants in appropriate setting such as classrooms.</li> <li>• A total of six weeks were spent in the field.</li> <li>• Researcher blended in among participants.</li> <li>• Field notes recorded accurately.</li> <li>• Sound measures were used to ensure confidentiality of participants and setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results were sorted and coded systematically and meaningfully.</li> <li>• Sufficient rationale was provided for what was and was not included in the report.</li> <li>• Methods used to verify trustworthiness are clearly documented.</li> </ul>

*Note.* Adapted from (Brantlinger et al., 2005).

***Credibility***

The credibility of research is measured with four specific criteria, which include credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Amin et al., 2020).

Credibility measures the internal validity of qualitative research and the extent to which the findings agree with reality (Amin et al., 2020). It also indicates the truth value of qualitative research, or accuracy of the findings. In the current study, I used several strategies to establish this criterion of trustworthiness. One of them is triangulation, which entails using different sources of information or procedures from the field to corroborate identified patterns (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Specifically, multiple sources of data were used to improve the trustworthiness of the findings. These included semi structured interviews, a focus group discussion, and observations. Triangulation is the

combination of sources and methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon to generate consistent evidence that breeds credibility (Bowen, 2009). Corroborating findings across data sets is one way of reducing the impact of potential bias by examining information collected through different methods.

As a study guided by ethnographic principles, I recognize that I also brought my subjectivity, including positionality, history, and assumptions, to this research process. As noted previously, I visited Kenya informally in the summer of 2021 to carry out a preliminary field assessment in Kakuma. This visit enabled me to prepare the ground through connections and observe the setting so that the research could be adjusted to fit the current context. When I first arrived, I stayed at a local hotel in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. After linking with my academic partner at the University of Nairobi, I travelled north to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, roughly 813 kilometers (505 miles) by road from Nairobi. The travel was by bus to Lodwar town, which is the capital of Turkana County. The journey was safe as security officers manned the road, although armed robberies occur occasionally. From Lodwar town, I took a motorcycle taxi to the camp. Overall, it took two days to travel from Nairobi to the camp. I was on site in Kakuma for a period of eight weeks, with the typical length of day being 9am to 5pm. During the six weeks that I was there, I mostly stayed at Silga Lodge, which is a local hotel in Kakuma town. Since it is quite a decent three-star hotel, I was able to eat at this facility every day.

Moreover, I conducted member checks to establish credibility. Member checking entails respondents or participants validating the interview transcripts. After collecting data from the study subjects, the researcher returned the information collected to them to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. My initial analysis was also shared with them to check for the same. All seven participants confirmed that the data gathered from them were accurate, which helped establish credibility.

I also employed deviant case or negative case analysis to ensure credibility. This procedure entails analysis of outlier data to ensure valid results (Hanson, 2017). By conducting negative case analysis, I identified elements within the data that did not support emergent findings. The procedure entailed identifying and discussing outlier data that do not support emerging themes from the research. I then used refined data analysis for data with a new negative case and I repeated this revision until most of the data captured in the research were explainable. In essence, this procedure assisted me in refining all the conclusions, ensuring they accounted for all the known cases.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability is another criterion of trustworthiness. It refers to the generalizability of inquiry (Amin et al., 2020). This criterion is only concerned with case-to-case transfer in qualitative research (Amin et al., 2020). For this study, I achieved this criterion through providing a thick description, as follows: The respondents in the current study comprised schoolteachers with refugee background and officers from Windle Trust International. All the educators taught at one secondary school located in Kakuma

Refugee Camp in Turkana County in northern Kenya. The teachers were refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of the Kenya's TSC. Overall, all seven participants worked in Kakuma Refugee Camp. By collecting data from the participants through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and observations, I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of how refugee teachers without prior formal Kenyan preservice preparations perceive and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability is a measure of the reliability and consistency of a study's findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This criterion of trustworthiness is mainly focused on whether similar findings would be attained if the study were repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, I established dependability by providing adequate information from the research report for those wishing to replicate it to do so and be able to obtain similar findings as the current study did or understand how the different contexts might lead to differing conclusions. The strategies I used to establish dependability are triangulation and inquiry audit or audit trail (Nowell et al., 2017). An audit trail, according to Nowell et al. (2017), refers to clear descriptive steps followed in a research study from the beginning of the project until when the findings are reported. In the current study, my audit trail followed eight steps in the research project, all of which are described in this chapter and summarized in Appendix D.

The audited trail contains all the steps I followed to complete this research project successfully from the beginning until when I reported the findings. Researchers following it would obtain the same results. Therefore, dependability is established. The audit trail enables the other researcher to follow my design in their context.

### ***Confirmability***

The final trustworthiness criterion established in this study is confirmability. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings from a given research study are objective (Amin et al., 2020). Simply put, it denotes that the findings are founded upon the responses of the study participants rather than on the researcher's personal motivations or bias. In the current study, I established this criterion through an audit trail. The audit highlights each step I followed in analyzing the data to justify the decisions I made. Specifically, the data were analyzed through six steps consistent with the thematic analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2019).

### **Data Management and Analysis**

In this study, I performed a thematic analysis on the gathered data. As a method for analyzing qualitative data, Castleberry and Nolen (2018) stated that thematic analysis requires the researcher to read a set of data and look for patterns in the meaning of data to find themes. In addition, it is an active process of reflexivity where the subjective experience of the researcher is at the center of making sense of the collected data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Specifically, I utilized the inductive approach to thematic

analysis, which entailed allowing the data to determine my themes. To aid in this analytical process, I used NVivo 12 software to analyze the data.

The data analysis process involved the six steps described by Braun and Clarke (2019) as follows:

1. Familiarization with the data. This entailed conducting a thorough overview of the gathered data before beginning to analyze individual items. Essentially, I looked through the raw data that I documented in a log during and after the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and observations multiple times to get familiar with it.
2. Coding. Here, I highlighted sections of the text, which were mainly sentences and phrases, and came up with codes or shorthand labels to describe their content.
3. Generating themes. (Braun & Clarke, 2019). I examined the codes that I had created, identified patterns amongst them, and began forming themes, which might portray the participants' meaning making.
4. Reviewing themes. In this phase of the data analysis process, I had to ensure that my themes were useful and accurately represented the data. I returned to the data set and compared my themes against it. This helped to determine whether anything was missing, the themes were present in the data, and there was anything that could be changed to make the themes work better. When I encountered problems with my themes, I combined them, split them up,



discarded them, or created new ones. I did whatever made them more accurate and useful.

5. Defining and naming themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Since I had my final list of themes, I now had to name and define each of them. Defining themes entails formulating precisely what each theme means and figuring out how it helps me to understand the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). On the other hand, naming them entails developing an understandable and succinct name for every theme.
6. The final step was writing the thematic analysis of the data presented in Chapters 4 and 5 (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

This study used critical ethnography to unpack refugee teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching multinational refugee students in a Kenyan refugee camp. The setting of the study was Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya's Turkana County. The participants included four schoolteachers with refugee backgrounds at one secondary school at Kakuma Refugee Camp and three representatives from Windle Trust International, which is an agency contracted by UNHCR to run the camp's secondary school system. I collected data through semi structured interviews, observations, one focus group discussion, and document/artifact review. I used a six-step thematic analysis process to make sense of the data. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of the study.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The focus of this study was the reflections of teachers with refugee backgrounds about their classroom experiences with students in a refugee camp school in Kenya. People generally do not become refugees by choice. Circumstances of war, government repression, and persecution against individuals and groups of people happen every day around the world (Kumin, 2017). My goal as the researcher was to understand and give voice to the participants' perspectives and not to impose my own ideas on them that they did not share. I ensured this through the member checking procedure by returning the collected data to the participants to ascertain its accuracy. They corroborated the data they provide as accurate. Thus, I did not use a deficit frame towards the participants.

I aimed to answer the following research question: How do refugee teachers, without prior formal Kenyan preservice preparations, perceive and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools? The findings of this study reveal that the teachers at the refugee camp schools had a range of experiences with their students such as students not being attentive in the classroom and difficulty teaching and/or disciplining some learners because of being overage or related to tribal culture and overcrowding in the classroom. Furthermore, the findings show that the teachers interacted in varying ways with the classroom content and pedagogy. Moreover, the participants experienced various challenges at the refugee camp including a lack of resources through to complex socioeconomic and political contexts. This chapter contains the results from a research

study conducted at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. As background, I begin by sharing information about the demographics of the participants.

### **Demographics of the Participants**

The study included seven participants, specifically, four schoolteachers with refugee backgrounds and three officers from Windle Trust International. All four educators taught at one secondary school at Kakuma Refugee Camp located in Turkana County, northern Kenya, and had at least 12 months of teaching experience. The selection of this group was important because without this experience, the participants could not give the relevant data I required for this study. None of the teachers had received formal preservice teacher training. All the three Windle Trust officers had refugee backgrounds.

The participants were all adults aged 25-35 years, five males and two females, and came from various African nationalities including Sudanese, Somali, and one Congolese. Based on my interactions with the participants and my engagement in the field, I am not aware of any significant organizational conditions, such as reductions in school budgetary allocation, personnel issues, or other specific events or trauma, which could have impacted the participants' experience during this study.

To guarantee the participants anonymity and confidentiality, I created pseudonyms for each participant, which are used in this chapter in place of their real names. The use of pseudonyms is consistent with a qualitative approach. A key issue when collecting data was that many potential participants did not want to be recorded. There were concerns of retaliation or harm, despite the efforts made on behalf of the

researcher to mitigate those possibilities. The participants and their associated pseudonyms are depicted in Table 4. All the participants, including Windle Trust officers, were refugees in Kenya. The demographic data of the study participants is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Participant Demographics*

Participant Number	Participant pseudonym	Gender	Nationality	Subject Area
Teachers				
1	Teacher Miading Luong	Male	South Sudanese	English
2	Teacher Achol	Female	South Sudanese	Sciences
3	Teacher Mohamed	Male	South Sudanese	Math and Chemistry
4	Teacher Mialual	Male	Sudanese	Math and Chemistry
Windle Trust Officers (WTO)				
5	WTO 1	Female	Kenyan	N/A
6	WTO 2	Male	Kenyan	N/A
7	WTO 3	Male	Kenyan	N/A

*Note.* Demographic information of the participants

**Findings: Categories and Themes**

The findings are organized under four content categories that include twelve key themes I identified through my analysis of the data. The categories are:

- 1: Experiences with Students,
- 2: Knowledge of Pedagogy and Content,
- 3: Teaching and Learning Resources, and
- 4: School culture and Political Contexts.

While this was a qualitative study, I found it was helpful to document how frequently participants mentioned each theme and sub-theme as one way to indicate their relevance and to ensure greater transparency (see Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Findings Categories and Themes*

Categories and Themes	Number of participants who contributed to this theme ( $N = 7$ )	Number of references to this theme in the data
<b>1:</b> Experiences with Students	7	33
<b>Theme 1.1:</b> Behavior of students: Inattentive and absent	4	15
<b>Theme 1.2:</b> Challenges of teaching and disciplining students	5	14
<b>Theme 1.3:</b> Overcrowding in classroom	4	10
<b>2:</b> Knowledge of pedagogy and content	4	34
<b>Theme 2.1:</b> Refugee and ethnic backgrounds	4	17
<b>Theme 2.2:</b> Prescribed curriculum	4	17
<b>Theme 2.3:</b> Adjusting teaching strategies and content delivery to help struggling students.	4	9
<b>Theme 2.4:</b> Offer formal assessments and adjust for reading level differences within the classroom.	4	8
<b>3:</b> Teaching and Learning Resources and Technology Integration	5	21
<b>Theme 3.1:</b> Human Resources	3	10
<b>Theme 3.2:</b> Learning Materials	3	6
<b>Theme 3.3:</b> Technology Integration	3	7
<b>4:</b> School Culture and Political Contexts	7	52
<b>Theme 4.1:</b> Socioeconomic and political challenges	7	42
<b>Theme 4.2:</b> Managerial, structural, and being looked down upon	3	10

*Note.* Categories of codes and themes developed from the analyzed data.

***Teachers' Experiences with Students***

All the teachers at the refugee camp schools had a range of experiences with their students. More specifically, I identified three sub-themes regarding these experiences in the classroom that included students not being attentive in the classroom, difficulty teaching and/or disciplining some learners because of being overage or related to tribal

culture, and overcrowding in the classroom although the teachers felt happy when their students excel. These sub-themes are discussed in the following sections.

**Theme 1.1: Behavior of Students: Inattentive and Absent.** Teachers in this refugee camp school experience challenges pertaining to the behavior of the learners, for instance, students being inattentive in the classroom. The teachers mentioned this issue 15 times. Teacher Mialual noted, “The most critical challenges are cases of indiscipline and absenteeism.” There is rotation in the classroom population to some extent as I observed children coming and going during class time. Teacher Mialual further added that “Counseling, advising, conferencing, and many other ways to calm down students. Some teachers go as far as spanking some students who cannot benefit from all the other peaceful ways (such as counseling and advising).” I observed two boys being advised to maintain proper discipline while in the classroom. The teacher walked up to the boys who were playing during classroom instruction and told them to stop playing, or else they would be punished. The students calmed down following this advice. Furthermore, schoolteacher Teacher Achol reported that:

Another challenge is that most students have issues dealing with the rigor of schooling and traumatizing background from which they come. They don't write notes or even listen to instructions because, perhaps they are coming through a lot, are going through a lot, or about to go through a lot in their home environment ... Most students absent themselves (refuse to come to school) for many months only to show up during the tests.

Moreover, many students were talking to each other while the teacher was in front of the class teaching. When observing Teacher Mohamed in the classroom, I noticed that just like all the other teachers I had observed earlier, most students began to murmur, and it appeared they were chatting with their friends. Moreover, although some students appeared to be writing notes, others were just staring at me. Because I was not formally introduced to the students, it is likely none of them knew me or what I was doing there. The fact that some were staring at me suggests that some of them were inattentive when the teacher was in class teaching.

I made similar observations when observing other teachers, including Teacher Miading Luong. As Teacher Luong's English lecture about auxiliary verbs went on for roughly 45 minutes, many students began to talk to each other while the teacher was visibly detached from the students' attention, which was evidenced by him not being really concerned with the students not paying attention to him and murmuring in the classroom. I observed that the teacher was not very much focused on the learners. Scanning around in the classroom from corner to corner, I could observe that the students' attention had died down quickly a few minutes into the lesson with nobody listening to the teacher anymore. The strategies or pedagogical practices that the teacher employed to maintain students' attention included raising his volume, using humor, and asking students questions at random.

**Theme 1.2: Challenges of Teaching and Disciplining Students.** Teachers in this refugee camp school also had trouble teaching and disciplining some learners who

are overaged and because of differences in tribal culture. One Windle Trust officer and all the four teachers mentioned this aspect. Teacher Mialual shared, “Some of the students are older than teachers and with that, when caught in the wrong, disciplining them becomes a challenge.” Likewise, Teacher Achol indicated that some of the most challenging situations they faced in the school was the age group diversity among the population of students. Some of the students were older than she was and were men from her own tribe, the Dinka tribe. As per the Dinka tradition, women are supposed to be seen and not heard. They are supposed to cook, bear children, and live in private spaces of the society as good wives (Horn, 2010). According to Teacher Achol:

You were in my class and saw how students behave especially towards small women like me. Discipline is part of the challenge here. Some of the students are older than us and it is hard to discipline them. Some of them are very indisciplined big men ... So yeah, it helps to know that I am refugee teaching refugee children. I wish our younger people whom we teach understand this so that we may behave towards us fairly.

Similarly, Teacher Miading Luong noted, “Some refugee students are older and stronger than me. That makes discipline often time difficult if not impossible. That is a challenge.” WTO1 also mentioned, “Others are overaged.” WTO2, who is also a Windle Trust officer, mentioned, “Some are overaged with disrupted education.” These findings highlight the challenges the teachers faced in the classroom when teaching or disciplining students who are older than them and some who come from certain cultural backgrounds.



I observed the teachers trying to advise such students in an effort to calm them down. In the final Focus Group discussion, Teacher Achol talked about the use of diverse strategies for student discipline, noting that:

I approach students using diverse strategies since they have different issues. As a teacher, you ought to be flexible and able to put yourself in the students' shoes. By adopting this approach, the students will gain their trust and will eventually open-up to what he/she is being taught. I always try to understand a student before acting and with that, it is easier. Once students know you understand them, they follow you.

Teacher Mohamed in the interview spoke about how he approaches student discipline, stating:

First, I will always try my level best to solve the problem by engaging with learners honestly and I will from time to time refer to the disciplinary committee. It has played a positive role in making a learner change and getting ready to learn.

**Theme 1.3: Overcrowding in Classroom.** The teachers clearly experience challenges pertaining to classroom overcrowding. Of the seven participants, four contributed to this theme, mentioning it eight times. When talking about the challenges they face in school, Teacher Achol reported, "The challenges are many, but the main ones are overcrowding, limited spaces of learning." Moreover, WTO3, a Windle Trust officer, mentioned, "The second obstacle and barrier [is] limited spaces of learning as you observed in those classrooms. The number of refugees coming into the camp

overstretches our capacity to serve.” In the interview, WTO3 expressed empathy for the situation of the refugee teachers, particularly their “low wages and lack of professional and career development opportunities.” Speaking about overcrowding in the interview, Teacher Mialual stated:

Teaching as I believe is a noble career which ought to be interesting and full of fun. However, this is not always the case in a place like Kakuma Refugee camp with almost 150 students packed in a small classroom. The students are of diverse background ranging from ethnic, religious, culture just to mention a few. So, handling them is quite challenging and exhaustive.

Furthermore, when observing Teacher Mohamed in the classroom teaching, I noticed that the class was packed beyond the intended limits of the desks and the classroom. The benches were packed to the point that the teacher could only move through the middle aisle and was unable to check each student’s work. Similarly, when observing Teacher Achol, I realized that the class was packed with only girls. Moreover, when observing Teacher Miading Luong teach, I noticed that the classroom was only composed of boys and tightly packed. Looking around, I could see that three foot benches were often used to seat four students, which was tight. Students could only move their heads around. No other parts of their bodies could move because they were tightly pinched. Although there was not much empty space as the classroom, every one of the students still tried to move into the front, perhaps, to be closer to the teacher so that they could listen, as everyone else was being noisy around. I noticed the teacher give

compliments to students who answered questions that the teacher asked.

Despite these considerable challenges, teachers also offered a glimmer of hope that kept them going. In the focus group, Teacher Achol talked about how she feels proud and joyful when the students succeed, stating:

There are always challenges when it comes to content delivery since there are many students in one class, yet we have only 40 minutes to teach. So, handling over 120 students and delivering the content effectively to all is hectic. Though by planning extra classes during the day and weekend, allowing students consultations, the teachers (I personally) I can help them to the best of my abilities. I am always joyful and proud when my students excel.

### ***Knowledge of Pedagogy and Content***

This category concerns how the schoolteachers at the refugee camp interact with content and pedagogy. There are four themes: (2.1) refugee backgrounds, (2.2) prescribed curriculum, (2.3) adjusting teaching strategy and content delivery to help struggling students, and (2.4) offering formal assessments and adjusting for reading level differences within the classroom.

**Theme 2.1: Refugee and Ethnic Backgrounds.** The teachers interacted in varying ways with the classroom content and pedagogy when providing instruction to students with refugee backgrounds. Four participants, all teachers, mentioned this theme a total of 34 times. Teacher Miading Luong indicated, “I understand the refugee students’ backgrounds. When I see students struggling with course materials, I try to help them one

on one and provide them with extra course materials.” This implies that the teacher often tries to help the refugee learners grasp the content given their backgrounds as refugees. Teacher Achol noted that, “most students have issues dealing with the rigor of schooling and traumatizing background from which they come.” She added that, “They don’t write notes or even listen to instructions because, perhaps they are coming through a lot, are going through a lot, or about to go through a lot in their home environment.”

While teachers recognized the challenges of being a refugee, they also looked for ways to create greater integration of students from differing ethnic backgrounds. Teacher Mialual in the interview mentioned that, “About three quarter of school population is from South Sudan. What I do to make sure every student has a favorable learning environment; I will always make sure that all the other nationalities are grouped interactively with the others.” Teacher Mohamed in the focus group noted that, “The most crucial aspect is creating a classroom where students understand themselves as students and not nationalities or whatever differences,” whereas Teacher Miading Luong also in the focus group stated that, “Though students are different, I normally ensure that English and Kiswahili are the only languages used.” Teacher Achol during the focus group indicated that, “The sitting arrangement is mixed ensuring students are not always from the same country or religious background. Being in uniform is another important factor. Also, games and sports, debates, etcetera, prove important for this.”

**Theme 2.2: Prescribed Curriculum.** The teachers were expected to use a particular type of curriculum when providing instruction to their students at the refugee

camp. The curriculum is the one required by the government of Kenya. Teacher Miading Luong specified the type of curriculum the teachers required to use, noting, “We have a curriculum which is already prescribed by the Kenyan government. It is called 8.4.4.” Most of the teaching presentations I observed were filled almost exclusively with direct instructions and information-giving. The teachers also asked questions and engaged in discussions with the students. This is exactly what Teacher Miading Luong was referring to when he said,

Teaching is tricky. Sometimes we think we know how to teach but there is often more to it. Our instructions are mostly informational. That means, giving students what they need. We hear that students should be involved in their learning. Most of us don’t understand what that means.

Similarly, Teacher Achol echoed the same when I asked her how she decides what content knowledge and competencies are important for her students to have, stating with frustration,

I told you that I am not trained to teach. So, that child-centered teaching strategies I hear a lot sound abstract. I only teach students to pass examinations. Passing examinations well is what everyone cares about here. So, short, I don’t decide on any content to teach.

Teacher Achol probably heard about child-centered teaching strategies through her colleagues at the school. The teacher’s role during instruction is to build critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the students by getting them to work together,

brainstorming, getting the learners to develop different skills, giving them different kinds of assignments, encouraging creativity, and asking different kinds of questions. The teacher would ask the students some questions and those who know the answer raised their hand. There were also discussions of questions amongst group members and the teacher helped the students to share their ideas. When observing Teacher Mohamed in the classroom, I observed that he came into the class and greeted the students. He then introduced the contents] and started to write on the chalkboard. The teacher began to calculate the area of a geometry circle. When observing Teacher Mialual, some child-centered learning was observed. Children were observed as active partners in the learning engagement while following the teacher's lead as seen in the following classroom observation I recorded:

Teacher Mialual lectures a little bit and assigns a few questions for the students to attempt. Then he moves around to check. Teacher asks students to draw a bonding of chlorine in their exercise books. Some students take out their exercise books and start to draw the bonds. The teacher moves around to check to ensure that drawing is happening. Students' engagement seems to be visibly happening as the teacher ensures their involvement in the learning process. He then briefly lectures and assign students again to draw the bonds of water. Then moves around again to check for task completion. He then debriefs. Towards the end of the class, he assesses his lesson by assigning students to draw the bond of carbons.

Furthermore, the teachers indicated that they decide the type of content knowledge and competencies that are important for their students to have based on examination systems. In the focus group, Teacher Achol mentioned, “I normally analyze the examination systems and trends [in education in the country]. Basically, I teach topics that are examinable in the end of four years course (KCSE).”

**Theme 2.3: Adjusting Teaching Strategies and Content Delivery to Help Struggling Students.** Moreover, the teachers indicated that when providing instructions to learners with refugee background, they adjust their teaching strategy and content delivery to help students who struggle with course materials. Four participants contributed to this theme. During the interview, Teacher Mialual spoke about how he changes the course material when dealing with a student who is struggling with the course materials, stating:

I will first try to identify what the problem could be. Could it be a disability? Could a learner be a slow learner? Etcetera. I will then call the learner and first change the course material to another one and if the same problem persists, I then arrange remedial classes with the student. A teacher should always encourage the learners to do and try solving the problems by themselves and this way, the learners will develop creativity.

In the focus group discussion, Teacher Miading Luong spoke about how he changes his teaching strategy and content delivery when he notices that a student is struggling, stating that:

Once I notice that in my students, I normally try to change my teaching strategy and content delivery. This can be done using simpler methodologies and giving relevant examples from real life situations that I believe they are conversant with. By breaking down the content to simpler terms and in a manner that they are conversant with, they easily digest the content.

Teacher Achol shared similar views in the focus group, noting that:

I normally relate to them using my personal story of how I once hated mathematics but later it turned become most beloved subject. Teachers' ought to always be flexible and be able to relate theoretical content into applicable real-life situations. They [teachers] should also be able to adapt several methods to deliver their contents. They [teachers] also ought to help the students believe they [students] can do better and change their perspectives.

Similarly, Teacher Mialual in the focus group mentioned some ways they were responsive to their students:

As a teacher though it might seem weird asking your students, I find it workable when I at times ask them how they want or how do they expect me to teach, for example, the pace and the time they feel comfortable to be taught. Group discussions prove crucial when I group students to help one another.

Teacher Mohamed also talked about providing the refugee students with life skills and advice, stating that he provides, "non-academic concepts such as life skills and random



advice which I believe tend to model these students since refugee life is full of challenges and they always need these skills which will always prove useful in one way or another.”

#### **Theme 2.4: Offer Formal Assessments and Adjust for Reading Level**

**Differences within the Classroom.** The teachers discussed the significance of using various assessments to measure success of student learning in a given content area. Four participants contributed to this theme. During the interview, Teacher Mialual spoke about the use of both oral questions and written assessment tests, stating, “After a few examples delivering content, I will always ask oral questions because of the number of learners. After every topic, I give a random assessment test.” In the focus group discussion, Teacher Achol explained the use of examinations, saying:

Examinations outstands in the formal assessment since for students to get entry to most universities, it is dependent on their final grades. By teaching and guiding students to excel in exams, it can prove crucial. This is through guiding them in content mastery and how to apply it.

Similarly, Teacher Mohamed during the interview talked about using tests to assess his students, saying, “This is through giving Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) regularly and through revisions. This would help students work hard despite their past experiences and weaknesses.” The teachers talked about adjusting for the reading level differences within their classroom considering that there are refugee students from diverse nationalities in the classroom.

### *Teaching and Learning Resources and Technology Integration*

The teachers described their teaching and learning resources at the refugee camp school, and how they have integrated technology into their lessons. Many of them reported experiencing some sort of challenges in relation to teaching and learning resources. Four teachers and one Windle Trust officer mentioned this 15 times. The category has two themes, which are discussed below.

**Theme 3.1: Human Resources.** Participants described the human resources at the school, including both refugee and non-refugee teachers. Two teachers and one Windle Trust officer mentioned this 10 times. The individual interviews and focus group revealed that perceived or real, that refugee teachers could not become administrators either in any of the schools or in the Windle Trust central office. Teacher Miading Luong summed it up in the following statements:

It is frustrating to know that your potential as a professional has already been preset and cannot grow into the leadership or administration of the camp's school system even when you have the energy and desire to grow ... Being labeled as an incentive teacher who cannot be paid salary just like my local peers is painful.

The human resources, particularly the teachers, indicated that they receive little incentive to work and are not well prepared as instructors. Many are teaching not because they are passionate about this kind of job, but because it is the only work, they can find. Teacher Achol stated, "I teach because it is the only opportunity available at my disposal right now. I also want to gain experience working with people so that when I go

somewhere else, I can be more effective. That is why I teach.” She added, “Working with this type of population requires special preparation. So, the only rewarding and enjoyable aspect of this job is the little incentive I get and the experience I am gaining... You know that I am not trained to teach.” Similarly, WTO3, a Windle Trust officer, noted,

The obstacles and barriers are many. First, the turnover is very high because of the low-quality work environment we have here. Most teachers are only here because they have nowhere else to find work. Once somebody gets an opportunity somewhere else, they leave.

The refugee teachers receive very little pay. According to Teacher Miading Luong, “A refugee teacher is paid Kenya Shillings 6,000 to 9,000.” This is equivalent to said US\$50 – \$80. Similarly, Teacher Mialual mentioned that “A trained refugee teacher is paid Ksh. 10,150 and the untrained teacher is paid around Ksh. 9,000.” Teacher Miading Luong in the focus group also talked about the unequal treatment of refugee teachers compared to Kenyan teachers particularly when it comes to compensation, stating:

Being a refugee is not always easy as we face unequal treatment. Despite being a teacher and teaching the same content and similar workload compared to the national teachers [Kenyan] teachers, there is a great disparity in terms of compensation. The Kenyan teachers [national teachers] earn seven times our stipend [incentives]. When we demanded for increment in our compensation, which should be at least a quarter of what the national teachers are paid (Ksh. 15,750 = \$120 USD) per month, we were summarily fired from work by JRS

management. The UNHCR camp manager later reversed this mass dismissal of refugee teachers. Even with that intervention, our compensation as refugee teachers remains at Ksh.9000 flat (\$80 USD) per month.

**Theme 3.2: Learning Materials and Lack of Sustainable Power.** Sufficient learning materials and stable electricity are needed by the schoolteachers for them to work effectively. Four teachers and one Windle Trust official mentioned this six times. The teachers face challenges in relation to learning materials and sustainable electricity. When talking about the challenges they face in school, Teacher Achol reported that some of the challenges include, “limited teaching materials such as textbooks.” Teacher Mialual noted,

Yes, we have a technology room here in the school. There are computers and a projector in there. If I want my students to see a video clip, I take them there. Another challenge which comes with such technology is the lack of electricity to power them. I normally find ways to assist up to and including finding video clips on the internet and have such students watch them so that they understand from different explanations and perspectives.

Likewise, Teacher Miading Luong reported,

In fact, we have a technology laboratory in which if I want my class to watch a video, I take them there to do so. We have chrome books that are loaned for a short time. But the challenge is one and one only. We do not have a sustainable source of power to charge our phones, leave alone chrome books or computers.

**Theme 3.3: Technology Integration.** Four participants contributed to this theme. The participants spoke about how they have integrated technology into their classroom lessons. Specifically, they talked about how they have integrated technology devices such as tablets. This has in turn helped to boost student performance. During the interview, Teacher Mialual noted that:

We have INS rooms in school which I have been referring to the learners to go and research on Several topics. I have been giving some academic links to the learners and several other search machines for the learner to go and look for other topic content.

In the focus group, Teacher Mohamed mentioned that:

I have always integrated technology with the help of our INS-department where students use tablets to search and read any content that might be quite challenging. Moreover, I have always advised my students to utilize platforms like you-tube listen to and watch educative programs. This has proved crucial with students' performance improving greatly. Therefore, technology in classroom is important only if students use it for the right purposes.

### ***School Culture and Political Contexts***

This category, which includes two themes, concerns the perceptions of the schoolteachers regarding the challenges they experience at the refugee camp school beyond their daily work in the classroom. First, the school culture influences the teachers. The culture is largely related to the structure and leadership or management of the school,

including how the refugee teachers are viewed by their local counterparts, the Kenyan teachers. Second, teachers have perceptions about the socioeconomic and political challenges they face, which includes some misinformation.

**Theme 4.1: Socioeconomic and Political Challenges.** There are various socioeconomic and political challenges at the school. All seven participants mentioned this. According to WTO3, a Windle Trust officer, “Most teachers are only here because they have nowhere else to find work. Once somebody gets an opportunity somewhere else, they leave.” Similarly, WTO2 noted, “Lack of money to fund their preparations and certification is the central obstacle and barriers. The money to pay their salaries is also an issue.” According to Teacher Miading Luong,

Those political controversies are many. Charging refugee children is indeed one of them. It is not even \$30 dollars only. There is added cost for buying reams of paper and calculators. It is more than that. In fact, when these fees were introduced, there was a strike for a year. Capping refugee teachers’ incentives at around Ksh.12,000 (\$100) and below is another. Most importantly, it is now impossible for a refugee teacher to grow into becoming an administrator. The Kakuma Refugee’s education system, as I observed, is a battleground for employment politics between the refugees and the locals.

Top positions in the schools within Kakuma Refugee Camp are reserved for local Kenyans. It is not uncommon to find that locals head most schools here, whereas most of the employees are refugees. A refugee teacher with many years of experience as a teacher

is hardly ever promoted into an administrator position whereas locals without much teaching experience can easily become school administrator. This could perhaps be because the locals have training unlike the refugee teachers. Speaking about socio-political challenges in the refugee schools, Teacher Mialual noted, “The socio-political movements that are currently coming in from time to time is an issue that can’t be brought to a stop currently unless the responsible bigger agencies are informed and are able to listen to us.” Similarly, Teacher Achol in the focus group spoke about socio-political issues at the camp, saying:

I normally try as much possible not to involve in any political related activities in the camp. However, sometimes I view it not fair seeing a student [refugee] being sent home because he/she cannot afford the \$30 dollars each student needs to pay per a school year. This is because many refugee students are minors and with no one to take care of them. There are no available jobs and to add salt to injury, refugees are given peanut food ration each month. Hence, the little money they can afford to get is spent on food or medication since medical services are also quite terrible.

**Theme 4.2: Managerial and Structural.** Refugee teachers are impacted by the school structure and management. Besides, the findings indicate that Kenyan teachers and other Kenyan officials look them down upon them. Three participants, namely, two teachers and a Windle officer mentioned this issue 10 times. According to Teacher Miading Luong, “I have no issues with the school. I am qualified to teach (meaning he is

experienced to teach). However, the national teachers look down on us...The national teachers up to and including interns are paid at least Ksh.20,000.” It is notable that Kenya Shillings 20,000 is equivalent to \$180 USD. Teacher Miading Luong went on to explain, “Not all Kenyan teachers look down on us. Some of them are very friendly and kind.” WTO2, a Windle Trust officer, reported, “I don’t call refugee teachers incentive teachers. They are refugee teachers who are making a lot of sacrifices to serve their own people. There is no need to look down on them.”

### **Summary**

My time listening to and observing these refugee teachers revealed considerable challenges when working with students both within and outside the classroom. Inside the classroom, the key challenges include behavior of the learners like not being attentive when the teacher was teaching, difficulty teaching and discipling some students because of tribal culture or being overage, and there was overcrowding in the classroom. Outside the classroom, there were challenges in relation to teaching and learning resources. The teachers or human resources were faced with challenges such as inadequate pay, receiving little incentive to work, lack of professional and career development opportunities as teachers could never become administrators, and insufficient learning materials.

Nonetheless, the teachers also indicated that they feel happy when students succeed and excel despite the hardship in the school. Teacher Miading Luong mentioned:



The happiness of a teacher is seeing their student prosper. The best moments I have had in my three years of teaching stints is seeing my students excel with some making it to Canada via World University Service of Canada (WUSC) scholarship, others succeeded in getting accepted into the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship, and still some got into the MasterCard Scholarship program. In the classroom, the best moment is seeing a student who was once struggling to do anything in class try and be able to participate fully in doing classwork.

There were also challenges pertaining to school culture and political contexts. The refugee teachers experienced socioeconomic and political challenges. In addition, they were impacted by the school culture, including the school structure and management, low pay, and being looked down upon by Kenyan teachers and other Kenyan officials. Furthermore, there were challenges pertaining to knowledge of pedagogy and content. With their limited knowledge of content and pedagogy, the participants helped students who struggled with course materials given their refugee backgrounds, giving largely informational instruction. They were also only teaching students to pass examinations, as they were not familiar with child-centered teaching strategies. Besides, the teachers were required to instruct students using the curriculum prescribed by the Kenyan government. In Chapter 5, I continue to discuss these findings, examine the limitations of the study, and consider the implications, conclusions, and recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions**

In this ethnographic study, my goal was to understand the problems and possibilities facing refugee teachers in a refugee camp school. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to gain better understanding of how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of a host country's TSC perceived and interacted with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students. With that in mind, the study addressed the following research question: How do refugee teachers, without prior formal preservice preparations, perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools?

In this chapter, I will highlight my interpretation of the findings from this study, methodology, and theoretical framework to make recommendations on how to solve the problems encountered by the teachers. A deeper understanding of refugee teachers' experiences with refugee children can help identify the gaps in knowledge that may be addressed in future studies. In this research, I explored the phenomenon through the lens of critical ethnography, a qualitative methodology through which researchers must be present in the field for cultural immersion both formally and informally with the interlocutors. Having documented the problems facing the refugee teachers in Kakuma Refugee Camp, I used critical ethnography and especially TribalCrit as a theoretical framework to disentangle the underlying politics of classism between the refugee and

local teachers. The use of TribalCrit as a lens to unmask power dynamics between the refugee and local teaching workforce is intended to decenter legacies of colonial imperialism which serves as the backdrop of Kenya's education system. By categorizing refugee teachers' knowledges as less valuable than the local teachers, compensating them less, and treating them disrespectfully with the use of demeaning language such as "incentive teachers," the people (and institutions) in power are building a narrative of othering and social inequality in Kenya as a whole.

### **Discussion of Themes**

Before delving into discussing these themes, I would like to caution readers to critically examine my positionality. Although I am an African by ethnicity with lived experiences as a refugee student in the same camp, my acculturation into a Western lens cannot be ignored. I went to college in the Western world, prepared to become a teacher in Western institutions, and currently teach in the United States. It is noteworthy that a critical reader, particularly a member of Kenya's teaching workforce or a UNHCR officer in a refugee camp, could contest my interpretation of the power dynamics in the Kakuma Refugee Camp school systems as coming from a Western hegemonic lens.

Stuart Hall (1992) considered the West an idea, a linguistic tool for visualizing stories, philosophies, occurrences in history, and social relationships. Hall continued to contend that the idea of the West, with assumed positivist research tradition, avails the basis for categorizing societies; condense their complex images through a system of representation, assign them a standard model of comparison, evaluate them, and rank

them without their voices. Enlightened by Hall's argument, my positionality as a Western educated schoolteacher is a considerable vulnerability throughout my interpretation of interlocutors' experiences. The refugee teachers and Windle Trust personnel are ones who work in the camp every year. I am only visiting them. They know more than I do.

During my two summer visits to Kenya, I interacted with seven participants through classroom observations, semiformal and informal interviews, and focus group discussions. Among them, four were refugee teachers and three were senior officers of Windle Trust, the agency UNHCR contracted to manage two refugee camps' secondary schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp. In my discussion, I will focus on the following key themes distilled from my findings in Chapter 4 on the challenges and possibilities faced by refugee teachers: (a) behavior of students such as not being attentive; (b) difficulty teaching and disciplining some students due to overage, trauma, or tribal culture; (c) overcrowding in classroom; (d) refugee backgrounds; (c) prescribed curriculum; (d) human resources; (e) learning resources; (c) socioeconomic and political challenges; and (d) managerial, structural challenges, and being looked down upon.

### ***Challenges to Teaching and Learning***

The Students at the Center of learning framework as advanced by Harrington and DeBruler (2019) includes four well-researched principles: (a) personalized learning (choice); (b) student agency (voice); (c) competency-based progression; and (d) real world connection to each material of core ideas of the content. These four principles of teaching and learning drive a deeper understanding that disrupts oppressive structures to

provide students with equitable opportunities to learn new skills, knowledge, and dispositions that enable them to realize their fullest potential. These tenets are overlapping and complementary.

In my observations in the classroom, the primary challenge refugee teachers experience is the students' substantial difficulties attending to learning in typical classrooms in the refugee camp. The cause of these inattentive behaviors among refugee learners has only been hypothesized but never clinically ascertained (Kirk & Winthrop, 2007). As a teacher prepared in a preservice program in the United States, my assumption is that the students' behavior in this context may be attributed at least partly to a lack of proper preparation of teachers to enable them to constructively interact with the content pedagogically. Besides, based on my own lived experiences, I assume that refugee children could be traumatized by so many negative experiences they or their relatives have gone through or could still be going through. With that in mind, every teacher who teaches refugee children should be well versed in trauma-responsive teaching strategies. Content teaching that is constructive centers on the child, prioritizing what needs to be taught by the teacher and learned by the learner. That simply means teaching the child the skills to solve problems and not necessarily pre-structured content. That means teaching the whole child and not necessarily an isolated content.

According to Latif et al. (2016), teachers and students think that larger class sizes, the injustice of teachers, the students' desire to seek attention and power, students' emotional problems, poor teaching, and classroom management styles are the

main causes of disruptive behavior of students in a classroom. The teachers in this study perceived overcrowding, being underpaid, a lack of promotion or career advancement opportunities for them as they could not become administrators, a lack of teacher preparation, inattentive students, and cultural issues as some of the problems they experienced.

During my summer of 2023 visit to Kakuma, I was invited to visit a few of the classes during examination times. From my observation, about 160 children, on average, share a classroom; this class size means that the desk to pupil ratio is higher than the standard 1:6. With that estimate, I would estimate that the average teacher to learner ratio stands at 1:160 in the camp-based schools. By talking to various teachers and administrators during informal encounters, I found that, generally, 78% of teachers in Kakuma, Kalobeyi, and Dadaab camps are refugees and considered unqualified in accordance with the TSC standards. The quantity and quality of physical resources available is a push out factor and could be directly linked to limited access, irregular pupil attendance, drop-out rate, children's safety and security, low academic performance, and low transition to high grades. With the detailed data above, refugee teachers in camp schools often face many challenges in the classroom day after day (Reliefweb, 2022). Overcrowding is a daily phenomenon at the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools. Every single classroom I observed during lessons by the four teacher participants contained many learners, if not all, whose homes have been destroyed or witnessed the destruction of the homes of their neighbors and injury or death of their relatives in

conflicts back in their original home countries. Some still live with disabilities either from birth or sustained during violent encounters during conflicts in their original countries. The composition of the classes I observed included former child soldiers, sexual abuse victims, or children whose siblings were killed in the conflicts. Their schooling was certainly interrupted for long as they shifted from their homes back in their home countries to their current host nation. Some of the refugee students appeared too overaged to be in normal secondary schools as they were over 20 years old. In one class I observed, there was a woman who, from her appearance, I could estimate her age to be not less than 50 years.

Classroom overcrowding causes distraction to learning. Overcrowded classes increase distraction, which, in turn, increases students' cognitive load, making teachers' instructions ineffective. Cognitive load in education is a learning theory developed by an Australian theorist John Sweller. Sweller (1972) used Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory as the foundation to explain how children learn. Moreover, other researchers have reported that the greater the number of students within a classroom, the less attention each learner can get from the instructor (Griffiths, 2017). In overcrowded classrooms, the level of noise is high, which can make it more difficult for the students to concentrate, affecting learning outcomes.

Teachers are also affected as overcrowding makes it harder for them to focus, resulting in more stress and even burnout (Grandi, 2022). Moreover, proper formal teacher preparation will give teachers the strategies for dealing with issues that affect the

quality of learning. Examples of such strategies include providing culturally relevant teaching, using student-centered instruction and student-led classroom, employing experiential learning, providing feedback, using inquiry-based instruction, and appropriately using formative and summative assessment (Hammond, 2014). Hammond (2014) claimed that brain receives information in stimuli-like schemas (building blocks) and some of these are sent to the short-term working memory. If these schemas are not used in time, that information is forgotten. Conversely, too much stuffing of information does not increase the long-term memory. Sweller (1972) concluded that learning is much better retained when it is offered in separate pieces, as learners can properly process the building blocks of knowledge called schemas and consequently retain them better. With too many learners in tiny spaces, learning is theoretically deluded.

### ***Responding to Marginalized Cultural Identities***

The participants' interviews and focus groups revealed that refugees' cultural identities and values are positioned as inferior within the new societies they enter (in this case, Kenya). As a result, they may feel and experience critical moments of their daily livelihood (in schools or work) as outsiders. In the case of the four refugee teachers who were followed during this study, this lower positioning in their professional or social interface with the local peers made them perceive or really experience cultural marginalization as they lived within two cultures but had not been fully integrated into either of them. It is an unfortunate situation to be in through no fault of their own. This



treatment hinders their progress and discourages others from helping them when they could.

Similar findings have been reported by other scholars, including Grabska (2006) who found that Sudanese refugees in Cairo, Egypt, were marginalized not only culturally but also politically, economically, and socially. Nonetheless, despite the marginalization, the Sudanese refugees in Cairo continued participating and contributing to the transformation of urban spaces in the Egyptian city. Despite the limited access to services and rights and social exclusion, many of them balanced costs and risks of marginalization to advance their livelihoods (Grabska, 2006). Furthermore, Im (2021) posited that refugees are typically viewed and treated as a marginalized and excluded group because of their political labeling and legal status. Moreover, examining these findings through the TribalCrit lens suggests that the Government of Kenya has no interest in preparing refugee teachers in refugee camps such as Kakuma in accordance with the TSC, which is a political stance. The failure by the Kenyan government to include refugee teachers in their preservice preparation programs is based upon ethnic ontology. Besides, Kenya's education system is itself a relic of British colonialism and it comprises of practices, knowledge, and theories that are not founded upon the local Kenyan contexts (Government of Kenya, 2007).

My interactions through formal interviews with three Windle Trust officers revealed that refugee teachers are perceived as people of low socioeconomic and political status. They are not paid well by de jure and de facto. Meaning, by law, they are seen as

“foreigners” who do not deserve equal salaries as their equal peers. Interviews with the Windle Trust interlocutors highlighted other challenges faced by refugees, including insufficient school infrastructure, equipment, and instructional materials; unqualified and inadequate teaching staff; differences in language and curriculum; and economic hardship. Factually, refugee teachers are only given incentives by the UNHCR agencies, which are intended to make them happy and motivated. By comparison, their local Kenyan peers with formal teacher training are paid salaries. As result, refugee teachers feel despised and intentionally categorized in a lower social class.

My conversation with the teachers in 2023 revealed considerable frustration with the compensation disparity between the refugee teachers and Kenyan teachers. A Kenyan teacher earns about Kenya shillings 50,000 (\$500 USD) per month, which is significantly higher than a flat rate of Kenya shillings 9,000 (\$90 USD) that refugee teachers earn per month. This analysis is consistent with the TribalCrit theoretical framework, which addresses the colonial and xenophobic nature of Kenya’s schooling institutions and education system. This theory depicts the unfavorable experiences of refugee teachers in the areas of compensation, a lack of training, as well as problematic representations of pedagogy (Bayly, 2016). Despising refugee teachers is an indication that the school system is xenophobic towards the refugee teachers.

The lack of a well-prepared teaching workforce, especially in places of protracted refugee encampment such as Kakuma Refugee Camp, is a significant barrier to learning for refugee children (Palmqvist, 2006). Given their refugee backgrounds, Levi (2019)

noted that for many students in encampments, adjusting to the education system of their host nation is a challenge, and they often struggle in the classroom. For such students, it is important that instructors give them additional help to enable them grasp course materials effectively (Barghadouch et al., 2016). However, owing to political, structural, and financial challenges, schools in refugee encampments are often poorly resourced and many lack adequate and well-trained teaching staff to teach the prescribed curriculum (Barghadouch et al., 2016), consistent with the themes developed in this study.

### ***Economic Poverty in the Camp***

Refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp are extremely poor. They left all their belongings and wealth behind and came to host nations to seek safety from war or fighting, or escape from persecution (UNHCR, 2022). This group excludes people who are internally displaced back in their home countries. According to the 1951 UN Convention, a refugee is someone who lacks the ability or willingness to return to their home country due to reasonable fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group, or holding divergent political perspective. The schools in the camps are affected by the poverty therein. Because of their limited financial resources, the schools cannot afford to pay the refugee teacher's salary, just giving them incentives instead. In addition, due to poverty, the schools do not have sufficient learning materials, a trend that also supports the themes of this study. Besides, owing to poverty, the refugee teachers indicated that they lack money to fund their

preparations and certification, which is consistent with the themes that emerged in this study.

In my conversation with various stakeholders running refugee education system, refugees generally provide free labor because the law prohibits their employment. They only work as volunteers and paid incentives. I also found that secondary education is not free for all learners. They pay a fee of Kenya shillings 3,000 per year (\$30 USD) plus other expenses including books, printing papers and cost of uniform. Based on these interactions, I learned that roughly 50% of refugee children are out of schools.

Refugees in Kenya have found safe spaces free of violence as they are well secured by armed personnel. The refugees experience relative political stability and peace in a host country like Kenya, despite regular problematic local elections and terrorist activities, which often serve as a reminder of the violence they had fled from in their home countries. The camps, however, are not always holy grails for refugees. According to Beltramo and Pape (2021), there were 160,000 refugees in 2021 in Kakuma Refugee Camp. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the countries of origin of these refugees are South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Uganda. They are extremely poor economically. The local population, however, does not regard the refugees as poor. Kakuma Refugee Camp is situated in Turkana County, a region that has one of the highest poverty rates in Kenya. Turkana residents are cattle keepers who live seminomadic lifestyles. Most of the Turkana people live in small huts in villages without running water or electricity. Because of this extreme poverty for some of

them, they often perceive refugees as better economically than the locals with the little free food they get from the United Nations. These perceptions, in the views of teacher participants, can affect the way refugee teachers feel and experience teaching in the camp. As Aukot (2003) stated,

The refugee-host relation remains a stumbling block. These realities challenge the UNHCR's mandate in providing "international protection" and in seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems. Humanitarian aid was exclusively channeled to the refugees without regard to their hosts despite the Daily Nation's 1999–2000 wide report on the Turkana famine that killed many. Refugee aid is not seen as humanitarian but rather constructed as an economic gain that guarantees life. (p. 75)

After reading intensively a publication by Dr. Ekiru Aukot (2003), a prominent Kenyan lawyer of Turkana identity who ran for president in a previous Kenyan general election, I made an appointment to meet him over lunch in Nairobi on the sidelines of this research. I asked Dr. Aukot, "Do you still think that it is impossible to integrate the refugees into the local community?" By the local community, I implied the Turkana people. Paraphrasing what he has written, Dr. Aukot maintained that integration of the refugees in Kakuma is impossible because the conflicts between the refugees and local people are still inherent in the socio-cultural set-up, which does not have the capacity to absorb the refugees. Because of these cultural norms, the locals still reject and segregate the refugees. This rejection and segregation is driven by the refugees' inability to speak

the local language. He went on to explain that the relegation of Kakuma refugees is driven by the perceptions of the host community and educational and occupational differences between the refugees and hosts (E. Aukot, personal communication, July 30, 2022). Of course, these are some of the variables, which determine the speed, the direction, and the level of integration. This analysis is consistent with the TribalCrit theory, which helps understand the challenges faced by Indigenous people within educational contexts (Babatola, 2013). In the case of the refugees, this framework helps understand the lived experiences of refugees and refugee teachers in Kakuma, for instance, the conflicts they have with the local Turkana people. The theory also helps to analyze the problems effectively and thoroughly they encounter. One of the teachers shared a story on how his wife, a mother of his two children, was lured into a new relationship by a local Turkana man on his watch. All these humiliations, inequalities, and put-downs are fueled by the refugees' material poverty simply because of their status. Furthermore, as per TribalCrit theory, the use of refugee teachers in the Kakuma encampment to provide instruction to refugee children promotes practices in schools allows refugees to promote their home cultures rather than integrate in the local culture.

During our luncheon in Nairobi, Aukot argued that refugees in Kakuma, like their hosts, are victims of discriminatory systems. Economically, refugees cannot by law participate in the local productive system (E. Aukot, personal communication, July 30, 2022). For example, refugee teachers who teach in refugee schools are not treated like their local counterparts. They are not paid salaries but rather mere incentives for the same

work done by their local counterparts. Although I was told that the refugee teachers are not assigned the same teacher workload as their local counterparts, this does not answer the question why they are not treated equally. Besides, my findings indicate that they feel a sense of humiliation, whether real or perceived, by being categorized as incentive teachers. They feel intentionally denied an opportunity to use of their ideas, talents, and aspiration to grow and lead in the society they live in. During the final focus group discussion in 2023, a teacher interjected with the following lamentation:

A trained refugee teacher is paid Ksh. 10,150 and the untrained teacher is paid around Ksh. 9000. Apart from few learners who tend to think national teachers are superior to the refugee teachers, a good deal of the learners believes on my content delivery and that is the part of my day-to-day practice, which is rewarding to me. Dealing with some disciplinary cases from time to time is always rewarding to me since it has always been successful.

This view highlights the theme of managerial and structural challenges given that the teachers are looked down upon by Kenyan teachers and other Kenyan officials due to their refugee status. It also highlights the theme of socioeconomic and political challenges as money to pay these teachers' salaries is lacking, and top positions in the schools within Kakuma Refugee Camp are reserved for local Kenyans. These challenges only add to the feelings of marginalization and exclusion of the refugees in Kakuma, in line with the TribalCrit theory.

These refugees continue to be marginalized economically and socially, which is consistent with the second tenet of TribalCrit. As per the second tenet, the policies of the U.S. government for Indigenous Peoples are rooted in imperialist motivations, White Supremacy, and self-interest. In the refugee context, the citizens of host countries, namely, the local people in Kakuma, are inclined to benefit from refugees in a one-way conduit. The local citizens despise the refugees and treat them like lower class people, which is part of a broader neocolonialism common in many African nations. Former imperialists use the elite Africans to perpetuate neocolonialism (Babatola, 2013). The policies of many African countries continue to be entrenched in the culture of former imperialists.

The number of refugees has gone up two-fold in scope over the last 10 years (Concern Worldwide US, 2019). In 2022, the UNHCR announced that the world has surpassed the 100 million marks in the total displacement of refugees. This figure means over 1.2% of the global population has been forced to flee their homes. With more children with refugee backgrounds, teachers in refugee camps will need to have appropriate knowledge of pedagogy and content when providing instruction to these learners and teach them while taking their refugee backgrounds into account (Concern Worldwide US, 2019). This conclusion is in line with the themes found in this study as reflected in what one of the teachers said during a focus group discussion:

I interact with parents on daily basis since I am part of the refugee community. I help encourage parents to take their children to school. Parents to help in

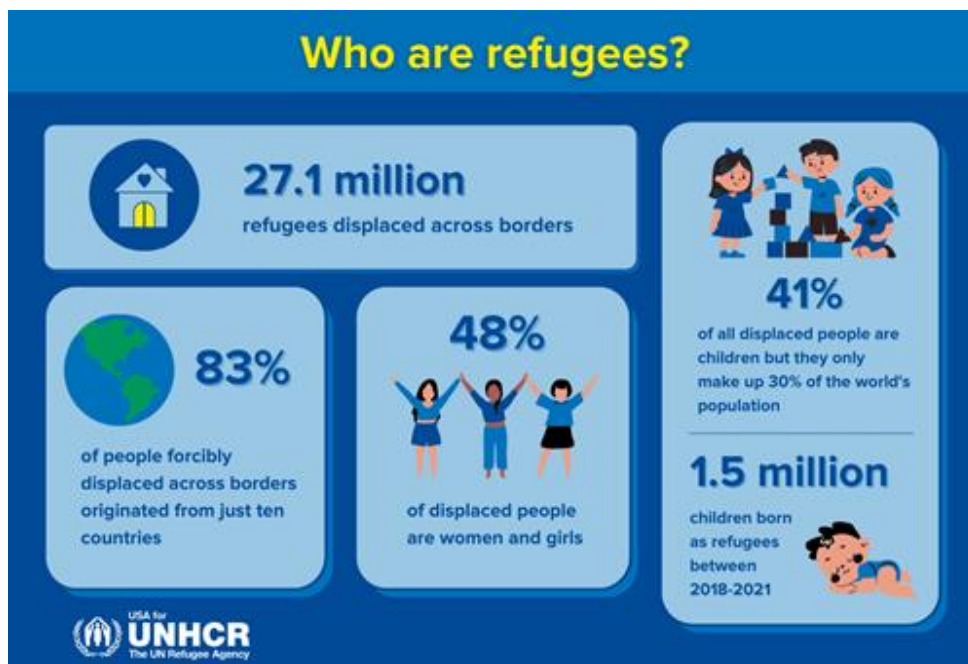


encouraging teachers to help the students as their siblings and not necessarily looking at the pay. A case like back in February/March after teachers' salary demands leading to whole incentive teachers under JRS being fired. Parents played a crucial role in convincing us to return to school and help students as fellow refugees regardless.

Figure 8 highlights five takeaways from the recent global report by the UNHCR (2021) on the refugee surge and challenges. It shows how the increase in the numbers of world's refugees has stretched the donor communities' generosity. As a result, everyone's experiences have been affected, including the refugee teachers in refugee camps.

### Figure 8

*Five Takeaways from the UNHCR Global Trends*



*Note.* UNHCR (2021) Report.

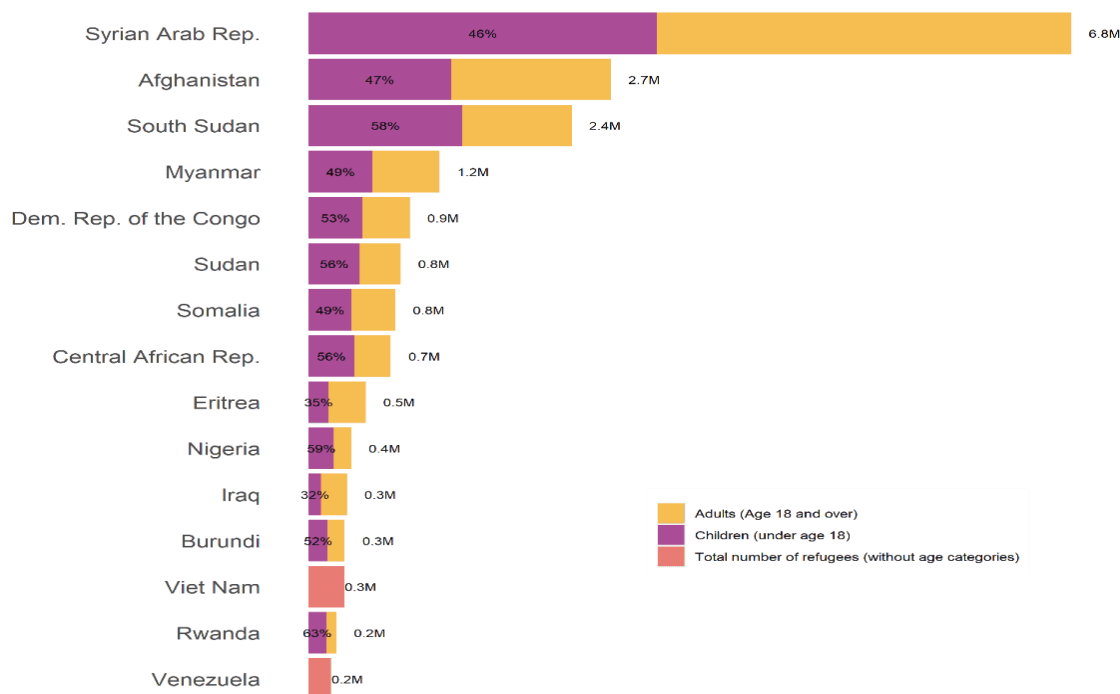
### *Teaching Resources and Tools*

Pedagogy has evolved over the years and with that evolution, new and different challenges have emerged. With the current learners influenced by modern technology, classroom management, technology resources, developmentally appropriate engaging lesson plans, and time management have become challenges faced in the current teaching and learning frontiers. What makes this study a critical imperative is the alarmingly increasing number of people being uprooted and forced out of their home countries. A recent UNHCR (2022) report revealed that the population being displaced from its home countries has more than doubled in the past decade. This trend suggests an increase in the population of not only adult refugees but also refugee children (UNHCR, 2022).

The increasing population of refugee children, particularly in global majority (so called “developing”) countries, implies that schooling institutions in such countries will be faced with the issues of overcrowding and insufficient resources including learning materials for these learners (Deckker, 2018), consistent with the themes found in this study. According to the data laid out by the UN (2022), “in 2021, an 8% increase in displacement forced an additional 7 million people to flee their homes. By the end of 2021, there were 27.1 million refugees globally and 53.2 million people displaced within their home countries” (p. 1). The graph in Figure 9 shows this forcible displacement of people by age and countries of origin.

**Figure 9**

*UNICEF Data on the Displacement of Children by the End of 2021*



*Note.* UNICEF (2022) data update on child displacement.

Students are not passive receivers of knowledge from the teacher. Rather, they come into the classroom with experiences, views, and attitudes they acquired informally and through daily life. This preexisting knowledge influences how they interact, process, and interpret learning content (Deckker, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Activating this robust and accurate knowledge at an ideal time can enable these students to learn new knowledge. This underscores the significance of culturally relevant teaching, in which the teacher uses the perspectives, experience, beliefs, characteristics, and customs of students as tools for better classroom instruction (Gay, 2010). Using this form of teaching, the

teacher connects the life experiences, languages, and cultures of the learners with what they learn in school.

On the other hand, when knowledge is not activated or inadequate for performing a learning task such as reading, activated inappropriately, or inaccurate, new learning is hampered. From the neuroscience perspective, the quality of instructions and external learning resources or activities determines how a child's brain develops and their psychological development processes (National Research Council, 2000). The National Research Council (2000) further conceded that brain and psychological developments are enabled through continuous interactions between the child and their external environment.

With more research-based knowledge on how the brain responds to learning, limited access to external teaching and learning resources for the refugee teachers in refugee camps hinders their ability to grow professionally and teach effectively. Such limited access to external resources, perhaps, contributes to negative behavioral reactions in the classroom. One of the teacher interlocutors clarified this point, saying,

I believe if technology was put into the intended purpose, it would be more crucial and supportive. I have always wanted to integrated technology with the help of our INS-department where students would use tablets to search and read any content that might be quite challenging. Moreover, I have always advised my students to utilize platforms like you-tube listen to and watch educative programs. This would prove crucial with student's performance improving greatly. Electric

power, however, is never available consistently. Therefore, technology in classroom is important only if students if available and used for the right purposes.

Neuroscience reveals three basic understandings on how brain responds or interprets external stimulations (National Research Council, 2000). These are (a) learning, which often comes in the form of external stimulations, changes the physical structure of the brain; (b) such structural changes in the brain alters the functional organizations of each learner; and (c) different parts of the brain learn at different times and may respond differently to different stimulants. That means, well rounded, complete, and effective learning only happens when the learner is physically and mentally involved by interacting directly with external stimulants or resources.

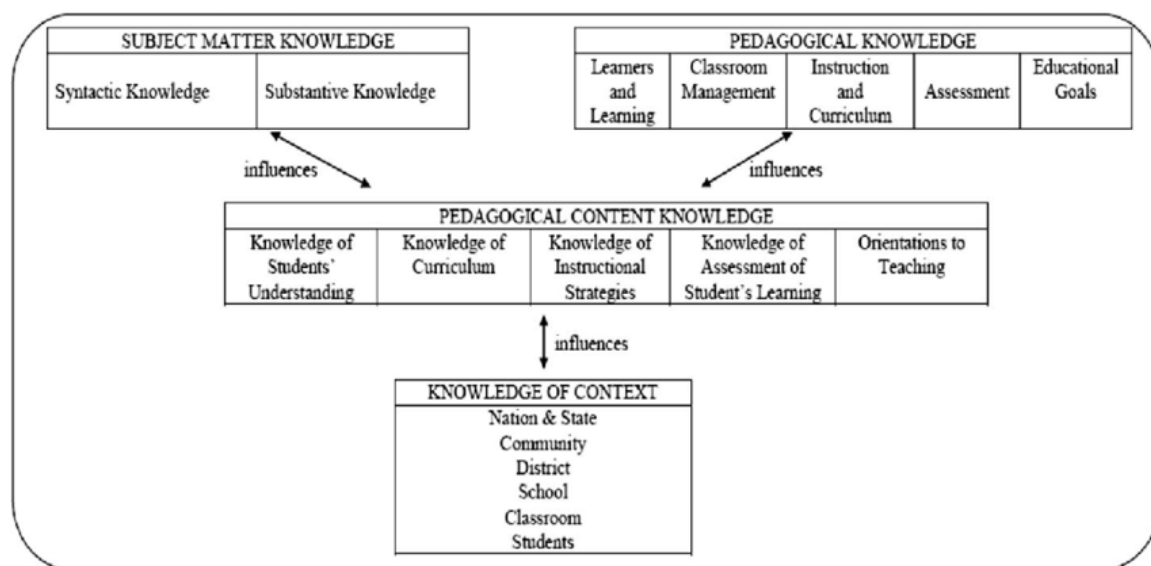
When refugee teachers depend heavily on banking methods (Freire, 2018) in which teaching is exclusively based on direct instructions with little involvement from the learners, most parts of learners' brains are not affected by this single external interactive stimulation (a pedagogical strategy based on lecturing). Besides, when the banking pedagogy is combined with limited content knowledge, as refugee teachers' highest education level is up to high school, it is reasonable to conclude that limited learning takes place in the refugee camp school classrooms because PCK of the refugee teacher workforce is limited.

PCK is the blending of pedagogy and subject content knowledge. Shulman (1987) introduced the concept of PCK in the 1980s (Shing & Mohd, 2015). Before then, both

content and pedagogy were regarded as an integrated indistinguishable body of knowledge. Shulman, however, highlighted the importance of both content and pedagogy as separate bodies of knowledge, which make teaching more effective if integrated with consciousness of their differences.

Content is about what is known, whereas pedagogy focuses on how to teach such knowledge. From my observation of each of the four refugee teachers, it is obvious that they are not prepared pedagogically as professional teachers and all of them have only 12 years of formal academic education. All of them lecture mostly from the beginning to the end of their lessons. I asked one teacher after my observation if he understood student-centered teaching strategies. He replied, “I have heard that vocabulary many times, but I don’t understand how it really works.” All the teachers made similar comments.

This result is an indication that their content knowledge is limited to teaching basic content from their high school background, which is tantamount to asking eighth graders to teach sixth graders. Figure 10 highlights a detailed analysis of what PCK really means (Grossman, 1990). My focus in the next section is answering the overall research question by summarizing triangulated data to distill refugee teachers’ experiences in their classrooms.

**Figure 10***Breaking down Pedagogical Content Knowledge*

*Note.* A model of the relationships amongst the domains of teacher knowledge, reprinted from Grossman (1990).

Although a lot of support is given to refugees from many directions freely, nobody would choose to become one if given an opportunity to find safety in a different status. Being a refugee, especially in the environment I observed, connotes shame, vulnerability, and lower social status—as per the case of incentive teachers. As I spoke to the four teacher participants in their spaces of comfort, I noticed that this sense of vulnerability permeated all the conversation, which pointed to the existence of ubiquitous trauma. Refugee teachers deal with a double trauma: their own and that of the students they teach. Researchers have reported that refugee children and adolescents experience different kinds of primary and secondary trauma. Primary trauma is experienced directly. Many refugee children have experienced trauma related to persecution or war, which

affects their physical and/or mental health long after the traumatic events have taken place (Barghadouch et al., 2016). Furthermore, Levi (2019) posited that refugees have experienced various stressful events related to war, religious and/or political oppression, migration, and resettlement.

A study that focused on Syrian refugees in Turkey revealed that among the Syrian refugee children who lived in Turkey's Islahiye camp, 30% had been physically hurt, 60% had witnessed another person being assaulted physically, and 79% had lost a family member (Dehnel et al., 2022). Secondary trauma is indirectly experienced by witnessing the aftermath or hearing details of a trauma from someone else who experienced it (Barghadouch et al., 2016). In the context of refugees, refugee children and adolescents whose parents endured primary trauma experience this type of trauma. Personally, as a former refugee myself, I have experienced both primary traumas, specifically war trauma from the conflict in Sudan, and was adversely impacted by it for a very long time. When I was a refugee learner, I experienced both primary and secondary trauma. In the interview, a teacher stated the following: "some of the challenging tasks we are dealing with is working with traumatized students due to their past life experiences. Others are traumatized due to drugs use, and peer pressures among many others."

The refugee teachers deal with double trauma. Their own trauma as refugees themselves and that of their students. I asked one teacher about their experience of being a refugee with the following questions: I am wondering if and how this experience helps



you with your work as a teacher. Do you have a related story you could share? He responded as follows:

Oh, Man! Yes, my refugee experiences keep me going. What types of stories do you want to hear? Personal stories? I have a lot of those. Some of them are too personal but I can tell, no problem. A local Kenyan guy took wife from me. Why? Because he got money? Could be of course. Well, so sad my friend. Did you have children with her? Yes! We do.

Before delving into this reality, which I observed in the classrooms, let me illuminate what trauma really is and how it affects learning. The term developmental trauma, as used in the literature, describes the trauma experienced by young people. To understand developmental trauma better, the theory of attachment must first be decoded. Attachment theory was introduced in 1958 by John Bowlby and was further built on by Mary Ainsworth 20 years later in 1973. This theory is still considered a useful framework for understanding human relationships (Bowlby, 1958). Attachment is the bonding of a child to their primary caregiver(s), usually their parent, physically and emotionally (Ainsworth, 1973).

Ainsworth (1973) explained that the nature of the attachment an infant form with their caregivers influences their interactions with their environment and how they relate with others (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). For example, a healthy, 'secure' attachment with their caregiver will motivate the infant to explore the environment and interact with others around them with confidence, assured of their safety. This attachment may also

promote the development of emotional regulation in the infant. Regarding refugee children in the Kakuma schools, due to factors such as war, many unaccompanied minors lack developmental attachment, which suggests that the parenting conditions lack safety assurances for the children.

### **Reflections on Researcher Subjectivities**

Self-construction and positionality in research are becoming more generally recognized and acknowledged, based on the idea that the research method informs reality and generates descriptions of itself (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). With that said, I would like to position myself in this research through different voices: myself as a former refugee student in Kakuma Refugee Camp (1992-2001), as a researcher in Kakuma Refugee Camp (2022-2023), and as a schoolteacher prepared and licensed in a North American preservice teacher program (2009-2023).

There is no doubt that my own life as a student in the Kakuma Refugee Camp between 1992 through 2001 served as the inspiration for this study. Although I have extensively discussed how Kakuma Refugee Camp was established in Chapter 1, the reader will have to bear with me the monotony that may be engendered by repetition of how this “me” might have interfered with intended objectivity in this research, as well as offering important insights. When I came to this camp in 1992, it was designed as haven for unaccompanied minors from Sudan and Ethiopia. I was one of those unaccompanied minors who fled one other refugee camp in Ethiopia in 1991.

I was Kakuma Refugee Camp for 8 years as a refugee student. During this time, we were always taught by refugee teachers, some of whom had no prior experience or preservice preparation. We were all first-generation refugees. Although the current refugee teachers are mostly second-generation refugees teaching third generation refugee students, my prior experience and background can interfere with my objectivity in this research.

Another area in which subjectivity can cloud my interpretation of data is my own background as a teacher prepared, licensed, and teaching in the United States. Although I have an African identity, my experiences in Western spaces of professional practices can affect the lenses I bring to this research. There could be a real or perceived power imbalance at play in my conscious or unconscious self. That means, implicit bias cannot be ruled out here.

### **Limitations of the Research**

Limitations refer to the weaknesses within a methodology or design which may influence or impact the outcomes from the research. The main limitations of this study pertain to three subcomponents of trustworthiness, namely, credibility, transferability, and dependability. First, the study may lack credibility because of the small sample size used of only seven participants and recruited from a single location, which was Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya's Turkana County, the findings may lack credibility. Second, the study may lack dependability. Because of the small sample size, other researchers may not find consistent findings if the study were to be repeated. Third, the study lacks

transferability and therefore its findings cannot be applied to other contexts, such as similar populations or situations. As this study is qualitative, it is, by design, not aiming for replicability. The three issues of trustworthiness are the main limitations of the study.

I used critical ethnography as an approach to methodology. This approach was limited by the time constraints of conducting research in a refugee camping in an international setting. This constraint served to limit the types of data sources that could be used as I ran out of time to access additional documents such as relevant documents from Turkana County Government's Ministry of Education and the United Nations offices in the county. This limitation affected the research, as it made it difficult for me to collect the "thick" ethnographic data that result from prolonged engagement in the field. During the fieldwork, the four teacher interlocutors were so vulnerable that they all declined to be recorded whenever I interviewed them. They feared being recorded for the security of their jobs and I understood them well. Therefore, they were not recorded.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Significant evidence shows that traumatic experiences have a substantial effect on child neurological development (Deckker, 2018). These findings present difficulties in many frontiers of human development such as cognitive development and social skills development. Social skills development encompasses the ability to create social relationships and regulate emotions. A combination of both social and cognitive development makes a human being successful in society.

Although more about traumatic experiences are being discovered, often linked to social identities and contexts, very little is known particularly on the refugee population, especially young, displaced refugees who are under the age of 18. I therefore recommend more research to examine the extent of developmental trauma in refugee children and how it affects their frontiers of human growth in terms of intellectual and emotional development. More research to create new knowledge on the refugee youth's trauma will inform decisions and plans which are typically made to manage challenges facing refugee education. This study revealed an average teacher to learner ratio of 1:100 in camp-based schools. In addition, 78% of the teachers in Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Dadaab camps are refugees and considered unqualified according to the TSC standards. The majority have undergone preparations ranging from in-service courses to degree courses. The remaining 22% are Kenyan nationals registered with the TSC contracted by the implementing agencies such as JRS. However, little is known regarding how refugee teachers compare with their Kenyan counterparts in terms of performance. A comparative analysis study is needed to understand the gap in their qualifications.

As noted in the discussion of limitations, only seven teachers participated in this study, which is a small sample size. Therefore, future researchers examining this topic of this study should use a larger sample. Additionally, all the participants were from only a single location, which was one school in Kakuma refugee camp. Therefore, another recommendation for future research is that participants should be recruited from multiple

locations and settings. Preferably, they should be recruited from several schools in different refugee camps.

The sampling method used in the current study was the purposeful sampling technique. Another recommendation, therefore, is that future researchers in this subject should use other sampling strategies such as quota sampling, a more nonrandom approach. The researchers could also sample the Kenyan teachers to gauge their experiences. One Kenyan teacher suggested that including them in the study would have ensured a fairer comparative analysis. Quota sampling could have encompassed their voices, which are now missing in this study. Furthermore, it is recommended that future researchers should use different research designs or even a different research methodology. The methodology adopted in this study was a qualitative approach and critical ethnography methodology and data were collected using interviews and focus groups. Using quantitative methodology in future research may yield more accurate and objective results because numerical data would be collected to compliment studies such as the current study.

Future researchers may also use a different methodology from the critical ethnography used in this study. It is worth noting that researchers can use other methodologies to gain critical perspectives of the refugee teachers besides critical ethnography. The other two critical methodologies, which could be used in future studies, include phenomenology and critical grounded theory. They all share common concepts such as societal power imbalances, social justice, reflexive practices, researcher

positionality, pragmatism philosophy, and social transformation. Digging deeper into critical methodologies requires more time and resources to understand all the underlying paradigms.

### **Implications for Practice and Policy**

Informed by the findings of this study, I have several recommendations for practice and policy. First, I recommend that refugee children be taught by teachers who look like them, speak the same language/s, underwent similar experiences, and understand their current problems. The teachers should provide culturally relevant instruction whereby they use the perspectives, experience, characteristics, and customs of the learners as tools for better classroom instruction (Mendenhall, 2018). This kind of instruction will help improve the learning outcomes of the refugee students.

Second, I recommend that refugee teachers' tertiary education should be prioritized as part of humanitarian assistance to encamped refugees. In Kenya, for example, refugee teachers should not only be given educational opportunities in local higher institutions of learning but also be funded fully by UNHCR to gain certification as teachers in accordance with the TSC standards. The funds used to pay Kenyan teachers who teach in the refugee camps' schools can be invested to prepare refugee teachers.

Third, in support of this recommendation, it is also imperative that UNHCR facilitates the refugee teachers' acquisition of work permits, Kenya Revenue Authority pins, and incorporation into the local labor unions. If well prepared, refugee teachers should then be registered with the TSC, paid salaries commensurate with the teaching

services they provide, their educational background, and years of experience, and pensioned as part of the local public employment policies.

Fourth, I recommend a clearer pathway of refugee teacher integration into the host country's teaching workforce, which is in line with the new UNHCR policy of integration. The population currently displaced due to war, conflicts, and natural disasters is unprecedented in history (Hynie, 2019). In the light of this trend, there is a growing need to promote sustainable, if not permanent, solutions to mitigate the impact of displacement. Integration into the local communities and resettlements are emerging areas of interest. However, the rate of implementation is moving at a slower pace depending on the context. The fifth recommendation is that being a signatory to the UN, Kenya should work in tandem with the international community to expedite a policy of integration. More research is needed in these areas to produce knowledge on how sustainable integration could be done by host countries. New knowledge is also needed on whether integration is the best solution to the surging refugee crisis around the world.

While at the camp, I often held informal conversations with educated locals whom I asked their perceptions toward refugee integration. It became generally clear to me that the locals have perceptions of fear toward the refugees. These fears form the backdrop of locals' attitudes toward refugees and in policy responses at the state level. According to group conflict theory, the cause of prejudice and intergroup clash is the perception of being threatened by the immigrating group (Bobo, 1983; Jackson, 1993; Sherif, 1967). These fears can be real or perceived in terms of increased cutthroat



competition for material resources under the control of one's local groups such as jobs, healthcare, or spaces of social cohesion.

### **Conclusion**

The lack of meaningful opportunities for preservice and in-service professional development of refugee educators serving in refugee camps in Kenya is impacting the quality of education provided to refugee children. Most instructors who teach in schools in refugee settlements such as Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northwest Kenya have not been prepared pedagogically or certified as required by the TSC. In this study, I adopted a qualitative, critical ethnography approach to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of the TSC perceive and interact with PCK and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in Kenyan refugee camp schools. Another aim of this study was to inform the host country's policymakers and the UN refugee service providers that teachers teaching in an emergency environment such as Kakuma Refugee Camp are at the heart of essential student learning.

The research problem addressed in this study was that given the context of teachers teaching in Kakuma refugee schools, teaching without formal preservice pedagogical preparations must be a challenging undertaking. Data analysis yielded nine major themes that helped address the research question. These are behavior of students such as not being attentive, difficulty teaching and disciplining some students due to overage or tribal culture, overcrowding in classroom, refugee backgrounds, and

prescribed curriculum. Others are human resources; learning resources; socioeconomic and political challenges; and managerial, structural challenges, and being looked down upon. These findings confirm what other researchers have reported and are consistent with the theoretical framework for this study, the TribalCrit.

I was a refugee student in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp from the early 1990s to the early 2000s. The way we were taught, in my observation and by talking to the four teachers I worked with, is still the way refugee teachers teach today in Kakuma Refugee Camp. It is unfortunate to learn that refugee teachers are othered and exploited by the local teaching workforce. They are teachers, not assistant teachers, and hence should be treated equally by the Kenyan authorities as the local teachers.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Informed Consent Form: Refugee Teacher Participants, Kakuma**

#### **Refugee Camp**

**Student Researcher:** James Adiok Mayik

**Committee Chair/Faculty Advisor:** Prof. John Nimmo

**Title of the Study:** Teaching in a Kenyan Refugee Camp: A Critical Ethnography of the Impact of Teacher Preparation and Cultural Experience on Pedagogy.

---

I am asking for your voluntary participation in my teacher education research. Please read the following information about the project. If you would like to participate, please sign in the appropriate box below.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the proposed study is to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of Kenya Teacher Service Commission (TSC) perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in Kenyan refugee camp schools.

**If you participate, you will be asked to:** (1) attend one-on-one unstructured and semi-structured interviews of more than an hour at a place and time that is convenient to you, (2) a focus group discussion together with three other teachers and myself (90 minutes), and (3) be informally observed on the equivalent of 4 full days working days while teaching the classrooms over the course of 2 or more weeks. During my time in your classroom, I anticipate that we will engage in informal conversations about what I am observing. If you orally consent, I will audio-record our interview with a digital recorder.

**Time Required for Participation:** Maximum of two months.

**Unseen Risks:** Some interview questions, discussions, and classroom observations will make you uncomfortable. Your participation is voluntary and won't be compensated financially. Some of your personal artifacts such as photos/images and taped audios may

be revealed to the consumers of this research product. There may be other risks that are not anticipated. However, every effort will be made to minimize any risks.

**Benefits:** Your participation will be a great learning experience and contribution to the production of new knowledge to the academic community and beyond.

**How Confidentiality will be Maintained:** Your personal information such as health status, sexual orientation, and any information you want us to protect will not be revealed to the consumers of this research product.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact:

Student Researcher:

James Adiok Mayik at [jmayik@pdx.edu](mailto:jmayik@pdx.edu)

Committee Chair/Faculty Advisor:

Prof. John Nimmo at [jnimmo@pdx.edu](mailto:jnimmo@pdx.edu)

**Institutional Review Board:** If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the Portland State University Office for Research Integrity (ORI) at (503) 725-2227 or 1(877) 480-4400. The ORI is the office that supports the PSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is a group of people from PSU and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity>.

**Unforeseen risk: Cost to participate:** There is no cost for your participation in this study.  
**Compensation:** There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question. By signing this form, you are attesting that you have read and understood the information above, and you freely give your consent to participate in this research.

Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reviewed & Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Informed Consent Form: Windle Trust Education Management**

### **Participants, Kakuma Refugee Camp**

**Student Researcher:** James Adiok Mayik

**Committee Chair/Faculty Advisor:** Prof. John Nimmo

**Title of the Study:** Teaching in a Kenyan Refugee Camp: A Critical Ethnography of the Impact of Teacher Preparation and Cultural Experience on Pedagogy.

---

I am asking for your voluntary participation in my teacher education research. Please read the following information about the project. If you would like to participate, please sign in the appropriate box below.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the proposed study is to understand how refugee teachers with no formal preservice preparation in accordance with the standards of Kenya Teacher Service Commission (TSC) perceive and interact with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with students in Kenyan refugee camp schools.

**If you participate, you will be asked to:** participate in a one-on-one interview for approximately an hour at a time and place that is convenient to you. If you orally consent, I will audio-record our interview with a digital recorder.

**Time Required for Participation:** Maximum of One Week.

**Unseen Risks:** Some interview questions will make you a little uncomfortable. Your participation is voluntary and won't be compensated financially. Some of your personal artifacts such as photos/images and taped audios may be revealed to the consumers of this research product. There may be other risks that are not anticipated. However, every effort will be made to minimize any risks.



**Benefits:** Your participation will be a great learning experience and contribution to the production of new knowledge to the academic community and beyond.

**How Confidentiality will be Maintained:** Your personal information such as health status, sexual orientation, and any information you want us to protect will not be revealed to the consumers of this research product.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact:

Student Researcher:

James Adiok Mayik at [jmayik@pdx.edu](mailto:jmayik@pdx.edu)

Committee Chair/Faculty Advisor:

Prof. John Nimmo at [jnimmo@pdx.edu](mailto:jnimmo@pdx.edu)

**Institutional Review Board:** If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the Portland State University Office for Research Integrity (ORI) at (503) 725-2227 or 1(877) 480-4400. The ORI is the office that supports the PSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is a group of people from PSU and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/integrity>.

**Unforeseen risk:** Cost to participate: There is no cost for your participation in this study.  
**Compensation:** There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question. By signing this form, you are attesting that you have read and understood the information above, and you freely give your consent to participate in this research.

Printed Name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reviewed & Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Interview Questions for Refugee Teachers**

Questions and answers will be coded under the following categories:

Behavior/experience, opinion/value, knowledge, and background/demographic.

### ***Behavior/Experience Questions***

- Could you describe the typical experiences of your day-to-day practices in the school/workplace?
- Could you describe the typical experiences of your day-to-day practices in the classroom?
- What kinds of tasks or activities are rewarding and enjoyable for you in the whole of your workplace and inside your typical classroom?
- What kinds of tasks or activities are difficult or challenging for you in the whole of your workplace and inside your typical classroom?
- How do you approach student discipline in your teaching practice and what role does it play in learning?
- Parents and other family members are an important part of the learning process and teachers must have the ability to communicate with them in a positive way to help the students be successful. On your part as a teacher in the camp, how do you interact with parents?
- Technology such as cellphones, calculators, internet, and more these days has become a commonplace in the teaching arena as a teaching and learning tool in

many classrooms. What do you think of technology in the classroom and how have you integrated it into your lessons?

- Can you share a story from your classroom experience in the past year that illustrates (a) a challenge you face as a teacher? (b) what brings you joy and satisfaction in your work?
- What do you do when you notice one or more students struggling with course material?

### ***Opinion/Value Questions***

- How do you view yourself as a role model to your students in and outside the school?
- In your opinion, what personality traits do you think teachers need to be successful in the teaching profession?
- Creative teaching involves showing the students how the lesson topic/content relates to their own lives and the real world. This can help students develop a greater sense of purpose in the process of their learning. In your best opinion, how can teachers develop their creativity in the classroom?

### ***Content Knowledge***

- How do you decide what content knowledge and competencies are important for your students to have?

- Content knowledge generally refers to the facts, concepts, theories, and principles that are taught and learned in specific academic courses. Could you, please, describe any specific areas of strength within your content area?
- If you could teach just one grade level and subject within your content area, what would you choose? Why?
- What sorts of assessment, both formal and informal, do you view as being important indicators of successful performance for students learning your content area? Can you share an example of how to do this?
- If you could teach any novel, what would it be and what would your students be doing?
- How do you adjust for reading level differences within your classroom?

### ***Background/Demographic Questions***

- According to the UNHCR statistics (UNHCR, 2021), Kakuma refugee camp is home to 160,000 refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Uganda. As a teacher in a refugee, could you, please, describe the demographic diversity in your school and classroom?

- How do you create a classroom culture that intentionally welcomes, respects, and supports students from different nations/ethnic, gender identities, and socioeconomic backgrounds?
- You have experienced being a refugee yourself. I am wondering if and how this experience will help you with your work as a teacher. Do you have a related story you could tell?
- There have been and still there could still be several political controversies in the camp which often impact teaching and learning in the schools. One example is that there have been calls for refugee students to access high school education for a fee of \$30 dollars per year. There have also been calls to replace refugee teachers with Kenyan teachers. By choosing your own examples, how do you engage and deal with these socio-political movements?
- What is your long-term goal with your teaching career?

### **Windle Trust International Participants**

- I have never run an education program in a refugee camp before. Could you, please, take me through how it looks like working with teachers in a refugee camp school?
- Why do you think the UNHCR set up a separate education system inside the refugee camps? What do you think are the goals and reasons for doing this?

- What are the obstacles and barriers that lead to refugee teachers not being prepared in accordance with the Kenyan Teacher Service Commission?
- The schools run by Windle Trust International follow the 8-4-4 education system and are registered by the Ministry of Education and yet the teachers who are refugees are not prepared, registered, and salaried under the Kenyan law, what your program's expectations of them from the services they discharge?

Students sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) at the end of their fourth year, where do you expect them to work after finishing school?

## Appendix D: Audit Trail Steps

Steps	Description
1 Determining what to research	The investigator sought to explore how refugee teachers, without prior formal Kenyan preservice preparations, perceived and interacted with pedagogical content knowledge and cultural relevancy in the context of their daily classroom experiences with children in the Kakuma Refugee Camp schools
2 Identifying how to research the identified problem.	This involved looking through secondary data and research, including research reports and studies carried out previously. The methodology to use was also determined, which was the qualitative approach with critical ethnography as the appropriate design. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, a focus group discussion, and observations were selected for collection of data.
3 Writing up a research plan	The research plan provided more information on the timelines, goals of the research, dependencies, and participant scope.
4 Preparing the research	This was done by selecting the participants, scheduling interviews, a focus group, and observations, and preparing face-to-face meetings and the necessary equipment.
5 Executing the research	Interviews were conducted with four participants and one focus group discussion with three participants was held in a face-to-face meeting. The interviews and focus group were all conducted within a period of four weeks. The data, which comprised of participant responses in the interviews and focus group discussion, were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Notes were taken using pen and paper for backup.
6 Coding	This step involved coding and synthesizing the data to find insights. Thematic analysis was the approach used to code the data using NVivo 12 software. Themes were found that resulted in the generation of insight, which helped to answer the research question and achieve the goal of the study.
7 Create research output	The research output was created in this step. This was a report outlining major findings from the study in a

document format. It encompassed an executive summary, insight themes, and supporting evidence.

8 Sharing the findings      The findings were shared with key stakeholders.

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