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**The American University in Cairo**

**School of Global Affairs and Public Policy**

**IS EDUCATION BENEFICIAL IN PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS?  
A CASE STUDY OF SOMALI REFUGEES IN KHARAZ REFUGEE CAMP**

**A Thesis Submitted to the**

**Center for Migration and Refugee Studies**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in Migration and Refugee Studies**

**by Stephen Lack**

**Under the supervision of Dr. Ahsan Ullah**

**December 2012**



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My Friends, this research is dedicated to you.

The American University in Cairo  
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy  
Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

Is Education Beneficial in Protracted Refugee Situations?  
A Case Study of Somali Refugees in Kharaz Refugee Camp

Stephen Lack

Supervised by Dr. Ahsan Ullah

**ABSTRACT**

With nearly half of the global refugee population under the age of 18, the importance of education in protracted refugee situations is universally recognized. This thesis will examine the impact of education in protracted refugee situations, by looking education in terms of economic opportunity and its role in the search for durable solutions. For this purpose, thirty four Somali refugees living in Kharaz refugee camp in southern Yemen were interviewed on the topics of education and employment. What became evident during the course of the research was that for the Somali refugees residing in Kharaz, education is measured in more than simple economic terms; it provides a tangible goal along with hope for a better future.

The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (GAPP)

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A Thesis Submitted by

Stephen Lack

Submitted to the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies

20 November 2012

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts  
in Migration and Refugee Studies

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The traditional international response to refugee crises is to establish temporary camps in an effort to provide the displaced population with emergency assistance. However, all too often these ‘temporary’ camps remain and for the second generation, born in exile, they are the only homes they have ever known.<sup>1</sup> Today, the prevalence of protracted refugee situations and the search for solutions dominate the field and for good reason. Conversely, this study is not concerned so much with solutions to protracted displacement, as it is with the reality that in many cases it might take years or decades before a sustainable durable solution is found.

According to the UNHCR, there are currently 29 protracted refugee situations spread across 24 countries. It is estimated that by the end of 2010, 12.02 million refugees, or 78 percent of the global refugee population of 15.4 million, were in a protracted situation. Those numbers include the 4.82 million displaced Palestinians who constitute the world’s largest displaced population and the longest running protracted refugee situation.<sup>2</sup> For the majority of the global refugee population, either in a geographically remote camp or in segregated settlements, protracted displacement has meant years of suffering in isolation and dependency.<sup>3</sup>

If we are to prevent the loss of an entire generation to the vicious cycle of hopelessness and dependence which are so characteristic of protracted refugee situations, we have to change our approach to these situations. Rather than assuming displacement is temporary and viewing it through that lens for decades, maybe we should change our perception; viewing displacement situations in more permanent terms until proven temporary, at least in terms of how the international humanitarian regime develops its long-term development strategy. This study seeks, in part, to determine the role of education in breaking the cycle of continued displacement.

Located in the harsh, geographically isolated southern desert of the Lahij governorate, the Kharaz refugee camp was established in the mid-1990s in an effort to consolidate the various camps scattered around southern Yemen and accommodate the large numbers of Somalis fleeing

<sup>1</sup> Sara J. Feldman, "Development Assisted Integration: A Viable Alternative to Long Term Residence in Refugee Camps?" *The Fletcher Journal of Human Security*, Vol. XXII (2007): 49.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 6, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Lui, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 187.



civil war during that period of time. Intended as a temporary camp, almost two decades later the camp population continues to grow; with refugees relocating to the camp from urban areas due to the insecurity and unrest in the country, along with a steady stream of refugees braving the treacherous crossing from the Horn of Africa to Yemen.<sup>4</sup>

Although every refugee and every displacement situation is unique; the experiences of the nearly 20,000 refugees who have called the Kharaz refugee camp and its predecessors home, share a number of similarities to those of encamped refugees throughout world. Four out of every five refugees are located in the developing world. For a refugee, there are few economic opportunities in a host country that carries the status of being among the poorest in the world.<sup>5</sup> Although, employment is used throughout this study to provide a measuring stick for the effectiveness of education, it became clear through an analysis of the research findings that refugees themselves do not view education solely in terms of economic value; it also has a social value. According to a 21 year old female participant who arrived in Yemen only a few years earlier at the age of 17; “Education is important because it's honor for you and the only way that you can develop your community.”

For refugees, education is an investment, not only in their own future, but in the future of their family, the community, and their country of origin and might possibly be the key to finding a viable durable solution to their displacement.<sup>6</sup> Many refugees, including those who chose to participate in this study, have come to see education as symbolizing hope. It is for that reason that refugee education forms the foundation of this study. In the following section I will outline my research objective and the structure of this study.

## 1.1 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to evaluate the long-term impact and effectiveness of refugee education in protracted situations. The fundamental question that this study sought to answer is what affect has education had on young adults of the second generation. The second

<sup>4</sup> IRIN, “Somalia: Refugees Hope for Better Life Beyond Kharaz Camp,” allAfrica.com, (25 January 2011).

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 6; UNHCR, “2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Yemen,” *UNHCR – Yemen* (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Zeus, “Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 2 (2011): 258.

generation is defined in its broadest sense for the purposes of this study and is used to loosely encompass those whose formative years were spent in exile.

**Comment [U1]:** Include info on 1.5 generation from proposal

The 'impact' and 'effectiveness' of education, for the purposes of this study are measured by the extent to which education affords refugees access to increased economic opportunity and as such, are measured in terms of employment opportunity and gain. For example, the educational system might be considered to be affective if students lives are improved as a result of having received that education. Essentially, when I refer to the long-term impact and effectiveness of education, this impact refers to the relative success of the educational system in terms of access to post-secondary education and employment. This approach is taken in order to determine the impact of education on the economic opportunity available to a refugee, is it more or less? Is education an effective method of improving the economic situation of a refugee? How effective is education in developing self-reliance in a protracted situation?

**Comment [U2]:** Clarify, conceptualize, and define "education" and "affect"

There is a wealth of academic literature regarding refugee education and protracted refugee situations. However, much of the available research is macro-level in focus. This thesis narrows that focus through a case study focused on a small number of Somali refugees in Kharaz refugee camp. In this way, this study adds a more personal review of education in protracted refugee situations that complements the more macro-level research on the topic. Moreover, research and analysis of refugee education tends to be statistically based analyses that focus on success indicators such as, enrollment rates, retention rates, student to teacher ratios, percentage of qualified teachers, and several gender-specific indicators such as the number of schools with gender-specific initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to clarify that for the purposes of this study, academic education, extra-curricular educational programs, such as language courses, and vocational training have been placed under the umbrella of education in general. The differences and distinctions between them are acknowledged and discussed. However, in the context of refugee education, at least as I experienced it during my time in Kharaz, language courses and vocational training programs

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, *Refugee Education Indicators 2003: Education Indicators and Gap Analysis, Covering 118 Refugee Camps in 23 Asylum Countries, Based on Initial Data From the Camp Indicator Report*, Population and Data Unit/PGDS and Education Unit/WCCDS (Geneva: UNHCR, 2003): 2.

such as computer literacy are integral components in the refugee educational system to the extent that a certain level of interdependence exists between the three.

First of all, primary and secondary education for refugees residing in Kharaz are conducted in Arabic and as such, without the Arabic courses offered in the camp, would be inaccessible to new arrivals. Moreover, it is simply impossible in terms of funding to provide and maintain enough computers for student use in the camp school. However, the importance of technology in the world today and its impact on economic opportunity and mobility cannot be dismissed. For that reason, vocational and livelihood skills such as computer literacy and language training are a necessary addendum to the standard educational curriculum in this context, and why for the purposes of this study, they fall under the general umbrella of education.

To that end, this study is a comparative case study conducted in the Kharaz refugee camp in southern Yemen. A comparative study and analysis of recently displaced Somali refugees and second generation Somali refugees served to highlight the relative effectiveness and quality of the camp educational system in terms of employment and economic opportunity. This objective is achieved and articulated in the following chapters. The objective of this study is to provide a meaningful inter-disciplinary study to the existing literature on refugees and refugee education, and the socio-economic empowerment and self-reliance that quality education engenders.

#### *Chapter Overview*

Chapter Two of this thesis begins with a review of available academic literature. This literature review will serve to put the issues of refugee education and protracted displacement into context. First, the literature review begins with a review of protracted refugee situations in general. Secondly, this section is followed by an examination on literature pertaining to durable solutions. Finally, the last section of the literature review focuses directly on refugee education, both in general and more specifically in the case of protracted situations.

The following chapter details the research methodology employed in this project. The research for this project was a four-step process. Chapter Three begins with an examination of the first step in the research process; participant observation. The next section discusses the methodology and decision making process of the literature review, such as the reason for the

inclusion of the section on durable solutions. The third section details the research methodology and sampling techniques utilized in the field work phase of the research, which consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted in Kharaz refugee camp. The data analysis phase of the research is also included in this section. The final section of Chapter Three outlines the myriad challenges and limitations encountered during this project.

The analysis and discussion of the research data is the subject of Chapter Four. This chapter begins by examining the data in terms of demographics. The data is examined in terms of education in and vocational training and their role in, or impact on, the economic opportunities available to the participants. Chapter Four concludes with a discussion of the findings of the research. Throughout the chapter, three themes are used to structure the analysis and discussion; education and vocational training, employment, and perceptions of future economic opportunities. The research findings serve to shed light on the value placed on education by the participants in this research and their fellow refugees in Kharaz.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter Five, is the conclusion. In this final chapter the relationship between the findings of literature review and the analysis section are discussed and placed into context. Furthermore, the themes and arguments that appear throughout this paper are brought together in this section and brought to a conclusion.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

In the last chapter the global refugee situation was discussed in overarching terms, in order to provide a general understanding of this topic on a global scale. Now that we have a broader context in to which to frame this study, an examination and discussion of protracted refugee situations in particular is in order. This chapter utilizes a review of the available literature, not only to define the problem and highlight any knowledge gaps in the field, but also to place the qualitative research into the broader context of the current discourse on protracted refugee situations. There are three main sections in this chapter; Protracted Refugee Situations, Durable Solutions, and Education in Protracted Situations. That there exists a wealth of academic literature dedicated to dissecting protracted refugee situations from every possible angle, is unsurprising to say the least; if anything with more than half of the global refugee population currently in a protracted situation it is surprising there is not more literature than that which already exists.<sup>8</sup> Despite the large body literature available, a disproportionate amount of the literature assumes a policy-centric approach based on macro-level research and analysis. The objective of this paper to address that gap has already been stated.

The first section provides a review of protracted refugee situations in general, in addition to a more focused review of the protracted displacement of Somalis in Yemen. This section begins by highlighting the scope of the problem and the increasing prevalence of protracted displacement, before narrowing in focus to the challenges unique to Somali refugees in Yemen. A general understanding of protracted refugee situations is necessary, in order to grasp the role and significance of education in this context.

Second, in order to fully understand the nature of protracted refugee situations we must also understand the three durable solutions and the complexities and challenges each possible solution presents. Self-reliance is commonly cited as a means to an end, with the end being a sustainable durable solution. This process is greatly aided by the availability of quality education, and is discussed in this section.

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<sup>8</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010, 10th edition: Trends in Displacement, Protection and Solutions*. (2011): 5.

The third and final section examines refugee education in protracted situations and the critical role of education in the search for durable solutions. Whereas in the previous section the focus is primarily on durable solutions, this section contains a detailed analysis of refugee education. This analysis of the literature review examines education from the conceptual stage to implementation and results.

## 2.1 Protracted Refugee Situations

The first step in an examination of protracted refugee situations is to define what exactly constitutes a protracted refugee situation in the first place. Naturally, this is no small task.

Refugees and the situations they find themselves in are fluid by nature. Every refugee and refugee crisis is unique. Therefore, it is necessary to apply a definition, sufficiently broad enough to account for a wide range of situations and populations. What is certain is that in 1993 the average duration of major displacement situations was 9 years; by 2003 that average had risen to 17 years.<sup>9</sup> Despite the steadily increasing prevalence of protracted refugee situations, to date there is no definitive universal definition of what constitutes a protracted refugee situation.

However, due to the ubiquitous nature of the organization, for decades now the working definition of the UNHCR was generally accepted as the standard.<sup>10</sup> The UNHCR definition considered a refugee situation to be protracted when a refugee population that numbers 25,000 has been displaced for a consecutive 5 year period.<sup>11</sup> Some organizations, such as the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), prefer their own definition of protracted refugee situations. The definition employed by the USCRI is a more numerically inclusive definition of what constitutes a protracted refugee situation than the original UNHCR definition. The USCRI considers populations of 10,000 or more that are displaced for 5 years or more to be in a protracted situation; however, the USCRI definition fails to account for urban refugee populations. Instead the focus is solely upon populations restricted to camps or settlements.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, in 2009 the UNHCR recognized that the traditional working definition was insufficient and acted to further broaden its definition of protracted refugee situations by

<sup>9</sup> Robyn N. Lui, "Such a Long Journey: Protracted Refugee Situations in Asian," *Global Change, Peace & Security: Formerly Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change* 19, no. 3 (October 11, 2007): 185.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR, "Protracted Refugee Situations," *Standing Committee*, 30th Meeting (June 10, 2004): para. 3.

<sup>12</sup> USCRI. *World Refugee Survey 2009*. 2009: 326.

removing the population requirement. It is this broadened definition that is utilized in this study. Therefore, since confirming the Conclusion of the executive committee in 2010, the UNHCR considers a refugee situation to be protracted when the population has been displaced for a period of five years or more and has no “immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions.”<sup>13</sup> This current UNHCR working definition of a protracted refugee situation and is the definition that will be employed for the purposes of this study.

Conceptually, refugees in a protracted situation exist in an exceptional state, subject to the law but outside of its protraction. According to Giorgio Agamben, “the state of exception, which [is] essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such nevertheless remains outside the normal order.”<sup>14</sup> Barbara Harrell-Bond explains that since the refugee is cast out of the realm of law where humanity is normally guaranteed and hence outside the realm of responsibility and accountability, in effect they occupy a space outside of the law where the constant threat of the removal of humanitarian aid serves as a means of control, which is made possible by their inability to protest.<sup>15</sup> According to Harrell-Bond:

There are insufficient resources to meet needs, with the power to decide their allocation placed in the hands of humanitarian workers who have no responsibility to consider the views of those for whom they are intended. As a consequence, both humanitarian workers and refugees are “trapped” in asymmetrical relationships in a structure in which accountability is skewed in the direction of the donors who pay for assistance, rather than the refugees.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Rebecca Napier-Moore attributes the rise in protracted displacement to a self-replicating cycle created by the codependent relationships that have developed between the UNHCR, the state governments, and the refugees. The interdependent relations of these three

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<sup>13</sup> UNHCR, “Conclusion on Protracted Refugee Situations” *Executive Committee*, No. 109(LXI) (2009); James Milner and Gil Loescher, “Responding to protracted refugee situations: Lessons from a decade of discussion.” *Forced Migration Policy Briefing*, 6. (University of Oxford, January 2011): 3-15; Loescher and Milner, “Understanding the Challenge” *Forced Migration Review No. 33* (September 2005): 9-11.

<sup>14</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 169.

<sup>15</sup> Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, “The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand,” *International Migration* 42, no. 1 (6 March 2004): 40; Barbara Harrell-Bond, “Can humanitarian work with refugees be humane?” *Human Rights Quarterly*, 24 (2002): 53.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara Harrell-Bond, “Can humanitarian work with refugees be humane?” 53.

main actors form a triangle that, due to the codependent nature of the actors, in addition to their diverging interests, results in an on-going cycle of displacement.<sup>17</sup>

**Comment [U3]:** Insert either before or after info on zones of exception....agamben

Host states, often in the developing world, hold leverage over the UNHCR since its presence in the country is by invitation only. This limits the UNHCR in the fulfillment of their protection mandate for they have to insure the cooperation of the state; whereas, developed countries hold financial leverage, as they represent the major source of funding for the UNHCR.<sup>18</sup> At the bottom of the humanitarian hierarchy are the refugees themselves, caught up in a seemingly endless state of limbo dictated by the politics of humanitarianism, the victims of a colonialism of compassion and the coercive power of the state.<sup>19</sup> Together, Napier-Moore contends, "Authoritative humanitarianism and coercive state power aim to keep refugees *in their place* - both in terms of identity and geographic location in camps."<sup>20</sup>

Developing countries are host to the vast majority of the global refugee population. At the end of 2010, an estimated 8.5 million refugees, who account for approximately 80 percent of the global refugee population, resided in developing countries.<sup>21</sup> According to the 2009 World Refugee Survey, 50 percent of the world's refugee population resides in host countries that have a per capita GDP of less than \$2000.<sup>22</sup> A protracted refugee situation "in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo," is harmful, not only to the refugee, but to the host community as well.<sup>23</sup> In host countries already struggling to meet the needs of their own populations, large refugee populations create a strain on local infrastructures and basic social services. Often developing countries simply do not have the capacity or infrastructure necessary to provide basic social services when faced with a large influx of refugees, much less a large population in a protracted situation.

Yemen serves as a perfect example of a developing country that has a large refugee population in addition to a host of domestic problems. Due to its geographical proximity to the

<sup>17</sup> Rebecca Napier-Moore, "Entrenched Relations and the Permanence of Long-Term Refugee Camp Situations," *Sussex Migration Working Paper*, no. 28 (2005): 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Jennifer Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xvi.

<sup>20</sup> Napier-Moore, 3.

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> USCRI, *World Refugee Survey 2009*, 2009: 31.

<sup>23</sup> UNHCR, "Protracted Refugee Situations," *Standing Committee*, 30th Meeting (June 10, 2004): para. 3.



Horn of Africa, Yemen has long served as the gateway to the Arabian Peninsula, as well as a destination for refugees fleeing violence and persecution in the Horn of Africa. The open-door policy adopted by Yemen towards Somali refugees, whom the country granted *prima facie* status, led to a mass influx of refugees in the early 1990s. These refugees were a direct result of the civil war in Somalia.<sup>24</sup> In countries such as Yemen, one of the world's poorest and least developed countries with 37 percent unemployment and 35 percent of the population living under the poverty line, economic opportunities are almost non-existent.<sup>25</sup>

For the majority of host states in the developing world, and particularly in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, a major weakness in the protection regime is the lack of acceptance of international protection conventions in addition to the lack of institutional capacity; specifically the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. As of 1 April 2011, only seven countries in the MENA region were signatories to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol; of these seven countries Mauritania is the only state that has adopted a national asylum system. Yemen was the only country in the Arabian Peninsula to sign the *1951 Convention* and its *1967 Protocol*. Today, Yemen is host to more than 200,000 refugees, the third largest refugee population in the MENA region.<sup>26</sup>

The initial formation and drafting of the international refugee regime, the 1951 Convention, took place in the aftermath of World War II. Therefore, the founding of this new international humanitarian regime was geared toward addressing refugee issues that arose as a result of the Second World War and the emergence of the Cold War, and proved to have little relevance to the refugee crises that would emerge in the developing world in the decades that followed. The nature of conflict and displacement has changed dramatically over the years.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, the absence of refugee related legislation and/or a formal protection regime in many MENA countries is especially disconcerting given that as of the end of 2010 the region was host to nearly 2 million refugees.<sup>28</sup> The lack of formal asylum legislation is perhaps the

<sup>24</sup> UNHCR, *Yemen Factsheet* (February, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Umlas, *Cash in hand: Urban refugees, the right to work and UNHCR's advocacy activities* (Geneva: UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2011): 5.

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, *Global Report 2010: MENA Section* (2011): 110, 195.

<sup>27</sup> Amy Slaughter and Jeff Crisp, "A Surrogate State? The Role of UNHCR in Protracted Refugee Situations," *New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper, no. 168* (2009): 3.

<sup>28</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 24.

greatest challenge facing refugees and informal migrants in the MENA region. Refugee and migrations issues have traditionally been dealt with on an 'ad hoc' basis, creating an environment of instability and insecurity in the region. Therefore, while protection has been erratic, abuses against refugees and irregular migrants have been a consistent feature of the region.<sup>29</sup> In many instances the efforts of the state to attempt to implement programs and policy directed at migrants and asylum seekers have been hampered due to insufficient institutional capacity, limited resources, and poor implementation of development strategies.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the burden of protection often falls on the international humanitarian regime. With the emergence of large scale refugee movements in Africa during the 1960s, UNHCR began to exceed its original role as a provider and coordinator of emergency relief and long-term care and maintenance programs.<sup>31</sup> Originally the burden of refugee status determination, security for refugees and humanitarian personnel, and the provision of basic services and goods fell on the host government. However, over time these responsibilities were assumed by the UNHCR as states proved unable in some case or unwilling in others, to shoulder these burdens.<sup>32</sup> Slaughter and Crisp attribute this progressive expansion of responsibilities by the UNHCR to an effort to address gaps that arose in the international refugee regime following the shift of the refugee problem from post-war Europe to the global south in the 1960s.<sup>33</sup>

The transfer of responsibility from the state to various UN agencies has in many cases resulted in the creation of a 'surrogate state', in which the UNHCR, in addition to the responsibilities outlined in its original mandate, fills the protection role of the state and assumes many of the state's responsibilities. Thus, the state is left only with the responsibility of ensuring the right of *non-refoulement*, with the greatest threat being the state itself; the state is in essence protecting the refugee population from itself through inaction. This situation often results in

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<sup>29</sup> Ruben Zaiotti, "Dealing with Non-Palestinian Refugees," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 18, no. 2 (2006): 353.

<sup>30</sup> Mirjana Bobic, "Forced Migrants in Serbia: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons—Facts and Figures, Coping Strategies, Future." *Refuge: Canada's periodical on refugees* 26, no.1 (2009): 102.

<sup>31</sup> Slaughter and Crisp, 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Kagen, "'We Live in A Country of UNHCR': The UN Surrogate State and Refugee Policy in the Middle East" *New Issues in Refugee Research Paper*, no. 201, (Geneva: UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Section, 2011): 3; Slaughter and Crisp, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Slaughter and Crisp, 2.

protection gaps as the UN lacks the ability and capacity to completely fill the role of the host state.<sup>34</sup>

Modern conflict has devolved into internecine power struggles within independent states with lines drawn based upon race, religion, or political affiliation. The involvement of non-state actors has also further complicated the landscape.<sup>35</sup> As a result protracted refugee populations have been increasingly attributed with playing a role in the continuation of conflict and instability and the obstruction of peace processes. Economic development initiatives have been thwarted. Adding to the source of international conflict are the protracted refugee situations themselves. The militarization of displaced communities creates a new host of problems which include a rise in trafficking and smuggling and additional opportunities for potential recruitment bases by militant.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, it is important to remember, as James Milner explains, that “refugee protection cannot effectively take place in conditions of acute and protracted state insecurity.”<sup>37</sup> The prolonged nature of modern conflicts has played a role in the perpetuation of protracted refugee situations, the increased dependency of displaced populations on international humanitarian aid, and limited the ability of the international refugee regime and the host government to provide basic services, protection, and in finding solutions to these protracted situations.<sup>38</sup> In areas of insecurity and conflict, refugees and migrants are often caught in the middle, with nowhere to turn. The absence of economic and physical security and few opportunities for resettlement have caused many refugees to seek to enter a third country illegally, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by smuggling and trafficking organizations.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, for most refugees third country resettlement either legally or illegally is not a viable option, leaving them to languish in isolated camps.

Given the lack of infrastructure and access to basic services in the host community, it is unsurprising that camp residents and urban refugees alike often lack access to basic services,

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<sup>34</sup> Kagen, 2-17.

<sup>35</sup> Slaughter and Crisp, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Gill Loescher, and James Milner, “The Long Road Home: Protracted Refugee Situations in Africa,” *Survival* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 154, 157-158.

<sup>37</sup> As cited in; Napier-Moore, 7.

<sup>38</sup> Slaughter and Crisp, 3-5, 12.

<sup>39</sup> Loescher and Milner, “The Long Road Home,” 153-154.

such as education, water, sanitation, and health care.<sup>40</sup> Although the majority of Yemen's refugee population resides in urban areas, such as the Basateen slum in Aden, nearly 20,000 refugees<sup>41</sup> reside in Kharaz which is located approximately 150 kilometers from Aden in the southern governorate of Lahij.<sup>42</sup>

Despite being considered a last resort by the UNHCR, approximately 30 percent of refugees in developing countries reside in camps. Originally established as temporary measures, many refugees remain in the camps for years and in some cases with little or no freedom of movement. Often these camps are located in harsh environments with little or no access to local markets or basic services. This results in the marginalization and segregation of refugees.<sup>43</sup> The geographical segregation of camps serves to not only physically separate refugee populations from host communities but also economically and socially marginalizes the refugee community.<sup>44</sup> This marginalization of the refugee community limits the economic options of the population and increases dependency on the aid provided by the international humanitarian community, effectively eliminating the possibility of local integration as a viable durable solution.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, refugees who are unable to return to their countries of origin due to ongoing conflict or for fear of persecution and with little hope of resettlement to a third country, are essentially trapped in camps and communities, due to the resistance to local integration by host governments.<sup>45</sup> In Yemen for example, although refugees are granted freedom of movement by law, in practice their mobility is hindered due to harassment at check points, insecurity, and high transportation

<sup>40</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 24.

<sup>41</sup> The most recent UNHCR statistics estimate the population of Kharaz to be just under 20,000; however SHS estimates that the population in 2011 grew to more than 17,000, which at the time differed from the UNHCR population statistics by a few thousand people. The exact number of camp residents is hard to measure as movement between the urban slum Basateen, located in Aden, and Kharaz is fluid. Refugees often travel back and forth from the camp in search of work. Furthermore, like the rest of Yemen, Kharaz saw an increasingly large influx of new arrivals in 2011, not all of whom are registered camp residents. The on-going conflict and deteriorating security situation in Yemen played a role in the increased arrivals as well.

<sup>42</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010*, 6; UNHCR, "2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Yemen," *UNHCR – Yemen* (2012); UNHCR, *Yemen Factsheet, July 2010* (2010); Society for Humanitarian Solidarity, *Kharaz Refugee Camp* (2011).

<sup>43</sup> Awa M. Abdi, "In Limbo: Dependency, Insecurity, and Identity amongst Somali Refugees in Dadaab Camps," *Refuge* 5, no. 2 (2005): 7.

<sup>44</sup> Hyndman, *Managing Displacement*, 87.

<sup>45</sup> UNHCR, *The High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: 2008*. (Protracted Refugee Situations: High Commissioner's Initiative 2008).

costs.<sup>46</sup> Due to the recent insecurity in the country, fuel shortages have caused transportation costs to skyrocket; leaving many refugees who are unable to afford the inflated costs of transportation, stranded in Kharaz or in their communities. These challenges are known all too well by the millions of refugees trapped in the many protracted situations throughout the world; those who are waiting and hoping for a solution to be found that will bring their ordeal to an end.

## 2.2 Durable Solutions

With the majority of the global refugee population in a protracted situation, it is no surprise that protracted refugee situations are one of the largest issues faced by the international humanitarian community today. In response, a large body of research has emerged on the topic, especially in regards to the search for durable solutions. The focus on finding durable solutions to protracted situations is evidence of the importance the international humanitarian community places on bringing these situations to an end. There are three recognized forms of durable solutions. They are as follows: repatriation, local integration, or third country resettlement.

Once the standard durable solution and the dream of refugees the world over; resettlement to a third country, usually located in the global north, is no longer a viable option for the majority of the global refugee population. Of the more than 10 million refugees in 2010, only 98,800 were resettled in a third country.<sup>47</sup> As the securitization of the global north continues, it is likely that resettlement will only become even more restricted and further limited in scope than it currently is. This is not a recent development; however, it is a trend that has its roots in the 1980s and the end of the Cold War era.

Historically there have been several shifts in the preferred durable solution. Although local integration and resettlement were originally the preferred durable solutions, by the 1990s the focus had shifted in favor of repatriation<sup>48</sup>. There are a variety of theories on why these shifts have occurred. B.S. Chimni explains that during the period immediately following World War II and on into the Cold War era, the growing economies of the global North saw the resettlement of refugees as a means of augmenting the workforce. Moreover, in the context of the Cold War

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<sup>46</sup> Umlas, 6.

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2010, 10th edition: Trends in Displacement, Protection and Solutions*. (2011): 6.

<sup>48</sup> B.S. Chimni, "From Resettlement to Involuntary repatriation: Towards a Critical History of Durable Solutions," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (May 1999): 55; Napier-Moore, 6.

voluntary repatriation simply was not a viable political option, especially for those fleeing communist regimes; it is telling that during the International Refugee Organization's (IRO) short lifespan (1947-1950) only 5 percent of the displaced population registered with the IRO was repatriated.<sup>49</sup>

As the Cold War drew to a close, another major shift in refugee policy regarding durable solutions took place. A combination of resettlement "fatigue" and the increase in economic migration led many developed nations to rethink their stance on resettlement.<sup>50</sup> At the same time many host governments, particularly in Africa, in the face of the increase of guerilla warfare tactics and the militarization of refugee populations, began to reject the idea of local integration as a politically and economically viable solution.<sup>51</sup> In the face of the growing reluctance towards resettlement on the part of developed nations and towards local integration by host governments in the developing world, voluntary repatriation emerged as the premier durable solution and remains so today.<sup>52</sup>

The prevailing ideology of the current international refugee regime regards repatriation, specifically voluntary repatriation, as the preferred and most viable durable solution for most refugee situations.<sup>53</sup> The basic principle of repatriation is simple and straightforward. It is the return of a refugee to his or her place of origin. Essentially, repatriation would appear to be a natural response to displacement, a fulfillment of the urge to return to the home you were forced to flee. However, things are rarely simple. When the UNHCR adopted voluntary repatriation in the 1980s as "the only viable solution to refugee problems in Africa and other low-income regions," it was working under the presumption that all refugees wished to return to their places of origin, which many scholars and experts assert is not universally true.<sup>54</sup>

In the fall of 1980 the UNHCR, "Recognized that voluntary repatriation constitutes generally...the most appropriate solution for refugee problems," furthermore the UN Executive

<sup>49</sup> Chimni, 56-57; UNHCR, "Rethinking durable solutions," *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the New Millennium* (20 April 2006): 129-130.

<sup>50</sup> UNHCR, "Rethinking Durable Solutions," 130.

<sup>51</sup> Loescher and Milner, "The Long Road Home," 156.

<sup>52</sup> Jeff Crisp, "No Solutions in Sight: The Problem of Protracted Refugee Situations in Africa," *Working Paper*, no. 75 (Geneva: UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, January 2003): 3.

<sup>53</sup> UNHCR, "Conclusion on Local Integration", *Executive Committee*, No. 104(LVI) (7 October 2005).

<sup>54</sup> Crisp, "No Solutions in Sight," 4; Chimni, 59; Barbara Harrell-Bond, "Repatriation: Under What Conditions is it the Most Desirable Solution for Refugees? An Agenda for Research", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 32 (1989): 45.

Committee, “Stressed that the essentially voluntary character of repatriation should always be respected.”<sup>55</sup> The conclusions on voluntary repatriation reached in 1980, were reaffirmed by the UN Executive Committee in 1985. The UN Executive committee further concluded that not only was voluntary repatriation the preferred durable solution, but that it was within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to actively promote voluntary return for refugees when circumstances are deemed appropriate.<sup>56</sup> This new direction in the search for durable solutions, however well intentioned, lacked the support of empirical evidence.<sup>57</sup>

Criticism soon emerged as scholars began to explore the subject of voluntary repatriation in the 1980s. Scholars and experts, such as Barbara Harrell-Bond, John R. Rogge, and Jonathan Bascom to name a few, immediately raised concerns regarding the lack of empirical research conducted on the issue.<sup>58</sup> As new studies emerged, it became clear that voluntary repatriation was not the perfect, one size fits all, solution to displacement. The complexity of the challenges of repatriation and reintegration faced by returnees are dependent on a number of variables. These variables include the length of time spent in exile, second generation refugees who have never known their original country, and the safety factor within the country of origin<sup>59</sup> As mentioned above, host states hold a certain amount of leverage over the UNHCR, which is operating on the sovereign territory of the state; this leverage, critics such as Harrell-Bond argued led to the promotion of return in situations where it was impossible to guarantee the protection of returnees.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, as the doctrine of voluntary repatriation failed to produce the desired results of mass repatriation, as critics predicted, and as states begin to question the validity of the doctrine, the idea of safe return was put forth to bridge the gap between voluntary return and involuntary return.<sup>61</sup> The issue of return to the country of origin is further complicated in the case of second generation refugees, born in exile having never known any home other than the host country.<sup>62</sup> According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR, *Voluntary Repatriation*, No. 18 (XXXI), (16 October 1980).

<sup>56</sup> UNHCR, *Voluntary Repatriation*, No. 40 (XXXI), (18 October 1985).

<sup>57</sup> Chimni, 59.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Barbara Harrell-Bond, “Repatriation: Under What Conditions,” 43.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>61</sup> Chimni, 55,60,61.

<sup>62</sup> Barbara Harrell-Bond, “Repatriation: Under What Conditions,” 45.

‘voluntariness’ of return is irrelevant. The Convention states that any person, who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country,” is a refugee.<sup>63</sup> However, if the circumstances which led to the recognition of that individual’s refugee status cease to exist, then the individual in question is no longer eligible to claim refugee status and is therefore no longer a beneficiary of the protection guaranteed by refugee status.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, these same guerilla movements and the militarization of refugee populations mentioned above also stood in the way of successful repatriation, whether voluntary or otherwise. Neither the countries of origin nor the developed world were interested in the large-scale repatriation of refugee populations that could potentially lead to further conflict and destabilization within the country of origin. It is therefore unsurprising that many of the protracted refugee situations in Africa, including the Somali refugee situation, have their roots in the period that began in the late 1980s.<sup>65</sup> Although voluntary repatriation has come to the forefront as the preferred durable solution, the reluctance felt by many actors in regards to repatriation, the complex challenges of integration, and the limited scope of resettlement programs, led to the encampment or ‘warehousing’ of refugees throughout Africa.<sup>66</sup>

Since the formation of the international refugee regime, refugee camps have held a central role, theoretically serving as temporary solutions in emergency situations. However, while often necessary and effective during the emergency phase, the temporary solution offered by encampment is an ineffective solution to protracted refugee situations, which have unfortunately become all too common<sup>67</sup>. Sara J. Feldman explains that:

While camps are certainly necessary in the emergency phase of a refugee crisis, as well as in a limited capacity afterwards, reliance on a camp-centric policy in protracted refugee situations is an inefficient use of resources, which causes tension between

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<sup>63</sup> 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1A(2).

<sup>64</sup> 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1C(5).

<sup>65</sup> Loescher and Milner, “The Long Road Home,” 156.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>67</sup> Sara J. Feldman, “Development Assisted Integration: A Viable Alternative to Long Term Residence in Refugee Camps?” The Fletcher Journal of Human Security, Vol. XXII (2007): 50.



refugee and local populations, keeps refugees dependent on aid, can lead to health and security crises, and prevents refugees from reentering society and pursuing livelihoods.<sup>68</sup>

Today, long-term encampment has become a common feature in the humanitarian landscape, so much so that Rebecca Napier-Moore, referred to encampment as “The fourth, *de facto* solution...because state interests and UNHCR interests converge at camps as ‘solution’.”<sup>69</sup>

#### *A Development Approach to Durable Solutions*

In an effort to alleviate the suffering of those in protracted situations in the 2003 *Framework for Durable Solutions* the UNHCR proposed a three pronged approach to the achievement of durable solutions; “Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR)”, “Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstructions (4Rs)”, and the “Development through Local Integration (DLI)”. The goal of the DAR initiative is the improvement of the quality of life of both the refugee community and the host community during the period of displacement, whereas the 4Rs and DLI approaches address repatriation, voluntary repatriation, and local integration respectively and directly.<sup>70</sup>

First, through “Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR)”, the goal of which is the integration of relief-based assistance and development through the promotion of development initiatives that will not only benefit host communities, but also refugee communities, which are normally marginalized economically, politically, and socially. An integrated development assistance strategy of this sort encourages the medium and long-term development of both the host community and refugee community, thus improving the quality of life for all involved, in addition to relieving some of the burden from the host community. Although this strategy is not a solution to protracted displacement, it does offer a productive alternative to encampment and the corresponding dependency on humanitarian aid while a durable solution is sought.<sup>71</sup> Programs of this sort are a step in the right direction, reducing the social and economic stresses on both the refugee community and the host community.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Napier-Moore, 13-14.

<sup>70</sup> UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*, Core Group on Durable Solutions (Geneva: UNHCR, May 2003): 5.

<sup>71</sup> UNHCR, *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes* (January 2005); UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions*, 8.

Secondly, as the country of origin enters the post-conflict stage of repatriation, it becomes viable as a durable solution. However, the cessation of the circumstances responsible for the recognition of an individual or a community as refugees does not, in and of itself, guarantee safe return. The resulting impact of a cessation of conflict in the country of origin on refugees can be profound, especially in the case of a protracted situation as assistance weary donor states and generally poor host countries seek to expedite the conclusion of the refugee situation. This increasingly manifests itself in the form of involuntary or imposed return.<sup>72</sup> Although signatories to the *1951 Convention* and its *1967 Protocol* are obligated to ensure the safe return of refugees, the notion of a 'safe' environment is fairly subjective, and moreover there is no requirement that that return be voluntary. In the words of James C. Hathaway, "once a receiving State determines that protection in the country of origin is viable, it is entitled to withdraw refugee status."<sup>73</sup>

Therefore, in order to increase of the chances of a swift, successful, and sustainable repatriation of a refugee population, and particularly in the case of populations potentially displaced for decades, the reintegration of returnees into the country of origin the UNHCR promotes the implementation of the 4Rs. Whereas DAR takes place in the host country during displacement, the 4Rs represent the integration of the humanitarian and development regimes within the country of origin. The search for sustainable solutions to refugee situations is the paramount challenge facing the international humanitarian regime. Successful implementation of the 4Rs not only makes sustainable repatriation and reintegration possible, but also serves to create stability in post-conflict states through development, which in turn reduces the likelihood of future displacement.<sup>74</sup> The integration of sustainable development initiatives during the repatriation process is critical, due to the fact that in some cases refugees actually experience a superior quality of life in host countries, as the countries of origin often lack the resources and infrastructure of the host country.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Chimni, 65-66.

<sup>73</sup> James C. Hathaway, "The Meaning of Repatriation", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1997): 553; As Cited in: B.S. Chimni, 56-57; UNHCR, "Rethinking durable solutions," *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the New Millennium* (20 April 2006): 60.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> UNHCR, *Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities* (Geneva; May, 2004): 1-2; Chimni.; UNHCR, "Rethinking durable solutions," *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the New Millennium* (20 April 2006): 68.

Thirdly, although local integration appears to be an attractive and potentially sustainable solution to long term displacement, there are inherent complications that reduce its viability and widespread implementation. First and foremost, local integration as a durable solution is entirely dependent on the ability and willingness of the host state to allow integration. According to the UNHCR “local integration is a sovereign decision and an option to be exercised by States guided by their treaty obligations and human rights principles.”<sup>76</sup> Secondly, the reality is that the majority of the countries that are host to large refugee populations are poverty stricken and underdeveloped. Therefore, in order for local integration to be a viable solution steps must be undertaken to ensure that host communities are not overburdened by the integration of a large refugee community.

International assistance in economic development and capacity building, in conjunction with the provision of access to quality education for refugees is necessary in order to achieve self-reliance, which is generally viewed as a precursor to local integration. Furthermore, integration depends largely upon the willingness of the refugee community to integrate into and adapt to the culture of the host community, and on the acceptance of the refugee population by the host community. The importance of education as the social contract between refugees and the host community cannot be overestimated, however it can be augmented through state rhetoric and policy that is both tolerant and inclusive.<sup>77</sup>

Several strategies or frameworks that work towards the promotion of successful local integration have been advanced over the past decade. The UNHCR introduced the DLI strategy which provides “opportunities for gradual integration of refugees, DLI would solicit additional development assistance with the aim of attaining a durable solution in terms of local integration of refugees as an option and not an obligation.”<sup>78</sup> The obstacles to local integration remain; however DLI can be viewed as an extension and broadening of DAR in circumstances where local integration is considered to be a viable solution, providing a gradual transition into the

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<sup>76</sup> UNHCR, "Conclusion on Local Integration", *Executive Committee*, No. 104(LVI) (7 October 2005).

<sup>77</sup> UNHCR, "Conclusion on Local Integration."

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions*, 5.

integration phase.<sup>79</sup> Sara J. Feldman promotes Development Assisted Integration (DAI), as a solution to the long-term warehousing of large refugee populations.

Similar to DLI, a DAI approach focuses on the coordination of development and assistance, thereby creating a scenario where integration is beneficial for the host communities.<sup>80</sup> The coordination between development and assistance programs proposed by each of these approaches would, in theory allow for an almost seamless transition into integration, while simultaneously stimulating economic growth. However, despite the apparent benefits of local integration implemented through a system of combined assistance and development, in many cases integration simply just is not a viable solution. As mentioned above, local integration is only possible if both the refugees and the host community are willing to adapt and accept one another. Unfortunately, in many situations this is not the case due to ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious differences and biases. In protracted situations resentment between the communities can potentially develop and become entrenched over decades. Moreover, local fears of increased economic competition and insecurity can lead to resistance to the integration of refugees into the community.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.3 Education in Protracted Situations

In 2011, almost half of the world refugee population, 48 percent, was under the age of 18. Therefore, it is no surprise that refugee education is such an important topic in the humanitarian field today. Education is confirmed as a right in the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol*, which requires that states, party to the *Convention*, “shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.”<sup>82</sup> Displacement is traumatic for adults but even more so for children who lack the coping mechanisms of an adult. Moreover, displacement and encampment at a young age can have a potentially devastating impact on the psychological and cognitive development of a child. The abrupt interruption of an adolescent’s education is yet another traumatic experience as normalcy gives way to the chaos and despair of hopelessness. The establishment of an education system for recently displaced children helps to provide a renewed sense of normalcy and

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>80</sup> Feldman, “Development Assisted Integration,” 50, 54.

<sup>81</sup> Feldman, “Development Assisted Integration,” 61.

<sup>82</sup> 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 22(1).

structure for the child as well as the community, and is therefore a key component of the emergency phase of a refugee crisis.<sup>83</sup>

It is not unusual for refugees in a protracted situation to experience despair or hopelessness. Limited economic opportunities result in many families becoming dependent on assistance for years. A study of second generation children in America undertaken by Rothe, Pumariega, and Sabagh found that psychological and behavioral issues were more common in the second generation than the first generation. This was attributed to the lack of a secure identity in either their country of origin or the host country. In effect; they are in a sort of limbo.<sup>84</sup> For children born or raised in this environment, education is critical. Educational programs not only provide structure in their lives, but are a source of hope; proof that life does exist beyond the boundaries of the encampment.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the scarcity of economic opportunities, education continues to serve as a beacon of hope for many refugees, lighting the way to a better future. The conceptualization of education as a guiding light was a recurring theme among the participants in this study. When asked about the importance of education the responses referencing the guiding light of education were variations or elaborations of a core idea:

*Yes, because education is the light of the life.*

The following response represents an elaboration on that same theme:

*Yes, I do believe that nothing is more important than education. To live without education means live in darkness in the rest of your life.*

The light metaphor was applied to education by six of the participants, each of whom have resided in Kharaz for at least five years. Therefore, it is a perfect example of community awareness campaigns and the use of slogans in refugee camps and communities that are conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in support of important issues and initiatives, such as education, healthcare, and life strategies.

<sup>83</sup> Margaret Sinclair, "Education in Emergencies," in *Learning for the Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*, ed. Jeff Crisp, Christopher Talbot, and Daiana Cipollone (Geneva: UNHCR, 2001), 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> Eugenio M. Rothe, Andres J. Pumariega, and Diana Sabagh, "Identity and Acculturation in Immigrant and Second Generation Adolescents," *Adolescent Psychiatry* 1, no. 1(2011):78.

<sup>85</sup> Sinclair, "Education in Emergencies," 8-9.

Refugee education also serves as a form of protection for school age youth. In a displacement setting, children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Children attending school have a less likely chance of suffering undetected physical or mental health issues. The potential for exploitation and abuse is limited by the structured nature of the education system and serves as a deterrent to self-destructive behaviors such as substance abuse and prostitution.<sup>86</sup> The value of a constructive environment in regards to the psychological development of the child, where children are able to engage socially while at the same time receiving the skills and education necessary for the development of self-reliance, cannot be underestimated.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, education is the key towards integration or, at the very least, co-existence with the host community. Refugee children are often instructed in the local language, forming the first links between the refugee community and the host country.<sup>88</sup>

Conversely, education can be a powerful tool towards integration and acculturation as children are instructed in the language of the host country, as in the case in Yemen where the Arabic language is a necessity; without which self-reliance is an impossibility, and after decades of displacement a sustainable solution remains an illusion.<sup>89</sup> The development of long-term education strategies and objectives can have a major impact on the success or failure of durable solutions. The concept of “education for repatriation,” which came about during the 1990s during the shift towards voluntary repatriation as the preferred durable solution, works towards preparing students to re-enter the education system of their country of origin as seamlessly as possible, using the language and curriculum of the country of origin rather than that of the host country. This strategy allows for the preservation of the Somali culture and language, which is learned in the home and community, while simultaneously accepting the reality that for the foreseeable future repatriation simply is not an option.<sup>90</sup>

Conceptually refugee education encompasses a broader range of activities that extend beyond the realm of academic education and vocational training. Over the years the need for health awareness education, peace education, and mine education has come to the attention of

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>88</sup> Gaim Kibreab, “Resistance, Displacement, and Identity: The Case of Eritrean Refugees in Sudan,” *Journal of African Studies* 34, no. 2 (2000): 251.

<sup>89</sup> Sinclair, “Education in Emergencies,” 26.

<sup>90</sup> Sinclair, “Education in Emergencies,” 21-26.

humanitarian actors. Furthermore, community awareness programs geared towards the community at large are a useful tool, helping families adjust to the realities of life in displacement, informing parents about topics such as parenting strategies and household management. Moreover, non-academic or extracurricular activities and events, such as athletic competitions, musical concerts, and educational drama productions, provide the youth, as well as the community at large, positive and fun outlets in which to express themselves. This sort of non-formal education is still vital to the development of youth, providing alternatives to other potentially destructive activities, while also building a sense of community.<sup>91</sup>

Another indicator used to measure protection level of refugee education is the percentage of refugee teachers present. The actual benefit and protection role of refugee teachers is unproven; however in my experience in language and vocational training, I found that students preferred to learn from refugee teachers. As numerous students explained to me, refugee teachers not only spoke their native language, but were also able to explain things in a manner that was easily comprehensible to the students. They served as role models for students in an environment of poverty and illiteracy. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that access to education alone is insufficient. Low quality education for refugees often “does not help children to make connections between schooling and their future livelihoods.”<sup>92</sup>

Research shows that in some cases the ability of children in conflict-affected areas to access quality education is so low that refugee children residing in a camp environment might potentially have greater access to quality education than they had in their country of origin. Furthermore, within the refugee population data has shown that refugee youth in a camp environment appear more likely to have access to quality education than their urban-based counterparts. The likelihood of increased educational access for refugees in the host country depends on the educational systems in the country of origin and that of the host country. For

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<sup>91</sup> Sinclair, “Education in Emergencies,” 30-31.

<sup>92</sup> Sarah Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education: A Global Review* (Geneva: UNHCR Policy and Development Evaluation Service, 2011): 32.

example Somali children in Kenya have much greater access to education than they had in Somalia.<sup>93</sup>

In the 2011 *Global Review* of refugee education, the UNHCR places, "Integration of refugees into national education systems" and the, "Provision of post-primary education for all refugees...with emphasis on access for girls" at the head of its "Agenda for Change". In the case of Kharaz refugee camp these goals have been met. Refugee children attend a Save the Children administered primary school within the camp, whereas they attend secondary school alongside local Yemeni students at a nearby nationally operated school.<sup>94</sup>

In the case of Somali refugees in Yemen, the refugees enjoy substantial increases in terms of access and quality. Statistically, educational access at the primary school level in Somalia is among the lowest in the world, with a mere 23 percent of children enrolled and a 24 percent literacy rate in female youth ages 15-24. Data for the literacy rates of males in the same demographic was unavailable. Comparatively, the situation in Yemen is significantly better with a 73 percent primary school enrollment and a 70 percent literacy rate for females aged 15-24. The literacy rate for males of the same age is 95 percent.<sup>95</sup> Although the majority of children in Somali have little or no access to formal education, enrollment rates along with the number of schools have recently increased in and around urban areas.<sup>96</sup>

The recent conflict in Yemen has changed the situation due to the large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Aden for example, as IDPs from the neighboring Abyan governorate flooded into the city they were housed in dozens of schools across the city. Classrooms have become home to as many as 24 people.<sup>97</sup> Once schools are co-opted for use as shelters, their use as educational facilities is suspended. Whereas refugees residing in urban areas are directly affected by the influx of IDPs and consequently the overburdening of the educational system, educational access in Kharaz saw no real impact due to its isolation.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Ferris and Rebecca Winthrop, *Education and Displacement: Assessing Conditions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons affected by Conflict*, (The Brookings Institute: Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2010): 12.

<sup>94</sup> Dryden-Peterson, 6.

<sup>95</sup> UNICEF, *Somalia: Statistics* [online] (2010).

<sup>96</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Somalia – Education – Issue*. 2005 [Date of most recent statistics].

<sup>97</sup> UNICEF, *Yemen: Statistics* [online] (2010).

<sup>98</sup> Ferris and Winthrop, *Education and Displacement*, 18.



Even in light of recent events in Yemen and the recent increases in educational opportunities in Somalia, statistically it is clear that educational access in Yemen is clearly superior to that of war ravaged Somalia. However, the *Global Review* points out that "Refugee education is generally of a very low quality," with student to teacher ratios reaching as high as 1:70. Teachers often lack even a minimum of training. In Kharaz, for example, due to the poor quality of education and lack of motivation, some students completed primary school despite being illiterate in either Somali or Arabic.

Global averages for primary school enrollment for refugees are higher in camp settings. Camp refugee enrollment is approximately 78 percent versus that of their urban counterparts which stands at 70 percent. Generally these numbers are further exaggerated in situations where refugees reside in both camp and urban settings within the same host country. For example, in Uganda the enrollment rate for camp-based refugees was 78 percent and 23 percent in urban areas. Contrary to these global trends, in Yemen primary school enrollment in camps is 72 percent compared to 93 percent in urban areas.<sup>99</sup>

Despite low enrollment rates, or perhaps because of them, the 36:1 student to teacher ratio in Yemen-based camps in 2009 was slightly below the UNHCR standards as defined by the 2011 *Refugee Education: A Global Review* regarding the student to teacher ratio. Yemen was also well above the goal of 80 percent of teachers being qualified, with 93 percent of teachers having received the minimum of 10 days of training. Although the UNHCR is clear that this standard is "far below what would be reasonable for prolonged refugee situations or what is needed to inculcate sustainable literacy and numeracy in rural students from poor and often illiterate homes."<sup>100</sup>

The emphasis placed on gender equality in the UNHCR *2011 Global Review*, is indicative of the international humanitarian regime as a whole. Unfortunately, however, gender inequality still exists in much of the developed world and consequently within the world refugee population. While enrollment rates in Yemen are on average higher than those in Kenya, Uganda, and the Central African Republic and the country boasts a comparatively impressive student teacher ratio, gender inequality remains an issue. A key indicator is the ratio of male to

<sup>99</sup> Ferris and Winthrop, *Education and Displacement*, 26.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 30.

female teachers, with only one female to every ten males.<sup>101</sup> Female teachers serve as positive role models, which is important in a cultural environment with a strong gender bias, such as exists in Yemeni and Somali culture. Moreover, poverty plays a significant role in perpetuating gender inequality as the burden of the day-to-day running of the household and family fall to the females. In fact, although generally considered to be a vulnerable group, women adjust to life in a refugee camp much better than men, perhaps out of necessity; however, the fact remains that women are underrepresented in refugee education systems.<sup>102</sup> According to Morris, the majority of Somali men are dependent on the income earned by women, who sometimes find work as domestic servants in Yemeni houses or resort to beggary.<sup>103</sup>

The importance of refugee education in terms of protection and psychological development for youth is universally recognized, however in non-refugee situations the end goal of education is generally economic, as it allows an individual access to economic opportunities which in turn lead to stability. Education is generally valued in economic terms, essentially a better education equates to increased economic opportunity. Therefore, as the economic value of education declines it follows that the value placed upon education for its own sake will decrease as well.

According to the *1951 Convention* and its *1967 Protocol*, refugees must be afforded the right to work in the host country and although as a signatory to the *Convention*, refugees in Yemen are legally allowed to work, this legal right carries little weight in the country. With a domestic unemployment rate of 37 percent, the poor economic situation in the country creates major obstacles. Treated as foreigners, refugees encounter difficulties in obtaining work permits and are restricted from working in certain fields.<sup>104</sup>

The resulting lack of economic opportunities leads to negative coping strategies, such as prostitution, begging, and theft, the same sort of negative and exploitative behaviors and situations we hope to discourage through refugee education. In urban areas the available economic opportunities for many are limited to operating small kiosks, internet cafes and restaurants, washing cars, emptying latrines, and for the educated perhaps the opportunity to

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<sup>101</sup> Dryden-Peterson, 6.

<sup>102</sup> Otto Hieronymi, "Refugee Children and Their Future," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2009): 10-11.

<sup>103</sup> Tim Morris, "Urban Somali Refugees in Yemen," *Forced Migration Review* 34 (2010): 37.

<sup>104</sup> Umlas, 4.

work as teachers or to possibly secure a job with a humanitarian agency, however funding limitations and a large workforce cause these positions to be highly competitive.<sup>105</sup>

The low economic reward for those who complete their secondary education is another major issue, leading many to drop out in the hopes of participating in vocational training programs. These vocational training programs offer a greater opportunity for employment in a country where the informal sector accounts for an estimated 95 percent of small and medium-sized business.<sup>106</sup> The harsh reality is that the short term and low wage positions for skilled and unskilled laborers in the informal sector are easier to find than positions in the formal economic sector that require an education, thereby reducing the value of education in the eyes of many Somali refugees in Yemen.

While education is highly respected by refugees and many youth are desperate to continue their education at the post-secondary level, the reality is that for many families the investment is greater than the possible economic rewards forcing many to opt for low paid unskilled work in order to provide for their families rather than pursue their education.<sup>107</sup> In order for education to retain its value and be effective in a protracted refugee situation, a long-term strategy with clear objectives, implemented in coordination with livelihood strategies, and economic development in the host community is necessary. Simply improving educational quality and access in the refugee community alone, is not enough, as Barbara Zeus explains some of the inherent systemic flaws or failings of refugee education:

Drawn into the power structures of international protection, refugees' lives might not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile and it becomes all the more challenging to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance and from this powerful narrative. Structural limitations mean that, irrespective of rhetoric to the contrary, educational planning is often done 'for' refugees by the IRR, rather than 'with' refugees."<sup>108</sup>

Essentially, the long-term objective of refugee education should be to open doors to new opportunities that will allow refugees access to post-secondary education that would in turn create a host of new economic opportunities. While "education for repatriation" can be an

<sup>105</sup> Morris, *Forced Migration Review*, 36.

<sup>106</sup> Umlas, 5.

<sup>107</sup> Barbara Zeus, "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 2 (2011): 257-258.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 268.

effective strategy, teaching skills that will be in demand once repatriation takes place, it has limited effectiveness in situations without a solution in sight. Although “education for repatriation” may be the only option in the case of a closed or isolated camp, at the very least it serves to provide the hope that upon return to the country of origin beneficiaries will be well prepared to compete in the economy.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ferris and Winthrop, *Education and Displacement*, 27.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter discusses the methodology utilized in this study and the challenges and limitations encountered over the course of the research. Due to the inherent limitations and challenges of this study, such as the small sample size, all of which will be discussed in this chapter, the research for this study is necessarily qualitative in nature although a small amount of quantitative demographic data is included. The research for this study was a three step process and therefore three distinct research methods were employed.

The first phase was exploratory in nature and relied upon participant observation in order to define the research problem. Once the research problem had been identified and the general direction of this study became clear I moved onto the second phase. The second phase consisted of an in depth review of the existing literature to define the research problem and to identify any potential knowledge gaps within that literature. The third and final phase of this study took the form of semi-structured qualitative surveys, which were distributed to what I hoped, was a representative sample group of Kharaz residents. I will discuss the challenges and limitations encountered over the course of the research following a discussion of the three research methods utilized in this study; participant observation, literature review, and semi-structured interviews in detail.

My first real exposure to the realities of humanitarian field work and to the harsh reality of life in a refugee camp came in July, 2011, when I accepted a position as the Livelihoods and Skills Coordinator in Kharaz refugee camp for an INGO. Prior to my arrival I decided that I would conduct the field work for this study over the course of my tenure in Kharaz. There were two key factors that led to my decision to focus my thesis research on the Somali refugee situation in Yemen. First, the decision was in a large part due to the result of my long-term interest in Yemen, specifically the plight of the Somali refugees, and a desire to one day live and work in the country. Secondly, the importance of convenience cannot be underestimated. Unrestricted access to the only refugee camp in Yemen provided an opportunity to conduct meaningful research that was simply too good to pass up.



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### 3.1 Participant Observation

Upon my arrival in Yemen, I was quickly disabused of any romantic notions I might once have had of life as an aid worker and humanitarian emergency and relief operations in general. I arrived during a time of turmoil, as the country was swept along with the rest of the Arab World by the tide of revolution in what has come to be known as the Arab Spring. By July, 2000, the international humanitarian organizations within Yemen, including the UNHCR and its implementing partners (IPs), had for the most part evacuated all non-essential international staff. Therefore, from July until December, 2011 the UNHCR field officer in charge of camp operations and myself comprised the entirety of the international staff posted full time in Kharaz. Travel restrictions imposed on all foreigners by the government of Yemen and security restrictions imposed on staff at an organizational level resulted in weeks at a time spent in Kharaz, providing ample time for observation and interaction with the community.

<sup>110</sup> Note the location of the Kharaz refugee camp; approximately 200 miles to the west of Aden; UNHCR, *Global Appeal*, 160.

Naturally, my vast experience and knowledge of refugees and protracted refugee situations heretofore being, as it was, derived solely from academic and, to a lesser extent, popular non-fiction literature, was far more useful in the classroom than in the field office. At the beginning of my tenure in Yemen I was unable to comprehend the sheer scale of the obstacles and the bewildering complexity of the challenges faced by refugees in a protracted situation. However, through my official position as livelihoods and skills coordinator and through non-official social interactions with the camp residents I was given a new perspective on refugees and displacement issues. My previous understandings and perceptions of refugee situations stemmed from a systemic approach to refugee and migration issues and a macro-level perspective that viewed and conceptualized displacement issues in terms of governmental and international policy and refugees as statistics.

I have now worked with refugees on a more individual basis, and it is easy to empathize with their situations which tend to have a very real and personal impact. I have found that viewing a single person or family as individuals from a personal perspective is relatively easy; however it is much more difficult to look at an entire refugee population in terms other than statistical. Although, once my perception was altered and the statistics became real people with real problems it became clear that refugee situations and the people in those situations are unique and cannot be addressed by a single, one-size-fits all policy. This helped to simplify the identification of the research problem I wished to address.

My coworkers and colleagues were extremely bright and motivated. However, in the time I was working in Yemen only one was able to secure a scholarship and attend a university. The thirst for knowledge and an opportunity to improve themselves and their economic situations is no less than inspiring. The best position that the majority of those refugees could hope for, without a university degree, was working for an international organization such as ADRA. The motivation, so strong among some, was not universal. As in any protracted situation, hopelessness was a reality for many.

Through simple, non-empirical observation, I began to notice a trend. It appeared to me that new arrivals that had completed their secondary education, or the majority of it in Somalia, were much more active in the community than their peers who had been raised in the camp. They also, I observed, tended to be better educated and thus represented the majority of the NGO

refugee staff in Kharaz; in fact, out of the six teachers in the English program employed by my organization, five were first generation refugees, only one of whom was over the age of 25. For that reason, I made the decision to conduct a comparative study of education in general and educational quality in particular between Kharaz refugee camp and Somalia; in an effort to shed light on the impact, if any, that the quality of educational system had on an individual's future economic opportunity. If this study revealed no notable differences between the groups then that would perhaps suggest that the underlying issue is psychosocial in nature.

The lack of mobility, the predominance of refugee staff, access to camp residents, albeit often unavoidably and unintentionally in an official context which I will expand on further in the limitations section, provided ample opportunity for participant observation and were fundamental to the development of this study.

### **3.2 Secondary Sources**

Following the participant observation conducted during the exploratory phase of the research, I then began a review of the available academic literature. The literature review serves not only to define the problem and highlight any knowledge gaps in the field, but also to place the qualitative research into the broader context of the current discourse of protracted refugee situations. In order to provide the majority of the statistical data incorporated into this study I relied upon reports from international organizations such as the UNHCR and UNICEF, in addition to various monitoring and evaluation organizations. While the findings of this literature review are detailed in Chapter Two, there are a few aspects of the literature review phase that are noteworthy.

It became apparent almost from the moment I began my review of the literature that despite the large body of work on protracted refugee situations, and more specifically literature and research on Somali displacement, Somali refugees in Yemen have received relatively little attention from academia. In theory I suppose the reason for this is obvious, given that the population of the Dadaab refugee camp alone is more than double the total refugee population in Yemen. Therefore, despite the breadth of research on protracted refugee situations and populations, case studies conducted in Yemen and more specifically Kharaz refugee camp are a scarcity. Additionally, security is a perpetual concern within Yemen. More recently access to the



refugee populations has been hampered as travel restrictions were increased in light of the growing security concerns during the revolution and the continued threat of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in the southern governorates.

Furthermore, a substantial proportion of the academic literature reviewed was systemic in focus. While, policy oriented research is useful to be sure, and proved valuable to this research which narrowed the focus to a small number of individuals at the bottom of the humanitarian hierarchy, in regards to the displaced Somali population, it was clearly lacking. I think this is essentially the result of the prevalence of large-scale quantitative research projects that prove useful in policy analysis and evaluation. Although, these sort of broad quantitative studies often involving case studies of populations in the tens of thousands are necessary, the reality is that no two refugee situations of populations are the same.

To conclude this section, the review of the available academic literature was a vital stage in the research process and accomplished two key objectives. First, the lack of micro-level qualitative research specific to Somali refugees residing in Yemen revealed that methodologically speaking there was a rather large gap in the existing literature. Secondly, the increasing attention paid to the role of refugee education in protracted situations, coupled with the growing trend that is seeking integrated development and relief programs, confirmed the relevance of a focused case study that addresses the importance of education and livelihood strategies from a bottom-up perspective.

### **3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews**

The third phase of the research process was fieldwork, data collection, and analysis. There were many benefits to limiting my case study to Kharaz. As mentioned above, convenience was an important factor in this decision; however, it was not the only one. First, for the purposes of this research I needed to find a semi-homogenous population of young adults in order to establish a baseline for comparison that would be representative of the target populations. Furthermore, the geographical isolation of a camp setting is preferable in this case to an urban setting as it guarantees that all participants have access to the same basic services, thereby reducing the number of variables. Such a situation exists in Kharaz refugee camp in southern Yemen.

Following the identification of a suitable location and population for my research, the next step was to determine which sampling technique was best suited to my research objectives. The decision to conduct a qualitative study was made in large part due to my reaction to the abundance of large quantitative studies on protracted refugee situations. I recognized the potential existed to make a meaningful contribution to the field in the form of a qualitative study that viewed the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system from the ground up. In order to avoid potential conflicts of interests I was limited in my choices of research techniques.

As I will explain in more detail in the following section; my official position in the camp necessitated the use of research assistants. Therefore, although I had originally envisioned in depth qualitative interviews as the foundation of this study, it was clear that the most appropriate research technique was to rely on semi-structure qualitative surveys. It became apparent that there were several benefits to this technique. First, while qualitative survey results lack the detail of a few in depth qualitative interviews, the sample size can be measurably larger. Secondly, the use of standardized questionnaires allowed uniform and measurable results despite the use of two different assistants.

Since the research was conducted after I left Kharaz, the only viable sampling technique was convenience sampling which, although a useful sampling technique, can serve to limit the diversity of the sample population. Furthermore, since the surveys were to be conducted by a research assistance within the camp, the following parameters were developed to ensure an appropriately diverse sample group. The parameters of the sample population were defined in demographic terms. For the purposes of this research, I defined the sample population as Somali refugees residing in Kharaz refugee camp, aged 18 to 28. Next, two target groups within the general sample population were defined and identified as follows:

*Sample Group A:* First and second generation Somali refugees between the ages of 18 and 28; who having resided in Kharaz refugee camp or its predecessor al-Gahin refugee camp since the age of 10 or younger, were educated in Kharaz refugee camp.

*Sample Group B:* First generation refugees, between the ages of 18 and 28, who arrived in Kharaz at the age of 15 or older, were educated in their country of origin, Somalia.

The reasoning behind the definition of these two target groups, and their selection as the focus of my research is twofold. Firstly, defining the age range as 18 to 28 limited the scope of the research to those individuals who had completed their education relatively recently; whereas it was determined that impact of the camp-based educational system on an individual entering the system at the age of 10 or younger would be sufficient for the purposes of this study. Conversely, for those individuals having arrived in Kharaz refugee camp at the age of 15 or older, the educational system in their country of origin would have already had sufficient influence for the purposes of this study. Additionally, an effort was made to include as great a level of gender parity as was possible.

The questionnaires used for this survey consisted of twenty three questions divided into three thematic sections; Demographic information, Education and Training, and Employment.<sup>111</sup> The demographic data was necessary in order to classify the participants and results, and also served as a useful tool in the recognition of common themes and trends that emerged in the data analysis. The demographic data also, to a limited extent, allowed for a statistical analysis of the sample group.

The next section concerned the educational background and achievements of the participants in addition to any vocational or skills training they have received. Through an assessment of the level of education of a participant in relation to their employment status and history and their perceptions of the attainability of future economic opportunities, it is possible to measure the effectiveness of educational systems and vocational programs in economic terms. Furthermore, although it is necessary to distinguish between academic education and vocational and skills training, it is also necessary to recognize the interdependent nature of the two.

The conclusion of this phase of the research method is the analysis of the findings. The analysis is similar in structure to the survey questionnaire in that it is based on three themes; Education and Vocational Training, Employment, and Perceptions of Future Economic Opportunity. Based on my participant observation, I hypothesized that *Sample Group B* would prove to be the more successful in terms of employment and post-secondary education. However, following an analysis of the data my initial hypothesis proved incorrect, at least

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<sup>111</sup>Research Questionnaire is available in Appendix 1; For the Somali translation used in the research, see Appendix 2.

partially. The results of the surveys proved to be both interesting and indicative of some of the underlying issues in refugee education and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Although the final phase of the research project yielded sufficient data to allow for the achievement of my original research objective, several limitations and challenges had a substantial impact on, not only the research process, but also the results. By nature, qualitative research is a fluid process, dictating the direction of the study. In their own way, the limitations and challenges encountered in the research dictate the direction of the study every bit as much as the research itself. In the concluding section of this chapter I will discuss these challenges and limitations and their role in shaping this study.

### **3.4 Challenges and Limitations**

In any research project that involves field research, the question is not *if* you will encounter challenges and other obstacles, it is *when* and *how many*. The probability of encountering major challenges in the research process increases exponentially when that fieldwork is conducted in a developing state in the midst of revolution, suffers from endemic insecurity, and is at times the definition of instability. When the focus of this research is a geographically isolated refugee camp within such a country, the research process is interesting to say the least. Such was the case in Yemen when I arrived in July of 2011. Nearly a year after my departure, the challenges of conducting research in Yemen continued to impact the direction of this research. Some challenges can be overcome. Others force you to adapt and therein lies the true challenge, adapting and adjusting to these challenges and limitations while maintaining the focus of your research.

Over the course of this study I faced challenges and limitations at nearly every stage. Some were relatively minor, such as my inability to speak the Somali language and were easily overcome with little to no real impact on my research. However, there were several challenges and limitations that fundamentally shaped this research. In this section I will address these issues and their impact on this study.

The first real limitations of this study became apparent almost immediately upon my arrival in Kharaz and severely impacted my access to the community in a non-official role. For the majority of the camp residents there was no separation between my personal identity and

professional role. Essentially I was defined by my position as the Livelihoods and Skills Coordinator for an INGO and my actions, in turn, reflected upon the organization I represented. This presented several challenges. First and foremost any interaction I had with camp residents was generally influenced by my perceived identity as a representative of the entirety of the international community. Therefore, my interactions with many camp residents were rarely non-official or purely social, regardless of the setting.

The next challenge to arise, also originated from my official position. I had assumed that I would be able to conduct my research during my tenure in the camp. However, I soon realized that this was impossible. If I was to conduct a survey it would be assumed to be official and, as such, not only represented a possible conflict of interests, but the credibility of the results would undoubtedly be in question. The reason for this is that I observed that often when responding to official inquiries or surveys some residents either attempted to give what they deemed the desired response or exaggerated their answers. Either of these ways, for the purposes of academic research, would have been unacceptable.

In response I was forced to abandon my previous strategy which revolved around conducting a small number of very in depth narrative interviews. The most viable alternative proved to be semi-structured qualitative interviews with standardized questions conducted by research assistants. This process was accompanied by a host of issues and delays; communication was an issue as telephone reception and the availability of the internet are notoriously bad in Kharaz. Fortunately, my two research assistants, Abdulfatah Abdulkadir Ma'ow and Ali Mohamoud Hussien also served as my translators.

Forced to conduct, or more accurately, coordinate this stage of the research process naturally limited my control over certain key aspects, specifically the selection of the participants. As I mentioned above, convenience sampling proved to be the best technique in this situation. However, convenience sampling can potentially lead to a lack of diversity in the sample group which is what happened in this particular instance. A review of the sample population quickly reveals that a majority of the participants are employed by the various international organizations within Kharaz and as such are not entirely representative of the camp population as a whole. Fortunately, it was possible to account for this in the research analysis by highlighting the fact that these participants had secured highly competitive positions, while at the

same time reaching the limit of the economic opportunities available to them. Many expressed their desire to continue their education so that they may one day have the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

The challenges and limitations mentioned above are the major challenges and limitations I faced during the course of this research, however they are just a few among many. The key to overcoming these obstacles was the fluid nature of qualitative research itself, in which the data directs the course the study will take. In Chapter Four, the way in which some of these challenges were overcome and their impact to the research is addressed.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter contains the analysis of the research findings. As discussed in Chapter Three, the analysis of the findings is organized along three major themes, in a manner similar to that of the questionnaires, in order to provide a structure for the analysis from which we can place the findings into context. The three themes that will be used to structure this analysis are as follows:

- Education and Vocational Training
- Employment
- Perceptions of Future Economic Opportunities

Within this structure, the analysis and discussion are guided by the research objective and are thus comparative in nature. Although, what began as simply a comparative analysis aimed at exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the refugee education in Kharaz refugee camp, evolved into something more over the course of the analysis of the data. The broadening of this discussion was the unintended result of the lack of diversity displayed by the sample population; it became apparent that employment rates in each target group, *Sample Group A* and *Sample Group B* were statistically very similar.

However, measurable differences in employment rates did appear when the level of educational achievement was factored in. Hence, the focus was therefore more on educational level in relation to employment than the location where participants received their primary and secondary education. The location of a participant's primary and secondary education did, however, play a role in determining a participant's educational achievements with 71 percent of participants possessing at least some level of university education belonged to *Sample Group A*.

What became apparent was that despite a limited economic value, education retained its value for the participants. Despite the current limited economic opportunity, the participants viewed educational value in terms of the future. Moreover, the value of education went beyond simple economic terms, and served as a source of prestige within the community, representing a tool with which to help shape the future of the individual and the community. Before we begin

our discussion of the data we must first analyze the data in terms of demographics, education, and vocational training in terms of employment.

#### 4.1 Profiling the Participants

The sample group consists of thirty four participants. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 28, with a mean age of 22. The sample group was slightly imbalanced in term of gender, with only 10 of the 34 participants being female. The participants were entirely Somali in origin, with the majority being born in the capital city of Mogadishu; however, three individuals were born in Yemen, while another was born in Kenya, and a third was born in Somaliland. Internationally, Somaliland is considered an autonomous region, and within its borders Somaliland is considered an independent state. I have therefore classified it as such given that the nature of this study revolves around the perceptions and experiences of the participants, not official political boundaries.

Furthermore, the majority of the young adults in this sample population, 27 out of 34, are single; the female demographic mirrors the overall marital statistics, with only 2 of female participants married. The demographic data of the participants is shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Data of the Sample Population**

Gender	Male		Female		Total	
	24	71%	10	29%	34	
Location of Birth	Somalia	Other	Somalia	Other	Somalia	Other
	21	3	8	2	29   85%	5   15%
Marital Status	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single
	5	19	2	8	7   21%	27   79%
Age on Arrival in Yemen	0-14	15-29	0-14	15-29	0-14	15-29
	17	7	7	3	24   71%	10   29%
Arrived at Kharaz Directly Following Displacement <sup>112</sup>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	20	4	7	3	27   79%	7   21%
Have Family in Yemen	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	21	3	9	1	30   88%	4   22%
Have Family in Somalia	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	14	10	4	6	18   53%	16   47%
Would You Return to Somalia in the Case of Peace?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	21	3	9	1	30   88%	4   22%

<sup>112</sup> A large number of the participants, resided in al-Gahin refugee camp, a predecessor to the Kharaz, on their arrival to Yemen, however all al-Gahin residents were relocated upon the establishment of Kharaz refugee camp. Therefore, for the purposes of this study there is no distinction drawn between Kharaz and al-Gahin refugee camp.



If you will recall the parameters of the sample population in Chapter Four were defined in demographic terms. The sample population is defined as Somali refugees, between 18 and 29 years of age residing in Kharaz refugee camp. For comparative purposes the sample population is sub-divided into two target groups, referred to here as *Sample Group A* and *Sample Group B*. Although explained in more detail in Chapter Four, essentially, *Sample Group A* consists of those participants who have resided in Kharaz refugee camp, or its predecessor al-Gahin, since the age of 14 or younger; whereas, those participants arriving in Kharaz at the age of 15 years or older are classified *Sample Group B*. This analysis will utilize *Sample Groups A* and *B* to a limited extent, however the small sample size allows for a more revealing individual level analysis of the data. The demographic makeup of *Sample Groups A* and *B* is shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Distribution of *Sample Groups A & B***

Gender	<i>Sample Group A</i>				<i>Sample Group B</i>			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	16		7		8		3	
Location of Birth	Somalia	Other	Somalia	Other	Somalia	Other	Somalia	Other
	14	2	6	1	8	0	2	1
Marital Status	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single
	2	14	1	6	3	5	1	2

A sub-division of the sample population into the target groups, *Sample Group A* and *Sample Group B* reveals a slightly unequal distribution between the two groups. This imbalance is a result of convenience sampling, as discussed in Chapter Four. Twenty three of the participants fall under *Sample Group A*, while the remaining eleven are classified as *Sample Group B*. In regards to gender, seven of the ten female participants fall under *Sample Group A* both having arrived in Yemen roughly three years ago.

## 4.2 Education

In terms of educational access the data is promising; a minimum of secondary level education was universal among participants and seven participants had at least some education at the university level. Of the seven participants educated at the university level, 3 were females.

There is an unsurprisingly strong correlation between higher education and employment. Of the 7 participants who attended, or are currently attending university, 4 of them are currently employed. Perhaps surprisingly, females with a university level education were statistically more likely to be employed than their male counterparts. Not all participants who reported university level education, earned university degrees. For example, one participant who was forced to abandon her university studies was currently employed by an international NGO as an English teacher.

**Table 4.3: Educational & Employment Status**

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
	15	7	22
	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>
	5	0	5
	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>
	4	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Previously Employed</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
	4	2	6   27%
	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>
	2	0	2   40%
	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>
	1	2	3   43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7   29%</b>	<b>4   40%</b>	<b>11   32%</b>
<b>Currently Employed<sup>113</sup></b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
	3	3	6   27%
	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Institute</b>
	2	0	2   40%
	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>
	2	2	4   57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7   29%</b>	<b>5   50%</b>	<b>12   35%</b>

However, despite the relatively high rate of employment, the quality of employment opportunities is rather poor, leaving these participants no choice but to accept any job they can get, despite being overly qualified or a professional in another field entirely. One young lady recently graduated from university and dreams of one day finding a job in a human rights

<sup>113</sup> Some of those that are unemployed are currently studying at institutes, universities, or currently enrolled in vocational training programs.

organization. Realistically though she believes that it is unlikely in her current situation, so she is actively seeking alternatives, “I’ll never get the job I want, working in human rights, unless I leave Yemen...so I would like to receive training in computer or mobile repair so that at least I could start my business.”

**Table 4.4: Unemployment Rates for Sample Groups A & B**

	Male		Female		Total	
<b>Educated in Yemen (Sample Group A)</b>	15		7		22	
<b>Currently Employed</b>	5	33%	3	43%	8	36%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>67%</b>		<b>57%</b>		<b>64%</b>	
<b>Educated in Somalia (Sample Group B)</b>	8		3		12	
<b>Currently Employed</b>	2	25%	2	67%	4	33%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>75%</b>		<b>33%</b>		<b>67%</b>	

With only 12 of the 34 participants currently employed<sup>114</sup>, it is clear that whether an individual receives their education in Yemen or in Somalia, it is irrelevant in terms of employment opportunity. However, perhaps a more telling statistic is that of university enrollment. If we look at higher education there is a marked difference in enrollment rates. For example, 5 of the 7 of the individuals who received university level education received their primary and secondary education in Yemen. It is unclear from this research, however, whether this speaks to educational quality or the level of access to post-secondary education afforded to long-term camp residents. In one instance, a young man who arrived in Yemen several years ago at the age of 20, reported being unable to get a scholarship, he explained that

*I would like to continue my education if I can get an opportunity for it. But I was forced to stop my studies...when I first came to Yemen 3 years ago, the donors of the scholarship in Yemen - the NGOs - refused to consider my certificate since it was from Somalia...*

Additionally, for some of the participants it was a matter of priority. The first and foremost challenge facing new arrivals in the linguistic barrier, without the ability to speak in Arabic an individual has no hope for opportunities of any sort outside of the camp environment.

### 4.3 Vocational Training

<sup>114</sup> Clearly, we cannot presume that a sample population of thirty four is representative of the approximately 17,000 residents of Kharaz refugee camp.

Education alone was not a determining factor in employment opportunity. The data clearly indicates that vocational training had a significant impact on employment rates. To put this into perspective, 8 of the 10 participants who received vocational training are employed, which is slightly above the total unemployment rate of the sample group, and equal to that of university graduates.

**Table 4.5: Vocational Training Employment Rates**

	Male	Female	Total	
Vocational Training	10	4	14	41%
	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Employed</b>	
	5	3	8	57%

Among the remaining participants, 5 participants had received diplomas from a post-secondary technical institute. Although these participants were less likely to be employed than those participants reporting university education, 2 are employed while a third is currently pursuing an English degree. Comparatively, the employment rate for this group was measurably higher than that of their peers with only secondary education. Perhaps the best indicator of the importance of the refugee education and vocational training programs is that of the 22 individuals with only a secondary degree, only 6 were currently employed.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

When discussing the potential for economic opportunities in the future, the participants were mostly positive. However, several themes such as, lack of opportunity in Yemen and chronic unemployment in the country, lack of post-secondary education, and lack of necessary vocational skills, were among responses. Included in this were those who had obtained university degrees, yet still felt they either lacked skills or that the unemployment situation in Yemen was simply too great an obstacle.

For those with university degrees the participants shared the universal belief that they will find their desired job in the future. However, 29 percent of the participants in this group mentioned the large unemployment rate in Yemen and expressed their desire to go abroad in order to find employment opportunities. According to one young woman, “Yemen is a poor Country and most of the Yemenis are unemployed, but I think I can get a good job if I leave the country.” Educational access at the post-secondary level is less than ideal. Despite this, the participants unanimously voiced their desire to continue their education at the post-secondary level and attend a university. Only one participant in the entire sample population pointed out that it was difficult for refugees to attend university in Yemen and therefore wished to travel to a third country in order to pursue her education.

The statistics clearly show that for refugees living in Kharaz refugee camp, at least those in the sample population, a university degree is as good as vocational training at least in terms of employment. These results, however, do not reflect the quality of that employment. Moreover, despite the lack of a statistical advantage in employment rates, the participants universally expressed a desire to continue their education. Even those with university degrees wished to pursue further educational opportunities.

If there is no economic advantage to post-secondary education, what is the reason for this? The answer is rather simple. In the words of one participant; “I would like to continue my education if I can get a scholarship to go to university, because this will benefit it my country and people.” Another participant explained that, “Education is a great honor for you personally and is the only way that you can help to develop your community.” Obviously, for the Somali

refugees residing in Kharaz, education is measured in more than simple economic terms. It provides a tangible goal along with hope for a better future.

Therefore, while educational quality is a major theme in refugee education literature, perhaps we should also consider the quality of economic opportunities. Take Amina<sup>115</sup> for example; Amina is twenty three years old and has resided in Yemen since the age of two. She has a law degree from a Yemeni university and is currently employed as a community mobilizer by an NGO in Kharaz. Naturally, she would like to find a job that is relevant to her university degree; however, she explains that, “If I leave Yemen and go abroad I think I will get a good job. But because Yemen is a poor country and most of the Yemenis are unemployed I don’t think I can get a good job here...” This sentiment is echoed by Abdi, a twenty seven year old man who has lived in Yemeni refugee camps since the age of three. Abdi explained the difficulties of finding quality employment opportunities in Yemen;

*I have obtained a Bachelor Degree of Business Administration and I would like to continue my education by getting a Masters of Business Administration but there are no scholarships for me to achieve this goal...I would like to have management position that allows me to lead and perhaps the day will come when I have that position. But right now in the country we live in now [Yemen] there are no vacancies.*

Following an examination of the research it is clear that education and training form the foundation upon which an individual’s economic opportunities are built. The quality and of that education and the availability of post-secondary education are crucial factors in breaking the cycle of dependence which so often characterizes protracted refugee situations. This is a recurring theme in this analysis; however, educational access and quality alone however, are not enough.

Unemployment is rampant in many host countries rendering the limited employment opportunities highly competitive and leaving even refugees with a university degree at a decided disadvantage. As shown by the analysis of the data provided in Chapter Four, in a country such as Yemen hat has few economic opportunities, a position with an international humanitarian agency is perhaps the best job opportunity available to the refugee community. The result of this is that the level of competition for employment is high. The limited economic opportunity does

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<sup>115</sup> All participant names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

not in fact decrease the necessity of education nor the motivation to pursue it, but serves only to increase the desire and the need for education.

As evidenced by the results, for refugees in a protracted situation, the importance of access to quality education and vocational training transcends their economic value. Education provides a beacon of hope, something measurable and attainable. It also offers an escape from the tedium of camp life, giving refugee youth an opportunity to focus on something outside of their environment; thus giving them hope that one day the education they are receiving may transport them to a better and more stable lifestyle.

In regards to the search for sustainable durable solutions whether that be repatriation, local integration, or third country resettlement, refugee education is a crucial step in the development of self-reliance. Education provides the tools necessary to adapt and excel once a solution is found. Moreover, a well-educated population is more likely to be a benefit than a burden on a host community. As stated earlier, since the formation of the international refugee regime, refugee camps have held a central role, theoretically serving as temporary solutions in emergency situations.<sup>116</sup>

The predicament lies in the fact that the initial temporary camps have given way to long term encampment. The result has become a multi-complex community of people who too often become dependent on aid from the various groups within the camp setting. From the research and studies I have done, as well as what I have witnessed firsthand, education can truly become the bridge that leads these refugees out of despair into hope. It is the gateway into stability for despairing refugees. A quote from one young man sums it up, “Life without knowledge is like a house without light...”

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<sup>116</sup> Feldman, “Development Assisted Integration,” 49.

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## Appendix 1

### Survey Questionnaire

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Can you tell me where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you married/Single? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
5. About how old were you when you arrived in Yemen? \_\_\_\_\_
6. About how old were you when you arrived in Kharaz? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did you come directly to Kharaz? If not, where did you go first?
8. Do you have family in Yemen?
9. Do you still have family in Somalia?
10. Would you rather return to Somalia (if there was peace) or stay in Yemen? Please Explain.

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

11. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
12. Where did you receive your education? (Please be specific. For example: I attended primary school and half of my secondary education in Somalia and I finished my secondary education in Kharaz.)
13. Can you speak any languages other than Somali? If yes, what other languages can you speak?
  - a) Can you read and write in these languages?
  - b) Where did you learn these languages?
  - c) Would like to learn another language? Why or why not? If yes, which language?

14. Would you like to complete or continue your education (For example, would you like to attend university)? Why or why not?
15. Do you believe education is important? Why or why not?
16. Have you received vocational training of any kind? If yes, please explain (For example, what types of vocational training have you received? Was the training through an international organization?)
17. Where did you receive your training? (For example, did you receive your training in Somalia? In Yemen? Was the training hosted by an organization or was it something you did on your own?)
18. Would you like to receive vocational training in the future? If yes, what kind of training would like to have and why?
19. In your opinion, do you have a better chance of finding a job if you receive vocational training or if you complete your education? Please explain:

#### EMPLOYMENT

20. Are you currently employed? If yes, what is your current position?
21. Have you been employed in the past? Where? What did you do?
22. What kind of job would you like to have? What kind of education or training do you need for this job?
23. Do you think you will be able to get this job one day? Why or why not?

## Appendix 2

### **Su'aalaha Baaritaanka**

#### WARBIXIN XOR AH

1. Jinsi: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Imisa jir baadtahey? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ma iisheegi kartaa halkaad ku dhalatey? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ma guursatey/doob Miyaa tahey? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Carruur maleedahay? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Haddii ay haa tahey, waa imisa? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Qiyaastii da'daadu imisa ayey aheed markaad Yemen timaadey? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Qiyaastii da'daadu imisa ayey aheed markaad Kharaz timaadey? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Si toos ah miyaad Kharaz u timaadey? Haddii ay tahay maya, xagee aadey ugu horeentii?
8. Qoys maku leedahey Yemen?
9. Wali Soomaali qoys maku leedahey?
10. Malaga yaabaa in aad Soomaaliya u laabato (Haddii ay nabad jirto) ama Yemen ayaad joogeysaa? Fadlan faahfaahi.

#### WAXBARASHO IYO TABABAR

11. Waa maxey heerka waxbarasho ugu sareeya ee aad dhameysay?
12. Xageed ka heshay waxbarashadaada? (Fadlan cadey/sharaxi: Tusaale ahaan: Waxaan ka dhigtey dugsiga dhexe iyo haaf dugsiga sare ah Soomaaliya, waxaana waxbarshadeyda dugsiga sare ku dhameystey Kharaz.)
13. Maku hadli kartaa luuqado kale oo aanan aheen Soomaali? Haddii ay tahey Haa, waxaa maxey luuqadaha kale oo aad ku hadli kartid?
  - a) Ma aqrin kartaa mana qori kartaa luuqadahaan?
  - b) Xageed ku baratey luuqadahaan?
  - c) Majeclaan laheed in aad barato luuqad kale? Sabab ama Maxaadse u baranweyday? Haddii ay Haa tahey, waa luuqadee?

14. Majeclaan laheed in aad dhameysato ama aad sii wadato waxbarashadaada (Tusaale ahaan, majeclaan laheed in aad dhigato Jaamcad)? Sabab ama maxaadse u dhameysan weyday?
15. Ma'aamin santahey in waxbrasha ay tahey muhiim? Sabab ama maxaadse u aaminiweyday?
16. Maheshay Tababar Mihni ah, nooc waliba ha ahaatee? Haddii ay Haa tahey, fadlan cadey/sharax, (Tusaale ahaan, tababaro nooc ee ah ayaad heshay? Tababarku miyaad ka heshay hey'adaha caalimiga?)
17. Xageed ka heshay tababarkaaga? (Tusaale ahaan, Soomaaliya miyaad ka heshay tababarkaaga? Ama Yemen? Tababarku ma wuxuu ahaa mid ay ku siisay hey'ad mase adiga ayaa sameystey?)
18. Majeclaan laheed in aad hesho tababar mustaqbalka? Haddii ay tahey Haa, Tababar nooc ee ah ayaad jeclaan laheed in aad hesho, Sababna?
19. Fikrad ahaantaada, ma u maleyneysaa inaad heli doonto fursad fiican oo shaqo ah, haddii aad hesho tababar, ama haddii aad dhameyso waxbarashadaada? Fadlan cadey/Sharax:

#### SHAQO

20. Hada miyaad shaqeysaa? Haddii ay tahey Haa, Maxaad ka shaqeysaa hada?
21. Hada ka hor, horey ma u soo shaqeysay? Xagee? Maxaadse qabanaysay?
22. Shaqo nooc ee ah ayaad jeclaan laheed in ay ka shaqeysay? Waxbarasho nooc ee ah ama tababar nooc ee ah yaad u baahnaan laheed si aad u hesho shaqadaas?
23. Ma u maleyneysaa in aad heli doonto shaqadaas maalin maalmaha ka mid ah? Sabab ama maxaad u heli kari weyday?

