



# Higher education for refugees in low resource environments: research study

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## **About this report**

This report was prepared by Jigsaw Consult in partnership with Refugee Support Network. The research was generously funded by an anonymous private foundation. The research study is one of two publications stemming from the research. It is best read in combination with the other publication which is titled 'higher education for refugees in low-resource environments: landscape review'.

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## **About Jigsaw Consult**

Jigsaw Consult is a social enterprise that conducts independent research and evaluation to enhance outcomes in the humanitarian and development sectors.

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## **About Refugee Support Network**

Refugee Support Network is a London-based charity which enables young people affected by displacement and crisis to access, remain and progress in education.

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# Executive summary

## Purpose and context

This report presents the findings from a year-long research study which analyses different approaches to providing higher education for refugees. The research study is best read in combination with the associated report titled 'Higher education for refugees in low-resource environments: landscape review'. The objectives of the study are:

- To compare existing models offering access to higher education to refugee students in low-resource environments
- To deliver insights about how pedagogy can or should change when marginalised populations are at the centre of higher education
- To inform future strategies for programmes providing higher education for refugees.

In recent years, a wide range of new initiatives have emerged in the refugee higher education field. These range from small camp-based and host-community programmes to large online learning platforms with theoretically unlimited reach. The research engages with the full spectrum of provision, with a particular emphasis on programmes with a physical presence among affected populations. The research does not focus on the provision of higher education for refugees in high-resource environments. Five thematic areas are analysed in-depth, organised as discrete chapters: accessibility and participation, academia and organisational structure, technology, pedagogy, and impact and future. The report prioritises the voices of refugee students and those facilitating their learning, offering insight into what students consider to be good practices and challenges of the individual programmes in which they engage, as well as of the sector as a whole.

## Methodological approach

The research was designed to gain as much direct experience of as many of the relevant programmes as possible. This necessitated

a significant focus on field visits to refugee camps and urban refugee settings. Eight field visits were completed to 15 refugee higher education programmes across seven countries (Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar, and anonymous programmes in Central Africa and South East Asia). During the field visits a total of 62 focus groups, 10 individual interviews and 119 learning outcome stars were conducted with refugee students. In addition, 38 individual interviews and 11 focus groups were completed with field-based programme staff. The research also drew upon sector experts and stakeholders from 17 different programmes through 27 distance interviews. The research had a particular focus on the work of Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) because of the number of accessible programmes with a physical presence among affected populations. A field visit was undertaken to the JWL office in the USA which incorporated interviews with 41 participants from JWL and their partner organisations.

## Accessibility and participation

The first of five analysis chapters examines the accessibility of and inclusive participation in higher education programmes. Providers employ a range of methods to promote their programmes, each with their own strengths, limitations, and degrees of inclusivity. Student motivation for higher education is often multi-faceted. In addition to academic and economic motivations, many students emphasised the value they saw in higher education as an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to support their communities. The research highlights common obstacles to student participation including the challenge of managing academic workload alongside other commitments and the high standards and strict schedules of academic study.

## Academia and organisational structure

The research considers the risks and strengths of different approaches to programme management alongside coordination and partnerships, accountability and monitoring, and

funding mechanisms. Programme structures, especially multiple layers of management, create challenges in communication between staff working in different locations on the same programme. There is a wide range of teaching quality and academic approaches within and between programmes. In the design of curricula there are often assumptions made about the value and suitability of subjects for students and their communities. The majority of students place high value on internationally accredited courses, however the accreditation process is challenging and transferability of credits often lacking clarity. Limited funding, staff capacity and perceived lack of urgency are each significant challenges in measuring the longer term impact of programmes on individuals and communities.

## Technology

The appropriate and effective role of technology in higher education provision for refugees is context specific and varies according to a range of factors. Technology plays a particularly central role within the blended learning approaches emphasised in this research study. Student and staff perspectives regarding the ease and value of learning with technology vary widely according to multiple practical issues such as security, sustainability of hardware, availability of electricity, and the reliability and robustness of internet connectivity. The research demonstrates the vital role of on-going training for both staff and students in effective programme delivery of technology-enhanced higher education. The value of technology-enhanced learning is significantly influenced by the national legislative environment within which the programme is operating, due to issues such as some countries not recognising the credibility of online learning. Effective programme monitoring is a widespread challenge: appropriate technology-based data collection systems could make a significant contribution in this regard, helping to build a more robust evidence base for the sector.

## Pedagogy

The research examines the different pedagogical approaches employed by the programmes, considering staff and student awareness and perspectives. It is clear that initial training

in the relevant pedagogy could significantly improve the ability of staff to integrate it into their daily teaching practice. Students reported that distance-based staff would also benefit from increased understanding regarding the challenges commonly faced by refugees and the nuances of these across a variety of contexts. Students expressed a preference for participatory, learner-centred methods that develop critical thinking skills. They also report appreciating the opportunity to study on courses accredited by universities in higher resource environments. Holistic approaches with the provision of additional non-academic support such as mentoring, psychosocial support and career development can help to create a sense of community and safety for students and can have a significant impact on student wellbeing and ability to learn.

## Impact and future

The final analysis chapter assesses the perceived and actual impact of higher education programmes on the future prospects of students. The utility of programmes depends heavily upon the specific situation and anticipated future of each student: whether they remain in their current location, return to their country of origin or resettle to a third country. Future employment prospects are a significant consideration for students engaging in higher education, with the most important factors being level of accreditation and local and international recognition of the available qualification. Both staff and students note the impact that higher education has in terms of improved cross-cultural understanding and relationships, improved primary and secondary education through the availability of better qualified teachers, and new skills and motivation to contribute to community development initiatives. It is clear that higher education programmes can have a significant influence upon the personal development, attitudes and worldview of students. Such non-academic outcomes are highly valued by students and staff, yet are challenging for programmes to assess and quantify.

## Lessons for the sector

The analysis of the research study leads to two series of recommendations: one

for the programmes that links to the five analytical themes and one set of cross-cutting recommendations for the sector as a whole. The nine sector-wide recommendations are as follows:

1. Programmes require a clear identity and rationale. There are multiple valid programme models and approaches within the sector, and it is not possible for one programme to cover all forms of provision. A programme should be clear from the outset about what it is planning to achieve, how it intends to operate, and how it fits within and is informed by the wider sector.
  2. The sector is inherently challenging. Programmes face multiple barriers in each context and require significant investment of time, energy and financial resources to be established and maintained. It is necessary for donors to be flexible and aware of the consequences of these challenges in regard to setting realistic timelines, budgets and outcomes.
  3. Each context is different. The nature of effective higher education for refugees works differently in each host country, and for different groups of refugees within a host country. Programmes should be designed and implemented in light of the implications of these differences.
  4. Refugees value higher education for multiple reasons. These reasons include the role of higher education in promoting refugee long-term employability, increasing their potential to engage as leaders and change-makers in their communities, equipping them with specific skills and knowledge, and growing their confidence and personal development. The employability agenda is significant but it is not always the sole or primary motivating factor for a refugee student wishing to participate in higher education.
  5. Many programmes are dependent on effective technology and reliable connectivity. The majority of programmes offering higher education for refugees rely on technology, especially in blended learning programmes and with online learning platforms. The transformative potential of programmes is often not fully realised because of inadequate internet connectivity and limited hardware.
  6. Cost per beneficiary models are important but limited. The cost of one student successfully participating in a higher education programme will be influenced by numerous factors including the extent of marginalisation, previous access to education and quality of programme inputs. There is a need for more long-term evidence building regarding a robust cost-comparison between different models and providers. An over-emphasis on cost per beneficiary models leads programmes away from focusing on the most marginalised amongst refugee prospective students.
  7. The sector requires investment in systematic learning and collaboration. The number of programmes seeking to provide higher education for refugees is expanding fast. There is need for a sustained focus on evidence building and lesson sharing between relevant actors and across representatives of the various models of programming.
  8. The sector needs increased data and evidence. It is complicated to demonstrate the outcomes of a higher education programme for refugees. There is need to invest in improving data monitoring in order to build the long-term evidence and learning base for the sector: donors should recognise the significant time and costs required to make this shift and to develop, sustain and utilise such systems.
  9. The sector should engage with humanitarian principles of protection. As new initiatives emerge and long-standing programmes rapidly scale up, protection principles must be fully explored and integrated into programmes so that opportunities are not missed to coordinate and share learning between established humanitarian actors and emerging higher education providers.
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# Acronyms

<b>CBO</b>	Community based organisation
<b>CSLT</b>	Community service learning track
<b>DEAC</b>	Distance Education Accrediting Commission
<b>ECDL</b>	European Computer Driving Licence
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
<b>FAQ</b>	Frequently asked questions
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEI</b>	Higher education institution
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technology
<b>IDMC</b>	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>JRS</b>	Jesuit Refugee Service
<b>LMS</b>	Learning management system
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MOOC</b>	Massive Open Online Course
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>QOLT</b>	Quality Online Learning and Teaching
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>URL</b>	Uniform Resource Locator
<b>USB</b>	Universal Serial Bus

# Programmes

<b>AOU</b>	Arab Open University
<b>AUF</b>	Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie
<b>BHER</b>	Borderless Higher Education for Refugees
<b>CIMC</b>	Community Mobilisation in Crisis

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<b>CLH</b>	Coursera Learning Hubs
<b>DAFI</b>	Deutsch Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative
<b>FCTC</b>	From Camps to Campus
<b>FSU</b>	The Free Syrian University
<b>GBS</b>	Global Border Studies
<b>GPSS</b>	Global Platform for Syrian Students
<b>IPS</b>	Iraqi Student Project
<b>ISSUE</b>	International Syrian University in Exile
<b>JWL</b>	Jesuit Worldwide Learning
<b>LASeR</b>	Lebanese Association for Scientific Research
<b>LfS</b>	Leadership for Syria
<b>LIU</b>	Laureate International Universities
<b>MSP</b>	The MENA Scholarship Programme
<b>NPYSJ</b>	New Perspectives for Young Syrians and Jordanians
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council (Distance Learning Project)
<b>OSLC</b>	Orient School and Languages Center
<b>SCHEC</b>	Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis
<b>SISS</b>	Swedish Institute Study Scholarships
<b>SRP</b>	Student Refugee Programme
<b>SRSP</b>	Syrian Refugees Scholarship Programme
<b>TIH</b>	There is Hope Malawi
<b>TL</b>	Tomorrow's Leaders
<b>UoPeople</b>	University of the People
<b>UNHCR/FF</b>	UNHCR Exchange/Fuse Foundation
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
<b>USP</b>	University Scholarship Program
<b>WU</b>	Wings University
<b>WUSC</b>	World University Service of Canada
<b>WTK</b>	Windle Trust Kenya
<b>YES</b>	Youth Education for Stability (UNESCO programme)

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# I. Introduction

## I.1. Purpose of the study

This research study aims to contribute to an understanding of good practices in the provision of higher education to displaced and marginalised groups. It is one component within a year-long study that analyses different models providing access to higher education to deprived groups at the margins, in order to assess which components best fit the purpose of delivering a high quality and holistic higher education qualification. The specific research objectives of the study are:

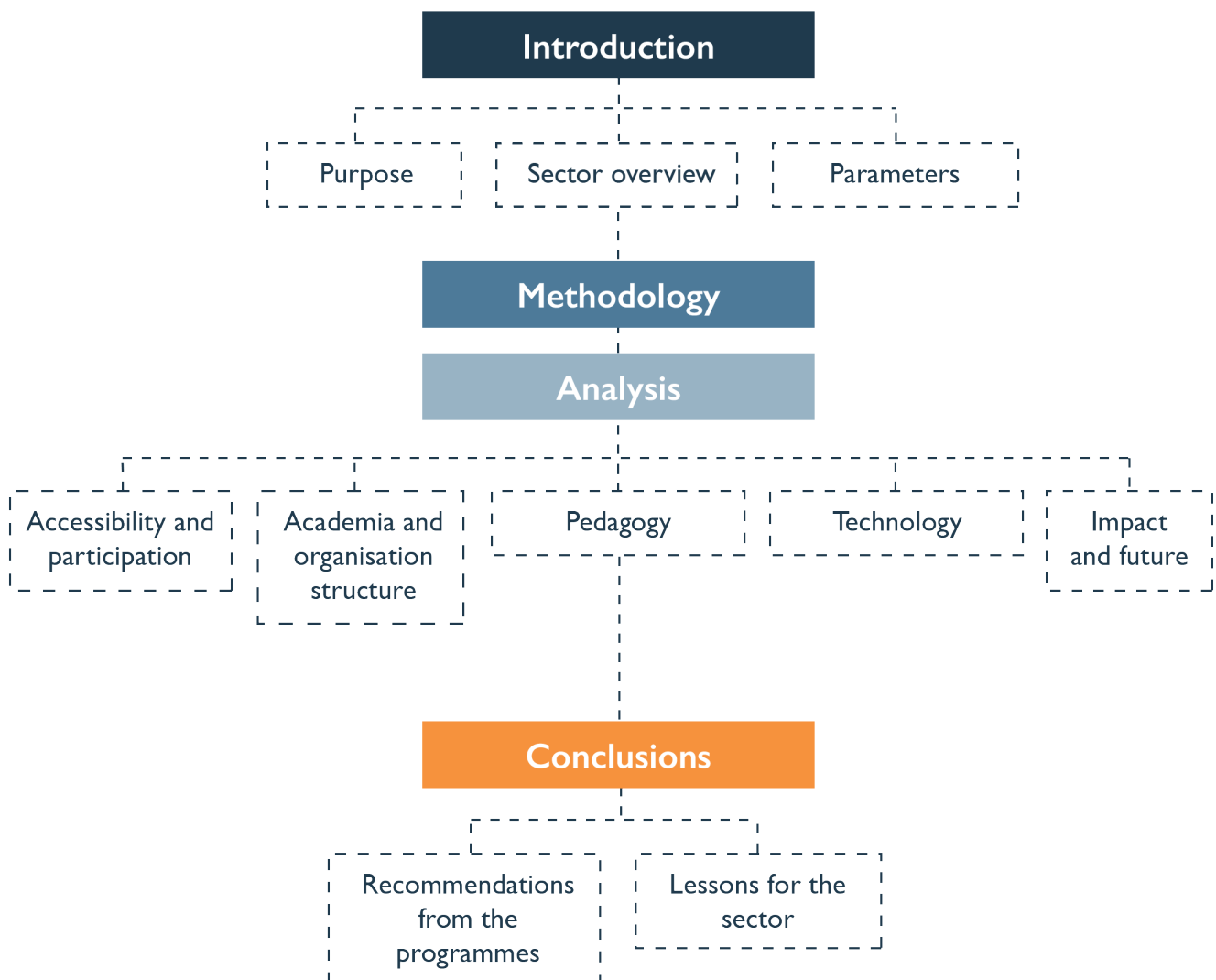
- To compare existing models offering access to higher education to deprived groups at the margins
- To deliver insights about how pedagogy can or should change when marginalised populations are at the centre of higher education
- To inform future strategies for programmes providing higher education for refugees.

The research engages with programmes across the sector, and also has a particular focus on the work of Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL).

A number of complementary resources have been produced, including a landscape review titled 'higher education for refugees in low-resource environments – landscape review' which provides a systematic mapping of programmes working on the issue of higher education for refugees. This study builds on the landscape review, and each report is best read in conjunction with the other.

Drawing on data collected through eight field visits and 28 distance interviews, this research report provides an in-depth analysis of accessibility, academic structure, pedagogical approach, use of technology and impact on future prospects across a range of higher education programmes for refugees. The report focuses primarily on programmes that have a physical presence among affected populations, and particularly on those that have adopted a blended learning approach. Throughout the report, the voices of refugee students and those facilitating their learning are prioritised, providing insight into what refugee learners themselves consider to be the good practices and challenges of the individual programmes in which they engage, as well as of the sector as a whole.

## Report structure



### 1.2. Structure of the report

The research begins with an overview of the sector and the need for higher education for refugees, building on the associated landscape review. The methodology of the study is then explained in some detail as a foundation for the subsequent analysis. The analysis is categorised into five chapters: accessibility and participation, academia and organisational structure, technology, pedagogy, impact and future. Each of the analysis chapters finishes with a summary of key learning points. The conclusions to the research are organised into those drawn directly from the programmes, and those that are applicable for the sector more broadly.

### 1.3. Sector overview

#### The need

Access to higher education for refugees is part of the education continuum beginning at pre-primary level, progressing through primary and secondary, and culminating in tertiary education. Without completing primary and secondary school, a student will struggle to progress to higher education. In 2014, 64% of refugee children and youth completed primary education across United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) priority countries, and 37% completed secondary education (UNHCR 2014). Although completion figures for 2015 were

not available at the time of writing, a further 230,000 refugee children and youth enrolled in primary and secondary education in 2015 compared to 2014 (UNHCR 2015).

Despite this, UNHCR estimates that globally, only 1% of refugee youth are able to access higher education (UNHCR 2014). This figure is, at present, the only available estimate of the proportion of refugee youth accessing higher education at a global level. It remains, however, somewhat problematic. This is in part due to the unwillingness or inability of a proportion of displaced people to register with UNHCR due to travel costs or concerns about security and freedom of movement (Save the Children 2014), and in part as a result of the increasing numbers of higher education initiatives enrolling or designed for refugee students. Although interesting and insightful work has recently been carried out analysing the numbers of refugee students (and Syrian refugee students in particular) accessing certain forms of higher education in particular locations (inter alia Al Fanar Media 2015a; UNESCO 2015a, 2015b; Lorisika et al. 2015; Redden 2015), no dedicated rigorous research on the global numbers of refugee students desiring and achieving access to the full spectrum of higher education initiatives has yet been carried out. This gap in research represents an important opportunity for future work.

Until a more detailed statistical analysis of the numbers of refugee youth accessing higher education is available, UNHCR's 1% estimate should continue to be used, albeit with a degree of caution.

The 1% estimate suggests that although around 7.2 million refugee children and youth complete secondary education, only 195,000 are accessing university. This does not mean that the population of 'university-ready' refugee students is 7.2 million, as not all secondary completers would have the academic ability or desire to access higher education. No robust data on the potential number of 'university-ready' refugee students is available. However, a brief examination of tertiary education participation rates in other locations provides some context in which to locate the 1% participation figure. In countries unaffected by displacement, relatively large numbers of young

people go to university. Across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states, an average of 41% of 25- to 34-year-olds had attained tertiary education in 2014 (OECD 2015). In contrast to OECD rates, it is helpful to look at participation rates in countries where conflict and poverty create significant barriers to participation in tertiary education. These statistics are not available for many countries, but Afghanistan provides a useful example. Here, in a country affected by severe long-term conflict, 8.7% of the population enrolled in tertiary education in 2014 (UNESCO 2016). By current estimates, therefore, individuals pursuing education in Afghanistan, one of the world's most fragile states, are more than eight times as likely to be able to attend university as refugee youth.

Evidence from several locations suggests that demand for university-level programmes amongst refugee students is very high. Increasing numbers of displaced students come from countries with historically high enrolment rates. The most notable example is Syria, with a pre-war higher education participation rate of 26% in urban areas and 16% in rural areas (UNHCR 2015). By contrast, in 2015 fewer than 6% were enrolled in higher education programmes, with significant discrepancies between potential and actual enrolment figures for Syrian youth in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (Al Fanar Media 2015b; Watenpaugh et al. 2014a, 2014b). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that even the most conservative estimates of the 'university-ready' refugee population would indicate that only a small proportion is currently being served. It is clear that the vast need cannot be met by international scholarship programmes alone, where applications already exceed available places by ratios of around 100:1 in many cases (Al-Fanar Media 2015b). Yet there is also a general lack of higher education places in immediate host countries (Lorisika et al. 2015) — whether in local universities or blended learning programmes designed specifically for refugee populations.

### **Why higher education for refugees matters**

Access to higher education is a human right enshrined or referred to in various international

conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26.2), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13c) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28c) (UNHCR 2015). Higher education provides protection from harm and contributes to post-conflict reconstruction, promoting social, economic and gender equality and empowering refugee communities.

Access to higher education also provides three other significant benefits. Firstly, it serves as a strong incentive for students to complete studies at primary and secondary levels. It has been noted that access to higher education is only possible in contexts where students have been able to complete primary and secondary school. Attending university is often listed as a primary aim for displaced students (Gladwell and Tanner 2013; Refugee Support Network 2011). Consequently, where tertiary education is not a possibility, learners have reported lower levels of motivation and persistence at the primary and secondary levels (Chaffin 2010; Perlman Robinson 2011).

Secondly, higher education protects. While it has been long accepted that education in all its forms is an instrument of protection in refugee or crisis contexts (inter alia Gladwell and Tanner 2013), higher education makes a significant contribution to the protection of older youth – increasingly found to be of particular importance in conflict settings. Providing education services for this particular group can both maintain a sense of hope for the future and provide a powerful ‘university student’ identity – factors that can mitigate the risk of young people being drawn into identification with violent or sectarian ideologies (Hart 2008; El Jack 2010; Brookings Doha Centre 2015).

Thirdly, higher education is a tool of reconstruction, developing the human and social capital necessary for future reconstruction and economic development in countries of origin. A study of the UNHCR DAFI (Deutsch Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative) programme for Afghan refugees demonstrated ‘a direct link between a refugee programme focused on tertiary education and national reconstruction’ (UNHCR 2007). The Brookings Doha Centre recently found that when properly supported, higher education can ‘act as a catalyst for the

recovery of war-torn countries... not only by supplying the skills and knowledge needed to reconstruct shattered economic and physical infrastructure, but also by supporting the restoration of collapsed governance systems and fostering social cohesion (Brookings Doha Centre 2015). In addition, providing higher education opportunities for refugees also has the potential to limit the socio-economic burden for hosting countries (Lorisika et al 2015), as the economic and social benefits facilitated by higher education (McMahon 2009, OECD 2012) can enable refugees to be more productive contributors to their host communities.

### Barriers to access

Reaching the academic standard necessary for enrolment is one of the first steps for refugees wanting to access higher education. Once this is achieved, there still exists a range of other, well-documented barriers to continuing education.

An initial barrier to access for many potential refugee students is the lack of available information regarding opportunities (Lorisika et al 2015). For urban refugees in particular, access to information about existing opportunities is a challenge. Populations are often dispersed across a variety of urban centres, without obvious information points or portals that communicate the avenues open to them (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010). This barrier to access is exacerbated by the lack of coordination between current providers, which means that potential students must attempt to access information about multiple different initiatives in multiple different places (Al-Fanar Media, 2015b; Lorisika et al 2015). Over the course of the last year, several initiatives that have the potential to address this gap have emerged, including UNESCO’s Jami3ti programme, which will provide a single online platform for dissemination of information for those seeking or providing higher education opportunities for refugees in Jordan (UNESCO 2015b), and an initiative led by Al-Fanar Media, which is exploring the creation of an online clearinghouse to track new initiatives and best practices and to facilitate networking for those in the field. However, as these two examples demonstrate, the majority of work taking place to reduce this barrier is focused on Syria and the surrounding region, and a more global approach remains needed.

The cost of pursuing higher education is also a significant barrier for potential refugee students. For the majority of refugees, economic hardship means that university fees are unrealistic (BHER 2010; CARE 2013, Dippo et al 2012; RSC 2014; Watenpaugh et al 2014b; Lorisika et al 2015; UNESCO 2015a). Those who do access university in their host country often have external sources of funding, typically money sent by relatives working in other countries. However, unless participating in a programme specifically designed for refugees (such as those outlined in Modality B), refugees are typically charged international student fees at public universities in their host countries and will not receive government support. This makes study at these institutions almost as costly as at private universities (Watenpaugh et al 2013; Refugee Support Network 2011).

Obtaining the necessary documentation is another substantial barrier for refugees wishing to pursue their education. Refugees often struggle to evidence their previous educational attainments due to loss of exam certificates and academic transcripts, and lack of recognition of certificates gained in other countries (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010; BHER 2010; Lorisika et al 2015). Documentation proving identity or nationality requirements may also have been lost (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010; Lorisika et al 2015; UNESCO 2015b; Watenpaugh et al 2013). As a result, potential students have been known to make life-threatening journeys back to countries of origin in an attempt to locate the necessary documentation. In response to this critical protection issue, early guidance is starting to emerge, with new resources documenting recommended practices in order to help institutions recognise refugee applicants' prior learning when full, official or verifiable documentation is missing (Loo, B 2016).

The need for a high level of written and spoken English also prevents many refugees from advancing their education (BHER 2010; Lorisika et al 2015). The majority of international scholarship programmes require English, as do blended learning programmes accredited by universities in Anglophone states. For many refugee students, improving their language capability is both expensive and time-consuming (British Council, 2015). For those studying in a regional host country, an additional language

may also be required (for Syrians wishing to attend Turkish universities, for example). The majority of online learning at university level also requires English, with Jordan's Arabic language Edraak programme being the notable exception.

For other refugees, the conflict means that their education has been interrupted, and many have been out of education for several years. Without appropriate preparatory courses, even those learners who are technically 'higher-education ready', having completed their secondary studies or started a degree programme, may never be able to re-start their education (Dippo et al 2012, UNESCO, 2015b).

These barriers to access affect potential refugee students across multiple categories and locations. Two particular groups, girls and camp-based refugees, face additional challenges. In many camp environments, freedom of movement — in particular the ability to come and go from the camp — is restricted (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010). As a result, university-ready students in camp contexts are almost entirely dependent on NGO-linked programmes or scholarship programmes that specifically recruit in their camp for tertiary education opportunities. Access to online courses is entirely dependent on camp connectivity and access to a computer. For girls, issues including responsibility for domestic work, early marriage, lack of access to sanitary products and a lack of confidence have also been found to hold them back from pursuing studies at the tertiary level (Dippo et al. 2012).

### **Donor and international community reluctance to engage**

The challenges and debates regarding access to higher education for refugee students take place in a global context in which education has not been considered a humanitarian priority; donors and the majority of humanitarian agencies prioritise expenditure on food, water, shelter and health (Crea 2016). Recent progress has been made towards the recognition of education as both a life-saving intervention and a stated priority for conflict-affected communities (Gladwell and Tanner 2014) particularly following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Several leading donors, including the EU, have

responded to a call to dedicate a minimum of 4% of humanitarian aid to education in emergencies (ECHO 2016). Despite this encouraging progress, however, primary and secondary education remain the principal focus. Recent global movements, including Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, have focused on enabling access to quality primary education. The post-2015 agenda and formation of the Sustainable Development Goals have generated a renewed focus on post-primary education, but the issue of higher education is largely unaddressed in both policy and scholarship (Dryden-Peterson and Giles 2010; Magaziner 2015). Likewise, compared to other phases of education, higher education for refugees was the least prioritised by UNHCR in 2015 spending (UNHCR 2015b). Other donors have resisted financing higher education programmes for refugees on the basis that the costs are high and the benefits may be limited to a small and elite group of students. Nonetheless, in 2016 the message that refugees need assistance to enter higher education is gaining both recognition and momentum, as donors and the international community recognise that, in a context of knowledge-based economies, long-term displacement and uncertain futures, higher education that is both adaptable and portable is essential (Dryden-Peterson 2010).

### Current state of the field

Historically, the UNHCR DAFI scholarship programme has been the key provider of higher education opportunities for refugees. However, over the last decade, a number of new initiatives have emerged, ranging from small programmes serving a limited cohort in particular camps or host countries, to large online providers that have the potential to facilitate access to higher education-level courses for unlimited numbers of people, albeit often without support or face-to-face contact. The recent Syria crisis has also led to an upsurge in new initiatives. Each programme, whether well-established or emerging, will have a (frequently thoughtful and justified) rationale for why they have chosen to operate as they do.

The landscape review that complements this research study identified 48 programmes providing higher education of some kind to refugee students across multiple countries.

These programmes fall broadly into five 'modalities' as outlined in Table 1.

Each of the modalities outlined in Table 1 is examined in detail in the aforementioned landscape review.

Of the direct service provision modalities (A to D), each has particular emphases, premises and aims. For Modality A programmes (those with a physical presence amongst the affected population), understanding and connecting with the needs of learners and their environment is often critical, as is the premise that blended learning is more effective than purely online courses, and has potential to reach more students than scholarship programmes. The majority of programmes in this modality also place considerable value on developing leaders able to contribute to their communities and offer a range of personalised forms of support to facilitate this.

Modality B programmes (host-country scholarship programmes) place high value on allowing students to continue or start tertiary education in an institution in their immediate displacement location, rather than having to travel to a third country through an international scholarship. They make use of local academic expertise and institutional capacity. Refugee learners are usually integrated into existing host community courses. While some programmes offer additional, non-financial support to refugee learners, such as language or leadership development courses, the majority aim to treat refugee students in the same way as non-refugee students.

Many Modality C programmes (international scholarship programmes) share this aim of integrating students into existing student support structures within the host universities but also offer various levels of specialist support. These programmes are often able to respond quickly to refugee crises by drawing on readily available expertise, resources and partnerships, but they demand high levels of resources and benefit a relatively small number of refugee students.

Modality D programmes (online learning platforms) have the potential to reach large numbers of students and may provide transferable, international accreditation, but

Modality	Description	Geographical spread (non-exhaustive)
A - Programmes with a physical presence amongst affected population (11 separate programmes identified)	These programmes, though linked with a variety of physical or online institutions around the world, operate through physical learning centres based in camps or in host communities. They commonly have a combination of remote and local staff/tutors/facilitators, and in many cases, this means that students can benefit from group-based collective learning without leaving their present displacement location.	Afghanistan, Chad, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey
B - Host-community scholarship programmes (12 separate programmes identified)	These programmes work in partnership with host-community universities in countries with high concentrations of camp-based or urban refugees, enabling refugee students to study at existing established universities without leaving their immediate host country.	Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Palestine, Turkey. One initiative (DAFI) is implemented in 41 countries, with the top countries including Chad, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda and Yemen.
C - International scholarship programmes (12 separate programmes identified)	These programmes' presence in camp and host communities is typically limited to selection processes. Refugee students will be selected from a camp or low-resource host community and provided with a scholarship to a university in a high-resource country. These programmes require refugee students to travel internationally to begin their studies in a new location.	Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Syria.
D - International online learning platforms (8 separate programmes identified)	These programmes can be accessed by individual learners with the requisite technology from anywhere in the world. They generally do not have a physical presence in camp or host communities.	Headquarters in: Bahrain, Egypt, Germany, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, USA.
E - Information sharing portals (4 separate programmes identified)	These programmes are not direct service providers but have emerged primarily in response to the Syria crisis to provide information, advice and guidance to learners wishing to begin or continue their tertiary education.	Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, various pipeline locations.

**Table 1.** Description of five modalities

they also have low levels of retention and are often dependent on internet connectivity at the individual (rather than learning centre) level. Within this modality there is an increasing trend towards blended learning, with providers that have historically been primarily or exclusively online beginning to explore the use of partnerships to expand the level of in-person and tailored support that they provide.

Within this diversity of approaches, it is clear that devising a universally applicable model is impossible. All models must consider the unique elements of the context or contexts in which they operate and maintain a high degree of flexibility to serve an ever-changing population in ever-changing environments (Centre for Refugee Studies 2010).

In this context, productive collaboration between initiatives and stakeholders is both an imperative and a challenge. Several overarching initiatives are, however, attempting to bring a much-needed degree of coordination to the growing sector. These include UNHCR's global platform for higher education, which focuses on innovation and blended learning; several nascent initiatives such as Al-Fanar Media's potential creation of a Syria region-focused online clearinghouse to track new initiatives and facilitate networking (Al-Fanar Media 2015b); and the Central European University's Higher Education Alliance for Refugees (HEAR), which plans to bring together university and college leaders to improve access to higher education for refugees through research, advocacy and volunteering (HEAR 2016).

## Blended learning

The landscape review that accompanies this research report reveals a trend for increased blended learning amongst Modality A and, to an extent, Modality D programmes. Blended learning (also known as hybrid or mixed-mode learning) describes the growing practice of combining online learning with face-to-face instruction and independent study, in order to create a new approach to teaching and learning (University of Central Florida and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities 2016). The approach often consists of three core components: learning materials accessed online including pre-recorded lectures; face-to-face, in-

person group learning activities led by a trained facilitator; and structured independent study and assignments informed by both the online study and in-person activities (Mindflash 2016).

This approach can offer refugees who are not in a position to study outside their communities an opportunity to engage in a form of learning that enables them to access high-quality international programmes of study, while being part of a local student community where they are supported in applying and processing their learning (University of Bath 2015; Ferede 2016). For refugee students, this can be particularly beneficial, with some practitioners describing the rehabilitative effect of a closer replication of the campus experience and the corresponding sense of identity as a student rather than a refugee (Al-Fanar Media 2015b).

Initiatives adopting a blended learning approach often use LMS (learning management system) borrowed or adapted from a partner institution and are dependent on the availability of reliable technological infrastructure — namely electricity, computers and an internet connection. However, blended learning programmes tend to depend less on high bandwidth connectivity (such as for online video streaming) than pure online learning platforms. Several initiatives have employed additional mitigation strategies, including allowing resources and tasks to be downloaded and completed later when the connection is reliable, or providing local facilitators with back-up materials on USB sticks. Blended learning programmes with physical presence amongst affected populations are also well placed to provide learners with technical support when problems with online elements do occur. On-the-ground facilitators are able to offer practical help, and some initiatives link learners to technical support hubs or experts.

The role of in-person facilitators within blended learning programmes is critical and extends well beyond providing help when technology fails. These facilitators not only enable the group learning aspects of the course and provide additional input for students, but they are instrumental in transforming the learning experience from an individualistic one to a collective one. The high attrition rates of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are well documented (Ferede 2016), and yet the addition



of the collective learning elements has been shown to increase student motivation and lead to substantially higher course completion rates (O'Malley 2016).

The blended learning field is developing rapidly, and new innovations continue to emerge. Many of the programmes analysed and visited for this research study are at the forefront of galvanising the learning and expertise of this evolving field for the benefit of refugee students.

#### 1.4. Parameters for study

The study focuses on higher education for refugees in low-resource environments. It, therefore, does not address the options for higher education that are available to refugees once they are living in a high-resource environment. These include scholarship programmes for asylum seekers or refugees already in high-resource environments operated by individual academic institutions or umbrella networks. For this study, scholarship programmes are only discussed if operating in a low-resource host country, or when selecting applicants from countries of origin or camps/urban environments in low-resource host countries; this may also include relocation to a high-resource country for the duration of their studies.

The landscape review engages with all of the different types of programmes that are providing higher education for refugees in low-resource environments. This includes programmes with a physical presence among affected populations (modality A), host-community scholarship programmes (modality B), international scholarship programmes (modality C), online learning platforms (modality D), and information sharing portals (modality E). This report focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on programmes operating within modality A and using the blended learning approach enhanced by technology described previously.

The refugee higher education field is rapidly evolving and developing. As such, there are a significant number of programmes currently planning to launch or in pilot phase. This research study has sought to learn from all programmes but has focused on those that have been established and operating for several years. It should also be noted that both new and well-established programmes continue to adapt and respond to the ongoing refugee crises around the world. The sector, in attempting to respond to issues of crisis, emergency and displacement, must be flexible and dynamic. As a result, readers should be aware that although the information in this research report is correct at the time of writing, changes and developments in the scope, locations and focus of programmes should be expected.

# 2. Methodology

## 2.1. Introduction

### Purpose of methodology

The methodological approach adopted for the study was designed to ensure maximum rigour in examining the research objectives. The approach builds on the findings of the associated landscape review.

### Structure of chapter

The chapter begins with an overview of the methodology employed. It then provides a detailed account of the approach adopted in the field-based methods and the desk-based methods. It closes by explaining the approach to data coding and introducing the analytical framework for the study.

## 2.2. Methodological overview

The following activities were completed during the research process:

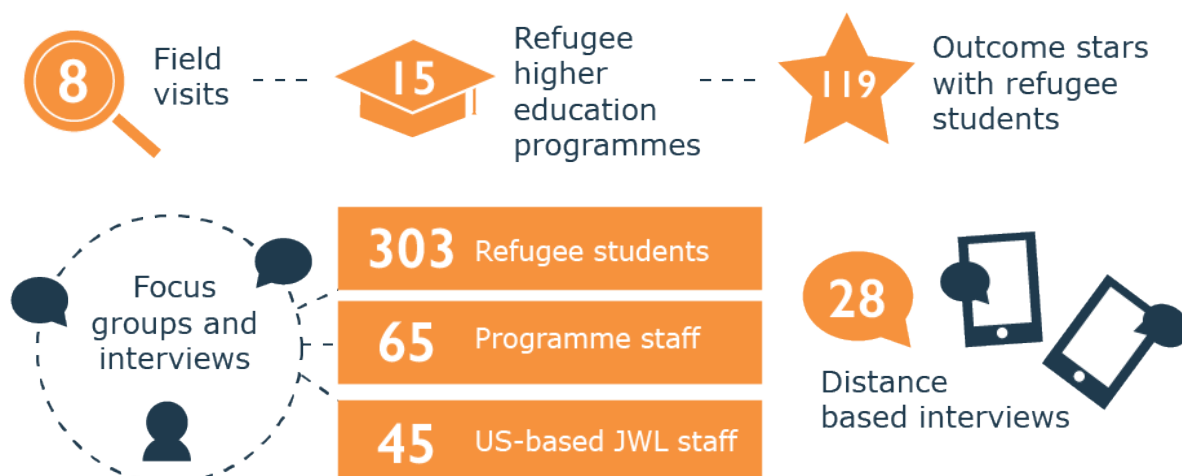
- Eight field visits to 15 refugee higher education programmes in seven countries (Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar

and countries in Central Africa and South East Asia)

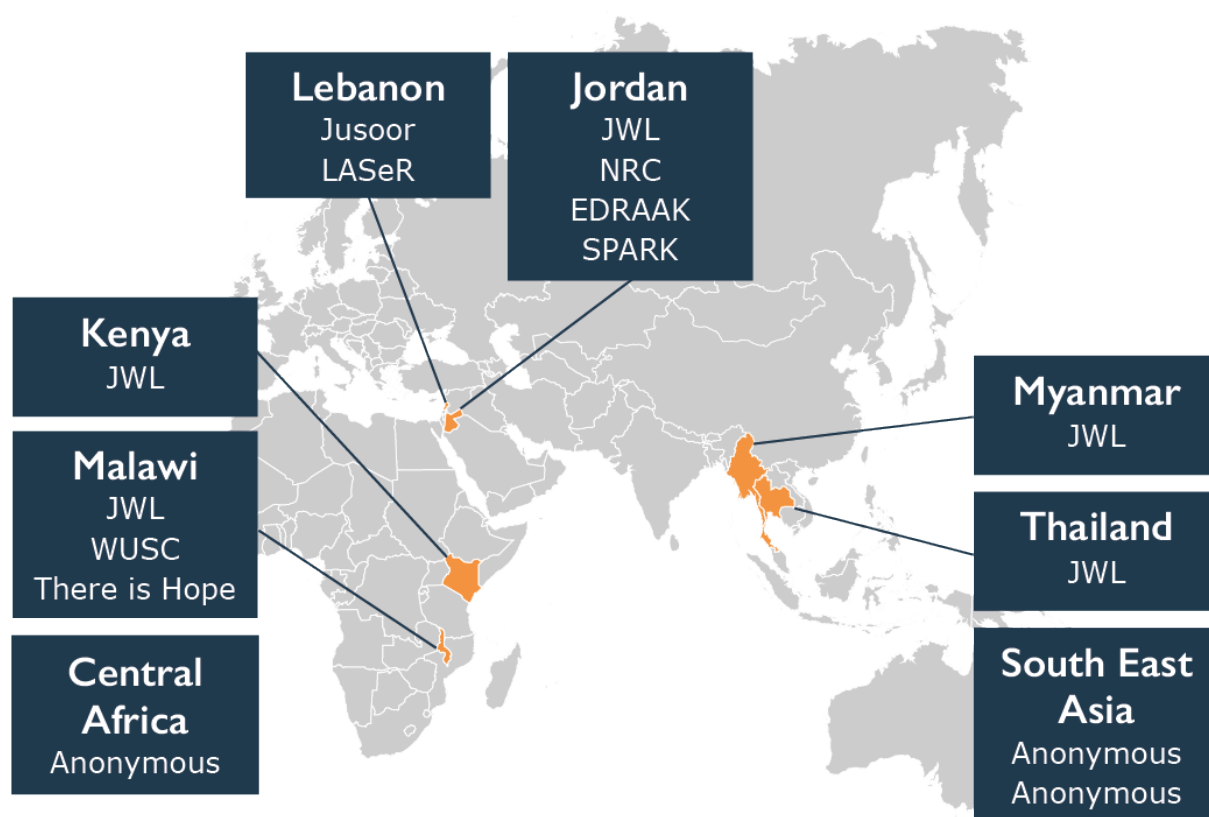
- Sixty-two focus groups with 293 refugee students
- Ten individual interviews with additional refugee students
- One hundred and nineteen outcome stars with individual refugee students
- Thirty-eight individual interviews, and 11 focus groups with 27 field-based programme staff
- Twenty-eight distance interviews with sector experts from 18 different programmes
- One field visit to JWL office in the USA (including individual interviews and/or focus group discussions with 41 participants from JWL, Regis University and Georgetown University)

The below diagram provides an overview of the research activities conducted in each field location. Annex C provides a summary of each of the programmes visited during the research.

### Summary of research activities



## Fieldwork locations and programmes



### 2.3. Approach to fieldwork

#### Rationale for field visits

The research was designed to provide maximum opportunity to spend time listening and talking in-person to refugee students, staff and associated stakeholders. This necessitated a significant focus on field visits to refugee camps and urban refugee settings. The field visits provided opportunity to build on the findings of the landscape review and explore the five key research themes in greater depth. The field sites were selected in order to gain direct experience of as many of the relevant programmes as possible, based on the analysis of the landscape review. The majority of programmes visited had a technology component within them and were based on a blended learning approach.

#### Sampling strategy

Within each visit, the selection of participants for interviews and focus group discussions was

undertaken in an unbiased manner, in order to be as representative as possible of the wider beneficiary and staff groups in each location. Most of the programmes visited were, by their nature, engaging with a relatively small number of participants. As a result, in most programmes it was possible to speak with the majority of students and staff members who were available and willing to engage in the research.

#### Protection

All of the field visit interactions were undertaken in keeping with established good practice regarding ethical engagement with research participants. The purpose of the research was explained to all participants before the interview or focus group took place, and it was made clear that all questions were optional. At this stage participants were given the opportunity to ask any clarifying questions or to stop engaging with the research team completely. Many of the discussions with refugee students involved highly sensitive personal situations. Whenever

this occurred, the researcher avoided asking intrusive questions and was careful to ensure that the conversation was led by the student. Identities have been protected for all the refugee students that participated in the study.

## Research teams

All team members were given detailed briefings to ensure consistency in methodological approach across the sites and were also able to adapt and contextualise these as appropriate. The majority of the research visits were conducted by two-person teams. The two exceptions to this were the visits to Lebanon and Malawi. The research visit to Lebanon was undertaken by one team member because the country's fragile security situation that meant the visit was only appropriate for a researcher with significant regional experience and fluency in Arabic. The research visit to Malawi was undertaken by three team members due to the wide range of research activities that needed to be completed, combined with the need for a fluent French speaker.

## Interaction with participants

Each of the field visits was facilitated by the relevant programme staff. Throughout the field visits the research teams maintained an agnostic position regarding the various pedagogies, technologies and programme structures employed. The research teams were careful to ensure that all participants understood the nature of the work as a contribution towards a long-term research agenda rather than as a direct evaluation exercise. It was important for all participants to recognise the primary motivation as learning rather than assessment and to understand that the research would not be likely to have any direct positive or negative impact on them as individuals. The majority of the research interactions took place in English, Arabic and French according to the preferences of the interviewees and focus group participants. Interpreters were used on occasion to aid effective communication. As far as possible, focus groups were conducted without programme staff or facilitators present.

## Iterative methodological design

The first field visit in October 2015 was to

Amman, Jordan. This visit was used as an opportunity to test, adapt and refine each of the methodological approaches with the students of the JWL and NRC programmes to aid subsequent field visits. This iterative design process allowed the methods to be tailored and tweaked so as to ensure maximum effectiveness. Working in this way during the first field visit required a significant investment of time from the research team. As a result it was not possible to interview as many beneficiaries on the first visit to Amman as had been anticipated. This was compounded by the poor weather conditions during the field visit which meant that students were reluctant to travel across the city to the learning centre in order to talk with the research team. As a result, a second field visit to Amman was conducted in April 2016. This second visit centred on conducting focus group discussions and learning outcome stars with JWL diploma students, as well as focus group discussions with SPARK students enrolled at Al-Quds College.

## Limitations of field visits

The original intention in the research design was to visit two additional significant sites: Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) in Kenya and JWL Afghanistan. After detailed discussion, the decision was taken not to visit the BHER programme in Dadaab camp because of significant insecurity in and around the camp. The proposed visit to JWL Afghanistan was also cancelled because of significant insecurity in the wider region within which the programme is operating, and logistical challenges in travelling between Kabul and the specific field sites. Such limitations are not uncommon when seeking to conduct research in fragile contexts. The integrity and representativeness of the research process was maintained by ensuring that detailed distance interviews were conducted with relevant staff from the programmes in question that could not be visited in person.

Significant challenges were encountered during two of the field visits. Firstly, it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive visit with the programme in the Central Africa region because of restrictions on research imposed by the government in question. As a result, all data collected during this visit is fully anonymised. Secondly, two programmes visited South East

Asia were only willing to participate in the study on the condition of complete anonymity. They were reluctant to be named in any research outputs because of the challenging operating context and fragile legality of their activities. These limitations in the field visits and the need for anonymity mean that the JWL programmes have significant prominence in the report, even though they represent less than half of the programmes visited.

## 2.4. Field-based methods

### Overview

The field visits included the following activities: focus group discussions and occasional individual interviews with participating students, individual and group interviews with programme staff and other key stakeholders, activities to assess learning outcomes with participating students, observation of programme activities, and review of all programme materials and relevant statistical information.

### Focus groups

The research team followed guidance regarding how to approach each question and the appropriate amount of time to spend focusing on each section. Each focus group discussion lasted between 60–90 minutes, depending on the depth of conversation and the availability of the participants. Each focus group discussion began by explaining the purpose of the research and how the information would be used, and by reiterating that participation was voluntary. All discussions were conducted in a manner that ensured everyone felt free to contribute and was given equal opportunity to engage with the questions. The semi-structured nature of the method meant that some groups engaged with all the questions, while others concentrated on issues that were of particular interest to those participating. The focus groups had a brief set of required questions to ensure consistency between groups and then allowed for diversity from that foundation. At the end of each session, participants were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to provide any additional information and ask questions of the research team. Annex F provides a sample of the questions used when conducting focus groups discussions with refugee students.

### Interviews

Interviews were conducted with a range of staff members working in the programmes. Again, the research team followed guidance regarding how to approach each question and the appropriate amount of time to spend focusing on each section. The individual interviews ranged in length from 20 to 150 minutes. The length of the interview varied according to the amount of time the interviewees had available, and the amount of information they wanted to share with the research team. All of the interviews began by explaining the purpose of the research and how the information would be used, and by reiterating that participation was voluntary. At the end of each interview the interviewees were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to provide any additional information and ask questions of the research team. Annex G provides a sample of the questions used when conducting individual interviews with programme managers.

### Learning outcome stars

Learning outcome stars were completed with 119 individual refugee students. The purpose of the outcome stars was to gain detailed insights regarding the holistic impact of higher education on the participating students. The first learning outcome star focused on learning approaches and cognition and the second on social and emotional factors.

The first outcome star had seven categories: collaboration, self-direction, persistence, problem solving, critical decision-making, flexibility and creativity. The second outcome star had six categories: social awareness, leadership, civic engagement, positive view of self and others, resilience/‘grit’, and moral and ethical values. The categories build on research from Brookings Institute to understand complex educational impacts. See Annex I for copies of the two learning outcome stars and a full explanation of the meaning of each category.

Students were given a full explanation of the purpose of the task. They were asked to reflect on their own capabilities in each category before they had engaged in higher education. The ‘0’ option indicated the lowest capability, and the ‘10’ option indicated the highest capability.

Students first circled a number for each category to indicate their self-assessment of their 'pre-higher-education' capability. After this, students repeated the exercise, circling a number for each category to indicate their self-assessment of their current capability. The choices were then connected to form two stars to show the self-assessment of the overall capabilities of the student previously and currently. The two stars provided a visual summary of the ways in which the students felt they had changed most significantly during the programme. Each star took approximately 20 minutes for an individual student to complete.

The tool provided useful numerical data for analysis regarding the changes that had taken place as a result of higher education. However, more valuable insights were gained through subsequent open conversation when the students talked about the reasons behind the answers they had given. In that way, the outcome stars provided a framework that then facilitated sensitive and insightful self-reflection from the students. The majority of learning outcome stars were conducted with students participating in the JWL programmes.

### Observation of programme activities

Throughout the field visits the research team engaged in a range of additional activities that enabled them to observe the detail of the programmes. This involved visiting learning centres and examining learning resources, engaging in study sessions and informal learning activities taking place in the centres, and talking with students during break times regarding their studies and lives. This type of unstructured but purposeful observation provided valuable opportunities to understand the detail of programme strengths and challenges as experienced on a day-to-day basis. The research team kept regular diaries throughout the field visits, which ensured the observations were captured and fed into the analysis.

### Visit to JWL in USA

A final research visit was undertaken in April 2016 to the JWL programme in the USA. This was distinct from all the other visits as it was focused on engaging with programme staff, academics and senior management within the

organisation. It was decided that it would be most beneficial to conduct this research visit once all camp-based visits were completed. This is because the visit to the USA provided an opportunity to strength-test the validity of the information gained previously from visits to individual JWL field sites and to compare the perspective of the refugee students with the programme management, academics and support staff.

The research involved visits to three significant JWL sites: Georgetown University, Regis University, and the town of Wheeling where the production team is based. During the ten-day visit, 16 interviews and nine focus groups were conducted, alongside additional observations of programme activities. The interviewees included the senior management team, the production team, online faculty members, support staff and senior academic staff in the associated universities. A full list of interviewees is incorporated within Annex E which lists all of the programme management individual interview and focus group discussion participants.

The research interactions focused on understanding the nature of the connections between the USA sites and the field sites and the overall strategy, management and sustainability of the programme. It provided valuable opportunity to understand the level of involvement of academic staff, their perspective regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, their familiarity with refugee issues, and their perspective regarding the purpose and applicability of Ignatian pedagogy.

## 2.5. Desk-based methods

### Overview

The desk-based research included the following activities: a review of all relevant literature, a review of all background materials from programmes, and distance interviews with programme managers and sector experts.

### Literature review

A literature review was conducted that included the relevant publications in the sector. This consisted of academic articles, policy reports and advocacy briefings. Analysis of key findings from the literature review informs the report's

examination of the broader higher education sector, and provides a foundation for the key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The research team's familiarity with the dominant themes arising from the literature review also influenced informal discussions with programme staff during field visits and distance interviews, the findings of which are analysed in each thematic area examined in the report.

## Review of background materials

Many of the programmes included in the landscape review provided the research team with additional background materials regarding their activities. In addition, a wide range of internal reports, programme summaries and usage figures were shared with the research team during the field visits. All of these were reviewed, and their content enhanced the overall depth of the study.

## Distance interviews

It was not possible for the research team to visit every relevant programme in person, so the distance interviews provided the opportunity to engage directly with a wide range of stakeholders. Distance interviews were conducted with 28 people, representing 18 different organisations. A total of 33 target interviewees were identified but five did not respond to the request for an interview. All interviewees are listed in Annex E and a sample interview template is included in Annex H. Suitable interviewees were identified during the landscape review and contacted through their website or through personal introductions. In some cases a snowballing approach was used, with interviewees connecting the research team to relevant colleagues or new initiatives.

The intention was to engage with a wide range of significant stakeholders involved in and shaping the sector of higher education for refugees. The landscape review demonstrated the limited amount of public information available regarding some programmes. Therefore the interviews provided opportunity to understand the programmes in greater detail, specifically in relation to the detail of programme operating structures, the challenges that they face, and the ways in which they overcome these. Interviews were semi-structured to

ensure comparability while allowing flexibility to cover unique or significant aspects of programmes. The majority of interviews were conducted over Skype and lasted 30 to 120 minutes, depending on the availability of the interviewee and the detail of their responses.

## 2.6. Use of data

### Data coding

All data from the field visits were cleaned and the data coding structure prepared. The research data was organised into five 'parent' codes that form the analytical structure for the report: accessibility and participation, academia and organisational structure, technology, pedagogy, and impact and future. This is an extension of the structure used in the landscape review which was organised around the three profiles: academic, technological and pedagogical. Together these five thematic areas of analysis provide a comprehensive framework for all of the key issues that influence the efficacy of higher education for refugees. Under the five parent codes are 42 'child' codes (listed in Annex B). The data coding was conducted using an online data analysis tool called Dedoose. The rigorous and systematic coding process ensured that an evidence-based approach was maintained that linked back to the specific objectives of the study. This approach engages systematically with the substance and weighting of qualitative responses from interviews and focus group discussions, rather than relying solely on anecdotal interpretation. A total of 4,752 fragments of qualitative data were coded across the five analytical themes.

### Approach to analysis

The qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups was linked to the quantitative data from the closed questions. It would not have been appropriate to use percentage figures when collating the qualitative responses after coding. The purpose of coding qualitative data is not to provide a precise number of respondents who identified particular issues. It is, rather, to demonstrate the overall prominence and range of the various themes within the study in a nuanced yet rigorous way; it does not seek to present these themes as quantitatively verifiable.

In identifying dominant or significant themes, the report employs the language of 'the most dominant rationale', or 'the three most significant themes', breaking them down in order of priority (e.g. 'first', 'second', and 'third'). When referencing groups of stakeholders in relation to the iteration of key points, an indication of the weighting is also identified where possible: 'a large majority of distance-based faculty commented...', or 'a small minority of students also reported...'. This language is supplemented by proportionality, indicating an approximation of the proportion of stakeholders that identified or emphasised a key theme. This is organised by quarters, thirds and halves, for example 'less than a quarter of students emphasised...', or 'approximately half of HEI programme staff noted...'.

It is important to be cautious when comparing responses between students in different countries and from different cultural contexts. The research team attempted to be consistent and clear in all interactions with research participants. However, there is a degree of inevitable cultural bias when people answer questions. For example, different cultures have various degrees of willingness to engage in criticism. In the study, students in various countries were asked how often they experienced challenges with internet connectivity at the learning centres: daily, at least once a week, at least once a month and so on. While this is a standard question, it is also dependent on participant interpretation and level of willingness to engage in what could be perceived as criticism of a programme — two elements that may be affected by, for example, cultural differences between the refugee student population studying in Kenya and Lebanon. Therefore it should not be assumed that this type of question provides infallible comparison between contexts.

The nature of the focus on blended learning for the field visits means that more than half of the students interacted with are participants in JWL

programmes (204 out of 303 students engaged with). This was not the intention in the research design, but the aforementioned security challenges meant that there was a very limited pool of blended learning programmes available to visit. The focus of the analysis throughout is as broad as possible. However, there is an inevitable emphasis on JWL programmes within the sections relating to the field visits. The main exceptions, where it was possible to engage with students from a broader range of programmes, are in Jordan, and Myanmar and Thailand. The research also prioritised distance interviews with programme staff from non-JWL programmes, thus promoting a broader examination of the higher education sector for refugees. As a result, when the report references student experiences, it is predominantly referring to students participating in JWL programmes. As much as possible, this has been balanced with the perspectives of programme staff from a more diverse range of programme.

Throughout the analysis relevant information regarding research participants is provided in brackets after a quotation. The format of this information for in-country research interactions is programme, role, host country (such as JWL, Student, Myanmar) and for distance-based research interactions is programme, role, type of interaction (such as BHER, Staff, Distance). Interviews conducted over skype or phone are recorded as 'Distance' throughout. There is significant additional information that could be provided regarding each student. The level of information provided, which excludes student gender and country of origin, is intended to provide context for the reader while retaining anonymity for the student. Where a programme has requested that they remain anonymous, due to security or operating concerns within a country, the format for referencing their quotations is anonymised (such as 'Anonymous, Student, Africa' or 'Anonymous, Staff, Middle East'). This relates to a minority of programmes and reflects the security challenges of operating in fragile environments.



## 3. Analysis: accessibility and participation

### 3.1. Overview and rationale

This chapter examines accessibility of and inclusive participation in higher education programmes, both during the application and selection process, and throughout the course of the programmes. It analyses the barriers to access and the inclusivity mechanisms designed by programmes to address those barriers. It then highlights students' motivations to complete their education, realise their professional ambition and bring change to their communities. The chapter emphasises common obstacles to participation, such as difficulty in finding a balance between academic workload and other responsibilities, and the level of academic requirements. Finally, it concludes by analysing the financial and pastoral support mechanisms offered to students at risk of dropping out.

### 3.2. Application and selection processes

#### Marketing of the course

Multiple marketing approaches are employed by higher education programme providers to maximise opportunities for prospective students to hear about courses. A deliberate range of tools is used to counteract potential issues that prospective students might experience, such as lack of internet or needing to be in a specific location in order to access the requisite information. These tools include focused community outreach activities; community information sessions; the displaying of information posters about specific courses within secondary and feeder schools, community centres, places of religious worship, and UNHCR centres; and, particularly in camp settings, use of loudspeakers and flyers. In a minority

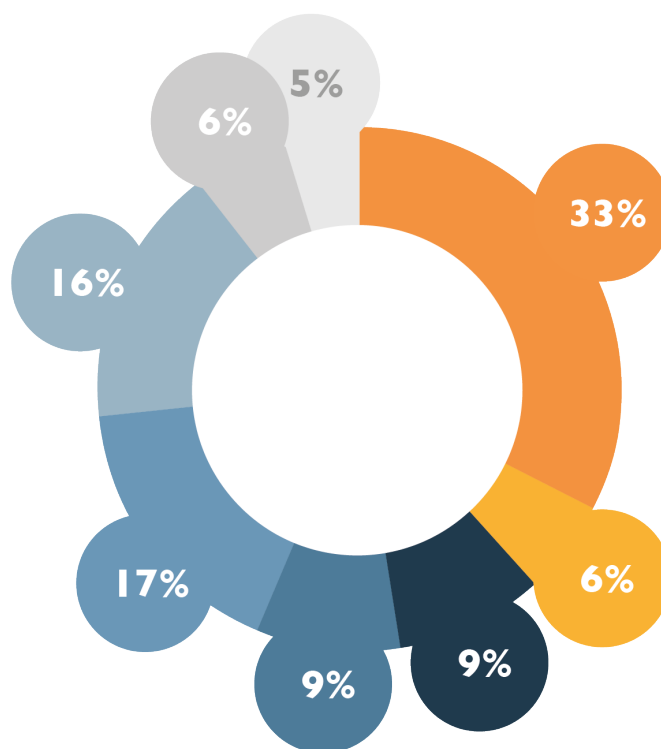
of circumstances, higher education programme staff employ local media, including radio stations or newspapers, to promote and market courses.

Despite attempts to ensure multiple means of raising awareness among prospective students, marketing of courses via word of mouth remains the most successful strategy to promote programmes and courses. Approximately one-third of students consulted in this research first heard about relevant opportunities through someone already studying on the programme they wish to enrol with, and who 'spoke highly of it' (JWL, Student, Kenya). Students may engage with the programme through multiple avenues; for this particular student, the personal recommendation enabled him to 'apply immediately' when he 'saw it [advertised] on the board which [he] was monitoring' (JWL, Student, Kenya). An additional fifth of students reported first hearing about their respective courses through other, non-student members of their personal networks, including fellow applicants, programme staff, neighbours of staff or students, or other community members who simply had access to and shared information about the course.

The extent to which information about higher education programmes is publically available impacts the potential for that information to be spread and shared through community and familial networks. Public display of programme or course information, especially in camp-based contexts, was referenced by just under a quarter of student respondents as the way they heard about the respective programme on which they are enrolled. Community noticeboards are an important means of supplementing initial discovery of programme or course opportunities with more detailed information about the application and enrolment processes. Of the student respondents who referred to using community noticeboards, more than half

## How students hear about programmes

- Through family or friends already studying on a programme run by the organisation
- Directly approached by the organisation
- Already involved in another activity of the organisation running the programme
- Referred through another organisation
- Through family or friends who were not already studying on a programme run by the organisation
- Community noticeboard
- Online
- Other



reported using them to seek further information following an initial discovery of a programme through word of mouth.

A minority of student respondents — less than one-tenth — had heard about their respective course as a result of a direct referral from an educational institute, NGO or CBO. An even smaller minority confirmed having been directly approached by a staff member from the relevant programme itself. Approximately one-tenth had participated in other educational activities implemented by the programme, including preparatory English courses or further education programmes (including Community Service Learning Track (CSLT)), which had afforded them opportunities to familiarise themselves with the relevant course. This was particularly the case for JWL students.

A minority of higher education programmes (particularly host-country scholarship programmes including Jusoor and Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR)) have incorporated and become increasingly reliant on online and social media mechanisms to market programmes. Lack of reliable internet access within many potential students’

environments can of course prevent certain learners from hearing about opportunities advertised online, and significantly less than one-tenth of camp-based student respondents had heard about the programme online.

In many contexts, a tension exists between the efforts to ensure inclusivity and transparency, and the actual capacity of the programme which is often insufficient to meet the demand for higher education. In such cases, rather than proactively marketing the course or programme, staff limit their outreach efforts and rely more on word of mouth through existing networks. This gives rise to a danger of limiting awareness of the course or programme to specific social, ethnic or religious groups based primarily on the make-up of current students or other persons already involved in the higher education programme’s existing activities. This tension was particularly noted in JWL’s programme in Jordan.

### Promoting inclusivity

The strong demand for higher education programmes among refugee students is influenced by the limited access of those groups to other public or government

provisions of higher education. A majority of student respondents had not been able to access alternative means of higher education in the host country or location in which they were living before enrolling on their current programme of study.

### Historic access to higher education in target population

A minority of students had previously accessed higher education in their countries or provinces of origin before being displaced. An exception is the case of student respondents from Syria and Iraq. More than three-quarters of student respondents in Amman, Jordan, had either studied in Syria at a higher education level before being displaced, or, occasionally, they had participated in other higher education programmes in Jordan following their displacement, prior to joining programmes run by JWL, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and SPARK. This group's high level of participation in tertiary education in their countries of origin clearly relates to the generally high levels of access to higher education in pre-war Syria and Iraq. Their ability to access relevant opportunities in their displacement location, however, is likely to be more closely linked to the greater freedom of movement for urban refugees as compared to those in camps (Syrian young people in Za'atari camp, for example, had not enjoyed the same level of previous host-country access to education as their urban counterparts).

For the majority of students who had not been able to access higher education previously, preparatory courses proved a significant stepping stone to higher level study. These courses have enabled JWL students from Jordan, Kenya and Malawi who were initially rejected to improve their skills and increase their chances of being accepted. One diploma student explained, 'The first time I came, my English was not great, but it has improved through doing online courses and other courses here in the camp. My English improved, and here I am' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

### Barriers to accessing higher education

More than three-quarters of student respondents knew of friends or peers who had made an

unsuccessful application to the programme in which the student respondent was enrolled. Seven principal areas were identified as affecting a prospective student's likelihood of both hearing about and having access to thorough information concerning application and selection processes, and her or his ability to then participate in the relevant programme, if selected. Each of these areas — gender, socio-cultural and religious background, language, disability, age, location, and access to requisite documentation — are explored in this section.

#### Gender

Gender was identified as the most significant factor influencing a prospective student's access to higher education programmes. Over one-fifth of the staff and students consulted spoke about specific challenges for female applicants. Women and girls are more likely to drop out of education to take on domestic responsibilities; their parents or partners might be more reluctant to allow them to study initially, especially when it involves travelling long distances; and they are likely to have lower English proficiency 'because of more limited access to secondary education' (TIH, Staff, Malawi).

To counteract these challenges, several programmes promote a gender-sensitive selection process. BHER proactively encourages female applicants, for instance by allowing women 'into the programme with a lower grade' and giving more consideration to their 'life or work experience' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Similarly, SPARK programme staff liaise with family members of female applicants in a bid to address any concerns about their engagement in SPARK's higher education programmes (SPARK, Staff, Distance). JWL programme staff in Kenya are considering trialling the creation of childcare facilities and day centres to enable mothers to participate in their higher education programmes, and WUSC and an anonymous programme in Central Africa are both running remedial programmes 'to boost [female applicants'] potential to apply' (WUSC, Staff, Malawi).

#### Sociocultural and religious background

Although a minority of programmes, including Tomorrow's Leaders and UNESCO's Jam3ti initiative, openly prioritise Syrian students, the

vast majority of programmes are intentionally open to all nationalities and cultural and religious backgrounds. This allows students to 'think beyond [their] own boundaries and to experience variety' (JWL, Staff, Myanmar).

However, programme management staff demonstrated an awareness that, at times, their programmes are not representative of the varied demographics of the communities they aim to serve. Somalian and Ethiopian communities are, for example, underrepresented in JWL and WUSC programmes in Kenya and Malawi, despite proactive attempts to encourage applications from these groups. Staff tended to attribute this tension to cultural and religious differences, the more 'transitory' nature of their migration patterns, and lack of fluency in the programme language (mostly English), as well as a lack of access by these nationality groups to secondary education (WUSC, Staff, Malawi).

Some programmes have started to implement mechanisms to promote an inclusive application process, to 'make sure as many nationalities are represented in the selection' as possible (WTK, Staff, Distance). The JWL programme in Malawi attempts to ensure diversity in faith representation amongst applicants by specifically targeting Muslim students, '[going] to the mosque and to their schools. [They] also talk to the lead Imam [and...] send the Muslim alumni to go and present to the community during mosque on Fridays' (JWL, Staff, Malawi). This approach is echoed by programme management or partner staff in other JWL locations, including Jordan, where it was noted that 'if you come from a nationality that is underrepresented on our course, you will have a slightly higher chance of getting a place, because of this ethos of diversity' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).

There is also a trend towards opening programmes to host-community students to prevent tensions between populations that have been living in the same area and sometimes in similarly challenging conditions. A programme in South East Asia, for example, initially targeted refugee and displaced young people, but it is increasingly open to youth from the conflict area inside the province in which it is operating. BHER draws 25% to 30% of its students from host communities in Dadaab, and JWL Chad takes a quarter of its students from the host population.

There is a minimum requirement for 10% of JWL diploma students in Jordan and CLST students in Malawi to be from the host community.

### Language

Lack of proficiency in the relevant language of instruction (particularly English) was cited as a prominent barrier to access by approximately a quarter of student respondents. The ability to complete a test or write an applicant essay in this language are common challenges. Programme staff confirmed awareness of this barrier, and increasing numbers of initiatives provide or plan to provide general English classes or dedicated preparatory English classes specifically aimed at assisting applicants through the process (LAsER, UoPeople, WUSC, JWL, among others).

### Disability

There is a limited awareness of accessibility issues linked to disability and the potential impact that this might have on prospective students. Less than a tenth of consulted staff and students identified it as a barrier. Similarly, only three references were made by programme management respondents regarding inclusion mechanisms or means to adapt programmes to make them more accessible to students with physical or mental health disabilities. A lack of disability monitoring is also evident: some scholarship application forms do not ask for any information pertaining to disability, and there was little evidence of proactive prioritisation of disabled students.

Notable exceptions among programmes reviewed included SPARK, which implements a 5% target for enrolling students with disabilities, and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which gives 'priority to disabled students who are studying at university and manage to have acceptance from university' (UNRWA, Staff, Distance).

### Access to required documentation

Almost a tenth of student respondents had struggled to provide the documentation required for applications and had to undertake a challenging, time-consuming and expensive process of retrieving original documents from their home countries, particularly when trying to access host-country or international scholarship

programmes. There is a selection bias here, as this research engaged primarily with current students: those whom lack of documentation prevented from accessing a course would not be represented in this data. For some programmes, it is challenging to find ways of avoiding this, with a staff representative of Tomorrow's Leaders explaining that 'a lot of times, honestly, students have to provide documentation' (Tomorrow's Leaders, Staff, Distance). For certain programmes, including WUSC, where higher education is a component of a broader refugee resettlement initiative, confirmation of students' refugee status is essential to the process.

These issues notwithstanding, programme management respondents demonstrated an awareness of documentation challenges and said they will often offer more flexibility to refugee, displaced and marginalised groups by extending the application deadline to provide more time, by helping students get their documents or by making exceptions to the rules: 'I was accepted by another university scholarship but they would not wait for the time I needed to get all my documents together, so I came here instead. It is more flexible here' (SPARK, Student, Jordan).

### **Additional barriers to access**

Other groups that struggle to access higher education provision include those who carry the greatest responsibility for providing for family members, including older men and young person-headed households. Several programmes have attempted to address the barriers for the second of these two groups, with WUSC, for example, prioritising orphaned students and SPARK aiming to secure a 5% student intake of those who have lost their father.

The need to work to cover the cost of accommodation can also prohibit prospective students from applying for courses. One exception to this is JWL's Myanmar programme, where accommodation is provided — at least partially relieving the burden on students to support themselves financially. Finally, the proximity of a given learning centre to prospective students' accommodation can also present an obstacle to sustainable participation in courses.

## **Ensuring transparency and inclusivity in the application and selection process**

Despite the numerous barriers highlighted by student respondents, the majority of programmes have made clear attempts to promote inclusivity and ensure transparency in the application and selection processes.

### **Additional application support**

Recognising the application stage barriers facing prospective students without access to computers or internet, at least two programmes explicitly spoke about offering offline means of application. SPARK, though continuing to market and encourage applications online, also offers an offline version of its application form, and JWL has implemented an entirely paper-based application process. JWL's programme team in Myanmar also offers preparatory information and communications technology (ICT) classes to refugee, displaced and marginalised populations, aiding their familiarisation with ICT systems and resources prior to beginning a higher education programme.

Several JWL programmes also offer prospective students the opportunity to receive timely feedback during the application and selection process to improve their applications. A programme manager in Malawi explained that, 'if the applicant agreed to come in and talk to [programme staff] about [their] feedback on the application, they would be invited to re-write the problematic part of their application. This enabled us to see who was motivated' (JWL, Staff, Malawi).

A willingness to consider non-academic achievements as part of the selection process is also evident, with student motivation and personal qualities being given similar weighting to evidence of academic qualification. JWL's programme management representative in Thailand explained that they look for 'future potential community leaders' (JWL, Staff, Thailand), whilst the TIH Malawi programme coordinator noted that they select students who demonstrate the ability to plan towards long-term goals and who have 'a passion for education' (TIH, Staff, Malawi).

### **Transparency**

Several programmes are attempting to make

their application and selection processes more transparent, particularly by designating multiple people to shortlist initial applications and by appointing external representatives to interview panels, including refugees themselves. JWL's programme managers include external representatives from local and international partners, UNHCR and refugee communities in their interview panels, and applicant essays are graded by an international team of volunteer faculty in the USA. WUSC regional programme teams also rely on the involvement of their head office colleagues in Canada, one of whom serves as a representative on interview panels. In WUSC's Malawi programme, this is supplemented by representatives from JRS, UNHCR and the government of Malawi, providing a particularly transparent approach to student selection. This push for transparency necessarily incorporates a focus on coordination between the various organisations providing higher education for refugees in each given context. At times, coordination and collaboration have been weak, but it is clear that transparency improves as collaboration increases.

### 3.3. Student motivation and retention

The motivations influencing student decisions to participate in a higher education programme, as disclosed by respondents, are often multi-faceted and intersecting. This analysis highlights four principal areas of motivation: the completion of education and opportunities afforded to gain knowledge and new skills; the pursuit of professional ambition and skills useful for future employment; the opportunity to initiate or contribute to change within one's community; and the opportunity to receive certification and validation of academic achievement.

#### Completing education and acquiring new knowledge and skills

The opportunity to complete their education and to gain new knowledge and skills was the most significant motivating factor for student respondents, with more than one-third referencing this. A JWL student in Kakuma camp, Kenya noted, 'If we have education, even if we have to stay here, we can do more, know

more' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

The status given to those with higher education is part of this motivation, especially when linked to a person's role and function within their community. The possibility of regaining a positive identity as a student or graduate, rather than being labelled a 'refugee' or 'asylum-seeker', also emerged as a significant motivation for respondents, with one student from TIH's programme in Malawi explaining that 'having education makes you someone' (TIH, Student, Malawi).

#### Professional ambition

Just under one-quarter of student respondents referenced professional ambition and the pursuit of skills advantageous for employment as a significant motivating factor. Although approximately half of the respondents do not have a precise idea of the particular employment they are seeking, they hope to have an advantage in job interviews as a result of their studies, finding 'a good job' (JWL, Student, Kenya), or 'opening [their] own business' (SPARK, Student, Jordan).

#### Initiating and bringing change to own community

Just less than a fifth of student respondents highlighted the expectation of being able to contribute and bring positive change to their present and future communities as a result of their studies. This motivation was much more prominent among JWL students and may correlate with their exposure to Ignatian pedagogy, which has a core focus on learning for others. Students hope that 'the diploma will help [them] to be a leader' (JWL, Student, Malawi) and 'to share [their] knowledge' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). Respondents who were engaged in JWL's diploma and CSLT programmes in Malawi referenced the particular importance given by staff to social justice and community intervention. Respondents said that these aspects were clearly emphasised in the application and selection process; they affirmed that applicants were more likely to be successful if able to demonstrate both this motivation and their plans for how they would lead in or contribute to the refugee community. The suggestion that this was commonly known

among the community corroborated one student's perception that students with an existing predilection for social change may be more likely to apply to JWL's programme.

### Certification

One in ten student respondents said that the opportunity to receive a specific qualification or certificate motivated them to apply to their programme of study. This documented confirmation of the level of study is seen as critical for future employment. Students consider the certificate or qualification 'a proof of the knowledge [they] have acquired' (JWL, Student, Malawi) that they will be able to show during employment interviews. Students also value the fact that this certification is not from their country and could act as 'a bridge to education to study abroad' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). This latter motivation was voiced by a number of different students engaged in programmes that offer internationally recognised qualifications, who reported feeling proud that they were studying courses administered and certified by Australian, UK or US institutions.

### 3.4. Reasons for dropping out or considering dropping out

Once enrolled on higher education programmes, multiple challenges can make it difficult for

students to proceed with their studies and complete the course. Interviews were facilitated with three students who had dropped out of their relevant programmes, and current students highlighted the particular obstacles that make continued engagement an ongoing challenge. Just over half of student respondents claimed they had never felt that they might have to take a break from studies or stop their course entirely.

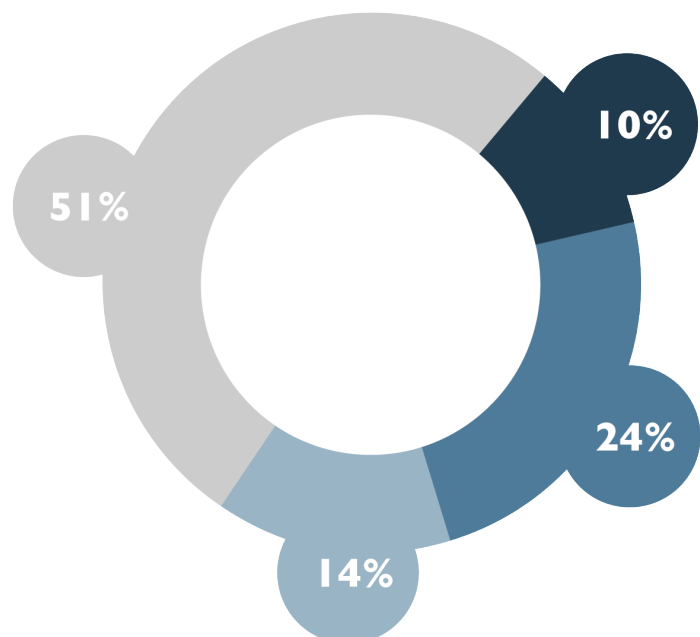
For those who had considered dropping out the contributing factors are grouped into five principal categories, examined below in order of significance.

### Workload and course structure

The most significant push factor influencing potential dropout concerned the perception of an unsustainable workload and tension between assignment deadlines and expectations for reading and other work. One student commented, 'For me, it is that the time for each course is too short. I struggle to do everything in the time that is allocated' (JWL, Student, Jordan). JWL diploma programme students reported struggling with the lack of breaks between individual modules, while CSLT students described the programmes as 'compressed' (JWL, Student, Kenya). A JWL representative from the USA recognised this challenge for

### Student perceived risk of dropping out

- Yes, I often think I will drop out
- Yes, sometimes I think I will drop out
- Yes, once or twice I think I will drop out
- No, I never think I will drop out



students and noted that the programme had tried to alternate demanding courses with easier ones 'to give [students] a little encouragement and a boost' (JWL, Staff, USA). However, this too can create confusion for students who reported finding it hard to study very different modules within a short timeframe. The pressure to consider dropping out of courses is heightened during exam periods, where additional deadlines and academic activities arise.

### **Balance between studies and personal or familial responsibilities**

The second most significant push factor influencing potential dropouts in both camp and urban contexts was the pressure of other responsibilities, including familial responsibilities and the need to work. Pressure to meet basic needs — food, accommodation, health care — either for themselves or for their families, creates a constant tension with the demands of study.

According to a JWL diploma student in Malawi, it is 'hard to learn everything and to find time for diploma work when I have to make the choice between looking for food for me and my family and using the time to do my studies' (JWL, Student, Malawi). This tension can be exacerbated both by societal and familial norms whereby students are expected to prioritise domestic responsibilities over study, and by management or distance-based staff who may not fully understand the pressures their students face. When students drop out or consider dropping out, it's often because, students explained, they 'give more priority to work than study, because they have to get something to support themselves and their families' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Female students highlighted particular challenges in relation to childcare responsibilities, with one student who dropped out reporting that her challenges 'began when I was giving birth to my first daughter. I was in a relationship that didn't work, so I had to raise my daughter by myself. It was not easy to come to the centre with my daughter' (JWL, Student, Kenya). At least one JWL programme is considering initiating a childcare programme to facilitate female enrolment at the centre. Finally, student respondents recommended that

the provision of a stipend, travel expenses, or a laptop — to allow them to work from home — would enable them to manage time and responsibility pressures more effectively, and could reduce the potential for dropout.

### **High academic expectations**

The third most significant push factor influencing student dropout concerns the high academic expectations of the programmes, which can incorporate 'a lot of new things all at the same time' (JWL, Student, Jordan). At least half of the challenges highlighted in this category concerned the high level of English, particularly written English, which many students reported finding difficult. In the context of the aforementioned perceptions of a heavy workload, a lack of breaks and constant competing responsibilities, this additional challenge is particularly significant in that it increases the amount of time students need to familiarise themselves with more complex course content.

### **Location and resettlement**

Geographical moves, due to temporary relocation, long-term resettlement, or voluntary or forced return to their country of origin, will often result in immediate withdrawal from the course. Experiences of relocation and resettlement varied between programmes, with Syrian and Iraqi students in Jordan being resettled most frequently, often mid-way through their studies.

One approach instigated in Malawi involves an agreement between JWL and WUSC so that the resettlement of students accepted into WUSC's programme will follow the completion of their in-country studies with JWL. The opportunity to engage in French and English language programmes through JWL has often meant that they are better prepared for courses at HEIs in Canada. This issue is assessed in more detail in the 'Impact and future' chapter.

### **Transportation to the centre**

The challenge of accessing onsite learning centres was noted by students in urban and camp-based contexts. Making the regular journey to learning centres is a source of fatigue for students who live further distances away.



Even in cases where transport is provided (SPARK, several JWL programmes), the challenge of living far away from the centre remains. Certain factors can exacerbate this, including when the 'short time of facilitation teaching means that it is sometimes not worth it to come that distance' (JWL, Student, Kenya), or when students make the effort to travel, only to discover that resources such as internet or other technology are unavailable at the learning centre.

### Additional factors

Other push factors identified by small numbers of student respondents focus primarily on their more protracted vulnerabilities as refugee, displaced and marginalised people. Camp-based accommodation was said to make focus and concentration on study difficult, as were the distractions arising from heat, hunger, or the uncertainty of their futures. One student explained that 'if you don't have a place to live or anything to eat you can't think about education' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Anxiety and grief also presented as challenges, with students reporting feeling particularly pressured to consider dropping out if a close family member became ill.

## 3.5. Student reasons for on-going participation despite challenges

Despite the tangible challenges influencing student consideration of or actual drop out, over half of the students consulted claimed 'never' to have considered dropping out or taking a break from their respective programmes. Student respondents identified five key factors that influenced their decisions to continue studying in the face of challenges.

### Ambition and hope for the future

Approximately one-fifth of student respondents noted that they continue because of their ambition and hope for a better future. One student explained that he persevered because of his 'hope that the papers and the study will help in the future' (JWL, Student, Kenya). This ambition can be on a personal or a higher level, with students describing a hope to both bring

a positive change to their community and 'to improve the lifestyle of [their] family' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

### Rarity of opportunity presented by course

Approximately one-eighth of student respondents recognised the rare opportunity presented by their programmes to study or do something they perceived as meaningful. Not wanting to waste such opportunities, students persevere, with one explaining, 'We don't have another chance to continue learning, so we shouldn't give up' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

### Flexibility of course structure

Just under one-tenth of student respondents identified the flexibility of their course structure as the primary factor enabling their ongoing participation. Flexible deadlines and the potential for negotiated breaks where necessary were noted as particularly helpful. Despite the above-mentioned lack of flexibility as a causal factor in dropout or consideration of dropout, here JWL programmes were specifically referenced in relation to their flexibility. JWL students are permitted to take a two-month break by skipping a module and re-sitting it the following year. Similarly, TIH, UNRWA, and UoPeople offer the possibility of a one-year break, provided the student keeps the programme updated on her or his situation and expresses an interest in staying engaged with the course. BHER has also ensured a significant amount of flexibility and remediation in order to facilitate retention, allowing students to re-sit courses, for example, and to rewrite and submit assignments after the deadline.

### Support and encouragement from onsite teaching staff

Just under one-tenth of student respondents identified the encouragement of their onsite teachers as a key factor in their decision to remain engaged when facing challenges. Students reported that in addition to helping them understand their course content, the onsite teachers 'are very friendly, they keep on advising the students' (JWL, Student, Kenya), and 'they are very kind and offer advice, even with private problems' (TIH, Student, Malawi).

## Support and encouragement from friends and family

Finally, just under one-tenth of student respondents reported that the support of their friends and family helps them to continue when they face difficulties. These students particularly valued the fact that the course offers them an opportunity to make new friends and connect with those from different cultural backgrounds and countries.

### 3.6. Programme responses to risk of dropout

When students express the concerns leading them to consider dropping out, programmes respond in a variety of ways. The form of support most frequently provided to students at risk of dropping out is pastoral support, where onsite staff members encourage students to continue, offering them informal advice and counselling. SPARK and JWL staff members also call students when they don't come to the centre. One student who considered dropping out but then continued explained, 'I was like, dropping out, I said "[Name of onsite facilitator], I can't continue. I can't understand everything, I am bad at writing, I don't have time to read", and she was my superhero! She called me when I was at home, she said "you can make it to the centre, come here and we fix it"' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

The second most frequently adopted dropout prevention measure is the provision of financial

support, provided in two main areas: transport and accommodation. Although talked about in the context of preventing dropout, this form of support, where offered, is provided proactively to all relevant students, rather than exclusively to those who tell staff members they are considering dropping out. BHER, SPARK, UNRWA and Windle Trust Kenya (WTK) provide transportation costs across all programmes, while JWL does so on a context-dependent programme-by-programme basis. BHER provides funds for students to stay with relatives who live closer to the centre, while JWL offers free accommodation in Myanmar and housing support when necessary in Afghanistan.

The third most frequently provided form of support specifically aimed at reducing dropout is academic support. Students at BHER and NRC Jordan have access to remedial courses, and BHER offers students who fail the opportunity to redo the courses, while NRC students can return to the course even after dropping out.

Finally, it should be noted that several programmes, including WUSC, BHER and JWL, either already operate or plan to operate bespoke support programmes to reduce dropout among new mothers. BHER is particularly notable in this regard, hosting nursing mothers within its learning compound to allow them to nurse the baby and return to class. BHER encourages a climate of support from among other students, noting that '[we] need the climate around the students to be understanding of that challenge' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

## Key learning regarding accessibility and participation

- Higher education programme providers employ a deliberate range of marketing methods to promote programmes; however, word of mouth is by far the most commonly mentioned. While important to continue to promote a diverse range of marketing tools, it is therefore critical that existing students and staff are sharing information about programmes. Marketing tools are commonly used in conjunction with one another – e.g. word of mouth initially, followed by community noticeboards. A multi-faceted approach has proved successful.
- Internet-based methods of marketing programmes are the least inclusive, with obvious exclusivity challenges prohibiting prospective refugee students who have no or limited internet access from hearing about programmes.
- Programmes predominantly focused on word-of-mouth marketing need to recognise the implications this can have on the prospective applicant pool, which tends to have similar socio-religious, ethnic or nationality influences to existing learners.
- Refugee students have limited access to public or government-run higher education institutions and initiatives, requiring a greater focus on bespoke programmes to address their educational needs.
- Investment in preparatory courses, especially for students with limited or no historic access to higher education or limited English language skills, increases their likelihood of being selected for higher education programmes. A willingness to offer additional support to refugee students at application and pre-enrolment stages helps promote inclusivity and retention.
- Programmes face multi-faceted barriers in ensuring inclusivity but are responding with creative means to promote applications from students of both genders and of different socio-cultural or religious backgrounds.
- The motivations influencing student decision to participate in a higher education programmes are often multi-faceted and intersecting. Non-academic motivations, including enhanced opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and to support their communities, are cited commonly and can be linked with the pedagogical approaches employed by programmes.
- There are multiple and overlapping barriers faced by refugee students once enrolled on higher education programmes: the challenge of balancing intensive studies alongside other commitments (e.g. family or employment) is significant, as are the course structure and amount of work expected from refugee students.
- Despite the barriers faced by students following enrolment, respondents exhibited strong motivation for continued study. Flexibility of course structure, and pastoral support and encouragement from programme staff and peers often increased student motivation to continue studying. Similarly, financial stipends (e.g. to assist with transport or living costs) also helped reduce pressures on refugee students.

# 4. Analysis: academia and organisational structure

## 4.1. Overview and rationale

Central to this research is an understanding of the organisational structures of programmes and their academic approaches. This chapter begins by addressing programme management and structure, considering the risks and strengths in different approaches, coordination and partnerships, accountability and monitoring, and funding structures. It then focuses on how curricula are designed and considers the suitability of subjects offered before addressing approaches to accreditation, certification and the assessment of learning outcomes, and reflecting on one online course model. The chapter concludes by discussing the structure of teaching responsibilities; the recruitment, training and experience of teaching staff; the monitoring of the quality of teaching; and the interaction between onsite and distance-based staff. Throughout this chapter, proportions relate to the number of programmes that engaged with the particular issue discussed.

Of particular significance to this chapter is the difficulty of drawing definitive conclusions about programme management due to the diversity of programmes (from start-ups to long-established initiatives, and from blended learning to scholarship opportunities) and the challenge of both obtaining accurate information about internal structures and discerning the extent to which described management processes are effectively translated into practice.

## 4.2. Programme management and structure

### Key risks and strengths

Just under half of the programmes articulated the important role that relationships and the character of individuals play in their development. Although visionary entrepreneurs and committed staff enable growth in challenging contexts, programmes noted their preference for 'a system that doesn't depend on just people' (JWL, Staff, Distance) or the generosity of higher education institutions (HEIs). Onsite staff also strengthen programmes, for example, by assisting with course facilitation; however, programmes can be precarious because of their reliance on whomever they can attract to those roles. The flexibility and vision that enable programmes to grow do, however, lead to a lack of clarity as they seek to do so: 'I'm not sure what it wants to be yet ... It is driven to grow outward, but not more depth ... It is driven by mission — but I am concerned by too much growth too fast' (JWL, Staff, USA). Programmes are considering their role in offering models for shared services or in developing open source resources.

Although these programmes are celebrated as educational opportunities for those with no alternatives, attention is also drawn to the particular risks faced by programmes working in refugee contexts. These include high turnover of staff due to resettlement, students' focus on durable solutions, and the way in which displacement contexts affect programme operations, including heightened insecurity, lack of internet and infrastructure, and the effects of local regulations.

### Coordination and partnerships

Half of the programmes have partnerships with

HEIs in high-income contexts and a quarter with those in displacement regions; these relationships allow for academically rigorous courses and faculty expertise and enable programmes to meet community engagement requirements. One programme argued that 'mission alignment' created more self-sustaining partnerships than those motivated by 'just altruism' (JWL, Staff, USA). BHER staff described the partnership between HEIs in different countries as helping to improve relevance and flexibility, and to buffer the programme from potential political shocks. Programmes with HEI partnerships articulated the 'advantage and vulnerability in being tied to the [university's] development and needs' (JWL, Staff, USA).

A quarter of the programmes benefit from partnerships with government agencies, mostly in the form of financial support from those in high-income countries. One programme was ideally placed to respond to a Turkish presidential decree requiring some universities to develop an Arabic curriculum, helping to facilitate access to higher education for Syrian refugees in Turkey. However, partnerships with governments can prove challenging. One programme tried but failed to garner support from the host government while another chose not to register with the government because 'the government would like to claim they have co-opted us. But then we could not speak out, we would not have freedom' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

Evident in just under half the programmes, partnerships with NGOs, either as implementing partners or by virtue of their mutual association with beneficiaries, benefit students through linked approaches, promotion of learning opportunities and the sharing of expertise and resources. However, they can lead to a lack of consistency in service delivery and confusion over roles, with just under a quarter highlighting the challenge of coordination and the need to make 'sure we don't duplicate efforts but rather that we are strengthening' (IIE, Staff, Distance). A quarter of programmes refer to coordination conferences, which bring stakeholders together to discuss challenges and best practice and to synchronise provision to ensure consistency for students. One programme drew attention to the particular value of these in bridging the gap between stakeholders at 'technologically

different levels' (Kiron, Staff, Distance) working from different perspectives. A small minority of programmes partner with companies that offer in-kind support, such as developing technological solutions.

## Accountability and monitoring

Programmes vary in their explanations of why monitoring is carried out. Just under a third monitor to ensure that they meet donor and HEI requirements about numbers and academic quality: 'It is vital we keep the rules,' explained one distance-based staff member, 'and if the quality of the programmes are not of a certain level then we can't sign off on it' (Regis University, Staff, USA). Funders and councils require different levels of feedback — 'academic accreditation bodies require strict adherence to and monitoring of course quality, course outcomes and faculty credentials' (Regis University, Staff, USA). Half the programmes monitor a wider range of issues, such as the participation and achievement of students, and although the majority of programmes describe monitoring processes, only a small proportion detail any changes resulting from them. One, for example, described the way in which these processes led to a change in programme delivery and moved it away from a completely online model.

Nearly three-quarters of the programmes described their monitoring methods, which vary widely in their rigour and frequency (from a short survey at end of a course to the regular provision of statistics). One staff member explained: 'You can only describe what you are seeing; we can't scientifically say what is there' (WTK, Staff, Distance). Fewer than a quarter use external evaluators. The monitoring challenges include getting the right figures from partners whose software is out-dated, as information cannot be transferred automatically; a lack of trust of onsite partners; different opinions regarding definitions of success; and inconsistent student names. Understanding the meaning of data gathered at a distance poses a further challenge and requires liaison with site coordinators: 'If there are some who aren't making progress or who aren't logging in for a while, we try and find out why ... It might be because of fighting or floods etc.' (JWL, Staff, USA).

Understanding long-term programme impact is vital, as one distance-based staff member explained: 'You have students leaving after three years as changed people — they are thinking critically, and they are leaders. Being able to measure that is totally key' (JWL, Staff, USA). Fewer than a quarter of programmes track alumni, and concern is voiced about a lack of data around those who are resettled. Lack of time, funding and capacity are cited as challenges to effective monitoring.

## Funding structures

Programmes have partnerships with a wide range of different funders, including national government bodies/research councils, the EU and private foundations, in addition to HEI support, including fee waivers, faculty time and use of facilities and materials. The majority of funding goes directly to service delivery, but in two programmes, funding is either used to pay universities to share content or to fund capacity building in exchange for their support of refugee students. In the majority of these partnerships, HEIs add significant value, described by one programme as the 'biggest donor' (CMIC, Staff, Distance).

Over four-fifths of those questioned about programme funding articulated challenges in this area, recognising that costs had increased across the whole HE sector and that student living and travel costs must also be met. The need for funding for capacity building was also noted, with one programme arguing that 'people want to throw every dollar at getting and supporting students, but if we are hitting the capacity of the IT team, we need to invest there' (JWL, Staff, USA).

Donor priorities pose a challenge to a third of programmes, leading to issues such as a disconnect between the funder's priorities and the programme's commitment to a particular pedagogical approach, or, for example, new donor interest in funding education projects inside Myanmar after the 2015 election, leading to withdrawal of support for initiatives for displaced Burmese in camps on the Thai border. Some donors simply require students to complete their studies, while others want them to achieve particular grades. It is important for donors to recognise the fact

that many programmes are 'working with a group of students that are not the best and the high achievers. The highest achievers go for scholarships ... We recognise we are working with disadvantaged students, in terms of academic achievements' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

A third of programmes articulated the challenge of communicating complex projects to donors, including the need to frame costs in ways that are understandable to a range of stakeholders. One said, 'We stopped talking about 'tuition free' and started talking about 'cost recovery'' (BHER, Staff, Distance), such as integrating refugee students into courses already being run for fee-paying students at the HEI, and demonstrating the benefits of this for the HEI and non-refugee students. Programmes often struggle to obtain accurate numbers and cannot calculate cost per beneficiary, and fundraising is limited by staff capacity or lack of expertise. One member suggested, 'Ultimately it needs a more sustainable financial model' (JWL, Staff, USA) while another spoke about the need to '[make] sure the programme can have a life after grant funding' (CMIC, Staff, Distance). Limited funding affects programme delivery in a quarter of programmes, and some staff suggested ways of delivering more cost effective programmes by, for example, pursuing cheaper, local alternatives.

## 4.3. Curriculum

### Curriculum design and development

Programmes provide many students with their first experience of studying with a curriculum. One student explained, 'When we study in the migrant school, we don't have proper curriculum, and it is always changing', whereas in these programmes, 'there is specific content, and we had to do everything on time' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). Just under a third of the programmes draw on pre-existing curricula, while two-thirds develop their own, and just under half are solely developed by distance-based staff and institutions. While this ensures the involvement of subject experts in creating academically rigorous curricula, numerous challenges emerge at the design phase including a disconnection between course design and academic teams and a lack of clarity about the extent to which student feedback

informs curriculum development. Frustration at academic teams' lack of involvement in course design is articulated by both distance and local staff alike who comment: 'We facilitators have not been considered or included when developing our objectives. We have not been involved in designing the shape of the programme. I think we should be' (JWL, Staff, Kenya).

Just over half the programmes use a consultative approach towards curriculum development, including international curriculum committees, visits by distance-based staff, local staff advice on cultural issues, collaboration between universities and academics in different countries, the undertaking of research and alumni pilots, and the use of expertise drawn from different sectors. The benefits of this collaborative approach include greater cultural relevance and the inclusion of displaced academics in the design of courses for students of their nationality. In one programme, onsite staff were surprised to learn that they had to develop their own curriculum for approval: 'We would have preferred to deliver a curriculum that had been developed at a university,' a programme manager explained. 'We had to look for our own resources, which took a lot of time' (JWL, Staff, Thailand). Whether curriculum is originally designed in collaboration with or by distance HEI, implementing staff play a role in its ongoing development to ensure that it fits their context, either by providing additional resources or by adapting images and language.

Two-thirds of staff and nearly half of students identified course design, approach and materials as some of their programme curriculum's key strengths; they appreciated pedagogical approaches, the blend of theory and practice, high quality course materials, and the way that programmes are 'progressive' in the sense that 'they really do take the students from A to Z' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan). However, three-quarters of students and staff also cited the design, approach and materials as weaknesses, particularly the volume of work required by the curriculum and its inaccuracies and cultural bias. Opinion was divided about English as the predominant programme language, either perceived as a benefit for students or as an additional difficulty when engaging with academically challenging material.

## Suitability of subjects offered

A significant proportion of scholarship programmes enable students to pursue their preferred subject at an HEI, although other programmes are more limited in their choices. Just under half the programmes conduct consultations to determine which subjects to offer, of which three-quarters are led by on site staff. Of these consultations, a third focus on student opinions about subjects offered, while two-thirds seek wider input from civil society and teachers. Although the vast majority of students based their opinions on which subjects would be most 'useful' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia), in one case it was observed by staff that students wanted particular subjects that would mean 'they don't have to go to classes, and they just have to pass at the end of the year' (LASER, Staff, Lebanon).

Distance-led subject consultation processes that involve travel to refugee contexts focus on identifying interest in and usefulness of particular subjects and assessing the feasibility of offering them. In the majority of cases, the feasibility assessment highlights the discrepancy between an articulated need and the possibility of providing particular subjects within the constraints of a camp context: 'When I asked the teachers', one programme manager reflected, 'mostly they said civil engineering, the other half said medicine — things to rebuild Syria. Of course, it is impossible to do this within the camp' (OUR, Staff, Distance). Balancing identified needs with the availability of faculty leads to some programmes, at times, having to offer the subjects that came 'knocking on our doors' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

Just over half the programmes reported basing subject choices on unsubstantiated assumptions, mainly by distance-based staff, about the needs and demands of the target population. These assumptions concern the perceived applicability of subjects to future reconstruction of countries of origin and relevance for students in terms of employability. Stakeholders make different assumptions: 'Some say, we're not going to fund certain majors ... The Lebanese market is saturated, so there are no job opportunities. Another organisation that funds those majors will argue that ... they will be respected if they go back to Syria' (Anonymous, Staff, Distance).

A third of staff and nearly half of the students identified subjects offered as one of the key strengths of their programme's curriculum. Just under half the students who spoke positively about the subjects offered did so on the basis of personal benefit and applicability to life, with a quarter emphasising their enjoyment of their subjects and a quarter highlighting the benefit of their studies to their community. So although a large majority of subject selectors and funders choose subjects which will be 'more sustainable, substantial, long term for the beneficiary' (UNESCO, Staff, Distance), this is not a high priority for students. The discrepancy also emerged in consultation when teachers stated their preference for civil engineering and medicine, 'things to rebuild Syria', and students wanted to study interior design, law, history and journalism: 'So the youth has a totally different vision from the teachers' (OUR, Staff, Distance). A fifth of students described the subjects offered as a weakness of their programme, divided equally between those who perceived subjects to be irrelevant or a waste of time, those who described a general lack of choice and those who lamented the lack of opportunity to study a particular subject. Recognising that most students have their 'ideal option in mind', one local staff member said, 'Personally I tried to advocate that it is better to have something than nothing' (UNESCO, Staff, Distance).

## 4.4. Accreditation and learning outcomes

### Approach to accreditation and certification

Partnerships between local higher education programmes and those in the USA who are able to confer accreditation to students are evident in over a third of the programmes. A small minority enable students to start their course online in displacement contexts before completing it at an HEI in a high-income country, or place value on the skills learnt rather than the accreditation achieved, with one programme stating, 'We look to achieve international standards, but that is not the ultimate goal' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia). The dominant rationale for accrediting courses is the fact that credits can be used for different courses in the future and that

accreditation from North American or European HEIs makes the course 'more mobile globally ... and links to the global community dialogue' (JWL, Staff, USA). Due to the complexities of securing accreditation from distance or local universities, some simply offer 'certificates of completion'.

Fewer than half of the programmes offer complete degrees. One programme described the value of a degree programme: 'It actually enables students to go somewhere afterwards, wherever they want, and to open doors after studying, not wasting time while they are sitting in any country not knowing if they can stay or not' (Kiron, Staff, Distance). Another programme asserted that its pilot was the first time an MOOC had been given academic accreditation and looked to the private sector for backing: 'If they will accept the MOOC qualification then that is what matters — then it doesn't matter what universities accept it' (EDRAAK, Staff, Jordan). Despite a local facilitator on a blended-learning programme encouraging students that a diploma is as useful as a degree, a significant number of students expressed their frustration at not being able to obtain one, even after studying for three years. Although 23% of diploma graduates continue to a full degree elsewhere, local staff questioned whether or not the credit was really transferable upon resettlement, and one staff member was considering alternatives, such as local university partnerships.

### Approach to assessment of learning outcomes

The majority of programmes do not state exactly what they are assessing and why. In half the programmes, unless students meet particular outcomes, they will be unable to progress to the next year or receive ongoing funding. This is always the case in scholarship programmes in which student learning is assessed by HEI processes. A small number of programmes emphasise a desire to help 'people in need achieve better outcomes for their lives, not just learning outcomes' (edX, Staff, Distance) by creating 'space for the sorts of learning that aren't so easily quantified: time ... for students to reflect and think'. This type of learning, they believe, would offer students 'more success at the end' (CMIC, Staff, Distance). One key



challenge of blended learning programmes is the need to balance forms of assessments by different institutions and cultures: 'Measuring learning outcomes is tricky — in the Kenya higher education system, students take courses, but they don't complete those courses at the end of instruction. They get an exam later' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

In over half the programmes, learning outcomes are assessed by distance-based staff, mostly through online submission of assignments, although in just under half the programmes, online and onsite exams and quizzes are also used for more formal assessment. In a fifth of programmes, onsite staff check that students have mastered the material. Where courses do not have an online component, learning outcomes are assessed through a combination of onsite tests, exams and informal verbal feedback. In a small minority of programmes, peer assessment is used to maximise the tutor's time or address language-related limitations of automated grading: '[The students] hand in homework, which is marked anonymously by three peers. The instructor gets involved if [there is] more than one grade discrepancy in the results or if he feels they are off' (UoPeople, Staff, USA).

More than three-quarters of the concerns about distance assessment of learning outcomes were raised by distance-based staff and reiterated by students, including fears that students are graded too generously because tutors do not want to 'knock students' confidence' (Regis University, Staff, USA), or that factors like gender could influence marking. Discrepancies are noted by students: 'We get different marks though it looks the same. I make a little mistake, they lower my mark and I don't know why' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). Over half the students valued detailed comments, but over a third did not receive personalised, timely feedback. Faculty also seek to achieve 'standardisation without losing the human connection and personal touch' (JWL, Staff, USA).

A second area of concern expressed by distance-based staff relates to their uncertainty about other factors influencing learning outcomes. They want to ensure course quality but question the role that local staff play in student

assignments, their limited understanding of the factors impacting student outcomes, and an inability to know if the usage of online systems equates to real learning: 'We want to know how it [online learning portal] is being used rather than if everyone is just watching' (JWL, Staff, USA). Cultural understanding and lack of previous experience of plagiarism are frequently raised by staff and students alike, and distance-based staff must discern how to take these factors into account when assessing learning outcomes.

### Structure of teaching responsibilities

In programmes that combine an online teaching component with local facilitation, distance-based faculty carry out the majority of teaching, the benefit being that 'the instructor has credibility ... because they come from the academic establishment' (JWL, Staff, Myanmar). In a small minority of programmes, distance-based faculty, graduates, volunteers or displaced academics travel to locations to teach. In courses without an online component, the role of onsite staff is more comprehensive, including preparing lesson plans and handouts, translating materials and teaching classes, often exceeding their hours. However, even in programmes with distance-based instructors, the majority of local facilitators play a key role in guiding students through the course, clarifying instructions and, in a small number of cases, editing and giving feedback on assignments before they are submitted or tailoring materials to cater to diverse academic levels. The teaching input of onsite staff is particularly appreciated when dealing with 'analytical material that it's hard to convey remotely' (JWL, Staff, USA). Across the programmes, the experience, skills and vision of the onsite staff affect the role they play in teaching. One staff member explained:

*I could see different teachers doing this job totally differently. That's the good thing about my role — it's not really teaching, more tutoring, but it is teaching, because they are second language learners ... It's blended learning — you absolutely need the right guidance from your tutor to make it work. These students aren't going to become independent learners without support from me — they haven't finished high school lots of them! (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).*

## Recruitment, training and prior experience of teaching staff

All those who discussed the recruitment of onsite staff were within the displacement region, and over a third described formal selection processes such as interviews or tests. A desire to employ people with compassion and social responsibility, as well as experience, was articulated by nearly half the programmes, though a fifth struggled to do so because 'it can be hard to find people with all that who are also empathetic' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan). It is challenging for two-thirds of the programmes to find anyone with adequate qualifications and experience. With the caveat that 'you can have 10 years' experience and not be a good teacher' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan), half the onsite staff have previously taught, for example, teaching with NGOs in camps or holding pre-displacement teaching posts (in another language or alternative education system), whilst a third have completed university level education. Other recruitment challenges include the inability to legally hire people or the fact that those with higher qualifications start their own centres or pursue more financially rewarding employment.

As a result, a third of programmes rely on alumni or students to teach or act as peer tutors, nearly all in a voluntary capacity. One programme manager expressed his concern about the sustainability of this: 'We are lucky because the peer tutors are teachers in the school, but in future cases ... without previous experience of teaching it may be tough to play that role' (JWL, Staff, Myanmar). Over a quarter of programmes rely on volunteers. The commitment of overseas volunteers is particularly appreciated, but concerns about local volunteers are frequently raised, including high staff turnover when they are resettled and the need for a 'mentality shift from soup kitchen volunteering to actually being responsible for the students' (JWL, Staff, USA).

In the absence of previous experience, training onsite staff is essential. Of the small number of programmes that explained the purpose of training, the two dominant rationales are to ensure high course quality and to assess the quality of onsite staff. Over three-quarters of training is done by regional or local staff, and fewer than a quarter of programmes bring in

overseas trainers. One takes tutors elsewhere for training. Of those that addressed the issue of onsite staff training, a quarter expanded on its content and nature. In a few cases, training also situates the programme within a pedagogical tradition. Some staff articulated their desire for more training. One local teacher explained: 'I would be far more effective in the classroom if I could have a training course — the reading doesn't tell me how to adapt it for the classroom ... I try to make those connections as an educator, reflecting on my practice, but it would be great to be trained' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).

Significantly less information was available about the recruitment of distance-based teachers. In some cases they are proactively targeted, while others are found by word of mouth. All have to meet faculty requirements for their own HEI, yet just one programme requires the teachers to have experience of teaching and facilitating courses online. In the few cases where information is available, distance-based staff training entails short online preparation courses and a Skype conversation. One local programme manager suggested that 'a little more training might help them — actually ... having five professors that teach all year rather than 20 that teach for two months would help with quality' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan). Although one described a training course that 'made a tremendous difference in my thinking and how to focus on the essential content' (Regis University, Staff, USA) a third of those who expressed concern over a lack of training were distance faculty wanting more input on engaging with different cultures. The case of a teacher only giving students top grades was addressed not by training but by stopping his involvement.

A further issue raised about the recruitment of distance-based staff concerned pay. Most programmes offer faculty a stipend, leading to suggestions that, on the one hand, this 'can take away some of the negative volunteer or slack mentality', (JWL, Staff, USA) but on the other, 'we don't want to attract people who are doing it for the money and don't have any ... heart for the issues and project' (JWL, Staff, USA). Although one programme boasted that 'they come to us as volunteers but sign a contract ... They all stay because they love it' (UoPeople, Staff, USA). Passing references were also made

in other programmes to staff leaving partway through a course.

### Monitoring of quality of teaching and facilitation

Academic rigour was given as the central rationale for monitoring teaching and facilitation by over half the programmes, while a quarter said they monitor to ensure that students meet their learning objectives and fewer than a fifth for teacher development. However, only a small minority of staff explained how monitoring was carried out, describing a range of activities including staff meetings, visits from distance-based staff or academics, regular reporting from teachers and programme managers, and student evaluations and surveys.

In spite of the central role distance-based faculty play in delivering courses, very little information is available about how their teaching quality is monitored. In one instance, peer review among faculty members enables them to 'build and critique one another's work' (JWL, Staff, USA), modelling the programme's holistic pedagogical approach. One challenge for programme managers is that when instructors are appointed, they 'have an obligation of delivering courses according to the standards they have assigned to/ signed up to when they become instructors [at their HEI]', and the programme managers 'can't tell a course director how to do a course' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Another member of BHER staff noted that integrating refugees into existing courses helped to ensure standards, commenting, 'More often than not our courses have both refugees and tuition-paying York University students in them. This ensures the quality of the course. Our students don't want second-rate courses, easy courses; they want real courses, the same courses they would get if they were there with you in Toronto' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

In one programme, a 'systematic reporting system to look at faculty activity week by week' had been created to cultivate an awareness 'that people are watching', although 'we softened it by calling it an accompaniment activity' (JWL, Staff, USA).

### Nature of interaction between onsite and distance-based staff

Interaction between onsite and distance-based staff varies widely. Fewer than a fifth interact on a daily to weekly basis, a quarter have regular or monthly interactions, and a small minority have pre-assigned interaction times such as the mid-point of a course. The majority of those who value this are distance-based staff who appreciate opportunities to gauge student perceptions, understand local issues, and meet the onsite staff who are 'the vital bridge between the faculty and the students' (Regis University, Staff, USA). However, in spite of interaction requirements, not all onsite staff participate. A further aim of regular interaction, from the perspective of distance-based staff, is to demonstrate to onsite staff that they are 'being a bottom-up organisation rather than top-down' (JWL, Staff, Distance) and to foster a sense of reciprocal learning. A quarter of the programmes only have occasional or ad hoc interaction, predominantly by email, and a handful have no interaction at all. The majority of ad hoc interaction is instigated by local staff to address particular issues or to play a mediating role when students face particular challenges. Fewer than a tenth of programmes facilitate in-person interaction between onsite and distance-based staff, always in the form of visits by distance-based staff to refugee locations, not vice versa.

Challenges in communication were articulated by onsite and distance-based staff in equal measure, particularly regarding their confusion about each other's roles and the layers of management. One distance faculty explained: 'I could not get hold of the site directors ... It was confusing who we should speak to' (Regis University, Staff, USA), while a local manager said, 'It feels like I have two bosses. There is an entire side of my work that is completely online (through email)' (JWL, Staff, Malawi). The challenges of the onsite and distance staff interaction were reiterated by a small number of students who described the lack of influence of local staff over distance-based faculty and their confusion about who to listen to because 'the information we are given isn't always the same' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

## Key learning regarding academia and organisational structure

- The majority of programmes rely on the skill and character of individual teachers, both distance-based and local, and their willingness to be involved. There is a wide range of teaching quality and approaches, within and between programmes.
  - Monitoring of teaching and facilitation quality varies widely across programmes and targets onsite staff; the quality of teaching by distance-based staff is often automatically assumed to be high. Few staff appear to receive specific training to address issues related to online and blended learning and to refugee contexts.
  - Complex programme structures, with multiple layers of management (both distance-based and onsite), create challenges in communication between staff working in different locations on the same programme. Uncertainty over roles and responsibilities and lack of understanding of each other's situations can undermine efforts to foster community, but where staff are able to trust each other and work together, this can lead to more appropriate courses and better outcomes for students.
  - In the design of curricula and choice of subjects, assumptions are made about what is most useful for students and their communities. Students have limited options to study their preferred choice of subjects. Value is placed by students on internationally accredited courses that would enable them to advance their education in the future; however, the accreditation process is challenging, and in some cases it is unclear how transferable course credits will be in the future.
  - The discrepancy in grading and lack of clear guidance from instructors can make it difficult for students to know how well they are really doing, and a lack of feedback from instructors makes it challenging for them to keep learning and move forward.
  - Lack of funding, staff capacity, expertise and prioritisation can make it challenging to measure the longer term impact of programmes on individuals and communities. The lack of a strong evidence base creates challenges in securing funding and planning for the future.
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# 5. Analysis: technology

## 5.1. Overview and rationale

The role of technology within the programmes spans each of the analytical themes, and as a result this chapter has inevitable overlap with others. The focus here is on the aspects of the programmes that are primarily influenced or determined by the use of technology.

The chapter begins by providing initial reflections regarding the place of technology in providing higher education for refugees and the specifics of blended learning. It then focuses on the ways in which technology is used in programme delivery and the opportunities and constraints encountered. Expanding on this is an exploration of how technology is used in programme management. It then focuses on the most significant themes emerging from the research regarding why students enjoy learning with technology, before closing with an emphasis on the vital role that training plays in effective programme delivery.

## 5.2. Introductory comments

The perspectives of students and staff in this study regarding the role of technology in higher education for refugees are not likely to be representative of the whole sector. The majority of research participants are already engaged in technology-enhanced programmes, and their usage and capability is therefore inevitably likely to be higher than average. Most of the field visits were to sites where some form of blended learning was taking place, combining online learning, through an LMS and with distance-based academic support, with face-to-face support, through onsite facilitators and group interactions. As previously noted, there is a wide range of online-only options available, but blended learning provides a substantively different option.

Some of the opportunities and challenges relating to technology are similar to those that would be experienced by any group of

students. Other opportunities and challenges are more specific to the context of refugee students. Similarly, it is also not possible to comment definitively regarding the strengths and weaknesses of technology-enhanced blended learning for refugees. This is because the research participants have a wide range of perspectives: what some perceive as positive, others view as negative. The refugee student population has a wide range of perspectives regarding the ease and effectiveness of learning with technology, just as would be expected in any population of diverse students. This diversity of perspectives is exacerbated by the wide range of contexts within which technology is being used. Student and staff experience varies significantly according to the multiple practical issues explored below.

Finally, it should be noted that technology is in no way a magic bullet that can solve the challenges of refugee higher education. In order to be effective, technology needs to be introduced in a phased, contextualised approach, with multiple entry points for users.

## 5.3. Blended learning

At its most effective, blended learning engages with multiple learning styles and approaches. However, there is inevitably a range of different approaches used under the umbrella of 'blended learning'. The programmes included within the research vary considerably in regard to the degree of emphasis on online learning compared to onsite support, type of online and onsite support, and level of online or onsite resources.

The combination of online and face-to-face engagement was noted by students as being particularly effective for learning. Onsite support in the learning centres provides the opportunity to address things that have been misunderstood through the online interactions. A student in Myanmar explained that 'it is a way of going between us and facilitators there; sometimes we can't understand [name of her tutor in the

USA], and [name of in-country tutor] can help us with this' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). Students noted that the combination of online learning and context-specific study helps them to ground their learning in a practical context. A student in Jordan explained that 'in the last year, I had to visit an organisation for special needs education because I was studying the education track ... I guess this was the most helpful thing — seeing in reality helped me understand the stuff I had learned online' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

Staff members also noted the importance of combining online and face-to-face elements in order to facilitate effective learning. A staff member from WTK explained:

*Face-to-face as well as online is very important ... The students in refugee camps may not understand fully what the lecturers are saying ... and sometimes students may not know the dynamics of using the internet and interacting with the lecturers ... So, face-to-face — you can see the person, you can see the facial expressions ... They have their own psychological problems; you can't deal with them just on the internet, only if you are facing them and talking to them (WTK, Staff, Distance).*

A similar perspective was provided by a staff member in South East Asia who explained that 'online learning doesn't work without the on-the-ground tutor — the person on the ground is key to the whole process. The tutor is important for cultural mediation; she is an interface between the academic and the student' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

## 5.4. Use of technology in programme delivery

### Overview

Technology is used by students and staff in the blended learning programmes in a wide range of ways. Their ideal usage is relatively similar because they are all studying in similar programmes, but the nature of the opportunities and challenges faced varies significantly between locations. Of the students asked about their use of technology within their studies, more than three-quarters said they use technology to view course content, search for content on the internet, write assignments and communicate

with students and lecturers in other countries. Approximately half use technology to make notes and communicate with other students in the same country (through WhatsApp and Facebook), and approximately two-thirds use technology to communicate with in-country facilitators.

At a programmatic level, technology is also used in a range of different ways and for various purposes. Onsite staff are positive regarding the use of technology within the programmes, and more than three-quarters of those who commented noted the benefits technology provides. More than three-quarters use the internet to do their own research for lesson preparation, to find additional resources for students and to communicate with the students. However, staff also have a critical awareness regarding the appropriate place of technology within learning, as exemplified by a partner staff member in Jordan who noted that 'it depends on what you are doing — technology can enhance your teaching, but it has to have a purpose. You should not use it for the sake of it' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).

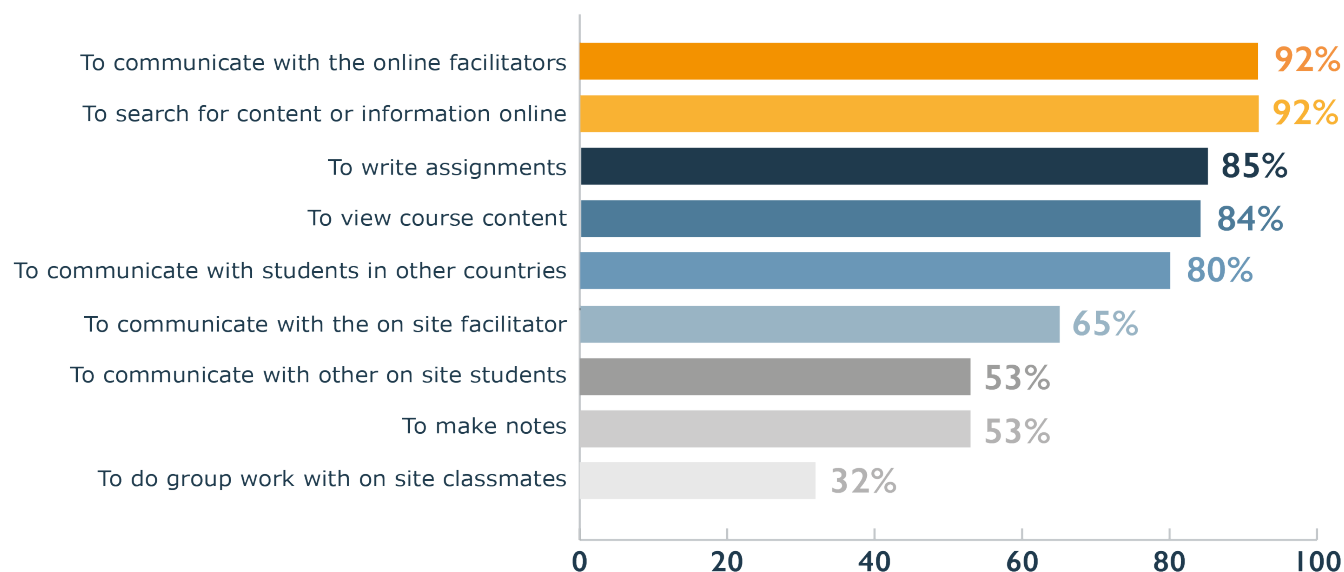
The research identified the programmes' most significant technical enabling factors as connectivity, hardware, content, online learning systems, online administration systems and use of social media. Each of these is explored below.

### Connectivity

Slightly more than one-third of the students reported that they have daily problems accessing the internet while trying to study in the programmes' learning centres. Slightly less than one-third reported that they have problems at least once a week. Students were also asked about their access to the internet outside of the learning centre. The majority do not have any access and are therefore dependent on the learning centres.

As would be expected, the reliability of internet access in the blended learning programmes varies significantly according to geography and context. The JWL programmes provide a helpful illustration of this variation. In the JWL programme in Kakuma, all students reported connectivity problems at the learning centre at least once a week, with more than three-quarters of these reporting that there are

## Student use of technology for learning



problems every day. Similarly, in the JWL programme in Dzaleka, more than three-quarters of students have connectivity problems at the learning centre at least once a week. Fewer than a tenth have connectivity outside the learning centre, and for all of them this involves daily problems. In contrast, students participating in the JWL programme in Thailand reported never having any problems using the internet at the learning centre. The JWL programme in Amman was in the middle, with approximately half reporting connectivity problems at least once a week but a third saying connectivity is never a problem for them.

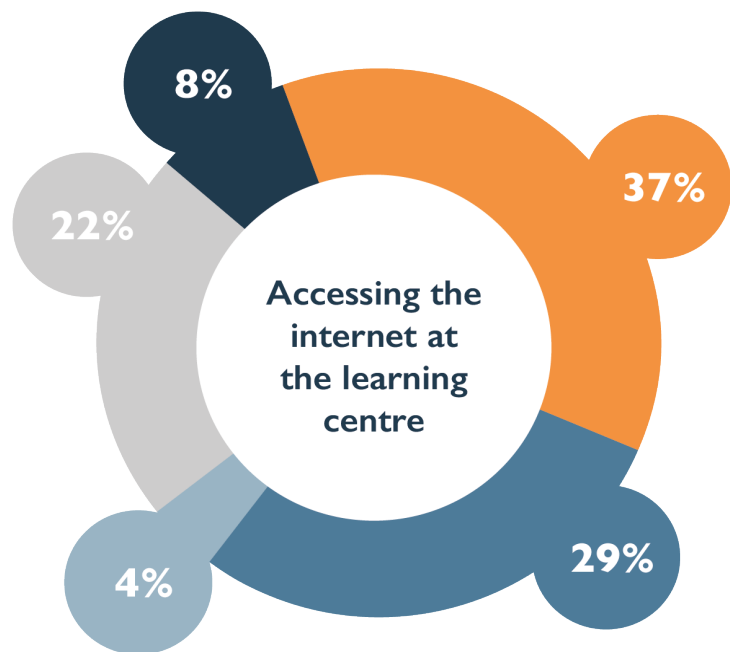
Almost all students and staff expressed the shared sentiment that 'we need a more stable internet facility, as this will speed up the learning process' (JWL, Staff, Kenya) and the frustration that 'the internet connection goes up and down through the day, every day' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Similarly, a staff member with WTK explained that the students 'feel very frustrated when they want to do something and it just goes off' (WTK, Staff, Distance). Many students identified their most significant learning challenge as not having fast and reliable connectivity and, when the connectivity is lost, having no ability to predict when it will be restored. Of those who spoke about connectivity limitations, more than half

specifically emphasised the problems it caused for the aspects of their learning with high-bandwidth requirements, such as accessing video content. In addition, JWL students in Kenya noted that the challenging implications of unreliable internet are exacerbated by the distance between the learning centre and their home. As one student explained, 'We live a long way away, so we sacrifice by coming early and walking a long way, and then we are unable to get online — this is very difficult' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Various students noted that the limited connectivity is most apparent when the learning centres are busy. This leads to difficulties when assignments are due and need to be successfully submitted online. One student in Malawi explained that 'we have the most problems in connecting when the centre is busy; the internet gets very slow, so when papers are due it becomes a problem' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Successful submission of assignments is inevitably challenging in a context of unreliable connectivity. As a student of a different programme in Central Africa explained, 'If you're doing assignment and want to submit, but you miss the network connection, that can be challenge because you can't submit without a connection, and you miss the deadline' (Anonymous, Student Central Africa). A student

## Student challenges

- I have a problem every day
- I have a problem once per week
- I have a problem more than once a month
- I have a problem less than once a month
- I never have a problem



in Malawi who withdrew from the programme explained that a contributory reason for stopping studying was that 'I was not always able to connect to submit my assignments, and this made me very stressed ... When I wanted to send my assignment, the network was not available. This would make me struggle. I would have much pressure and anxiety' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

In Amman, Jordan, the majority of students have alternative means of accessing the internet outside the learning centre, either at the houses of friends or at cyber cafes. In other countries, students noted that internet access outside the centre, although theoretically possible, is prohibitively expensive because 'the cyber café costs a lot of money' (JWL, Student, Kenya). Others noted that they are able to access the internet through their phones but feel that this has limited value because 'you can't use it for assignments and such' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Similarly, students noted the limiting factor that 'the internet on phones is slow and expensive' (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

In a small number of programmes, the connectivity challenges are exacerbated by the surrounding political context. Staff at the JWL programme in Myanmar explained how

the government controls connectivity and that their decision to sometimes remove connectivity leads to learning disruptions beyond staff control. A related challenge is that 'sometimes the government also cuts off electricity', which leads to similar disruptions. In light of the latter challenge, staff noted that they hope to install a solar supply in order to have an independent power source when the government cuts the supply (JWL, Staff, Myanmar).

At a programmatic level, there is a range of approaches being used to overcome the challenge of limited connectivity and ensure programmes are as robust as possible. UoPeople explained how they try to provide a range of options to sustain learning for those in low-bandwidth environments, noting that 'we try to give alternatives — if you can watch video, watch this, if not, read this, and so on' (UoPeople, Staff, USA). Similarly, a staff member at edX explained how they continually adapting their platform to optimise it for low-bandwidth environments:

*You can download the content and engage with it while you don't have connectivity ... We also built the mobile application so that the streaming and bandwidth required to actually view the content is minimized to the extent possible — the whole*



*platform is built with the understanding that not everyone has the kind of internet connectivity and access that we do (edX, Staff, Distance).*

Finally, while programmes can work to adapt to different connectivity levels, there is also a need for a healthy awareness of the contextual limitations of each solution. A staff member of Kiron explained, 'If you don't have stable Wi-Fi connection, maybe Kiron is not the best model' (Kiron, Staff, Distance).

## Hardware

The JWL students reported a smaller number of problems with hardware in the learning centres than with connectivity. A total of 14% reported having daily problems, while 42% either never have a problem or face difficulties less than once a month. As with connectivity challenges, the most issues occur in the programmes in Malawi and Kenya, with 64% and 50% of students reporting problems at least once a week, respectively.

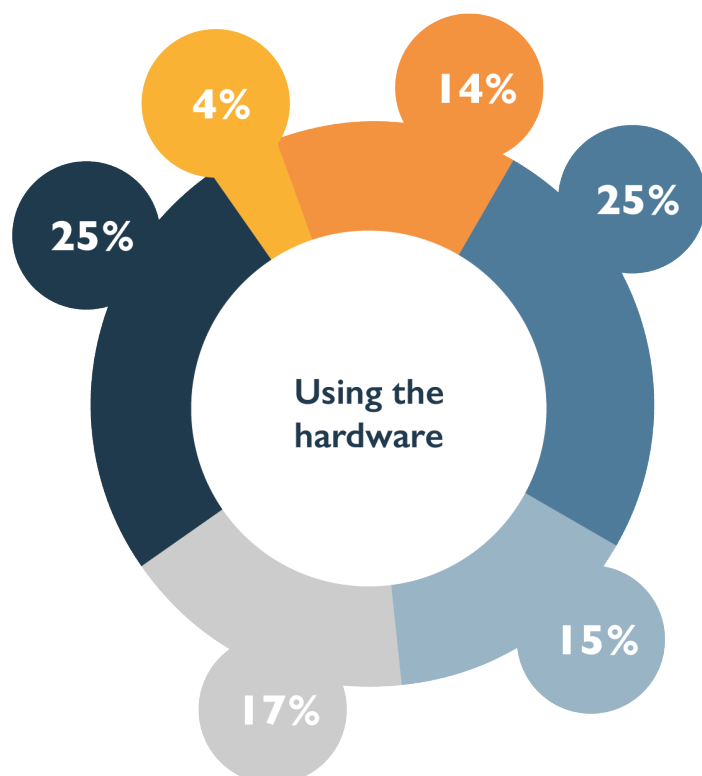
The physical infrastructure of the learning centres is a continual challenge and most commonly linked to the lack of space for

hardware. A JWL student from Kenya noted that 'there are not enough classrooms or computers for all the courses and diploma students', and another said that 'it is too congested — there are too many students and the computers are not enough' (JWL, Student, Kenya). A similar sentiment was felt in Malawi, with a JWL student noting how 'we have so many students, but very few computers. We have to wait to use the computers' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

Students also highlighted that the reliability of the hardware inevitably decreases once it has been in place for a few years. One JWL student in Kenya noted that many of the computers in the learning centre no longer worked and 'the ones that do work are not that reliable, they often freeze' (JWL, Student, Kenya). Others expressed frustration that it takes a long time to get new parts to the learning centre when computers break (JWL, Staff, Kenya). In light of these things, the same staff member noted the importance of building programme resilience by including a realistic estimate of hardware lifespan in programme budgeting and forecasting.

## Student challenges

- I have a problem every day
- I have a problem once per week
- I have a problem more than once a month
- I have a problem less than once a month
- I never have a problem
- Not applicable



The security implications of having high-value equipment in low-resource environments was not raised as a dominant theme by interviewees. However, programmes have considered security implications and the way in which these may limit some innovative uses of technology. A JWL staff member in Kenya discussed the possibility of providing tablets to students to reduce their dependence on the learning centre, explaining that ‘once you give [a tablet] to a student, you don’t know if they are going to take good care of it or sell it and claim it is lost, so it remains a delicate situation ... The security concern is a big thing ... Even if given as a donation, students get to carry them, they could be stolen, can be broken’ (JWL, Staff, Kenya).

Finally, there were a few examples of programmes adopting innovative approaches to overcome the context-induced hardware limitations and differing infrastructure capacities. The JWL programme coordinator in Afghanistan explained that Ncomputing devices are used, rather than conventional desktop computers. Because of the low power requirements of the Ncomputing devices operating as virtual desktops, the programme is able to rely on

solar power rather than be dependent on mains electricity (JWL, Staff, Distance).

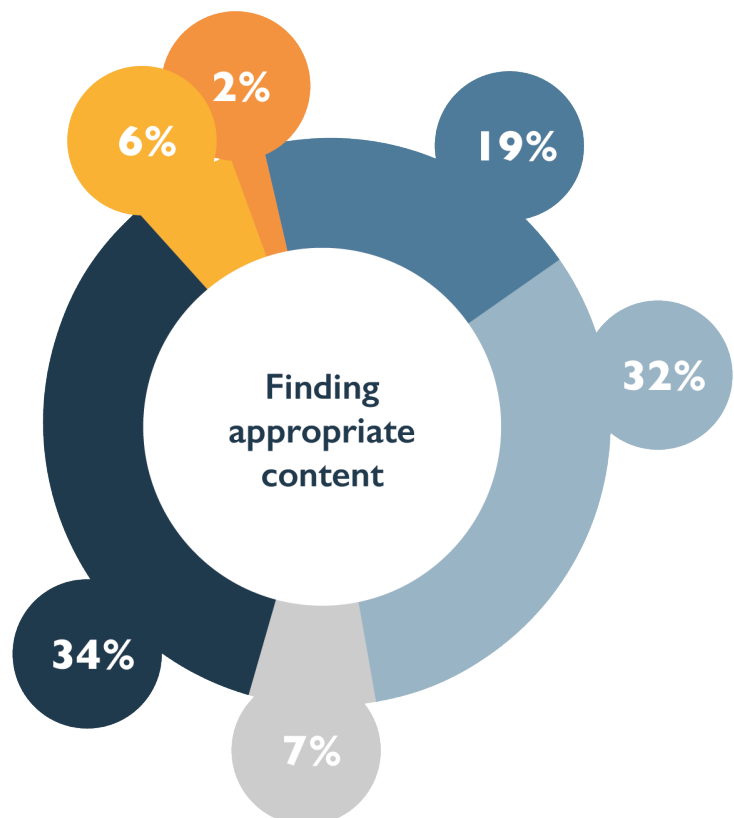
### Access to content

Finding appropriate online content to aid study on the programmes is a challenge for some JWL students. A total of 20% identified this as a daily or weekly struggle, but 30% said it was never a problem for them. Unlike with connectivity and hardware, the level of challenge with finding appropriate online content is experienced relatively evenly across the different geographies. A specific challenge noted by several students is the inaccessibility of certain online content. A JWL student in Jordan explained that ‘all of the best content costs money, and we do not have credit cards – so we cannot access it’ (JWL, Student, Jordan) and another in Myanmar said that ‘sometimes the articles we find are difficult to get from the internet for free ... Sometimes we can just read one page of an article, but if we want to read the next pages we have to fill in lots of information’ (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

Alongside the cost of accessing content, students also noted occasionally how they

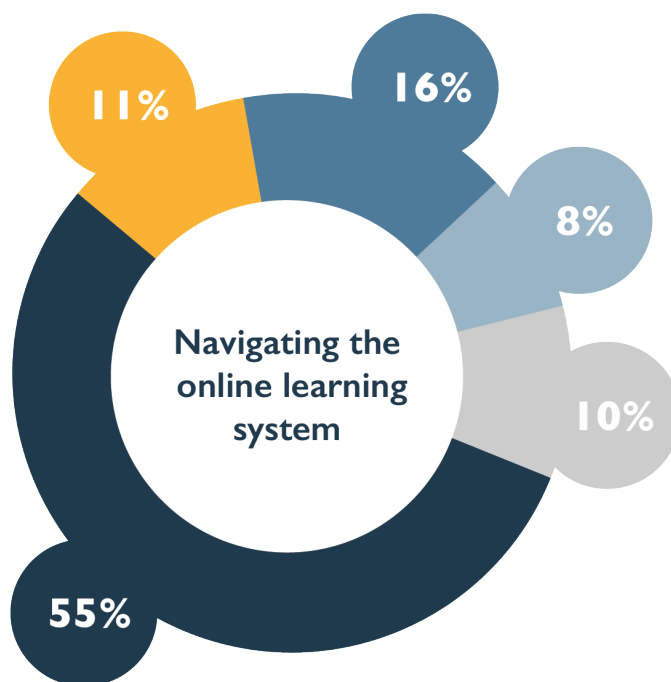
## Student challenges

- I have a problem every day
- I have a problem once per week
- I have a problem more than once a month
- I have a problem less than once a month
- I never have a problem
- Not applicable



## Student challenges

- I have a problem once per week
- I have a problem more than once a month
- I have a problem less than once a month
- I never have a problem
- Not applicable



anticipate that there might be additional content in physical books that is not available to them anywhere online. This is linked to a perception that content on the internet may not be as reliable as content that is in physical books. A staff member in Malawi expressed the perspective that 'books are really important, and some information is not on the internet ... We develop a reliance on online information, which may not be complete or good information' (JWL, Staff, Malawi).

### Use of online systems

The students on JWL programmes are relatively confident and competent in navigating the LMS used in the programme. Of the students, 16% reported weekly challenges, but 55% said they never had any problem.

Students were keen to note the benefits of working on collaborative projects using various technologies. A significant example of this is collaborative working via discussion boards. One student in Jordan explained that 'we use the discussion boards to talk about things with [students] in different countries — we use it every week ... It helps us to learn about other people and other places ... You get a connection with those people even though you have not met them face-to-face' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

However, the use of online collaborative learning tools also leads to misunderstandings and difficulties between students. As one JWL student in Jordan explained; 'Last week on the discussion board, someone misunderstood me, and they responded to me severely. It made me realise that I need to be careful — they cannot see expressions when you are typing on the discussion board' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Another student in Malawi talked about how using online collaboration tools is not always easy for them because 'it is difficult to communicate with people abroad, for example, not knowing the correct way to speak to the online instructors, how to address them properly and what the correct language to use is' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

It was noteworthy to observe the length that programme staff go to in order to identify or design the most appropriate tools for facilitating effective learning online. A staff member of Kiron noted that this involved reducing the complexity of their original platform so that it is more accessible and less confusing to students (Kiron, Staff, Distance). Similarly, a staff member of BHER explained the approach their programme has adopted, using the technology that is most accessible to the students:

*We also learned that the students use their mobiles much more actively and that there were*

*fewer problems if we took a step back from the LMS and used other technologies. So, for example, the application WhatsApp is used by the students, we're using that for instruction instead of an elaborate LMS. It is more effective; the students were already using it to collaborate with one another. We are now using it to distribute course materials, to keep in touch with students and to update them on assignments. So we aren't using the most elaborate technologies because of the issues in Dadaab (BHER, Staff, Distance).*

Many programmes utilise the online systems of international HEIs as a foundation of their administration and course delivery. This has many benefits and ensures that programmes have access to sophisticated technology and are not required to build their own bespoke systems. However, there are challenges in integrating effectively with pre-existing systems that were initially designed in a manner intended for students in high-resource environments. This illustrates the importance of ongoing efforts to ensure that systems are as compatible as possible and that students are equipped to navigate the online systems required for their effective participation. As explained by a partner staff member in Jordan with JWL:

*There are small day-to-day headaches — for example with the Georgetown system, if you don't change your password every two months you get locked out, and if you haven't set your security questions, you have to contact the Georgetown IT department to reset. People who haven't used a computer before don't think of setting security questions. This means [name of staff member] always ends up sending loads of emails to Georgetown saying that people are locked out — students get locked out of Blackboard all the time (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).*

## Use of social media

Programmes use social media to communicate in the locations where student smartphone ownership is widespread. Many students discussed their use of social media and how it enhances their learning by enabling them to connect with onsite staff and students on their programmes and in other locations. Technologies mentioned included Facebook, Viber and WhatsApp. A student in Jordan explained that their class has a Whatsapp group that is

used for 'announcements and any suggestions that people are making'. The class also has a Facebook group: 'this is for the socials; also we have workshops where we take photos and can put them on the website' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Similarly, a student in South East Asia noted that the students have a specific app in order 'to help stay in touch with each other after the course' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). Social media is also used by students to communicate with friends who have received international scholarships: 'I do chat with some of my friends who are already there. I ask them how life is there; they give me advice about what I will need to do when I arrive. I do this mainly by Facebook' (WUSC, Student, Malawi).

## 5.5. Use of technology in programme management

Technology plays an important role in effective programme management, in addition to student and teacher use of technology to facilitate blended learning. Numerous staff involved in the back-end of programmes explained that the effective use of technology is vital in helping them develop effective and scalable programmes. A JWL staff member in the USA explained that she anticipated in the future the programmes would introduce bespoke software, moving away from a dependence on spreadsheets and use of a database for tracking student data, faculty information and course schedules. She noted that this transition would have a significant positive impact on the reliability of programme data (JWL, Staff, USA).

The commitment to finding the best and most appropriate solutions available was well articulated by a JWL staff member who noted that 'from a technology perspective we are constantly trying to move things forwards ... I am working on making things faster — we want to optimise the route to getting the classrooms running' (JWL, Staff, USA). Similarly, BHER emphasised the importance of robust, tested, reliable technology that is appropriate for the context, explaining that 'we are trying to not make the programme so reliant on elaborate technology that it would fail if the technology were not as reliable as we assumed' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

The programme manager of LASeR in Lebanon also noted the importance of appropriate software in facilitating effective programme operation, explaining how this becomes increasingly pertinent as a programme grows and the number of applicants increases (LASeR, Staff, Lebanon). Other organisations also emphasised the challenge that growth brings to managing different data requirements. A staff member for UoPeople explained the importance of effective system integration: 'Our learning platform is Moodle, and we are still building the CRM system. They don't speak to each other as well as we would like ... so keeping our tech and systems up with the growth [is the challenge]' (UoPeople, Staff, USA). As a result of this challenge, UoPeople has begun an alignment project to integrate Moodle and the CRM in order to facilitate operational efficiency and planned increases in enrolment.

The way in which students are documented and tracked during and after their participation in programmes is a delicate and contested issue because of the various implications of collecting data on vulnerable and transient people. The majority of programmes currently face challenges regarding the appropriate use of technology to collect and analyse student data. An example comes from Kiron, where a staff member explained that 'we don't know how often people are studying — we are not able to access the analytics' (Kiron, Staff, Distance). Staff noted the way in which some students are reluctant to share their identity online because of perceived security challenges. This is a particular issue in areas of ongoing political unrest. As noted in relation to students in Jordan: 'In Amman you have the problem that they don't want to share their email addresses because they are afraid — and so they connect on Facebook instead' (JWL, Staff, USA).

Related to this, other programmes are beginning to explore how mobile phones can be used to track students and collect relevant information. One interviewee explained that their initial efforts to collect student data through SMS had struggled because of the limited ability of the refugee students to pay for airtime. As a result they 'chose to talk to the telecom operator and managed to secure an agreement with them whereby they accepted to let them to send and receive [SMS] free of charge for recipients,

for those who are going to participate in the exercise' (UNESCO, Staff, Distance).

## 5.6. Positive student engagement with technology

### Overview

The majority of students expressed overall positive sentiments regarding their participation in technology-enhanced programmes. Various reasons were given regarding the reasons why students enjoy learning with technologies, including the opportunity to learn ICT skills while studying, the flexibility of the learning schedule, the pragmatic awareness that it is the only realistic option available to them as refugee students, and the global connections established.

### Developing ICT skills

Students have widespread appreciation for the way programmes enable them to develop ICT skills alongside subject-specific learning. A JWL student in Malawi explained: 'I have gained skills in using a computer — before this course, I wasn't familiar with using a computer, and so I have now developed this skill' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Another in Kenya explained that 'the course makes me familiar on how to do things online, how to communicate professionally; these things are really important' (JWL, Student, Kenya). Finally, an NRC staff member in Jordan explained that the majority of students arrive with minimal knowledge of technology and therefore the programme 'enables them to learn basic ICT skills' (NRC, Staff, Jordan).

In addition, many students expressed their positivity regarding learning with technology because it is perceived to represent a 'modern' approach that will open up future opportunities. A student in Central Africa explained that 'during primary studies, we were using pencils and pens; nowadays we are using computers ... That means we are improving our education through using modern equipment' (Anonymous, Student, Central Africa).

### Flexible learning

The flexibility afforded through internet-enhanced learning was emphasised as a major

benefit by JWL students in Jordan. One noted that 'I don't need to go to a centre and commit to specific days or classes, but I can manage my time and work alongside study' and another that 'I can do it anytime I want. Here there's internet; I can come and mix with my friends ... Here we feel free, we can do everything, anytime we want, and it's online — this is what I love' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Similar sentiments were expressed by students in other countries. A student in Myanmar with an internet connection in their home noted that the flexibility of an online course means 'I can do it when I finish my job and can work in my home' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). In Malawi, a student explained that because it is online, 'this course gives me the power to control my time and the freedom to do things at your own pace' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

The more limited role of face-to-face teachers pushes some students to take responsibility and develop their independence:

*There is no one standing in front of you telling you what to do. You have to be responsible for yourself. You either have to be a grown up girl and to do your assignment, or you are going to fail. At the beginning, it was very hard and challenging, but with the support of my friends here I have got better (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

However, others described how the flexibility of blended learning can be both a positive and negative thing, depending on perspective. A partner staff member in Jordan explained that because the course is online and constantly available to students:

*If they miss my class they can access it any time to catch up — they come with me and sit with me and we go through it and I catch them up ... One lady had a baby, and she can't come, but she is still doing the work online, as she's ready and keeping up that way. Those that do night shifts can just come to one class a week and do the rest at home (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).*

## Pragmatic realities

Despite the overall positive perspective regarding blended learning, more than half the students reported that, if given the opportunity, they would prefer to engage in a form of higher education that has more face-to-face interaction.

There were various reasons given for this, and the most often cited was the increased ease of communication when face-to-face. However, the students explain pragmatically that, as a refugee, if you want to access an international education then online learning is often the only viable option. One student in Jordan noted that 'it is vital to do the courses online because you cannot bring the professors from the USA' and another from the same programme in Jordan that, if given the choice, 'I would prefer to have both — to have a teacher, teaching in person ... to help you ... but it is good and at the end of the day we are here and thankful for this opportunity' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

## Global connections

A significant recurring theme from more than three-quarters of students who engaged with the issue is the benefit that blended learning provides in helping students build global networks and feel connected to a wider community. This benefit was expressed by students in a range of different ways. Some described the way in which online learning helps them overcome geographical barriers and ensures they are 'able to exchange views with people in lots of countries, and ones I can't visit' (JWL, Student, Malawi). This makes them 'feel like we are close to our teachers' and 'it brings everything close to me, and it feels like I have been everywhere', serving to 'open our minds to see the world' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). Others appreciate the way in which the pedagogical tools of the LMS are helpful for them in building networks: 'it gives us the chance to share the experience of our reality here as refugees. And we can use Blackboard to talk with people in similar situations in other refugee camps who are also studying the course' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

Learning beyond a physical learning centre also serves to raise student awareness of problems that are being faced by others in different parts of the world. A student in Kenya noted that their awareness of global issues has grown through use of the LMS because 'the professors share helpful information about speeches in the world, and it helps us to see that there are problems around the world and that we are more connected' (JWL, Student, Kenya). A student in Kenya also explained how expanding their

horizons through studying online has an overall positive impact on their well-being:

*Studying globally also helps; it is much better, it is more therapeutic, more healing. You woke up in Kakuma, you grew up in Kakuma, you know how Kakuma is like, but the moment I am here, I am less stressed, less traumatised — I feel like I am attached to the whole world (JWL, Student, Kenya).*

Finally, students spoke about the way in which online learning has a particular positive impact in building their critical thinking skills. A student in Myanmar noted that learning online 'is a very different way of learning — different to our country ... compared to the education system we have here; this really makes us think a lot' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). They went on to explain that the programme has enabled them to learn beyond the confines of their national context:

*This country limits our way of thinking, but when we started doing this, I realised after a year that it opened our thinking. For example, we learn about coffee in Ethiopia — how many people have to work for so long to make one cup of coffee. We never thought about that. Now we think more about where things come from and about the connection between people around the world (JWL, Student, Myanmar).*

This impact on critical thinking is also demonstrated by the experiences of a student in Jordan who is engaging in online learning for the first time in the JWL programme:

*I have studied in the past in schools and universities, but I like this method the best because ... it helps you with critical thinking. It helps you to write what you see and what you think. Here in Jordan, you study by reading a book and then taking an exam in it. After that, you just forget it. But this course makes you really think about it. You don't forget what you are learning online (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

## 5.7. Importance of training

Students have a wide range of prior experience with technology when they begin participating in programmes, and as a result, they have diverse training needs. Students described the type of challenges they face in adapting to

online learning, especially when they have had limited previous usage. Students in South East Asia explained that they have previously only used the internet to watch films or had 'basic skills but did not know how to do research online' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). Coming from this background, many students explained that they find it 'hard to know what is good information on the internet and what is not good information' (Anonymous, Student South East Asia). Others emphasised that the lack of experience with using computers means it is hard to develop subject-specific skills at the same time as developing necessary ICT skills because 'it takes a really long time to do everything at once' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Others said they were frightened before starting the course: 'I had never heard of this thing called "online" so it took me a long time to adapt to the idea of studying online. I was so afraid also that I might not succeed' (JWL, Student, Jordan). The varied previous exposure to technology demonstrates the importance of ongoing training if the transformative benefits of blended learning are to be realised for students. Refugee students often begin the same programmes from a wide range of backgrounds and contexts, and thus the training provided should ideally be targeted to the needs of the individual rather than standardised across programmes.

The majority of programmes highlight the important role of training in order to ensure that the potential benefits of learning online are actually realised for students. This takes a significant investment of time and effort and should not be underestimated. The BHER project has worked with its students over a long period of time, beginning with face-to-face instruction and slowly building in online components with significant flexibility and adaptation, a staff member explained 'There is no way students in a protracted situation like Dadaab would be able to participate in online learning without some serious extended preparation' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Similarly, a staff member in Jordan explained that 'it has been a process, educating people how to learn online' (EDRAAK, Staff, Jordan). Students spoke about how much they value the training they receive and would appreciate additional initial training in computer usage and in the specific functionality of the LMS. One student from Malawi noted in relation

to the LMS that more initial training 'would have been good because this took a long time to learn and was very challenging and took time when we could have been doing our reading and studies' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

It is also important to remember the training needs of staff in addition to students. Staff do not always come to programmes with all the relevant skills and experience for online learning in place. As a staff member in Kenya highlighted,

learning online causes challenges for them as teachers because 'we come with skills that are not developed enough to facilitate the students ... We have to keep pushing ourselves to remain one step ahead of the students' (JWL, Staff, Kenya). Similarly, a staff member in Myanmar explained that at the beginning, learning about the course and the technology at the same time took a lot of effort but concluded that 'it is hard but good for us' (JWL, Staff, Myanmar).

### Key learning regarding technology

- The research has demonstrated the extent to which programmes are highly dependent on reliable and robust internet connectivity. The current lack of connectivity is a significant factor limiting student learning in many sites.
- Basic ICT literacy is necessary in order to engage effectively with a blended learning programme. Many students do not have this on entry and therefore require substantial initial training and ongoing, in-person support so that they can realise the potential learning benefits of the programme. Without such support, technology-dependent programmes risk excluding the most marginalised students who have had less prior exposure to ICT.
- Learning how to use an LMS effectively can take significant time and effort for both students and staff, and this should be anticipated in programme design.
- Hardware is expensive and does not last indefinitely; maintaining and upgrading it should therefore be incorporated into programme budgets.
- What constitutes appropriate technology is determined by the context; what works in one location will not work in another because of many different factors, including connectivity, electricity supply, climate and security context.
- Operating technology-dependent programmes in fragile contexts leads inevitably to challenges in maintaining the schedules and deadlines of mainstream higher education.
- The way in which students use technology to learn, even within the same overall programme, varies significantly from location to location, and within different student groups in one location.
- The appropriateness and use-value of technology-enhanced learning is influenced by the national legislative environment within which the programme is operating. The research demonstrates the negative impact of some countries not recognising the credibility of online learning.
- Effective programme monitoring is a challenge across the sector and there is a lack of consistent, reliable data regarding programme inputs, outputs and outcomes. Appropriate technology-based tracking and data collection systems can make a significant contribution to addressing this and building the evidence base for the sector for the benefit of students, staff, accrediting bodies and donors. The capabilities of such systems have not yet been fully utilised in any programme within the research.



## 6. Analysis: pedagogy

### 6.1. Overview and rationale

This chapter explores the place of pedagogy within the programmes and the various implications of the different approaches adopted. It begins by reviewing each pedagogical approach employed, exploring staff and student awareness and perspectives, and the level of curriculum contextualisation in the programmes. It then focuses on holistic, non-academic aspects of the programmes and the formation of protective and inclusive learning environments. The chapter closes by explaining the way in which students, local staff and distance-based staff interact on the programmes.

### 6.2. Pedagogical approaches

#### Staff awareness of particular pedagogical approach employed

Over two-thirds of the local and distance-based staff consulted were able to explicitly identify a particular pedagogical approach adopted by their programme. Of those able to talk explicitly about the pedagogical approach, more than three-quarters spoke positively, demonstrating an understanding of the core components of the given approach and reporting a perceived positive impact.

Across the programmes analysed, staff in the JWL programmes had the highest level of awareness of the pedagogical approach adopted by their programme. All distance-based staff, over three-quarters of international field-based staff and over half of local staff demonstrated a moderate to high level of understanding of the different elements of the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm, and spoke positively about their experience of using this pedagogy.

Three primary strengths of the Ignatian pedagogical approach emerged from staff interviews. The most frequently cited benefit of this approach was the emphasis on reflection, which was often also linked to the development

of critical thinking skills. One onsite manager explained that 'if you don't reflect, you are not learning,' and that, as a result of the inbuilt reflection elements, the Ignatian approach was 'never about a teacher telling you what to believe but giving you evidence and you then coming to your own conclusion' (JWL, Staff, Sri Lanka). Secondly, the focus on giving back to the community and serving others was identified as a key positive impact, with an onsite facilitator reporting that students and staff learn together that 'we are meant to serve others' (JWL, Staff, Malawi), and another in Sri Lanka explaining that students learn to 'contribute selflessly to society' (JWL, Staff, Sri Lanka). The third most cited strength of this pedagogy was its ability to help students identify what they already know, placing value on the knowledge gained through students' lived experiences and helping them 'discover what they think they don't know but do' (JWL, Staff, Kenya). These three emerging themes reflect some of the core components of Ignatian pedagogy, which is structured around five phases: understanding (the learner's given context); experiencing (a set of learning activities); reflecting (on this learning and what it means to the individual in their context); acting (upon the reflection in a way that gives back to others); and evaluating (the entire process). A more extensive analysis of Ignatian pedagogy and its impact on learning outcomes in higher education for refugees is found in Annex J.

Only two staff members reported negative experiences of using Ignatian pedagogy. One suggested that 'it would be better to collaborate with universities in Kenya and the government rather than simply sticking with Ignatian' (JWL, Staff, Kenya), whilst another explained that the approach was 'not that easy to understand' and said that he 'can't take the time and energy to focus on that' (JWL, Staff, Malawi).

The two other clearly articulated pedagogical approaches across programmes examined were the constructivist-informed and peer-

to-peer approaches adopted by BHER and UoPeople. BHER's constructivist-informed pedagogy is based on 'people getting together and generating knowledge and understanding through the interactions they have with one another' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Staff note that this student-centred, participatory approach is in contrast to 'a more didactic and teaching-centred' pedagogy found in the mainstream Kenyan education systems, and BHER has learnt valuable lessons about the process of 'transitioning from one pedagogical style to another whilst still respecting the cultural norms and values that people bring to the teaching and learning process' (BHER, Staff, Distance). UoPeople's peer-to-peer approach also places a high value on student participation and engagement, with required contributions to class discussion boards, anonymous three-peer marking of assignments and tutors intervening only 'if there are questions no-one can answer, if the discussion goes in the wrong direction, or if [in the case of peer marking] there is a more than one grade discrepancy in the results' (UoPeople, Staff, USA).

Among programme staff unable to identify a particular pedagogical method adopted, the majority were, nonetheless, able to talk about elements of the teaching and learning style that implicitly referenced a broadly participative pedagogical approach. NRC's programme staff in Za'atari camp in Jordan, for example, spoke on multiple occasions about 'quality and students being involved in the learning' (NRC, Staff, Jordan). Representatives of a programme in Central Africa spoke of 'discussion groups ... project work ... and group experiments in our science lab' (Anonymous, Staff, Central Africa); and WUSC staff spoke of a 'rounded approach ... with lots of different activities' (WUSC, Staff, Malawi) in their pre-departure English language orientation programmes. In only one programme were staff unable to either explicitly or implicitly identify any pedagogical approach used, talking instead about their broad vision of 'hope' when asked about pedagogy.

Despite the high levels of either explicit or implicit awareness of particular pedagogical approaches among staff in the majority of programmes, several mechanisms for improving staff familiarity with their programme's chosen approach emerged.

Two key factors that affect staff ability to integrate and clearly communicate the given pedagogy are the presence of training and discussion groups. There was a high degree of correlation between the ability of staff to articulate the pedagogical approach underpinning their programme and their reported participation in regular discussion or reflection groups on their teaching approaches. Within the NRC programme in Za'atari camp, for example, onsite staff reported participating in monthly discussion groups where they 'reflect together on what did or didn't work in our methods' (NRC, Staff, Jordan). The importance of training in pedagogical approaches for onsite staff across programmes was also emphasised, with staff who felt less confident repeatedly requesting explicit training sessions on both the underlying pedagogical approach and how to integrate it more effectively into their teaching.

### Student awareness of particular pedagogical approaches

Less than a quarter of students across all programmes were able to identify a particular pedagogical approach adopted by the programme of study in which they were enrolled. However, onsite and distance-based programme staff were, without exception, convinced that this did not matter. They emphasised that the goals of their respective programmes were to facilitate positive learning outcomes and change in the lives of students, not for them to be able to name a particular pedagogical approach.

This was particularly the case with staff using the Ignatian approach to pedagogy. One US-based staff member explained that although the Ignatian approach is specifically referenced in the initial 'Bridge to Learning' JWL Diploma module, 'it is more important that they are being transformed than that they know exactly what to call it' (JWL, Staff, USA). Another expressed the view that 'because the students are all from different religions' it was not important that many 'don't know who Ignatius was' (JWL, Staff, USA). Several of the US-based JWL staff are former students at US Jesuit colleges, and, notably, their experience echoed that of the JWL students. The majority of former-student staff said that they would not have been able to identify the Ignatian pedagogical approach

at the time of studying in a Jesuit university, but that they had nonetheless been positively impacted by the methodology. As a result they emphasised that the design and impact of the course was more important than 'what the student says' (JWL, Staff, USA) about the name of the underlying pedagogical approach.

### **Pedagogy and curriculum contextualisation**

Choice of curriculum for refugee students at the tertiary education level is a complex and difficult issue to resolve. The academic elements of curriculum design and development are discussed in the relevant chapter 'academia and organisational structure'. In the current chapter, the analysis focuses on the debate around contextualisation of curricula. At the primary and secondary level, the critical choice facing educators, particularly international NGOs providing or supporting education, is whether children should study the curriculum of their country of origin (where they may eventually return) or the curriculum of their host country (where they may remain). At this level, the choices made impact directly and rapidly on children's ability to gain the certification and accreditation necessary to progress to the next level of education within a given system. At the tertiary level, however, the debate is focused on a divide between those who advocate for the opportunity for refugee students to study curricula originally from US or European universities, and those who advocate for curricula designed in and more relevant to specific displacement or country of origin locations.

Staff and students interviewed spoke clearly about both the importance of contextualisation and the value of an international curriculum. Various perspectives on this issue were expressed: approximately two-thirds of those that spoke about the issue placed a high value on what they perceived as the 'international' elements of, for example, US or Australia-designed curricula, whereas the remaining third valued locally designed and developed curricula, which they believed to be of greater use in the displacement context. It is noteworthy that the majority of national, onsite staff interviewed placed a higher value on international curricula, whereas the most strongly articulated

arguments in favour of local contextualisation came from international NGO staff.

### **Student perspectives: global or local**

Of the students interviewed, more than three-quarters stated a preference for an 'international' curriculum designed and accredited abroad, and just under a quarter preferred to have a curriculum designed in their region, by people from their region, and accredited in their region. The most frequently cited reason for preferring what was referred to as an 'international' curriculum was the awareness that there are other students around the world studying the same materials, and the sense of being part of a global learning community that this created. One student spoke of the value she placed on 'being a member of an Australian university' and knowing that 'this is not just a refugee programme but part of something bigger' (Anonymous, Student South East Asia). Another student reflected that 'I think that when we are doing this course, our education is worldwide and equal' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Within this category but specific to the JWL programmes, students placed a high level of importance on learning more about other cultures through being able to interact online with students studying the same course in different countries; one learner explained that 'we can share with [learners from around the world] and learn more about different cultures' (JWL, Student, Myanmar), and another stating that 'if we had our own curriculum, we would lose that contact with people outside and with other countries and cultures' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

The second most frequently student-cited rationale for preferring 'international' courses was an anticipated future mobility among the refugee students. One student in Kakuma camp in Kenya explained that to him, 'this is just a transit place — if we choose to get materials according to this place, it is to our disadvantage ... It is great that we can learn from the whole world because we don't know tomorrow where we will be' (JWL, Student, Kenya). A student from a refugee camp in Central Africa also said that, as a result of her studies, she would 'have skills that are not limited to one country — you are somehow extended, open to everywhere in the world, wherever you will go in the

future' (Anonymous, Student, Central Africa). Notably, this future-mobility-related rationale was mentioned by students in protracted displacement crises as much as by students in more recent displacement contexts, indicating that the potential to move, and equipping oneself with the tools for this possibility, remains an important part of the refugee student's psyche, regardless of the length of time spent in one particular host-country location.

Finally, the third most cited reason for preferring a course designed and accredited in the USA, Europe or Australia was that it provided an opportunity to get what students described as 'a world-class degree' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia), the 'American system' (JWL, Student, Jordan) or 'better quality studies' (JWL, Student, Kenya), not usually available to learners in their given contexts.

Of the students who stated a preference for a more locally contextualised course, a third indicated that it was because the lack of familiarity with the context of the content created a heavier workload. This was particularly important for students studying arts and culture modules — for example, one student explained that 'it is challenging to do assignments because we have to find out more about the background of the paintings and things. We have to do more research to do this work because it is very Western art' (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

A quarter stated that their key reason for preferring a locally contextualised course was again linked to workload — but as a result of having to make a fast and difficult transition from a more traditional rote learning and memorising pedagogical approach, to the participatory, reflective approaches favoured by many of the US, European or Australian courses. One student explained that their challenge was the additional work because of the new 'learning system — in Australia the students there are more used to it, but we have to adapt and learn to express our ideas. It is a new environment that we have never experienced before' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia).

Another quarter preferred a more contextualised approach because of the greater potential to put their learning into practice in their immediate environment. One student explained that he had particularly appreciated his family economics

course because 'it matches the situation we are facing in the camp. It is very relevant, and we have to survive on that' (JWL, Student, Malawi), with another confirming that because 'what we learn is particular to our situation, we can pass it on to people we know' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Finally, one-sixth of the students who preferred locally contextualised courses stated that this was because the certificate they would gain from their international course of study would not be recognised in their immediate host country environment. This was stated by students studying a variety of online courses in Jordan (JWL, Edraak), where online degrees are not recognised by the Jordanian government.

## Integration of the local and global

Across several of the programmes consulted (JWL, BHER, WUSC, Jamiya, WTK, edX, Kiron and CMIC), staff and students identified efforts to enhance the local relevance and contextualisation of courses designed elsewhere or designed for more than one country. Over three-quarters of the staff and students who expressed an opinion on contextualisation reported that courses were improved when efforts were made to integrate the benefits of local contextualisation with the benefits of an internationally accredited curriculum.

The most significant factor identified in enabling internationally designed and accredited courses to adopt elements of relevant contextualisation was the presence of quality onsite teaching or facilitation staff. Just under two-thirds of students and staff who talked about this issue identified these onsite staff as key to ensuring a course could be made as relevant as possible to a given environment or group of learners. The two key ways in which onsite facilitators were able to do this were through adding additional local resources to the teaching materials, and facilitating student discussion groups grounded in local experiences. This approach has proven particularly successful for BHER, JWL, and two anonymous programmes — one in Central Africa and another in South East Asia.

The second most significant contributing factor to successful contextualisation was collaboration between international and local experts, particularly in cases where successful academics from the country of origin or host community

had been able to work alongside academics from the accrediting university in order to design or adapt the courses. The Jamiya project, for example, is working with displaced Syrian academics to develop curriculum content for that region, and the JWL programme has a pedagogy coordinator in Chad and plans to collaborate more with curriculum and subject matter experts from a variety of regions over the next few years.

The third most significant factor was the presence of a local needs assessment in order to examine where and how it might be necessary or desirable to adapt an international course. This was also acknowledged to have had particular positive impact for the BHER programme and in several of the JWL sites.

Finally, smaller numbers of staff and students also referenced multiple additional practices employed in order to link local and global. These include building links with local umbrella education organisations (BHER and anonymous programme in South East Asia), cutting out or altering North American-centric examples in resource materials (BHER, JWL), including activities or projects carried out in the local community as part of the course (BHER, JWL and anonymous programme in Central Africa), and allowing distance-based staff to visit field sites (BHER, JWL and anonymous programme in South East Asia). In one case (BHER), the programme design drew on the views and experiences of students originally from Dadaab camp now studying on WUSC scholarships in the accrediting Canadian university.

Despite these efforts, just under half of students and staff consulted expressed a desire for further contextualisation of international courses — although, importantly, almost all students wanted this to be done without losing the global focus to the content, or the international accreditation. Suggestions around how to do this focused on two key areas: firstly on introducing onsite facilitation in places where it does not exist and providing more training on contextualisation to onsite facilitators or teachers in places where it does, and secondly,

on increasing the involvement of academic experts in the design and adaptation of the courses.

## Student reflections on teaching methods

When examining the detail of how the various pedagogical approaches adopted have been implemented in the day-to-day teaching and learning styles applied in the classroom, participatory methods have proven the most popular among learners. Despite the above-mentioned students who reported that having to adapt to participatory teaching methodologies created a heavier workload, when asked what they most appreciated about the teaching and learning on their particular course, over three-quarters of students identified participatory activities.

Several learners explicitly contrasted these approaches with the more traditional rote learning methods they had previously been exposed to, suggesting that although transition to these methods requires a period of adjustment, the majority of students ultimately find that these better stimulate learning.

Activities that encourage critical thinking and reflection were particularly appreciated by students who identified participatory teaching and learning activities as their preferred course elements — again emphasising the value of pedagogical approaches that explicitly focus on this (e.g. those seen within JWL and BHER). Integrated community-focused elements — be they community projects, research in the community, or community placements — were also noted as some of the most appreciated aspects of courses by almost a third of students studying on programmes that offered this.

Overall, the importance of adopting mixed methods that cater to a variety of learning styles, whatever the underlying pedagogical approach, emerged as important to students. The majority of responses highlighted the value of varied activities: the integration of audio and video material was particularly appreciated, with over one-third of students mentioning these activities as some of the most helpful.

### 6.3. Holistic approaches within higher education pedagogies for refugees

In displacement contexts, whether camps or urban centres, learners face a host of challenges and difficulties to which their counterparts in more stable environments may not be exposed. As a result, almost all of the blended-learning-focused programmes studied have chosen to adopt a more holistic approach to the education they provide, concerning themselves not just with academic learning outcomes, but with the broader well-being of their students. This holistic approach is centred both on efforts to provide various forms of non-academic support and efforts to create a protective and inclusive learning environment. Provision of holistic support was highly valued by the learners interviewed and appears to significantly improve the learning experience. It is a particular strength of courses with onsite facilitation, where the ability to interact face-to-face with learners makes the provision of informal, personalised, holistic support more viable.

#### Non-academic support

The two most frequently provided forms of non-academic support provided to refugee students across all programmes were mentoring support and work- or career-related support. The third most frequently provided form of assistance was psychosocial support, followed by, in very few cases, legal advice and explicit life skills sessions.

Where mentoring support takes place, over three-quarters of the initiatives are informal, based on the provision of ad-hoc (but extensive) coaching from onsite staff and the establishment of peer mentoring groups that students can, and often do, choose to participate in. For the JWL programme, the concept of 'accompaniment' is integral to the Ignatian pedagogical approach, and over two-thirds of JWL students who spoke about forms of non-academic support emphasised the value of having staff and peers who would 'walk alongside us whatever we face in our studies and lives' (JWL, Student, Kenya). This type of mentoring support is also built into the BHER programmes, where 'there is an element of coaching throughout the

programme' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Although providing mentoring support online is often more challenging than face-to-face, two particular examples of this support did emerge: firstly, the 'online buddy system' adopted by Kiron, where each learner is offered the chance to join an online peer support group, and secondly, the extensive use of Facebook groups to create learner networks that can extend beyond graduation to alumni (JWL, WUSC, Swedish Institute for Study Scholarships).

As with mentoring, the majority of career- or work-related support provided also takes the form of ad-hoc, informal advice. The most explicit focus on work was found in one programme in Central Africa, where students' study is based on workplace competencies, and links with local employers are explicitly and actively cultivated. For other programmes (BHER and JWL), official work placements are only available in the education sector (teaching in camp or NGO-partner schools, or transitioning to become an onsite facilitator for the programme studied on, for example). However, in several locations (such as for all programmes operating in Jordan), the decision to keep career advice and work placements informal is based in necessity. Where refugees do not have permission to work, an overt focus on this is perceived as detrimental, both in terms of student expectations and in terms of ongoing relationships between programmes of study and local and national authorities.

Whether or not they were able to provide it, almost all of the programmes analysed identified the provision of psychosocial support to refugee students as both desirable and beneficial. The only programme that found 'it was not as important as we thought' (Kiron, Staff, Distance) was the Kiron programme, which offers students access to an online psychologist but has found that only very small numbers take up this support. Student take-up of formal or informal psychosocial support does appear to be much higher in contexts where they have the option of talking face-to-face with someone or where onsite staff are close enough to identify emerging issues and respond accordingly. The ULYP programme in Lebanon, TIH programme in Malawi and several of the JWL sites for example, offer onsite counselling and appointments with social workers or psychologists. Other

organisations, including NRC, do not have in-house specialists but have strong referral pathways to other local NGOs able to provide face-to-face support for serious cases.

### Facilitating a protective and inclusive learning environment

For students interviewed across the programmes, the most significant contributing factor in facilitating a protective and inclusive learning environment was the creation of a tolerant, respectful and family-like atmosphere. Over three-quarters of the students who described what, for them, constituted a protective and inclusive environment, talked about the positive impact of spending significant amounts of time in a learning centre where they made friends with people from other cultures and religions; they learned to express and appreciate different values and worldviews and were treated as valued individuals or members of a family. One Sudanese student studying in Jordan simply said, 'When I come here, people treat me as a human' (JWL, Student, Jordan), and an onsite manager from the same programme confirmed:

*Here, we see them making friends with people they would never have spoken to before — there is no other place where these different people would be able to sit together and drink Nescafe — no other place. They would never mix outside. But here, they learn from other cultures, and ethnic mixing and religious mixing is fine (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).*

Another onsite manager with a different programme in South East Asia explained that in their centre, students 'learn each other's differences — it is students of different ethnic groups who are normally totally isolated ... they are here equally. Students from the cities and the camps are all equal and all studying together' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia). For some students, building relationships with learners from different backgrounds has proven an important step in their own recovery from the effects of conflict and war. As one programme manager explained, 'They are traumatised, but the moment they open up and share, real reconciliation takes place. They are able to forgive the other, those who wished the worst on them, spending time with them personally,

chatting with them...' (JWL, Staff, Distance).

This creates a particularly important environment for the development of the self-reflection and critical thinking skills discussed above. In instances where self-reflection and critical thinking skills have not been so well developed, or have been developed but not directly applied to the situations young people have faced, past experiences and hostilities have at times remained 'the elephant in the room' (Anonymous, Staff, Distance). One interviewee working with young people in Lebanon (who wished to remain anonymous) said that refugee students had confided in him that when studying on higher education programmes, 'there was no-one to help them talk through these issues', and, in a more extreme case, that a young person confessed to 'hating his university because it is so political' (Anonymous, Staff, Distance).

For many learners, these experiences of understanding each other, and being valued themselves, are in direct contrast to their daily experiences when not studying — particularly for those facing physical dangers or abuse. Students in the TIH programme in Malawi reported that official letters issued to each student by the programme protected them from being picked up by the police when travelling outside of the camp, and another student from the Malawian camp stated that studying protected her from 'bad things that happen in the community, like bad teenage behaviour' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Tensions between host communities and refugee communities are well documented around the world, and, in this research study, the Sudanese and Somali refugee populations in Jordan reported experiencing particularly high levels of abuse in urban Amman. Several students spoke of having hot coffee thrown in their faces or of being verbally abused or hit. This was in stark contrast with their experiences in the learning centre, where one Sudanese student explained:

*Here, I get their experiences ... This is the first time I have actually met Syrians and Jordanians — though I have seen them in the street, I had not spoken with them. The ones I meet here are interesting people, I am happy with them. I can learn from them, as well as from the courses (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

This again emphasises the role that onsite centres can play in enhancing the learning

experiences and overall wellbeing of vulnerable youth and adults.

## 6.4. Student and staff interaction

Across all programmes, and with both online and distance-based instructors, the majority of students reported a high level of satisfaction with the level of interaction they have. This section analyses the frequency and quality of interaction between students and both distance-based and onsite staff, and the extent to which staff demonstrate an understanding of the challenges students face.

### Student interaction with distance-based staff

Across all programmes, students noted that the level of interaction available to them depended significantly on the personality and circumstances of the individual distance-based staff member involved, but opinion was divided equally between students who were happy with the frequency of their interactions and those who felt the interactions were insufficient. Where students were satisfied with the frequency of interaction, this was sometimes as a result of clear obligations and guidelines for distance-based staff, such as the UoPeople requirement

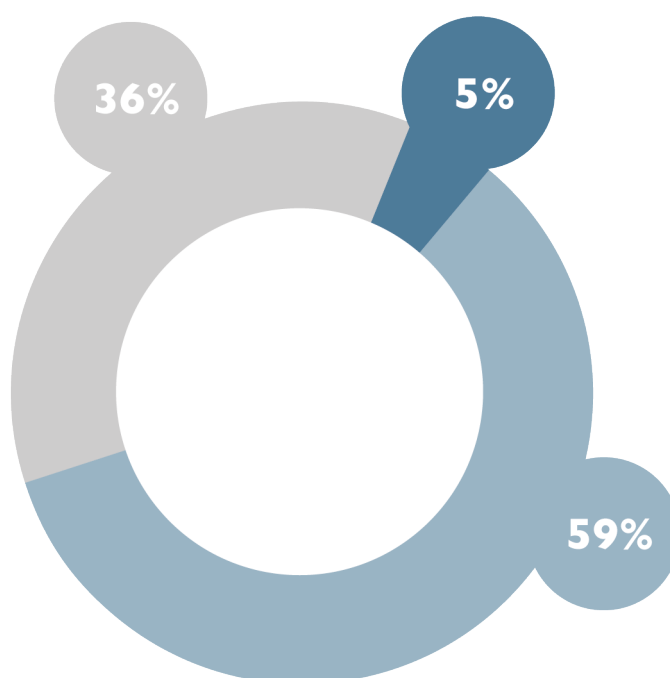
that staff respond to student queries within 24 hours, or the JWL ratio of approximately eight students to one distance lecturer. In other cases, students did not refer to guidelines but mentioned repeatedly how impressed they were by distance-based staff who responded promptly and regularly, and how critical this was to their ability to progress through the course.

The half of students who were dissatisfied with the level of interaction with distance-based staff spoke of receiving slow or, at times, no responses to their online queries or emails, and often did not understand or see a reasonable explanation for this. Where students did see a reason for the infrequent or interrupted communication, they attributed it to (in order): the busyness and other responsibilities of the distance-based staff, having to work across time zones, different weekend days, holidays and network problems.

Two principal consequences of infrequent communication by distance-based staff for students were reported. Firstly, not receiving timely responses or feedback led to a sense of frustrated academic progress. Students spoke of receiving feedback too late for it to be of use and sending draft assignments to tutors 'for help and corrections before I submit the final version' but not receiving feedback 'in time to make changes and submit the

## Student satisfaction with course instructors and facilitators

- I am very satisfied
- I am quite satisfied
- I am not at all satisfied





assignment' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Others spoke of submitting one assignment and then having to complete and submit a follow up assignment without having received feedback on the first (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). The second consequence of infrequent communication was a sense of disconnection from the distance elements of the course, with students reporting that 'I feel like they don't even read our emails' (JWL, Student, Malawi) and that 'we wait, and wait, and wait, and feel very far away' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

Student opinion on the quality of their interactions with distance-based staff was also divided almost equally, with just over half reporting satisfaction with the quality of interaction and just under half reporting dissatisfaction. In over three-quarters of cases where students were satisfied with the quality of interaction with distance-based staff, this was linked to the academic progress and development that the interactions provided. Students explained, 'they show us how to improve', 'give feedback that motivates us to do our best' (JWL, Student, Jordan) and 'help us with our mistakes' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia). Where students were dissatisfied with the quality of their interactions with distance-based staff, this was primarily as a result of the level of detail of feedback provided. One student gave an example of a course facilitated by the British Council: 'Their feedback is generalised [for the class], not personalised' (NRC, Student, Jordan). Another student explained, 'Sometimes [distance-based staff] only gives a general comment on my work ... but I want to understand if my work has a weakness' (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

Over three-quarters of students who suggested ways of improving student-staff interaction requested more face-to-face contact, usually in the form of Skype or video conference. Potential network issues notwithstanding, students stated that having this type of contact built into the course on a regular basis would enable them to better express themselves, understand feedback and learn more quickly. The remaining quarter of improvement recommendations from students were split between those who suggested having access to distance lecturers' direct emails, so that they could be contacted outside the confines of whichever online classroom or portal

their programme had adopted, and those who suggested more frequent site visits by distance lecturers to deliver courses in person. This latter approach has proved particularly effective in BHER and an anonymous programme.

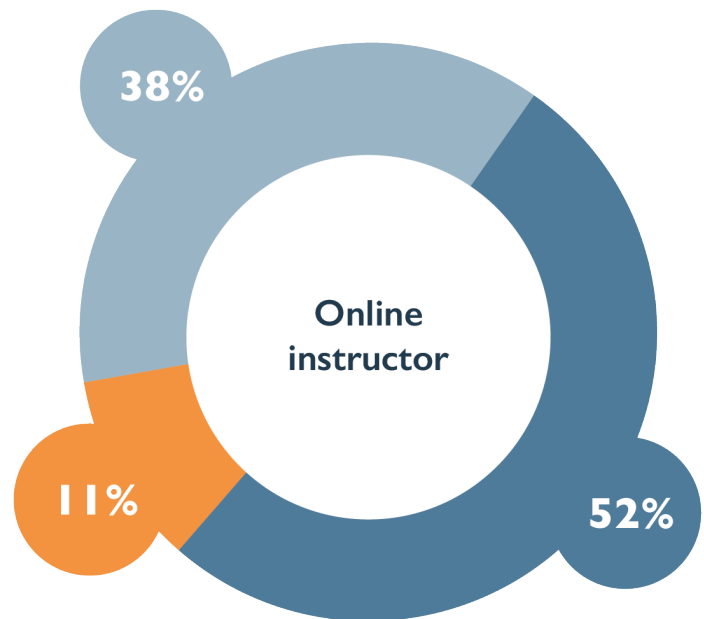
### Student interaction with onsite staff

Across programmes with onsite staff, frequency of student interaction with these professionals emerged as one of the key strengths. Over three-quarters of students interviewed from such programmes identified their interaction with onsite staff as one of the key factors facilitating their learning and increasing their motivation, reporting that 'I can ask them anything, questions anytime ... and do not have to wait for responses' (JWL, Student, Malawi), and a staff member noted that 'we have daily interaction' (BHER, Staff, Kenya). Significantly, onsite staff were also found to play a valuable function of acting as a bridge between students and distance-based staff, at times simply easing communication 'because they know us better than the ones in Australia' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia), and on other occasions helping resolve specific issues or queries, when students ask onsite staff to approach distance-based staff 'on my behalf' (JWL, Student, Myanmar). Under a quarter of respondents reported insufficient interaction with these staff, primarily as a result of staff having to manage multiple responsibilities, with one student explaining that 'they are busy with other work ... they have lots of meetings' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

As with distance-based staff, student feedback on the quality (as opposed to the frequency) of their interactions with onsite staff was divided equally. Those expressing satisfaction with the quality of interaction spoke about how the onsite facilitators excelled at 'explaining things to us' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia) and 'finding new ways to help us understand' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Those expressing dissatisfaction focused predominantly on a lack of subject-specific expertise on the part of some local facilitators. While some students stated strongly that 'it is not the responsibility of the onsite facilitator to understand every single course' (JWL, Student, Jordan), others found it problematic that 'some facilitators' knowledge is a bit limited' (JWL, Student, Malawi), and that

## Student perceived instructor understanding of refugees

- They understand very well
- They understand a little
- They do not understand at all



they were therefore not always able to provide detailed answers to student questions.

### Distance-based staff understanding of student challenges

A significant ongoing challenge for programmes where students interact with lecturers based overseas is enabling staff to understand and respond appropriately to the challenges their students face. Just over one-third of students thought that distance-based, online staff had a very good understanding of the challenges they face in life, with the remainder reporting that they understood either a little or not at all.

The two most frequently cited areas in which students felt misunderstood were missed deadlines and the personal challenges relating to life as a refugee. While just under half of students rated distance-based staff's understanding of their personal challenges highly, reporting that 'they have a human understanding' (JWL, Student, Kenya), or that 'they are like friends who want to understand my circumstances' (JWL, Student, Jordan), just over half disagreed. For this latter group, the dominant sentiment was expressed:

*The instructors have never been in a refugee camp and don't know what our life here is like. So they can treat us like any other student who is not in our situation ... Sometimes some instructors*

*are not understanding about the conditions we are living in and the problems we face, and say that we need to just concentrate on our studies (JWL, Student, Malawi).*

Just under half of students thought that distance-based staff understood the specific challenges they faced around submitting work on time: 'They give me more time to finish my work, so I think they understand that we have some problems here in the camp' (JWL, Student, Malawi). But slightly over half felt that they were unfairly penalised given their circumstances. One reported that extensions were often necessary, because 'life in the camp is a fight every single day' (JWL, Student, Malawi) but were not given. Another explained:

*Sometimes you email an online instructor about a problem with submitting an assignment on time, but some are very strict and say that even students in America have challenges, so everything needs to be submitted on time. I don't think they understand that we have many challenges that are every day, and that it is different to someone living and studying in America (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

In addition, smaller numbers of students reported that distance-based staff did not understand their cultural or political context and the way they wrote about these in assignments, and others stated that staff did not appear

to understand when they faced practical or logistical problems to do with internet or power outages.

A small minority of students did not emphasise one particular area in which they felt misunderstood but worried that at some stage, the cumulative impact of multiple challenges would cause distance lecturers to think that they were trying to avoid work. One student reflected:

*They may not understand if you tell them today I have this problem, tomorrow I have this problem - they are not seeing it with their own eyes, so will they accept me to continue if I apologise, will they understand? With all these challenges, will they let me keep going? I don't want to drop! (JWL, Student, Kenya).*

Students had a variety of suggestions about how to improve the understanding of distance-based staff regarding the challenges they face. The three key recommendations consisted of encouraging more site visits from distance-based staff, introducing a 'get to know you' component at the beginning of each course so that the distance lecturer is able to learn about the personal as well as academic background of each student, and ensuring that each distance-based staff member receives a thorough briefing

on the context, culture and political situation of each location of their students. It was also noted that this briefings should include information regarding the key differences between camp and urban refugee settings.

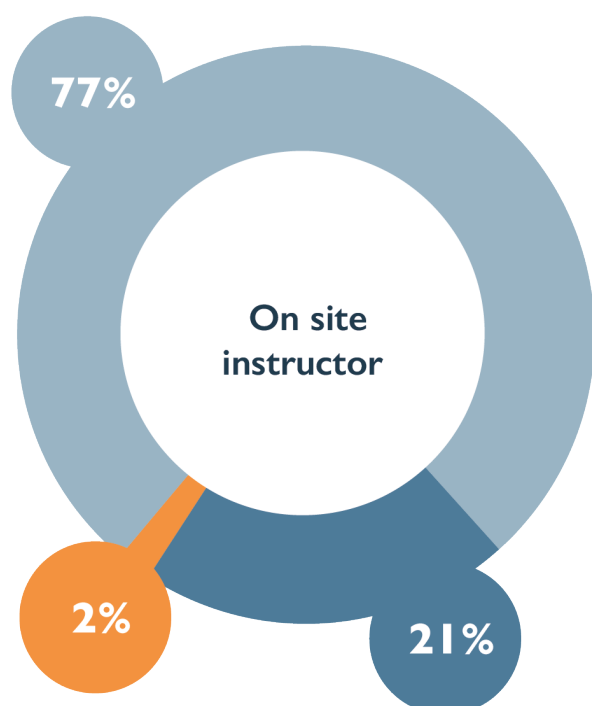
### Onsite staff understanding of student challenges

Over three-quarters of students in programmes with onsite staff reported that these staff showed very good understanding of the difficulties and challenges that they faced. Students identified this as a key factor in their ongoing motivation and ability to sustain their studies in the face of said challenges.

According to just less than half of the students, the most significant factor mentioned in helping onsite staff understand their challenges was simply the fact that the staff too are either from a refugee background or are familiar with the struggles of camp and urban displacement contexts as a result of their own day-to-day exposure to or experience of the same issues. One student explained, 'We are all refugees and so are they — they understand the challenges we face because they are going through the same things' (JWL, Student, Kenya), and another confirmed that, even for onsite staff who were not necessarily refugees themselves,

## Student perceived instructor understanding of refugees

- They understand very well
- They understand a little
- They do not understand at all



'they understand because they know our situation and see how we live and what our problems are' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

Interestingly however, approximately a quarter of students who rated their onsite staff as being very understanding of the challenges they faced, also noted that they are at times powerless to translate this understanding or empathy into concrete change for the students. One student reported that 'onsite instructors don't have much power with the [distance-based] instructors; I tried to explain some problems with online

instructors, but there was nothing the onsite facilitators could do' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Another confirmed that 'they do understand, but they have no power to change anything. It would be good if they could have more power to speak for us and on our behalf with the offsite instructors' (JWL, Student, Malawi). In other cases, students thought that onsite staff needed to be more proactive about seeking out opportunities to advocate on their behalf, or that communication structures between the two groups of staff needed to be improved (JWL, Student, Kenya).

### Key learning regarding pedagogy

- Where particular pedagogical approaches are employed, staff — both distance-based and local — have benefited from time to reflect with colleagues on their teaching practice. Staff have also noted that initial training in the relevant pedagogy would significantly improve their ability to integrate it into their daily teaching practice.
- Students expressed a preference for participatory, learner-centred methods that develop critical thinking skills.
- The majority of students appreciate the opportunity to study on what they perceive as 'international' courses, which are accredited by universities in higher resource environments. However, the curricula and learning materials of these courses work better when appropriately contextualised — through collaboration with local academics and students, careful study of the target learning environment at the materials development stage, and through activities delivered by onsite facilitators at the point of delivery.
- The provision of additional support for students is particularly important in refugee contexts, and learners benefit from mentoring (both at a peer and non-peer level) and psychosocial and (where appropriate) career development support.
- The sense of community, safety and family provided by many of the onsite learning centres has a significant impact on student wellbeing and ability to learn and develop.
- At times, staff delivering lectures and grading assignments by distance may struggle to fully understand and respond appropriately to the challenges and difficulties that refugee students face. Students noted that distance-based staff would benefit from both exposure to and training in the challenges commonly faced and the nuances of these across a variety of differing circumstances (for example, in camp-based and urban environments).

## 7. Analysis: impact and future

### 7.1. Overview and rationale

The first part of this chapter assesses the perceived and actual impact of higher education programmes on students' future prospects. The utility of programmes is analysed according to three scenarios: if students remain in their current location, if they return to their country of origin, or if they are resettled or travel to a third country. The next section then examines the non-academic outcomes resulting from higher education programmes, including the extent to which these programmes influence students' personal development, attitudes and worldview. The chapter closes with an analysis of the most significant strengths and weaknesses of higher education programmes, as identified by key stakeholders, and their recommendations for improvements to their respective programmes.

### 7.2. Usefulness of course

Students were asked to rate the utility of their current programme of study in three imagined future scenarios: if they remain in their current location, return to their country of origin or travel to a third country. In each scenario, students were asked whether having completed their course would be 'very useful', 'somewhat useful' or 'not useful', and why. Students were least positive about the benefits of having completed their programme of study if they remain in their current location. Fifty-five percent of students described it as 'very useful' in their current location, compared to 72% if returning to their country of origin and 75% if resettled to a third country.

#### Benefits of course in current location

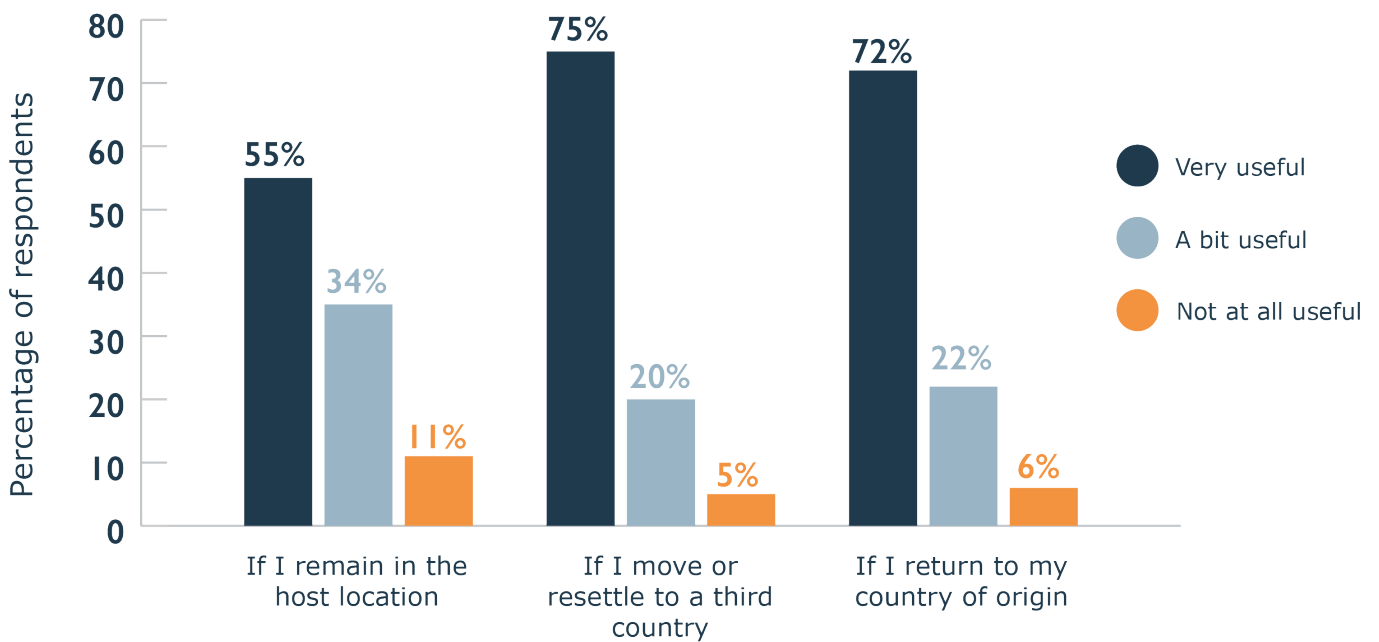
The most frequently cited benefit of programmes for students in their current location, by both students and staff, was enhanced job prospects. Among this group, over one-quarter said that the reason their job prospects would be improved was the certificate or qualification itself, while another quarter said that the reason

was improved grasp of the relevant language. An onsite facilitator for NRC said, 'Here in Jordan, if you need work, you need English. This is the first thing you will be asked for any job' (NRC, Staff, Jordan). Other reasons included increased confidence and being better equipped with skills to start and run a business.

The second most frequently cited benefit of the course if students remain in their current location was an enhanced ability to positively impact their wider community. For just under one-third of staff and students, this was the primary reason why the course would be useful to them if remaining in their current location. Students mentioned being able to share their skills with others, with statements such as, 'Through the skills and knowledge I have, I am able to help other people in my community' (JWL, Student, Malawi). A student in a refugee camp in Central Africa, studying with an anonymous programme, said, 'After doing my degree here, I'd like to be using it helping my little brother and sister who are living here, sharing with them what I got here; they can get the benefits of learning at university through what I've got before them' (Anonymous, Student, Central Africa). Over one-third of students and staff in this category described being better equipped to establish or manage a community initiative, with statements such as, 'The diploma is very useful in the camp. The knowledge gained is helping us to support other people, to set up organisations and manage projects well' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Both students and staff also highlighted the impact of programmes on teaching quality and educational standards. Just over a quarter of positive comments from staff and students about the utility of the programme of study in students' current location related to teaching. Over half of this group noted that students were able or would be able to teach more effectively in schools. A JWL CSLT facilitator commented, 'I have found that the participants improve their teaching methodology — they are more creative,

## Student perceived value of the course



and they form better relationships with the students. They are helped in how to deal with the students' behaviour, to understand children's development' (JWL, Staff, Thailand). Another quarter of students in this group mentioned opportunities to work or to volunteer by teaching other students on their current programme of study.

Improving the quality of education in camps and host communities through the provision of university training opportunities for teachers is an explicit aim of the BHER project (Dippo et al. 2012). Many of BHER's students are already practicing teachers in Dadaab. Although this research did not include interactions with BHER students, staff and partners described changes in teaching methodologies and enhanced teaching quality in local schools. A staff member of WTK, BHER's partner in Dadaab, said:

*There is impact on their place of work, especially in the schools, we see better performance. [...] Our students are doing much better now. We attribute that partly to the training that they have received, that the teachers now are able to teach better; they have better teaching methodologies and styles. We have taken about 11 students from the local communities, student trainees,*

*to teach in our secondary schools. That is a big impact because without that we could not have hired them to teach in the secondary schools. So I think there is a big impact on contribution to the community and individual development (WTK, Staff, Distance).*

A staff member of BHER commented that the impact of the programme is:

*The improvement of education quality for children at primary and secondary level through a better trained workforce ... student teachers talk about different ways of implementing what they learn in their classrooms. In the aftermath of April attack [on Garissa University], quite a few teachers resigned from posts in Dadaab, and our students stepped in to meet some of the need in the schools (BHER, Staff, Distance).*

### Limited utility in current location

Just over a third of students said that completing their programme of study would be 'somewhat useful' in their current location.

One quarter of students expressing reservations about the utility of their course did so because of concerns about the recognition of their

certificate. This was primarily raised in relation to recognition of courses with a significant online component, as discussed in the chapter on technology. JWL students in Jordan, for example, emphasised that ‘the ministry of education will not accept my online study’ (JWL, Student, Jordan).

Others expressed concern about a lack of recognition of their subject or the structure of their studies; one noted, for example, ‘a three-year diploma is not known here — two years of studying liberal studies with a one-year major, this is a completely unclear system for people here’ (JWL, Student, Jordan).

Another quarter of students commented that the qualification is only somewhat useful because the academic level itself is not high enough to be competitive, particularly among students studying short courses, such as CSLTs. They hope, however, that these lower level courses will enable them to progress to a higher level.

Just under a fifth of those who said completing their programme of study would be somewhat useful perceived that the language of instruction was not relevant in their current location. This was primarily raised as an issue in Jordan, where students expressed concern that programmes such as JWL are taught in English, but many jobs and study opportunities in Jordan require Arabic.

### Not useful in current location

Regulations forbidding employment of refugees were the most frequently cited reason why completing a programme would not be useful to students in their current location. Almost two-thirds of students who said the programme would not be useful to them if they stayed in their current location did so because they do not have the right to work.

Refugees in Kakuma, Kenya, for example, do not have the right to work and have limited ability to travel beyond the camp. Some obtain work as ‘incentive staff’ in the camp, for which they receive a limited amount of remuneration, significantly less than the salaries of national staff. One student who had been in Kakuma for six years said, ‘It is not helpful because as a refugee, it is not getting you anywhere — you will not be treated as a national staff’ (JWL,

Student, Kenya). Students generally continued to speak positively of the value of learning and of the skills gained. A common view was therefore that the JWL diploma would enable them to be more useful to their community but would not enhance their own prospects, because of these restrictions:

*I think, if I remain here with my skills, others will benefit from what I have gained, but I will not benefit. Even if I try my best, open a centre, teach others, it will not be so helpful for me and my future (JWL, Student, Kenya).*

Another said, ‘The diploma will be kept in the house. It is useful for us, and we have grown and have more knowledge, but I’m not sure it will help us to better ourselves and get a job with it’ (JWL, Student, Kenya).

The lack of right to work is combined with other intersecting, contextual challenges, as highlighted by a student from Syria studying in Jordan, stating that their certificates are unlikely to lead to employment ‘because of the work permissions, because of high unemployment, because of the huge number of Syrians here’ (SPARK, Student, Jordan). An anonymous researcher working with refugee youth in the Middle East also commented on these multiple challenges, stating:

*So much depends on context ... In Lebanon, Syrians are not allowed to work. So even if you have a great management degree, which some organisations are prioritising, you can’t get hired officially, and if you do, you get paid far worse than the Lebanese, or you’re not on official payrolls or you don’t have access to labour rights (Anonymous, Staff, Middle East).*

Just over one quarter of students who said that completing their programme of study would not be useful in their current location did so because the qualification is not recognised, similarly to those who said it would be ‘somewhat useful’. Again, this depends significantly on the local context. Lack of recognition leads to significant frustration among students and risks creating a ‘time-wasted’ mentality. A student from Syria, now living in Jordan, said:

*All the work that we do here is not recognised by the government of Jordan because it is online. Because of the lack of opportunities and because*

*we don't have another chance and because they say we can continue our higher education abroad, we accepted the course here, but it is hard that it is not recognised here. Most of the online courses are the same. I think that the most helpful thing is that it would be recognised by everyone so that we know we are not wasting our time (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

A small minority of students studying on lower level courses said that the qualification was not useful because the academic level was not high enough and expressed concerns that they could not progress to a higher level because of a lack of documentation. For example, a student in Jordan explained that '[we] might not be able to continue with education with this level of certificate ... It is only six month certificate, and we don't have the high school certificate. For me, the way out is to travel' (SPARK, Student, Jordan).

### **Benefits of course in country of origin**

Among students who said that the course would be useful if they return to their country of origin, over two-thirds talked about the benefits for their wider community, through their contribution to development, by teaching more effectively, or sharing the knowledge they have gained.

Just under a quarter of students who said that completing the programme would be useful spoke specifically about being better equipped to contribute to development or peacebuilding in their country of origin. One student studying in an anonymous programme said the programme is 'very useful for our future because we can serve our community effectively — we need to work more effectively for [name of country]' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia).

JWL students in Kakuma, Kenya, were most positive about the usefulness of the diploma if they return to their home country, as opposed to being resettled or remaining in their current location. This was discussed particularly in terms of improved community and peace-building skills and their ability to bring positive change to their home countries. A refugee from Burundi in Kenya said the JWL diploma would be very useful because:

*My dream is to go back home; that is why I want*

*to stay in this course, to know more in order to contribute to my country. My country needs something like this we are studying, need to have peace, and as I see, in future when I finish, I will have something that I can contribute in my country in order to have peace, to abate the violence and other things (JWL, Student, Kenya).*

Just over one-third of staff also said that the course equipped returning students with an ability to contribute to development. This was the benefit most frequently cited by staff for students returning to their home countries. The facilitator of an anonymous programme in South East Asia said, 'Whenever people visit [name of province] they find our students working in many of the CBOs. We produce many good students here, and they are multiplying the effect, creating leaders' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

Another quarter of students, commenting on the utility of the course, said that it would equip them to be more effective teachers or to establish and manage a school in their home countries. A refugee from South Sudan, studying the Primary Teacher Education (PTE) CSLT in Kakuma, Kenya, said, 'The skill I have now and have got on this course, I know it can help my country a lot, because you find we don't have a school; they are very few there. We don't have good people to run the schools' (JWL, Student, Kenya). This was reiterated by a facilitator on the same course, who commented, 'We are talking about teaching categories, trying to look at the kind of curriculum we are offering, adapting Kenyan curriculum to South Sudan, so it is relevant to them here or if they go home' (JWL, Staff, Kenya). A member of the BHER consortium noted that returnees from Kenya to Somalia 'were hired to teach in Somalia based, at least particularly, probably on the fact they had completed this programme' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

The programme manager of a second anonymous programme in South East Asia spoke about the impact of the course in terms of community development, leadership and education:

*Several graduates are now looking after 50 village schools in [name of state] ... It is the only educational opportunity there ... We have two graduates who were just elected into parliament*



*... One of the main reporting institutions ... is staffed by [our] alumni. So we are trying to create leadership at different levels. We encourage students to work for at least one year serving inside the community. Then after six months or a year, some may pursue education. But 85% to 90% go back to the community first (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).*

One-fifth of students who said that the course would be useful in their home countries anticipated being able to share the knowledge that they have gained with others in their home countries. Just under a fifth said that the course would enhance their job prospects if returning to their country of origin. A student in Jordan said, 'It is very useful because ... I can work in Syria, and I could have the chance to continue studying there. It is accredited and so will be transferrable there' (SPARK, Student, Jordan).

### Limited utility in country of origin

Just under a quarter of students said that completing their current programme of study would be somewhat useful if returning to their country of origin. Students' hesitations related primarily to the recognition of their certificate, including the fact that 'certificates from refugee camps are not recognised in [name of country of origin]' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia).

Some expressed concern that their programme of study is not sufficiently competitive or well recognised to allow them to flourish in the job markets of their countries of origin. A JWL student from Burundi said, 'I think others are learning to an advanced level, and I feel I am stuck in the camp and have no other options and am being left behind' (JWL, student, Kenya). Others highlighted the security risks in their home country, and the consequent challenge of implementing the non-academic lessons they have learned. A refugee from DRC in Kenya said, 'If I defend people's rights according to what I have been learning, I would be in trouble' (JWL, Student, Kenya). Others expressed a lack of clarity about the potential utility of the course, commenting, for example, 'I'm not sure about Iraq, I didn't hear about an online diploma before, so I don't know what they do with this certificate there. And I don't think I will ever return to Iraq' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

### Not useful in country of origin

The concerns voiced by students about the utility of the course in their country of origin are similar to those regarding their current location. Among students who said that completing their programme of study would not be useful in their country of origin, the two most frequently cited reasons were that their certificate or qualification would not be recognised in their country of origin, and that others would be better qualified.

Students in Jordan were least confident about the benefits of the programme if returning to their country of origin. Here, just over one-tenth of students said that having completed the course would not be useful in their home countries, compared to just under one-twentieth in Kenya, and none in Malawi, Myanmar or Thailand. One student in Jordan said, 'In Syria, people are used to competing based on academic merit. If someone has a higher level of learning, they will be at an advantage' (SPARK, Student, Jordan). Others highlighted high levels of unemployment and reiterated concerns about the higher levels of education of others in their country of origin: 'It will not be useful. People who study medicine find themselves with nothing — do you expect us to use diploma there? They will not accept the course' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Another drew attention to the language barrier, commenting that a diploma in English would not be useful in Iraq.

### Benefits of course in third country

Three-quarters of students said that they felt the course would be very useful if they travel or are resettled to a third country. Over half of those who said that the course would be useful if resettled did so because of enhanced prospects for further education, including the transferability of credits, international recognition of the certificate and better preparedness for academic study.

Interviews with staff confirmed this perspective, with over half of staff also commenting that the qualification could help students access further study. A BHER staff member noted the portability of the programme, commenting, 'If they resettle, they'll be much better off than without that university programme. They can

apply credits to graduate or undergraduate degrees' (BHER, Staff, Distance). A facilitator in South East Asia said, 'Once they've finished with us, they have an orientation to learn that is portable anywhere' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

One-quarter of students who rated their programme as 'very useful' if resettled mentioned improved grasp of the language as an important benefit, leading to opportunities for work and study and improving integration. Just over one-sixth of students said they thought the qualification would enhance their job prospects if resettled.

There is an outstanding question over whether higher education programmes have an impact on students' chances of being resettled. As discussed in the chapter on accessibility, the likelihood of resettlement and implications on students' studies vary by course and by location. A programme manager in Kenya noted: 'The students believe that it will help them be resettled in the States. It doesn't help them to get resettled, but if they are resettled, then it helps give them a step up' (JWL, Staff, Kenya). On the other hand, a JWL programme manager in Jordan commented that the course provides 'Western cultural literacy... [that] enables them to do really well in their UNHCR resettlement interviews' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan). Almost one-third of the 2014 JWL cohort in Jordan have already been resettled, though the extent to which their enrolment on the JWL diploma contributed to this is unclear. One JWL student who has been accepted for a WUSC scholarship said:

*It's because of this course that I got my scholarship. I have the academic writing course, the philosophy course, the interpersonal skills course — all of these things will help me so much ... Even if I can't transfer any credits, that's fine with me if I have the skills in my mind (JWL, Student, Jordan).*

A related question is whether students enrolled on blended learning courses are able to continue with their programme of online study if resettled. To some extent, this depends upon the level of in-person facilitation required and whether this will be available in the new location. CMIC, which is in the process of designing a new programme, described this as

an area of learning and intends to make their programme portable if students resettle, noting, 'We were warned very early from a former student in the UN that this programme should be mobile. A student shouldn't have to choose between an opportunity that offers itself up, for example resettlement, and our programme' (CMIC, Staff, Distance). For students studying with Kiron, it is relatively easy to change location within the first two years, but becomes less mobile once students enrol with partner universities. A multi-country network of study hubs and partner universities can be a strength here, with a Kiron staff member commenting, 'The more countries and universities we have, the more flexibility and possibilities we can offer to our students' (Kiron, Staff, Distance).

It is also important to note that the likelihood of resettlement, the probable destinations and the options for future study vary between locations. This is likely to affect the appropriate balance in programme design between portability if resettled, and utility and recognition in students' current location.

### Limited utility in third country

The most frequently cited reason why students felt that the value of their programme of study in a third country was limited was that the level of accreditation was not high enough. A related reason, and the second most frequently cited, was that others would be better qualified. A JWL student in Kenya epitomised this, commenting, 'They say it is international, so if I go there I may work there ... but I am not sure, because there, people have learnt a lot. Maybe they have a lot of knowledge' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Students also exhibited a lack of information about the transferability of their programmes of study. A student in Lebanon said, 'Lebanese diplomas are not accepted worldwide necessarily ... We really don't know, but this is what we hope' (Jusoor, Student, Lebanon). Another noted a lack of clarity about whether they could continue on the JWL diploma, asking, 'What happens when I go to another country — why can I not continue my course then? I do not intend to be here for three years — but I want to be able to carry on my studies' (JWL, Student, Jordan). It is notable that JWL students in Jordan — where the rates of resettlement are

higher than in many other contexts — discussed with more frequency than students in other locations whether or not they would be able to continue on the diploma if resettled.

### Not useful in third country

A small minority of students said that they did not feel that having completed their course of study would be useful if resettled. Similar to those who said the course would be somewhat useful, the most frequently cited reason was that the level of accreditation was insufficient and would not be competitive. One student commented that the number of credits gained was low compared to other courses, noting that the diploma course would not easily lead into a bachelor degree. This illustrates the challenges of operating within differing credit systems, where a 'credit' from one course or country may not represent the same amount of work at the same standard as a credit from another but may be judged superficially as if it does. Others highlighted that the utility of the course would depend on the context of the third country, stating, 'I think there would still be discrimination, so it depends on the country and how much they respect human rights' (TIH, Student, Malawi).

## 7.3. Non-academic outcomes

Students were asked about the non-academic outcomes they have experienced since beginning their programme of study and staff were asked to reflect on the changes they have witnessed in students' lives. Comments relating to non-academic development and personal transformation, including changes in worldview and attitudes, are analysed below. This section also elaborates on the non-academic benefits arising from blended learning, as introduced in the technology chapter.

### Social awareness

The area of personal transformation most frequently mentioned by students in interviews and focus groups was increased social awareness. One-third of students who discussed elements of personal transformation talked about improvements in social awareness, including students on JWL, NRC, and two anonymous programmes. This was also the

area of most significant change most frequently identified by students in learning outcome stars. In addition, just under one-fifth of staff identified this as a significant change observed in their students.

Themes within this category included a change in perspective towards other cultures and religions, reduced prejudice and stereotypes and becoming more open minded. A student in Dzaleka said, 'The course has really changed me the most in my prejudice against other cultures ... I have learned that we are all one and all the same because I have got to know people from other cultures with different views' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Another noted, 'I didn't know if I could learn with people from different cultures and backgrounds because we consider some other people our enemies. But this course has taught me to take people as individuals and not generalise' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

Members of host communities enrolled on courses alongside refugees expressed increased awareness of the situation of refugees in their country, noting, for example, 'Sudanese refugees have a very hard time ... We learn — me, and my children — that they are kind people' (JWL, Student, Jordan). A similar point was expressed from the other side by a Sudanese refugee, who reflected, 'Jordanians don't really understand how many people are here in Amman from Sudan. I've been able to tell them about this' (JWL, Student, Jordan).

An additional theme running through student comments in this area was increased community engagement. This was epitomised by one student from Malawi, who stated, 'There is a big change in my social awareness. I think now about the needs of others, and we are much more motivated to help others, not just ourselves. When are finished the course, we will have to work in the community' (JWL, Student, Malawi).

One reason for changes in social awareness, as articulated by JWL students, is the way in which courses have brought them together with members of other cultures through online discussion boards. A student in Malawi noted, 'You can see that there are others in the same situation as you are, and you are not alone' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Similarly a student in Myanmar commented:

*This course has broadened my mind to see the world and get knowledge about the world and people. I feel like we are one family because of our discussion portal; we know their cultures and country, and we feel for them (JWL, Student, Myanmar).*

Students and staff members also attributed changes in social awareness and reductions in prejudice to students studying together in physical learning centres. The reasons for this are examined in detail in the pedagogy chapter. One student in Jordan, for example, noted, 'I am more open to speaking with other people from other places ... It is education that gives us the space to interact with one another. Before I did not have any Syrian or Sudanese friends — so I found out that I can live with many nationalities now' (JWL, Student, Jordan). In the case of one anonymous programme in South East Asia, living together in shared accommodation was described as being 'a good chance to share and learn' (Anonymous, Student, South East Asia).

Other JWL students alluded to elements of the course that specifically facilitate intercultural awareness and communication: for example, 'The materials are good that teach us new skills such as interacting with different cultures' (JWL, Student, Jordan). Another said: 'The materials help us to understand each other, and for the differences between us to be less, especially in relation to religion' (JWL, Student, Jordan). An academic tutor for JWL in Jordan reiterated this, stating: 'When they come into this centre they have so many stereotypes about each other, but the course is structured to break this down' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan).

Staff on an anonymous programme in South East Asia and on BHER's programme explicitly mentioned transformations relating to gender. A staff member of WTK, BHER's partner in Dadaab, said:

*When women and men come together, study in one class, have interaction with international professors, it changes their perspective. I've seen women being more vocal, more able to resolve issues, perhaps they would never have done that. So the academic journey they are going through has helped them to accept in their mind that you need to ask questions, you need not to take things for granted, and to be tolerant and to accept other people (WTK, Staff, Kenya).*

A staff member from an anonymous programme in South East Asia alluded to the tensions that students might face as a result of their changing perspectives, noting: 'They have changed in this six months, and they have gained new perspectives, skills and capacity. When they go back, they deal with traditional stereotyping of women, youth — they don't get much space ... We talk to students and encourage them and make them feel ready' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

## Communication

Around one-quarter of students identified improved communication skills as the most significant element of personal transformation resulting from their programme of study. For many students within this category, this element of personal transformation stems from enhanced language skills, such as English, leading to improvements in communication, confidence and relationships with others. An NRC student said: 'For me it is not about the certificate, it is about learning English — because learning English is important for everything else in life' (NRC, Student, Jordan). An NRC staff member also highlighted this, noting, 'I have been with them for nearly two years now ... Hearing them talk in English with such confidence is such a major change. Also there has been a change in their culture and beliefs — now they are ok with having mixed classes' (NRC, Staff, Jordan).

Students cited improvements in reading, writing and speaking, noting, for example, 'I've really improved my communication, especially in English. My reading has significantly improved' (SPARK, Student, Jordan). Students also often identified improved confidence as a result of enhanced communication and language skills, recalling:

*My reading ability has been the biggest change for me. I could only read one page per day when I started and now I can read much more and learn what I am reading. This helped my self-esteem and has helped me post my assignments on time, which has helped my confidence as well (JWL, Student, Malawi).*

Similarly, a student on a women's preparatory class within an anonymous programme in Central Africa commented, 'For me, I didn't know English well, but from this programme I

will learn new things, new words, and will be able to stand before people and give a speech' (Anonymous, Student, Central Africa).

## Confidence

The third most frequently cited area of personal transformation by students was enhanced confidence and self-worth. A Jusoor student said, simply, 'I never hoped to complete university, so now I feel self-confident' (Jusoor, Student, Lebanon). A JWL student in Jordan said of her course, 'It makes you feel like a human, you are something' (JWL, Student, Jordan), while a student in Malawi said:

*The course has helped me get back some of the confidence I lost through being displaced. I saw myself as inferior, but today I have courage and confidence to move on and to see that I can help someone else in my situation (JWL, Student, Malawi).*

Almost half of staff observations of changes in students' lives related to increased confidence. It is notable that improvements in confidence and self-worth were consistently highlighted as the most significant change by staff across all programmes. A Kiron staff member said, 'We can enable our students to change their self-perception from being a refugee towards being a student ... The first students I met were very much looking up to all of us, they were very shy ... and then seeing them studying for a while, they changed their behaviour; we are talking with them on eye level now' (Kiron, Staff, Distance).

For staff on some programmes, this was highlighted as being more significant than any other course outcome; for example, NRC's programme manager said:

*Having one of our certificates makes young people feel like they are somebody in their community — this is the most important thing that we give them. Whether or not they use it — the actual skill can be irrelevant — but it's making them feel that they are normal and doing something normal, that they are gaining a skill and an identity (NRC, Staff, Jordan).*

## Critical thinking

Critical thinking and decision-making abilities were the fourth most frequently cited area of

change, mentioned by students from JWL and an anonymous programme in South East Asia. Interestingly, a number of students positively compared JWL programmes to previous experiences of education in terms of critical thinking, noting, for example, 'Compared to the education system we have here, this really makes us think a lot ... I realised after a year that it opened our thinking' (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

## 7.4. Stakeholder reflections

### Most significant programme strengths

Programme staff were asked to identify the most significant strength of their respective programmes. Although there is significant variation across programmes, two major themes emerged: firstly, the personal transformations that students undergo, and secondly, the wider community impacts resulting from the programmes.

Around one-quarter of staff across all programmes identified elements of personal, non-academic transformation as being the most significant strength of the programme. Key themes included hope, self-awareness and social awareness. A JWL programme manager in Jordan identified the most significant strength as being 'the transformation that students go through — that students become culturally conversant in different spheres' (JWL, Partner Staff, Jordan). Similarly, the JWL programme coordinator in Afghanistan identified the greatest strength as being 'that the students interact with other students across the sites, across the world, which also enriches them, and the learning process. Because they come in contact with students from different cultures, they get to understand the people who live elsewhere' (JWL, Staff, Distance).

Another quarter of staff identified wider community impacts as the most significant strength. In particular, staff commented on students' enhanced motivation and skills to improve their community and on improved teaching ability. A JWL facilitator noted this specifically in relation to CSLTs, commenting, 'I think CSLT is different from the diploma because it is a practical education. We are teaching people to participate directly in their community'

## Outcome stars

Learning outcome stars were utilised to measure the non-academic impact of programmes. This is a form of self-assessment, enabling students to measure the changes that they have experienced as a result of their programme of study. Two types of learning outcome stars were developed, with each star based on a different set of learning outcomes. Students were asked to give themselves a score out of ten for each area of potential growth listed on the learning outcome star before starting their programme of study and then currently. Students were then able to identify the area of most significant change in each star. The learning outcome stars and definitions of each learning outcome listed can be viewed in Annex I.

The area of most significant change identified most commonly in the first learning outcome star was critical decision making. This was identified as the most significant change by 21% of respondents, with themes including 'tips and tools' for decision-making, weighing positives and negatives and analysing information. An indicative quote, from a diploma student in Kenya is, 'Before I joined the course I had to consult others to make decisions. I used to fear taking risks, and I used to focus on the negative sides of potential outcomes, but after the course I have learnt how to analyse the positive and negative elements, and it has taught me how to better analyse and address risk' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

Collaboration was identified by 19% of respondents as their most significant change. Themes included building trust and breaking down stereotypes, including gender stereotypes, to work together, and overcoming personal insecurity, which led to the ability to work with others. A diploma student in Malawi said, 'I could not express myself with other people, but now I am open to discuss with other people' (JWL, Student, Malawi). A 23-year-old man in Kakuma, Kenya, said, 'When I look back before I joined the diploma course ... women were always looked at as subordinates, not people who could also make a good decision. But now learning this course, after getting this diploma, I have come to realise these were only myths' (JWL, Student, Kenya).

The third and fourth most cited areas of most significant change were creativity (14%) and persistence (14%).

In the second learning outcome star, the most frequently cited area of MSC was social awareness, identified by 28% of participants. Themes included becoming aware of others and their needs, the importance of community and respect for other religions. A diploma student in Myanmar said, 'Now I pay respect to other ethnicities and religions because I have awareness' (JWL, Student, Myanmar).

Twenty-four percent of participants identified leadership as their area of most significant change, with respondents referencing increased confidence and bravery, and learning about other leaders as role models. One woman said:

*When I joined the diploma I did not know how to manage myself on my own, how to give ideas to my people when they ask me for experience. But through this diploma, through reading many texts, assisting, resources about leadership, about our professors, how presidents are, I have learnt that I am able to make my own decisions, to give a decision, or assist anybody who comes for assistance (JWL, Student, Kenya).*

Seventeen percent of participants identified 'positive view of self and others' as their area of most significant change, with themes including rejecting a fatalistic attitude and feeling valued by others.

(JWL, Staff, Malawi). Programme staff from an anonymous programme in South East Asia emphasised that the programme 'is run by the community but with great support from experts' (Anonymous, Staff, South East Asia).

Just under one-fifth of staff members, including representatives of BHER, JWL, TIH, UNRWA and WUSC, identified the simple provision of higher education to those who would not otherwise have access as the most significant strength.

A broad range of other significant strengths were identified by distance interview participants. A Kiron staff member emphasised the importance of the accreditation level, noting the most significant strength as being that 'it is a successful, blended learning model, but it is actually ending with a bachelor degree' (Kiron, Staff, Distance). An NRC staff member identified the most significant strength as 'the commitment of the students — which is linked to the accreditation and the use of the new teaching methods with computers' (NRC, Staff, Jordan). A representative of SISS said that the most significant strength was that the scholarship they provide covers all costs, including travel, as well as the additional support provided, including a network of alumni.

A staff member from WTK, BHER's partner in Dadaab, identified the most significant strength as being that 'the partnership [between consortium members] has remained, we have met every month ... I think that has kept everyone aware, and engaged, in discussing the challenges together and looking for solutions together' (WTK, Staff, Distance). This was also highlighted by other members of the consortium, commenting, for example:

*'That is an important part of any international engagement — developing personal and professional relationships that are going to be necessary to pull this off. The ease of communication between University of British Columbia and Moi University has been instrumental in solving problems that come up and finding out how flexible the university systems are' (BHER, Staff, Distance).*

A BHER staff member emphasised its principles of gender equity and engagement with the host community. Other BHER staff identified the way in which students are integrated into existing

university courses as a particular strength. One stated, 'The students get university programmes like any other student. They are not getting a lower level programme. It is the same kind of programming, same instructors, but you need the added layer of support to work in Dadaab, you can't just go in as a university and do a programme; you need the structures like BHER to help with delivery' (BHER, Staff, Distance). Another member of the BHER consortium emphasised the benefits for students at York University, commenting, 'Our students learn a lot from the [refugee] students describing their lives ... The quality of our teaching and learning at York is enhanced when we have refugee students in our classes' (BHER, Staff, Distance).

### Most significant programme weaknesses

The most prevalent themes mentioned in responses to the question of programme weaknesses were challenges in ensuring inclusivity and expanding coverage to more students. This was mentioned by both scholarship providers and providers of blended learning programmes. Challenges relating to inclusivity were identified most frequently by staff members as the most significant weakness. This includes only being able to meet a fraction of the demand for higher education in their location and difficulties reaching the most marginalised students. A WUSC facilitator in Malawi noted, 'To meet the requirements, [the students that we select] will have to have already had certain opportunities like a high school education, which are determined by their social status' (WUSC, Staff, Malawi).

Challenges relating to the quality and relevance of facilitation were identified as the most significant weakness by just over one-fifth of staff. This includes challenges in recruiting qualified local facilitators, and in designing and delivering contextually appropriate courses. This was highlighted by both onsite and distance staff. One JWL staff member in Kenya noted, 'The quality of the facilitation needs to be looked at, as it's not currently monitored and not sufficiently relevant' (JWL, Staff, Kenya).

Another fifth of staff highlighted issues with facilities as being the most significant weakness, including internet access, and the size, number and location of classrooms available.

## Recommended changes to programmes

Programme staff raised a broad range of recommended changes to programmes, with common themes including increasing the number of students on the programme, improving facilities, enhancing monitoring and evaluation, and improving the quality of facilitation.

The most common recommendations from staff were those that would facilitate the inclusion of more students, voiced by programme staff from SPARK, Kiron, JWL, WUSC, TIH and an anonymous programme. For the majority of respondents, this is dependent upon access to funding. Interviewees across all locations highlighted the scale of demand for higher education.

The second most common theme in terms of staff recommendations was for improved facilities, particularly improved internet access and additional classroom space.

Monitoring and evaluation was the third most frequently cited area in need of improvement, particularly concerning the collection of feedback from students. Some highlighted the challenges in measuring programme impact: a member of JWL management in the USA said, 'Success

for me would be them shifting their worldview, knowing they have a voice and can use the education for their community. But how do you measure the change in the community through the programme?' (JWL, Staff, USA).

Improvements in the training and expertise of local staff and the contextual knowledge of distance staff were the fourth and fifth most common recommendations, respectively. The majority of recommendations about local staff related to the need for more subject matter expertise. Distance-based staff expressed a need for more contextual knowledge about the students, including their prior levels of education and current situation. One USA faculty member for JWL said, 'More information on these two types of background would help us deliver the course in the most effective way' (JWL, Staff, USA).

Among students, the most frequent recommendations related to facilities. This was particularly pronounced amongst JWL students in Kenya, who emphasised the need for additional classrooms and computers, given the number of students studying. The provision of a higher level qualification was also a common theme, particularly among JWL diploma students, who requested the development of a bachelor's degree.



## Key learning regarding impact and future

- Both staff and students described wider community benefits arising from higher education, including improved understanding and relationships between members of different communities and cultures, improved primary and secondary education through the availability of better qualified teachers, and new skills and motivation to contribute to community development.
  - The most significant non-academic learning outcome for students is social awareness, with notable transformations in terms of reduced prejudice and increased inter-cultural engagement. These non-academic outcomes are highly valued by students and staff and emerged strongly in the course of the research, yet are difficult for programmes to measure and demonstrate.
  - Students are looking for programmes of study that are relevant in both their current and potential future locations. Employment prospects are a significant consideration, with the level of accreditation and local and international recognition of the qualification both seen as important in enhancing employability. Students are also interested in programmes that equip them to support their communities. Inevitably, this varies between individuals, communities and locations: there are therefore benefits to the existence of a multiplicity of programme offerings. This also points to the importance of conducting thorough research to inform programme design and ensure that courses are well suited to students' current situations and imagined futures, in addition to ongoing monitoring to assess the extent to which programmes are meeting students' needs.
  - It is important that students have access to reliable information about the recognition and transferability of different programmes of study, in their current location and in potential future destinations, to enable them to make an informed decision. There is a dearth of neutral sources of information and advice to support students in making these decisions.
  - Contextual factors play a significant role in informing the extent to which completing a course is beneficial to students, for example, in terms of national policies regulating refugees' right to work and the recognition of online learning, as well as cultural and economic factors influencing the recognition and practical benefits of a qualification.
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# 8. Conclusions

## 8.1. Recommendations from the programmes

The following recommendations are grouped according to the five analytical chapters of the report, summarising the key learning from each. They are intended to provide good practice guidance for higher education programmes, regardless of the specific modality. However, there is inevitably a specific focus and relevance for those programmes that adopt a blended learning approach to higher education programming in refugee contexts. The recommendations are intended to be of benefit for the range of different groups of stakeholders involved in the provision of higher education for refugees in low-resource environments. While presented as prescriptive guidance, they should be read with an awareness that all applicable recommendations vary according to the specific operating context of each programme.

### Accessibility and participation

- Higher education programme providers should utilise a range of marketing methods to promote programmes, building on the common 'word-of-mouth' strategy to ensure that prospective students from diverse backgrounds can access relevant information about course options, application processes and enrolment. Programme providers should work to avoid a dominant focus on internet-based marketing strategies to ensure that prospective refugee students with limited or no access to internet can still access the required information.
  - In view of the limited access refugee students have to public or government-run HEIs and higher education initiatives, there is a need for actors within the sector (programme leads, donors, academics, UN agencies) to collaboratively advocate for the promotion of refugee inclusion in national educational systems.
  - Higher education programme providers should invest in preparatory courses to support student application and ongoing retention on the associated programmes, especially for students with limited or no historic access to higher education or limited English language skills. Supplementary pastoral and practical support through the application and enrolment process also boosts inclusivity.
  - Programmes should assess the inclusivity barriers they face to securing applications from specific target groups or minorities and consider what creative approaches can be taken to address them. Deliberate targeting of women, students with disabilities, and religious or ethnic minorities is recommended.
  - Multiple and overlapping barriers are faced by refugee students following enrolment on higher education programmes, and
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these present challenges to their ongoing participation in the programmes. Programme providers should consider what practical, pastoral and academic support is required and monitor closely the course structure and intensity to ensure it is manageable for students. Groups of students at higher risk of withdrawing from the course should be identified and offered targeted support. This is likely to include working students, students with a key support role within their families and students with lower levels of education prior to engagement in the programme.

## Academic and organisational structure

- Programmes rely on the skill, willingness and character of individual teachers, both distance and local. Regular monitoring of teaching and facilitation quality is essential, for both distance-based and onsite staff. Opportunities should be fostered for students to feed into this monitoring process to build two-way accountability in programme quality.
  - It is often assumed that teaching from distance-based staff will inevitably be of a high quality. Few distance-based staff appear to receive detailed, bespoke training to address issues related to online and blended learning and to refugee contexts. Context-specific training, both in regard to the country and the refugee group, should be conducted for distance-based teaching staff to ensure better understanding of the experiences of the specific students.
  - Programme managers should ensure thorough briefing for educational instructors to address current discrepancies in grading and the provision of comprehensive feedback to students. Without this, it can be difficult for students to know how well they are really doing and challenging to keep making progress.
  - Complex programme structures, with multiple layers of management (both distance-based and onsite), create challenges in communication between staff working in different locations on the same programme. The majority of programmes would benefit from senior staff reviewing existing management structures to ensure they are as flat as possible.
  - Programme decision-makers should implement and review systems to promote communication and coordination between programme management staff at different locations of a programme and foster a greater culture of community learning, leading to more appropriate courses and better outcomes for students.
  - At the design stage of programmes, when curricula and course subject choice are being considered, programme managers should
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seek to consult existing education and refugee specialists, as well as prospective students, to ensure that unhelpful or incorrect assumptions are avoided and that course options are as suitable as possible for students.

- There is a need for further work to explore the transferability of course credits between programmes and countries, especially in view of increasingly mobile target groups.
- Donors should recognise the vital place of monitoring, evaluation and learning within programmes and should enable programmes to allocate staff time and financial resources accordingly. There is urgent need to build the evidence base regarding the long term impact of refugee higher education on both individuals and communities. Ongoing investment in this area promotes learning and good practice and provides a foundation for effective decision-making regarding programme design and broader policy.

## Technology

- The research has demonstrated the extent of programme reliance on robust connectivity and the significant negative impact on student learning when it is not in place. In light of this, programmes should invest in the most reliable infrastructure available in the context and should be structured to accommodate the costs of this, both at set-up and for ongoing maintenance and fees.
  - Programmes should prioritise substantial initial and ongoing training in technology so that the students can engage effectively with a blended learning programme. This is particularly important in ensuring that the most marginalised students are not further excluded because of their lack of previous access to technology. Within this, significant attention should be paid to ensuring that students and staff are confident and competent in their usage of the relevant LMS.
  - The costs of programme hardware should be accounted for from the outset. This should include the cost of both maintenance and replacement, and total cost of ownership models should be integrated to programme budgets.
  - The standard schedules and submission requirements of mainstream higher education programmes should take into account the inevitable technology failings that occasionally occur in fragile contexts and especially camp-based settings.
  - Technology should always be implemented according to context, and it should not be assumed that something will work in one refugee environment because it has previously worked well in another. The appropriate technical approach to a programme will vary in light of connectivity, electricity, hardware and location.
  - The appropriateness and use-value of technology-enhanced learning is influenced by the national legislative environment within which the programme is operating. There is opportunity for higher education providers to advocate to national governments regarding the credibility of online learning in order to
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enhance the value for students.

- Appropriate technology-based tracking and data collection systems can make a significant contribution to enhancing programme monitoring and building the evidence base for the sector. Investing in digital monitoring systems could have a major positive impact for programmes across the sector. For donors this could enhance understanding of the impact and effectiveness of programmes and influence the direction and usefulness of future funding. For accrediting bodies, this could enhance understanding of the success rates and suitability of different course options across protracted and complex refugee programmes and contexts. All stakeholders should therefore invest the required time and resources to develop, maintain and utilise such systems.

## Pedagogy

- Distance and local staff benefit from time to reflect with colleagues regarding their teaching practice and the implications of the particular pedagogical approaches that are being employed. Initial training in the relevant pedagogy should be prioritised, along with regular opportunities to meet together as peers to discuss and review approaches and how they can be integrated into daily teaching practice.
  - Programme staff should engage in dialogue with students regarding their preferred learning styles and consider incorporating their feedback into an annual review of pedagogical approaches to learning. This research has identified a student preference for participatory, learner-centred methods that develop critical thinking skills.
  - The curricula and learning materials of courses accredited by international HEIs should be adapted for context. This should be done through collaboration with local academics and students, careful study of the target learning environment at the materials-development stage, and through activities delivered by on-site facilitators at the point of delivery.
  - Programmes should ensure provision of contextualised additional support for refugee students, including mentoring at both a peer and non-peer level, and psychosocial and (where appropriate) career development support.
  - Programmes that incorporate onsite learning should seek to foster and promote a sense of community and safety among refugee students, as the research has shown that this has a significant impact on student wellbeing and ability to learn and develop.
  - Distance staff would benefit from more detailed training and exposure to the challenges commonly faced by refugee learners across a variety of differing circumstances. This would have significant positive impact on their ability to more fully understand and respond appropriately to the challenges and difficulties faced by refugee students.
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## Future and impact

- Programmes should consider the way in which future employment prospects constitute a significant motivating factor for study. This has an effect on decisions about the level of accreditation and local and international recognition of the qualification provided through participation in the programme.
  - Refugee students should have access to reliable information at the start of their application process about the recognition and transferability of different programmes of study to enable them to make an informed decision about which higher education programme is most suited to their needs and trajectories. This is especially important in contexts where student populations are particularly transient and likely to move to another location.
  - Programme managers should recognise the contextual factors informing the extent to which course completion is beneficial to students. This particularly relates to national policies regulating refugees' right to work and the recognition of online learning. Appropriate transparency and accountability measures should be put in place to ensure that refugee students are adequately briefed on their likely learning and employability outcomes in host and future locations.
  - Programme managers should review and consider the non-academic benefits arising from higher education as voiced by both staff and students. These benefits include improved understanding and relationships between members of different communities and cultures, improved primary and secondary education through the availability of better qualified teachers, and new skills and motivation to contribute to community development. Efforts should be made to consider how these wider community impacts can be factored into the pedagogical approaches employed by programme.
  - Students and staff place high value on the way in which programmes can enhance social awareness and intercultural engagement and reduce prejudice. These benefits should be proactively sought through appropriate programme design.
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## 8.2. Lessons for the sector

The following recommendations are drawn from the full research report and address key learning and good practice for the sector as a whole, rather than specific programming recommendations. There is some purposeful overlap with the previous section, as some relevant points of key learning are used below to provide context for an associated recommendation. The intention is that the lessons provide a useful contribution for the sector and help to make progress in this dynamic and challenging area of programming. It should be noted that recommendations are not, therefore, grouped by stakeholder, though these have been identified where relevant.

### Programmes require a clear identity and rationale

- There are a number of different higher education programming models, with a spectrum of options to consider for each programming component. There is a role within the sector for multiple models and it is not possible for each programme to cover all forms of provision. Having a diverse range of programme approaches can be a strength, as students have multiple aims and objectives in pursuing higher education.
  - It is essential that a programme is clear from the outset what it is planning to achieve, how it intends to operate, and how it fits within and is informed by the wider sector.
  - Positive impact requires engaging with complicated and sometimes controversial decisions regarding each potential component of the programme. For each key component, there is a spectrum of programming options to consider. Any new programme should understand and be explicit regarding its anticipated location within the relevant spectrum. The box below illustrates six spectrums that programmes should consider to promote clear identities.
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## Six spectrums to consider in relation to programme identity and rationale

**Internationally accredited or nationally certified programmes:** What kind of course accreditation do you seek for the programme? What will be the impact upon the usefulness of the course for refugees if they remain in the host location? If they are resettled or move to a third country? If they return to their country of origin? What implications will it have on cost per beneficiary?

**Deep impact for a few (scholarships) or broad impact for many (MOOCs etc.):** Scholarship programmes are expensive to implement and therefore smaller in scale than solely online initiatives but are likely to yield a more holistic and deeper impact for those students that do participate. What level of impact does the programme anticipate yielding and for how many beneficiaries? How does this compare with the cost per beneficiary and the anticipated value for money?

**Locate the programme within location with existing high numbers of higher education-ready students (e.g. Syria crisis) or locate within location with relatively small numbers of higher education-ready students (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa):** When scoping out potential locations for programmes, it is necessary to consider the extent to which they will engage with higher education-ready target populations, or populations where the number of higher education-ready prospective students is relatively low. Similarly, should the programme target only higher education-ready prospective students or build in support systems (language, ICT skills, flexible schedules) to enable the programme to be more inclusive of other prospective students?

**Build courses to be bespoke for refugees or integrate courses into a national system:** Will the programme create a standalone selection of course options designed for and implemented specifically with refugees, or will it enable refugees to access the national higher education system within the relevant country? What are the potential integration and social implications of the approach selected?

**Build culturally contextualised programmes or build universal programmes:** Will courses be designed specific to the context in which they are being implemented, or will they incorporate a universal curricula or learning approach? How will greater contextualisation affect the recognition of course content and accreditation in different settings such as host country, third country, returning to country of origin?

**Focus on higher education for current context (host country) or higher education for future context (country of origin or resettlement country):** How much will the programme consider the future context that target students are likely to be engaging in? To what extent will programme design be based on the skills students may require if they return to their country of origin and participate in the long-term reconstruction of those countries, or if they remain in their host country, or if they are resettled and seeking productive engagement and employment or further study in a third country?



## The sector is inherently challenging

- Programmes are inherently challenging and face multiple barriers in each context. In each programme and location, significant investment of time, energy and financial resources is required to establish and maintain an effective programme in this environment. Some illustrations of the refugee-specific challenges are the implications of national policy on course accreditation or employment for refugees and asylum-seekers, restrictions on student movement in host country, the needs and requirements of transient and mobile target groups, technology challenges, and the differences between camp and urban settings. Each of these is nuanced and requires expert skills to navigate effectively.
- The challenges listed above that are inherent to the sector make it expensive to establish and maintain programmes successfully and inclusively. It is necessary for donors to be flexible and aware of the consequences of these challenges in regard to setting realistic timelines, budgets and outcomes.

## Each context is different

- The nature of effective higher education for refugees works differently in each host country, and for different groups of refugees within a host country. Within a host country, there will be differing opportunities and constraints faced by refugees because of their various countries of origin, and this may include varying provision of asylum, detention, restrictions on movement and permission to study. This inevitably has an impact on which prospective student groups can be targeted within a programme and links back to the issue of whether a programme aims to target the most higher education-ready group of prospective students or the most marginalised, or both.
  - Programmes should be designed with an awareness of the substantial differences between camp- and urban-based refugee contexts, especially concerning refugee ability to move freely around the host country, their potential to secure employment and the associated challenges of balancing work and study.
  - National policies relating to asylum-seekers and refugees differ between countries, and this has a major impact on the ability of prospective refugee students to participate in higher education programmes. Issues include varying restrictions on movement outside of refugee camps, varying employment eligibility, and varying permissions to study at national higher education institutions. Policy differences also have an impact on the staffing of higher education programmes. In camp-based settings, programmes are often staffed by refugees themselves, but there is frequently ambiguity and uncertainty regarding whether they can legally work and be paid.
  - National policies affecting refugees within host countries can be fluid or fixed, usually depending on the length of time the country has been a significant host country for displaced population groups. To illustrate, at present the policies in Jordan appear to be relatively fluid whereas in Kenya, host to a more protracted crisis, the policies are more fixed. This variance has major implications
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on the planning and implementation of higher education programmes.

- It is important that at the planning stage for higher education programmes, consideration is given to how the provision for refugees will impact the local host community and whether it will exacerbate tensions within the local community. Individual host country policies can influence this, with some countries requiring a minimum student intake from the local host community into refugee programmes.
- Refugee students participate in higher education programmes with the potential for being resettled during the programme. This should be actively considered, with a clear policy communicated to prospective students at the start of their involvement in the programme regarding what happens in this eventuality, particularly clarifying whether students should be allowed to participate in re-settlement programmes while participating in host country higher education programmes.

## Refugees value higher education for multiple reasons

- There are multi-faceted reasons why refugee students pursue higher education, including its role in promoting their long-term employability, the way it increases their potential to engage as leaders and change-makers in their communities, equipping them with specific skills and knowledge, and growing their confidence and personal development.
  - Within the multiple rationales identified above, it is important to understand the significance of the employability agenda within the provision of higher education for refugees. The significance of this should not be underestimated. However, it is also equally important to note that employability is not always the sole or primary motivating factor for a student wishing to participate in higher education.
  - Different pedagogical approaches to education can influence initial and ongoing motivating factors for higher education. There is particular value in promoting pedagogical models that emphasise holistic personal and community development.
  - Programme staff should recognise the different and overlapping motivating factors for higher education and should consider means through which they can be accountable to students for the programmes offered. Many programmes in the sector would benefit from offering increased clarity to students regarding what they will be able to achieve and access as a result of participating in the programme.
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## Many programmes are dependent on effective technology

- The majority of programmes offering higher education for refugees have a high degree of dependence on appropriate technology and reliable connectivity, especially in blended learning and online learning platforms. The transformative potential of programmes is often not fully realised because of inadequate internet connectivity.
- ICT resources and internet connectivity are often only available for students at learning centres. However this varies among host countries and between camp-based and urban settings.
- Many programmes do not have sufficient volume of hardware to meet student demand. The use of computers needs to be carefully scheduled within the learning centres. At a programmatic level, total cost of ownership budgets should be employed to ensure adequate resources to maintain and replace hardware when necessary.

## Cost per beneficiary models are important but limited

- Cost per beneficiary models and estimates play an important but limited role in assessing programme effectiveness. The cost of one student successfully participating in a higher education programme will be influenced by numerous factors including extent of marginalisation, previous access to education, and quality of programme inputs. There is a need for more long-term evidence building regarding a robust cost-comparison between different models and providers.
  - The limitation of cost per beneficiary models has significant implications for how output and outcome indicators are determined, with a consequence for how evaluation is approached as a whole.
  - There are many aspects of a higher education programme in which the outcomes are difficult to quantify and are likely to extend significantly beyond the lifespan of the programme. The fragility of many refugee environments results in significant insecurity and unpredictability in programme sites. This means that there are challenges in budget setting.
  - An over-emphasis on cost per beneficiary models leads programmes away from focusing on the most marginalised amongst refugee prospective students. Restrictive or complex application processes, as well as partial scholarships (which exclude transport, living or accommodation costs), mean that the most vulnerable refugees can be excluded from applying or would be likely to have difficulties participating.
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## The sector requires investment in systematic learning and collaboration

- The sector is expanding fast and requires systematic evidence building, collaboration and lesson sharing between relevant actors and across representatives of the various models of programming.
- There is evidence of some encouraging attempts at collaboration across the sector, but there remains a need to systematise this and proactively share lessons and good practice. There are a high number of new initiatives operating in the sector. This presents a significant opportunity for established programmes to share their experiences and promote effective practice across the sector. There is a current gap in ensuring that the knowledge, experience and lessons learned from well-established programmes are made accessible to all higher education providers.
- There should be greater allocation of time and resources to ensure the development of cross-sector learning. There is a current tendency for the sector to be somewhat short-term in thinking, with decisions taken in the absence of compelling evidence.
- In some instances, competition between higher education providers can result in a push to get the best students to fill programmes, rather than considering the best programmes to suit specific prospective student group needs. This is evident in the differentiation between stipends and enticements that attract students. There is an associated role for greater emphasis on coordination bodies to support information sharing and transparency and accountability mechanisms to students.

## The sector needs increased data and evidence

- Across the sector there is potential to improve the way in which data are collected and stored regarding student enrolment, participation and graduation in programmes. Beyond this, systems for gathering outcome and impact level data are not yet widely established. There are good reasons for the lack of data — as it is time-consuming and costly to set up appropriate systems, and this is rarely considered a top priority by programmes.
  - Building this capacity is valuable for multiple stakeholders including other higher education service providers (to improve learning and quality of services), donors (to improve understanding of the challenges experienced and to encourage greater investment), and to accrediting bodies and international HEIs (to encourage further engagement and collaboration).
  - There is a significant challenge faced by refugee higher education programmes because of donor demand to see short term and quantifiable outcomes. Demonstrating outcomes is an inherent challenge for the higher education sector, and the difficulties are exacerbated further by the complexities of operating with refugees. The sector would benefit from donor recognition of the ongoing time and cost required to develop and maintain systems for data collecting and evidence building.
  - Many of the benefits and impacts of higher education for refugees are not captured with simple statistics regarding number of students enrolling, participating and graduating. Much of the transformative impact of participating in a higher education programme is non-academic. Thus there is a need for the dissemination of appropriate methodological tools that can capture the nuances of change — for example in relation to participant worldview, confidence, and self-perception.
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## The sector should engage with humanitarian principles of protection

- There are significant numbers of new higher education initiatives arising in complex and protracted refugee contexts from organisations within the higher education and technology sectors. These new initiatives often have limited or no historic background in humanitarian work or associated principles of good practice. There is a risk that, as new initiatives have emerged and long-standing initiatives rapidly scale up, protection principles are not being fully explored and integrated into programmes, and opportunities are being missed to coordinate and share learning between established humanitarian actors and emerging higher education providers.
- In light of the point above, at the international level opportunities should be fostered by higher education programme managers to build links with existing protection and refugee specialists within the humanitarian sector. Some emerging good practice is beginning to take shape, pioneered by UNHCR. Opportunities to coordinate activities between the higher education, humanitarian and technology sectors should be taken and protection lessons identified and implemented across higher education programmes.
- At the field level higher education providers should consult with existing protection and education coordination mechanisms in each country to understand specific higher education needs and benefit from country-specific risk assessments prior to designing initiatives. Regular and close consultation should be maintained with these bodies, and coordination groups and cluster meetings should be engaged with.
- Higher education programme providers, at all levels and across all modalities, should pay special attention to UNHCR's principles for operating in refugee contexts (see box below).

### UNHCR - Higher education considerations for refugees (UNHCR 2015b)

- Precautions [should be put in place] to ensure initiatives don't jeopardize legal status, protection or psychosocial wellbeing of refugees and to carefully manage their expectations
- Initiatives should be durable and solutions-driven and lead to economic and social empowerment of refugees and communities
- [Programme providers need] to negotiate with [the Ministry of Economy] or relevant department, to ensure participation in the education programme does not negatively affect legal status or protection space for refugees
- [Programme providers should] take into account social cohesion — including assessment of any forms of additional support needed for effective integration into academic environment
- Clear communication strategies on the parameters of the opportunities [should be established] — vital to responsibly manage young people's expectations and allow them to make informed decisions.

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## Annexes

### Summary of annexes

**Annex A:** Quality framework for higher education for refugees in low-resource environments

**Annex B:** Data coding framework

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**Annex I:** Learning outcome stars template and definitions

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# Annex A. Quality framework for higher education for refugees in low-resource environments

## Overview

This annex provides a formative contribution to ongoing conversations regarding the issue of quality provision in higher education for refugees. It is based solely on the data of the research and therefore should be viewed as a contribution rather than as in any way comprehensive for the sector. It provides 40 good practice principles that programmes may wish to utilise as a reflective learning and self-assessment tool. There is not likely to be any programme where all the principles are relevant, but most will be applicable to most programmes.

## Programme good practice indicators

<b>1. Accessible structure and approach</b>		
<b>1a</b>	The programme is promoted and advertised in a way that makes it accessible to all prospective students, including marginalised groups and those with limited or no internet access.	
<b>1b</b>	The programme selection criteria are transparent and accessible to prospective students.	
<b>1c</b>	The programme is structured to be as accessible as possible to students, especially those with limited or no prior access to higher education or limited prior experience of learning in the relevant language of instruction (e.g. English, Arabic etc.).	
<b>1d</b>	The programme provides reliable information from the start of the application process regarding the recognition and transferability of course credits and different programmes of study.	
<b>1e</b>	The programme is structured to be as flexible as possible in light of the multiple commitments and responsibilities of refugee students.	
<b>1f</b>	The programme has a clear policy regarding what happens if a student has the opportunity to be resettled during the programme, and this is made clear to students from the outset.	
<b>2. Promotion of academic quality</b>		
<b>2a</b>	The programme establishes clear standards and policies for the recruitment of quality teaching and facilitation staff.	
<b>2b</b>	The programme actively monitors and improves the quality of teaching and facilitation.	
<b>2c</b>	The programme ensures that distance-based staff have the relevant contextual understanding to teach refugee students effectively.	
<b>2d</b>	The programme ensures that assessment and grading is consistent for refugee students while adapting requirements where appropriate in order to facilitate on-going participation.	
<b>2e</b>	The programme has simple organisational structures that facilitate clear communication for the benefit of both students and staff.	
<b>3. Effective use of technology</b>		
<b>3a</b>	The programme has suitable technological infrastructure that enables the anticipated learning to take place.	



<b>3b</b>	The programme budgets for the cost of the set-up, ongoing maintenance and replacement of the required technology.	
<b>3c</b>	The programme prioritises substantial training in effective use of the technology for both students and staff - both at the outset and through ongoing support.	
<b>3d</b>	The programme selects appropriate technology for the context and does not assume that the same configuration will work effectively in different environments.	
<b>4. Well-developed curriculum and pedagogy</b>		
<b>4a</b>	The programme curriculum is designed in consultation with prospective students and with experts in refugee education.	
<b>4b</b>	The programme course subjects are selected in consultation with prospective students and with experts in refugee education.	
<b>4c</b>	The programme ensures that learning materials from internationally accredited courses are suitably adapted for the local context, ideally in collaboration with local academics and students.	
<b>4d</b>	The programme helps staff to reflect on their teaching practice and the implications of the pedagogical approaches employed.	
<b>4e</b>	The programme provides training in the relevant pedagogical approaches and regular peer-to-peer support sessions.	
<b>5. Accreditation and course completion</b>		
<b>5a</b>	The programme is clear regarding its approach to accreditation and why this is the most suitable offering in the context.	
<b>5b</b>	The programme actively considers the impact its accreditation structure has on the future employability of refugee students.	
<b>5c</b>	The programme is clear regarding its approach to academic standards (e.g. a decision regarding whether to impose a standard system as at a mainstream HEI or whether to make special allowances because of the challenges faced by refugees).	
<b>5d</b>	The programme is realistic regarding the benefit that course completion will have on students, demonstrating an understanding of the different factors influencing likely employability outcomes in host and future locations.	
<b>5e</b>	The programme does everything possible to ensure the transferability of course credits between programmes and countries.	
<b>6. Protection and holistic support</b>		
<b>6a</b>	The programme provides additional non-academic support for refugee students including mentoring, psychosocial support and career development coaching or advice where appropriate.	
<b>6b</b>	The programme provides travel and accommodation support for students to promote their engagement where appropriate.	
<b>6c</b>	The programme actively engages with and promotes the non-academic benefits of higher education such as improved community relationships, cultural understanding, and contribution to community development.	
<b>6d</b>	The programme adopts established humanitarian principles of protection in its structure and activities.	
<b>6e</b>	The programme builds links with existing protection and refugee specialists within the humanitarian sector.	
<b>6f</b>	The programme considers how the provision of higher education for refugees may have a negative impact within the host community and how this can be ameliorated.	
<b>7. Clarity of purpose and approach</b>		
<b>7a</b>	The programme is clear regarding the rationale for its choice of location (e.g. whether in a context where there are lots of higher education ready refugees or whether in a context where there are few higher education ready refugees).	

<b>7b</b>	The programme is contextualised for each new location, recognising that an effective programme is structured differently according to the specifics of the host country, the different groups of refugees within the host country, the legislative environment, refugee freedom of movement, ability to secure employment, etc.	
<b>7c</b>	The programme is aware how the specific national policies relating to asylum-seekers and refugees have a significant impact on the ability of prospective students to participate in higher education programmes, and on the likely employment outcomes for refugees following the successful completion of higher education programmes.	
<b>7d</b>	The programme operates with an awareness of the multiple possible futures facing refugee students and considers the usefulness of the qualification if students are resettled, move to a third country, or are returned to their country of origin.	
<b>8. Evaluation and learning</b>		
<b>8a</b>	The programme invests in systematic evidence building, collaboration and lesson sharing.	
<b>8b</b>	The programme is clear regarding its theory of change and the relationship between the activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes.	
<b>8c</b>	The programme invests in contributing to the overall learning and evidence building for the sector and working collaboratively with other higher education providers.	
<b>8d</b>	The programme is investing in effective data collection regarding student participation, completion rates, and long term outcomes and impact.	
<b>8e</b>	The programme understands its cost per beneficiary and can communicate the relevant associated factors (such as extent of marginalisation, previous access to education, and quality of programme inputs).	

## Annex B. Data coding framework

The following data coding framework was compiled to guide the analysis of field research data. The framework divides data across five 'parent' codes, which form the analytical structure for the report: accessibility and participation, academia and organisation structure, technology, pedagogy, and impact and future. This is an extension of the structure used in the landscape review which was organised around the three themes: academic, pedagogy, and technology. Together these five thematic areas of analysis provide a comprehensive framework for all of the key issues that influence the efficacy of higher education for refugees. Under the five parent codes are 42 'child' codes, and a small number of 'grandchild' codes, where necessary (each outlined below). This coding framework was entered into an online data analysis tool called Dedoose. The rigorous and systematic coding process ensured that an evidence-based approach was maintained that linked back to the specific objectives of the study. A total of 4,752 fragments of qualitative data were coded across the five analytical themes.

Parent code	Child code	Grand-child code	Description
Accessibility and participation	Marketing of the course		How do potential students hear about the course? Include staff and student reflections on this.
	Application and selection processes		How do potential students apply and get selected for the course? Include staff and student reflections on this.
	Inclusivity		To what extent are marginalised or minority groups able to (or encouraged to) access this course?
	Historic access to HE in target population		Was it normal to go to university in the students' country of origin? (E.g. in Syria and Iraq lots of students may have been about to go to university when the conflict broke out, but those in Kakuma may have a) come from Somalia where it was unusual to go to university and b) grown up in a camp where there has been no previous access to HE).
	Alternative access to HE in target population		What HE options other than the one they are participating in could they have the possibility of engaging with - such as other local universities, scholarship programmes, other initiatives in the camp etc?
	Student motivations for study		Why do students say they want to study on this course? Why do staff think students want to study on this course?
	Strengths in course structure		What aspects of the course structure make it better/easier/more accessible for students?
	Weaknesses in course structure		What aspects of the course structure make it worse/harder/less accessible for students?
	Reasons for on-going participation / not dropping out		What enables/encourages students to keep studying when their circumstances are hard and mean they could drop out?
	Reasons for dropping out or considering dropping out		No explanation required.
Academia and organisational structure	Approach to accreditation / certification		How the courses are accredited/certified; student and staff reflections on the accreditation /certification.
	Suitability of subjects offered		Anything on the appropriateness (or otherwise) of the number, range and type of subjects offered, including reflections on why certain subjects were selected/are appreciated/are not liked etc.

Parent code	Child code	Grand-child code	Description
	Approach to assessment of learning outcomes		How student achievement and progress is measured - including staff and student reflections on how this is working.
	Structure of teaching responsibilities	Onsite	What are onsite facilitators responsible for in this model?
		Distance-based	What are distance facilitators responsible for in this model?
	Recruitment, training and prior experience of onsite teaching staff		How are onsite staff selected, what training do they receive from the organisation, and what levels of previous experience do they have?
	Monitoring of quality of teaching/facilitation		How does this model ensure that the teaching or facilitation that takes place is high quality? Include any staff or student reflections on this.
	Nature of interaction between onsite staff and distance-based staff		How do the distance and onsite teaching staff relate to and interact with each other? Are there structures for this? Is the interaction adequate? Staff (and student) reflections on what works well/doesn't work well.
	Programme management and accountability		How do the onsite and international management staff relate to and interact with each other? How do in-country hubs demonstrate what they are achieving or finding challenging to the international secretariat (or equivalent)? What structures (or lack of structures) facilitate or hinder this? Include student and staff reflections on this.
	Strengths of curriculum		What are the best things about the content of the curriculum?
	Weaknesses of curriculum		What are the worst things about/what needs to improve with the content of the curriculum?
Technology	Type of technology used	Technology used by students	NB. The information in these codes will be straightforward information about what is used - the affects/problems/strengths etc. all go in other codes.
		Technology used by onsite staff	
		Technology used by distance-based staff	
	How technology affects facilitation of onsite learning		How does using computers/the internet/online learning portals etc affect student learning on-site?)
	Problems experienced using technology	Students	Self-explanatory
		Onsite staff	
	How technological challenges are overcome		What do students and staff do to overcome the problems and challenges they face, and how easy is it for them to access the support they need?
	Strengths of course being online		Self-explanatory
Weaknesses of course being online		Self-explanatory	

Parent code	Child code	Grand-child code	Description
Pedagogy	Reflection on teaching / learning activities and methods	Positive	Self-explanatory
		Negative	
	Pedagogical implications of blended learning		How does having a mixture of online study and onsite facilitation affect students' ability to learn well?
	Pedagogical implications of curriculum contextualisation		Pros and cons of a locally developed vs US or EU developed curriculum - staff and student reflections relevant to the question of whether educational models should be imported or home-grown.
	Support provided to students	Non-academic support provided to students	Self-explanatory
		Support for students at risk of dropping out	
	Inclusive and protective learning environment		What makes the learning environment (centre) a place where all students are included and feel safe (or otherwise)?
	Reference to / awareness of particular pedagogical approach employed	Staff	To what extent are staff and students explicitly aware of the pedagogical approach that informs the course? To what extent do staff and students reference things that indirectly imply a particular pedagogical approach (for example, with Ignatian pedagogy, talking about how they are encouraged to reflect, develop critical thinking skills, apply knowledge in their context, etc.).
		Students	
	Interaction between students and distance-based teaching staff		Descriptions of how the students interact with distance-based teaching staff.
	Interaction between students and onsite teaching staff		Descriptions of how the students interact with on-site teaching staff.
	Distance-based staff awareness of student challenges		Reflections on the extent to which distance-based staff are aware of, understand and respond appropriately to the challenges faced by refugee students in a given location (including student perception and on-site staff perception, and possibly the distance-based staff themselves).
Onsite staff awareness of student challenges		Reflections on the extent to which onsite staff are aware of, understand and respond appropriately to the challenges faced by refugee students in a given location.	

Parent code	Child code	Grand-child code	Description
Impact and future	Usefulness of course	In current location	Self-explanatory
		If resettled or move to third country	
		If returning to country of origin	
	Input from alumni		Any reflections from alumni on how they now use the course and how studying impacted them.
	Evidence of change in student worldview		As expressed by students or teachers or programme managers.
	Most significant strength of programme		Self-explanatory
	Most significant weakness of programme		Self-explanatory
	Recommended changes to the programme	Current programme	Self-explanatory
Completely new programme			
Reflections on the broader sector		Anything relevant to the broader design, function and approach of the emerging HE for displaced learners sector.	

# Annex C. Summary of programmes visited during the field research

## Jordan

### EDRAAK

EDRAAK is an Arabic-language massive open online course (MOOC) platform that is an initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation. Established in 2014, the programme offers a variety of vocational courses within five focus areas: employability, STEM, business and entrepreneurship, teacher training and education for citizenship. More than 460,000 learners are registered with EDRAAK. The average course has 4,000 participants, with a 10% completion rate. It is estimated that EDRAAK is currently growing at a rate of 2,000 learners per day.

### JWL

The JWL programme in Jordan is offered through a partnership with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Jordan and based out of the JRS Higher Education Learning Centre in urban Amman. Established in 2010, they offer a three-year Diploma in Liberal Arts programme, as well as short-term English language Community Service Learning Tracks (CSLTs). The CSLT often acts as a bridge to the diploma course. JWL is one of the few programmes in Amman still serving Somali and Sudanese refugees, and its classes are mixed cohorts of Somali, Sudanese, Iraqi and Syrian students.

### NRC

Established in 2013, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) youth programme in Za'atari camp targets Syrian refugee youth aged 16-32 who want to continue their post-secondary education. The programme operates within a learning centre in the camp and offers a variety of qualifications (all certified by relevant partner organisations). The particular elements focused on higher education include IT and English classes.

### SPARK

SPARK is a multi-country scholarship programme, primarily funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which provides opportunities for students to study in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Kurdistan. The SPARK programme in Jordan began in 2015 and facilitates learning in conjunction with education partner Al-Quds College, in urban Amman. They target youth aged 18-35 and aim to offer higher education and entrepreneurship training that can be directly applicable in a post-conflict setting. The scholarship programme in Jordan offers education opportunities at both further and higher education levels. At higher education levels, a range of diploma programmes and undergraduate degree courses are facilitated.

## Kenya

### JWL

Established in 2010, the JWL programme in Kakuma camp offers an accredited Diploma in Liberal Arts and five CSLTs: Primary Teacher Education (PTE), Peace and Inter-Religious Dialogue (PSID), English Language Learning (ELL), Community and Business Development (CBD), and Psychosocial Case Management (PCM). The CSLTs are taught locally by Kenyan or refugee facilitators with expert knowledge in their subject and an understanding of Ignatian pedagogy. The diploma course takes three years and is taught online, with supplementary learning activities from two academic tutors, who are from the refugee community themselves and who have completed the diploma programme. Its implementation partner, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) run a number of other activities in the camp, including counselling and the provision of safe housing to vulnerable men and women.

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## Lebanon

### Jusoor

Jusoor has been working with Syrian refugees in Lebanon since June 2013. The refugee education programme provides both primary school education as well as scholarships for secondary school students. The programme mostly focuses on students in the Beirut area and chooses students based on merit. They aim to provide strong psychosocial support within a larger framework of community engagement and rehabilitation.

### LASeR

The Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR) supports Syrian refugees in continuing their degrees and accessing higher education in Lebanon. Established in 2013, the programme offers scholarships for study in business administration, media studies, education, and health and psychosocial studies. The courses are supplemented by an English language programme and a capacity building programme. Courses are facilitated by professors from participating universities (which also provide course certification). LASeR works across Lebanon, but its office is based in Tripoli. Their broader work has focused on scientific education and research, but their work with Syrian refugees is not limited to this.

## Malawi

### JWL

The JWL programme in Malawi is based in Dzaleka camp. Established in partnership with JRS in 2010, it delivers the Diploma in Liberal Arts and also seven CSLTs: IT and Computer Programming, Business Management (French), Community Health (French), Family Economics (French), Youth Work, Sustainable Agriculture (A), and Sustainable Agriculture (B). CSLT courses are facilitated in English and/or French and run for one year. The diploma course is facilitated in English and takes three years to complete. JRS run a number of other activities in the camp, including psychosocial support and counselling. This service is offered to students on their CSLT and diploma programmes who require more specialist support.

### There is Hope

There is Hope (TIH), a nationally-registered NGO in Malawi, established its higher education programme in 2009. The organisation engages in a broader range of income-generating activities to support refugees and asylum-seekers, and includes a small-scale higher education scholarship programme for up to five students per year. These are full scholarships which enable the recipients to study at national universities in Malawi and to seek employment in the sectors open to refugees in the country. The programme targets students aged 24 and older. A Children's Worker provides ongoing support to students throughout their enrolment at national universities in Malawi. To date, TIH has assisted 29 refugee students through their higher education programme.

### WUSC

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is an operating partner for UNHCR and works in conjunction with JWL (as UNHCR's principal education partner) within Dzaleka camp. WUSC's higher education provision is one component of a broader resettlement programme. Up to 20 students per year (aged 17-25) are selected and prepared for resettlement in Canada. Their resettlement includes enrolment on an undergraduate degree programme at either a French- or English-speaking university, as well as financial sponsorship for the first year. Students are selected one year in advance of the start of their programme of study, allowing time for preparatory language classes and cultural acclimatisation workshops, facilitated by a combination of onsite tutors and visiting volunteers from Canada.

## Myanmar

### JWL

The JWL programme in Myanmar, established in 2014, is implemented in partnership with the St.

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Aloysius Gonzaga Institute in Taunggyi and explores how the Diploma in Liberal Studies can operate in a non-JRS setting, where students are marginalised rather than forcibly displaced. The institute also runs other basic classes and prepares young men for Jesuit ministry, all with explicit reference to Ignatian pedagogy. Students are accepted from across the country, bringing together people from a mix of religious and ethnic backgrounds who may not otherwise have the opportunity to interact with each other.

## Thailand

### JWL

Established in 2012, JWL Thailand operate in the camps near Mae Sot and offers pre-university CSLT in English as a Foreign Language which is certified by JRS and/or the local implementing partner and Regis University (but is not university-level accredited). There are also a small number of community-led programmes providing post-school education opportunities inside the camp. JWL now runs a teacher training programme in response to a needs assessment, which had identified camp residents' desire for support with livelihoods. To run this programme, JWL staff have established a strong partnership with the Karenni national Education Department (KnED), which assists in recruiting teachers, raising awareness of the course in the camp, and vetting candidates. The JWL programme is scheduled to close in early 2016.

[Various additional programmes were also visited – one in Central Africa and two in South East Asia. They have requested to remain anonymous in the research and are therefore their programme activities are not summarised here.]

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## Annex D. Record of data collected during field visits

The table below provides an overview of the data collected on the field visits, categorised by programme and activity. For the group activities (FGDs) the number conducted is listed first, followed by the total number of participants in brackets.

Date	Country	Location	Programme	Ind. inter-views. (staff)	Ind. Inter-views (stu-dent)	FGD (Dip)	FGD (CSLT)	FGD (other -	FGD (other - staff)	LOS	Notes
Oct 15	Jordan (1)	Za'atari	NRC	4				1 (12)			
		Amman	JWL	5	6	1 (7)	2 (10)			12	LOS are double counted with FGDs and student interviews
		Amman	EDRAAK					1 (3)			
Nov 15	Malawi	Dzaleka	JWL	1	1	9 (39)	2 (9)		2 (8)	24	4/24 LOS are double counted with student FGDs
		Lilongwe	There is Hope	1				1 (3)	1 (2)	3	LOS are double counted with student FGDs
		Lilongwe	WUSC	2				2 (8)			
Nov 15	Central Africa	Anonymous	Anonymous	6				2 (8)			
Nov 15	Myanmar	Taunggyi	JWL	1		4 (17)			2 (4)	13	LOS are double counted with student FGDs
Nov 15	Lebanon	Beirut	Unite Lebanon Youth Project	2							
		Beirut	Jusoor	1	1			1 (4)			
		Tripoli	LASeR	2				1 (5)			
		Beirut	Palestinian Students Fund	1							
		Beirut	Hayya Bina	3							
		Various	Various additional	1				1 (3)			
Dec 15	Thailand	Mae Hong Son	JWL	2							

Date	Country	Location	Programme	Ind. interviews. (staff)	Ind. Interviews (student)	FGD (Dip)	FGD (CSLT)	FGD (other - staff)	FGD (other - staff)	LOS	Notes
		Various	Various					2 (7)			Programmes requested to remain anonymous
Dec 15	South East Asia	Anonymous	Anonymous					1 (9)	1 (2)	9	Sensitive data LOS are double counted with student FGDs
		Anonymous	Anonymous	2				3 (28)	1 (3)	12	LOS are double counted with student FGDs
Dec 15	Kenya	Kakuma	JWL	3	2	13 (49)	6 (26)		4 (8)	28	LOS are double counted with student FGDs
Apr 16	Jordan (2)	Amman	JWL	1		5 (17)				18	Staff member is double counted from first Jordan visit (same interviewee) 17/18 LOS are double counted with student FGDs
		Amman	SPARK	1				4(29)			
Apr 16	USA	Wheeling Regis Georgetown Skype	JWL	11*					4 (16*)		7 of the 11 individual interviews with staff were with people who also participated in a FGD 1 of the 11 individual interviews with staff also participated in a Regis University FGD
		Regis	Regis University	4					4 (15*)		Double counts x1 participant from JWL interviews
		Georgetown	Georgetown University						1 (2)		
		Washington D.C.	Various	1							
<b>Totals</b>				<b>55</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32 (129)</b>	<b>10 (45)</b>	<b>20 (119)</b>	<b>20 (60)</b>	<b>119</b>	

## Annex E. List of programme management and focus group discussion participants

This annex documents the details of programme management staff who participated either in formal or informal individual interviews, or focus group discussions, with the research team. It includes staff from individual country visits, the USA visit and all interviews facilitated via phone or Skype as part of the distance-based activities. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all interviewees incorporated in this research. Researchers also interviewed various programme facilitators and tutors.

Name	Position	Programme	Location
<b>Jordan</b>			
Nafez Dakkak	Director	EDRAAK	Amman
Matthew Stevens	Project Director	JRS-JWL	Amman
Natalie Khoury	Lead Academic Tutor	JRS-JWL	Amman
Emma Bonar	Programme Manager	NRC (Youth)	Za'atari
Basma Abu Daabes	Youth Curricula and Training Officer	NRC	Za'atari
Yazan Mashini	Senior Assistant (ICDL and technical courses)	NRC	Za'atari
Yara Younes	Project Manager	SPARK	Amman
<b>Lebanon</b>			
Inga Schei	Programme Manager	Hayya Bina	Beirut
Abdul Rahman al-Ali	Finance Director	Hayya Bina	Beirut
Mahmood Khalil	Programme Manager	Jusoor	Beirut
Mustapha Jazar	President (and founder)	LASeR	Tripoli
Zeina Awaydate	Programme Manager	LASeR	Tripoli
Wafa al-Yassir	Director	Palestinian Students Fund	Beirut
Cynthia Assad	Programme Manager	Unite Lebanon Youth Project	Beirut
Melek Nimr	Bridge Programme Coordinator	Unite Lebanon Youth Project (ULYP)	Beirut
Informal interviews facilitated with management representatives from three additional programmes			
<b>Kenya</b>			
Michael Onyango	Programme Director	JRS	Kakuma
Nyamweya Omari Samwel	Programme Coordinator	JWL-JRS	Kakuma
<b>Malawi</b>			
Joe Slaven	Project Director	JWL	Dzaleka
Theovene Baravura	Academic Director	JWL	Dzaleka
Innocent Magambi	Director	TIH	Lilongwe
Floris Magambi	Communications Manager	TIH	Lilongwe
Jennifer Tornga	Scholarship Program Coordinator	TIH	Lilongwe

Name	Position	Programme	Location
Bertha Mbichila	Projects Coordinator	WUSC	Lilongwe
<b>Myanmar</b>			
Paul Dass	School Director	JWL	Taunggyi
Joseph Thu Khaung	Executive Administrator	JWL	Taunggyi
<b>Thailand</b>			
Rosalyn	Project Director	JWL	Mae Hong Son
<b>USA</b>			
Martha Habash	Faculty	Creighton University	Skype interview, USA
Judd Nicholson	Interim CIO, Georgetown	Georgetown University	Georgetown, USA
Lahra Smith	Faculty	Georgetown University	Skype interview, USA
Lazarina Topuzova	Faculty	Gonzaga University	Skype interview, USA
Dave Lambert	JWL board	Internet2	Washington DC
Peter Balleis	International Director	JWL	Skype interview, USA
Mary McFarland	International Director	JWL	Georgetown, USA
Dennis Packer	Creative Director	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Cindy Bonfini-Hotlosz	Chief Information Officer	JWL	Georgetown, USA
Carey Treado	Chief Academic Officer	JWL	Georgetown, USA
Kareena Byrd	Program Assistant	JWL	Skype interview - USA
Karen Cordova	Alumni Coordinator	JWL	Regis, USA
Marie Friedemann	Faculty Coordinator	JWL	Regis, USA
Tara Ross	Academic Programme Coordinator	JWL	Skype interview - USA
Ben Doyle	Chief of Staff	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Amy Pinkerton	Manager of System Support	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Jay Yelenic	Production Manager	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Tracey Jenkins	Student Records Officer	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Kayla Johnson	IT Specialist	JWL	Wheeling, USA
Jody Allen Smith	Volunteer Tutor Coordinator	JWL	Regis, USA
Father John Fitzgibbons	President	Regis University	Regis, USA
Steve Jacobs	Assistant Provost	Regis University	Regis, USA
Janna Oakes	Assistant Provost	Regis University	Regis, USA
Deb Vinnola	Associate Director College Admissions	Regis University	Regis, USA
John Shaball	Administrative Manager of Registration	Regis University	Regis, USA
Janet Lee	Dean of the Library	Regis University	Regis, USA
Paul Betty	Research & Instruction Librarian	Regis University	Regis, USA
Ross Trenton	Book Shop Attendant	Regis University	Regis, USA
Carole Hruskocy	Professor	Regis University	Regis, USA
Lila Docken Bauman	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Quinn Waller	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Janeen Galligan	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Elizabeth Kinsey	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Greg Wells	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Mary Lawrence	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA

Name	Position	Programme	Location
Jordan Woodward	Faculty	Regis University	Skype interview, USA
Beverley Whelton	Faculty	Regis University	Regis, USA
Sylvia Miller	Instructor	Regis University	Regis, USA
Aram Balagyozyan	Faculty	Scranton University	Skype interview, USA
Distance-based			
Heather Oliver	Programme Officer (Tomorrow's Leaders)	AMIDEAST	USA (joint interview)
Kate Archambault	Vice President	AMIDEAST	USA (joint interview)
Aida Orgocka	BHER Project Manager	BHER	Canada
Don Dippo	Professor, Tenured Faculty of Education at York University, and co-lead of BHER	BHER	Canada
Tom Sork	Professor, Department of Educational Studies at University of British Columbia, and Research Advisor, BHER	BHER	Canada
Wenona Giles	Professor, Anthropology and Associate Researcher, Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, and Project Director of BHER	BHER	Canada
Emily Regan Wills	Assistant Professor and co-founder of CMIC	CMIC	Canada (joint interview)
Nadia Abu-Zahra	Assistant Professor and co-founder of CMIC	CMIC	Canada (joint interview)
Johannes Heinlein	VP of Strategic Partnerships	edX	USA (joint interview)
Rachel Lapal	Director of Communications	edX	USA (joint interview)
Daniel Obst	Deputy Vice President, International Partnerships in Higher Education	IIE	USA
Barbara Moser-Mercer	Director of InZone Centre at Geneva University; Chair of UNHCR HE Consortium	InZone	Switzerland
Claude Akpabie	Team Leader, Education Sector, UNESCO Amman	Jami3ti initiative, UNESCO	Jordan
Ben Webster	Founder	Jamiya Project	UK
Orville Desilva	JWL Coordinator	JWL Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Divya Anandam	JWL Project Manager	JWL Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Fr Eric Goeh-Akue SJ	Chad Country Director	JRS	Chad
Stan Fernandes	South Asia Director	JRS	
Nora Hauptmann	Head of NGO relations	Kiron	Germany (joint interview)
Vincent Zimmer	Managing Director	Kiron	Germany (joint interview)
Gul Inanc	Founder	OUR	Singapore
Islam Elghazouly *Informal interview also facilitated in person, during visit to Amman, Jordan	Deputy Regional Project Manager, Higher Education for Syrians Programme	SPARK	Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq
Seble Abera	Programme Manager	SISS	Sweden

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Location</b>
Shai Reshef	President	University of the People	USA
Sami Abu-Zuhair	Finance and Scholarship Officer	UNRWA	Jordan
Sawsan Masri	Country Director	Welfare Association	Beirut, Lebanon
Dr. Marangu Njogu	Director	Windle Trust Kenya	Kenya
Anonymous researcher working in sensitive environment			

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# Annex F. Template for focus group discussions with students

Below is a sample of the questions used for conducting focus groups discussions with participating students. Each focus group discussion lasted between 60 – 90 minutes. The research team were also given detailed guidance regarding how to approach each question and the appropriate amount of time to spend focusing on each section. Each focus group discussion began by explaining the purpose of the research and how the information would be used. Each participant was given the choice whether or not to participate and whether or not to be anonymous. All discussions were conducted in a manner that ensured everyone felt free to contribute and was given equal opportunity to engage with the questions. At the end of each session participants were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to provide any additional information and ask questions of the research team.

## Section 1. Basic information

[Completed for each participant]

Name, age, gender, country of origin, programme of study

## Section 2. Before the course

2.1. How did you hear about the [insert name of relevant initiative] programme?

- Through family or friends who were already studying on a programme run by [name of organisation]
- Directly approached by organisation running programme
- Already involved in another activity of organisation running programme
- Referred through another organisation
- Through family or friends who were not already studying on a programme run by [name of organisation]
- Through a community noticeboard or similar
- Online
- Other

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

2.2. Do you have friends who applied who were not given a place?

Yes | No

If yes, who, and why do you think they did not get a place?

## Section 3. During the course – academia

3.1. What do you most like / find most helpful about the way this course is taught?

3.2. What do you least like / find least helpful about the way this course is taught?

## Section 4. During the course - technology

4.1. How do you use technology in your learning? (List, with multiple answers allowed)

4.2. How often do you have a problem using the technology for learning?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

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4.3. How often do you have a problem accessing the internet whilst trying to study in the centre?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

4.4. How often do you have a problem accessing the internet whilst trying to study at home?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

4.5. How often do you have a problem with the laptop or computer?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

4.6. How often do you have a problem finding the content you need?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

4.7. How often do you have a problem navigating the online system?

Daily | Weekly | Less than once a month | More than once a month | Never

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

4.8. What has been the most positive thing for you about studying an online course?

4.9. What has been the most negative thing for you about studying an online course?

## **Section 5. During the course - pedagogy**

5.1. Do you think the distance (online) facilitators understand the challenges you face in life?

Not at all | A little bit | very well

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

5.2. Do you think that the on-site facilitators understand the challenges you face in life?

Not at all | A little bit | very well

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

5.3. How satisfied are you with the level of interaction with your instructors?

Not at all | A little bit | very satisfied (traffic lights approach)

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

5.4. What are the best and worst things about having facilitators here on-site and online?

5.5. Do you like studying using the same materials as people all over the world are using or would you prefer more resources went into designing something that was particularly relevant to your context?

5.6. Studying as a young refugee in this camp/country can be really challenging. Lots of people find it hard to continue. Have you ever felt like you might have to drop out of the course or take a break from studying?

Never | Once or twice | Sometimes | Often

[Space also provided for additional open responses]

5.7. Why do you want the diploma?

5.8. Is there anything about the way that this actual course operates that might make it difficult for students to keep studying?

5.9. What is the main thing about the way the actual course operates that helps you to continue even when things are difficult?

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## Section 6. After the course

6.1. How useful will having completed this course be for you in the future?

If you remain here in [host country]

Not useful | A little bit useful | Very useful

Why and how?

If you travel or are resettled to a different country

Not useful | A little bit useful | Very useful

Why and how?

If you return one day to [country of origin]

Not useful | A little bit useful | Very useful

Why and how?

6.2. What is the one biggest change you see in yourself as a result of this course? (Verbal ranking designed for students not able to complete the outcome stars)

6.3. What have you done since completing your course? (For alumni, to understanding achievements enabled etc)

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# Annex G. Template for individual interviews with programme managers

Below is a sample of the questions used for conducting face-to-face individual interviews with participating programme managers. Each individual interview lasted between 20 – 150 minutes. The research team were also given detailed guidance regarding how to approach each question and the appropriate amount of time to spend focusing on each section. The length of the interview varied according to the amount of time the interviewee had available, and the amount of information that they wanted to share with the research team. All of the interviews began by explaining the purpose of the research and how the information would be used, and by reiterating that participation was voluntary. At the end of each interview the interviewees were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to provide any additional information and ask questions of the research team.

## Section 1. Basic information

Name of programme, location of programme

Date of interview, name of staff member, position of staff member, country of origin, length of time with this organisation, length of time working on this programme

## Section 2. Programme background

2.1. Who are the target population? What is their current situation in terms of access to HE? How much have they had prior access to HE? Can they access the national education system?

2.2. How are responsibilities split between programme staff in-country and: (a) programme staff in headquarters, (b) staff at partner institution(s)?

2.3. How many facilitators work on the programme and how many of them have prior teaching experience?

2.4. What is the role of the teaching facilitator on this programme?

2.5. How do you monitor and ensure the quality of teaching/ facilitation on this programme?

2.6. What is the role of the distance-based teachers on this programme?

## Section 3. Application and selection process

3.1. How do you connect with potential applicants?

3.2. Do you think it is easier for certain students to hear about this course than others? Why?

3.3. What selection criteria do you use for applicants? How do you ensure this is fair and transparent?

3.4. Do you think it is harder for any of the following groups to study on this course?

Women | Men | People with disabilities | Young people without family | Older people | Some nationalities | Religious minorities | Some ethnicities | Other (Specify which)

[Space provided for narrative explanation]

## Section 4. Place of technology in the programme

4.1. What is the most significant positive impact of using technology in this programme? Why?

4.2. What is the most significant negative impact of using technology in this programme? Why?

4.3. How easy is it to access support for technology-related issues? What are the main challenges you face and how do you overcome them?

4.4. What technological changes could be made that would make the programme more effective?

## Section 5. Place of pedagogy and curriculum on the programme

5.1. What subjects / topics do you offer on this programme?

5.2. What pedagogical approaches do you employ in this programme? Why do you use these approaches?

5.3. How often and in what way do you discuss or reflect on teaching methods and pedagogical approach?

5.4. What do you think is the most significant strength of the curriculum?

5.5. What do you think is the most significant strength of the pedagogy?

5.6. What do you think is the most significant weakness of the curriculum?

5.7. What do you think is the most significant weakness of the pedagogy?

5.8. How is teaching and learning contextualised to [name of location]

By local staff? | By distance-based staff?

5.9. How important is it that curriculum and pedagogy are contextualised to [name of location]? Why / why not?

5.10. Is the programme accredited in any way? How and why?

5.11. What steps are taken to create a protective and inclusive learning environment? [How do you make this a safe and supportive place to learn?]

5.12. What types of non-academic support do you provide to students?

Career / employment advice | Work placements | Psychosocial support (including counselling) | Legal advice | Free accommodation | Mentoring | Active facilitation of peer support networks | Other (Specify which)

[Space provided for narrative explanation]

5.13. What changes do you see in students' lives as a result of receiving this support?

5.14. What are the main challenges that lead students to stop participating in this course/programme of study?

The poor quality of teaching | The poor quality of facilitation | Problems with technology | The course is not relevant | The course is too expensive | The course is too time demanding | Pressure from others to stop | Other

[Space provided for narrative explanation]

5.15. Is there anything about the way the course is structured that helps them to continue?

5.16. Can students take a break from their studies if they need to? Under what circumstances?

At any time, for as long as they wish | In exceptional circumstances, for as long as is needed | For a limited period of time | For a limited period of time in exceptional circumstances | Students cannot take a break from their studies

[Space provided for narrative explanation]

## Section 6. After the programme

6.1. What impact does completing this programme have on students' future prospects? Why?

- If they stay in <host country>?
- If they are resettled or go to a third country?
- If they return to <country of origin>?

6.2. How could the following aspects of [insert name of programme] be improved?

- Accessibility and inclusivity
  - Quality of content
-

- Quality of in-person teaching
- Quality of distance-based learning (if relevant)
- Non-academic student support
- Use of technology
- Other (Specify which)

6.3. What do you see as being the most significant strength of this programme?

6.4. What do you see as being the most significant weakness of this programme?

6.5. How would you like to see this programme develop in the future?

## **Section 7. Your broader perspective on the sector**

7.1. What do you think are the most significant strengths of the current main operating models for higher education provision for refugees (outside your own programme)?

7.2. What do you think are the most significant weaknesses of the current operating models for higher education provision for refugees (outside your own programme)?

7.3. If you were able to design a brand new programme to provide access to higher education for refugees, what would you do and why?

7.4. Is there anything else that you think it is important for us to know that we have not talked about?

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# Annex H. Template for distance individual interviews with programme managers

Below is a sample of the questions used for conducting distance-based individual interviews with participating programme managers. The majority of the interviews were conducted over Skype and lasted between 30 – 120 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured, to ensure comparability while allowing flexibility to cover unique or significant aspects of programmes. The length of the interview varied according to the amount of time the interviewee had available, and the amount of information that they wanted to share with the research team. All of the interviews began by explaining the purpose of the research and how the information would be used, and by reiterating that participation was voluntary. At the end of each interview the interviewees were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to provide any additional information and ask questions of the research team.

## Section 1. Basic information

Name of programme, location of programme

Date of interview, name of staff member, position of staff member, country of origin, length of time with this organisation and on this programme

Other staff members to interview, if relevant

## Section 2. Programme background

2.1. Who are the target population? What is their current situation in terms of access to HE? How much have they had prior access to HE? Can they access the national education system?

2.2. Does this programme operate in partnership with any other organisations? If yes, what is the nature of the relationship; how are roles and responsibilities divided?

2.3. Please describe the role of teachers/ facilitators on this programme [including, if applicable, both in-person and distance facilitators]. How are they recruited? Do they receive any training?

2.4. How do you monitor and ensure the quality of teaching/ facilitation on this programme?

## Section 3. Application and selection process

3.1. How do you connect with potential applicants?

3.2. Do you think it is harder for certain students to access this course than others? Why?

3.3. What selection criteria do you use for applicants? How do you ensure this is fair and transparent?

## Section 4. Place of technology in the programme

4.1. What is the most significant positive impact of using technology in this programme? Why? I.e. does it enable you to reach more students? To improve content or quality of teaching?

4.2. What is the most significant negative impact of using technology in this programme? Why?

4.3. What technological changes could be made that would make the programme more effective?

## Section 5. Place of pedagogy and curriculum on the programme

5.1. What subjects / topics do you offer on this programme?

5.2. What pedagogical approaches do you employ in this programme? Why do you use these approaches? Why do you feel that this is effective and appropriate in this context?

5.3. What do you think is the most significant strength of the curriculum and pedagogy?

5.4. What do you think is the most significant weakness of the curriculum and pedagogy?

5.5. How is teaching and learning contextualised to [name of location]?

5.6. Is the programme accredited in any way? How and why?

5.7. What steps are taken to create a protective and inclusive learning environment? [How do you make this a safe and supportive place to learn?]

5.8. What are the main challenges that lead students to stop participating in this course/programme of study?

5.9. Is there anything about the way the course is structured that helps them to continue even when things are difficult?

## **Section 6. After the programme**

6.1. What impact does completing this programme have on students' future prospects? Why?

- If they stay in <host country>?
- If they are resettled or go to a third country?
- If they return to <country of origin>?

6.2. How could the following aspects of [insert name of programme] be improved?

- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Quality of content
- Quality of in-person teaching
- Quality of distance teaching (if relevant)
- Non-academic student support
- Use of technology
- Other

6.3. What do you see as being the most significant strength of this programme?

6.4. What do you see as being the most significant weakness of this programme?

6.5. How would you like to see this programme develop in the future?

## **Section 7. Your broader perspective on the sector**

7.1. What do you think are the most significant strengths of the current main operating models for higher education provision for refugees (outside your own programme)?

7.2. What do you think are the most significant weaknesses of the current operating models for higher education provision for refugees (outside your own programme)?

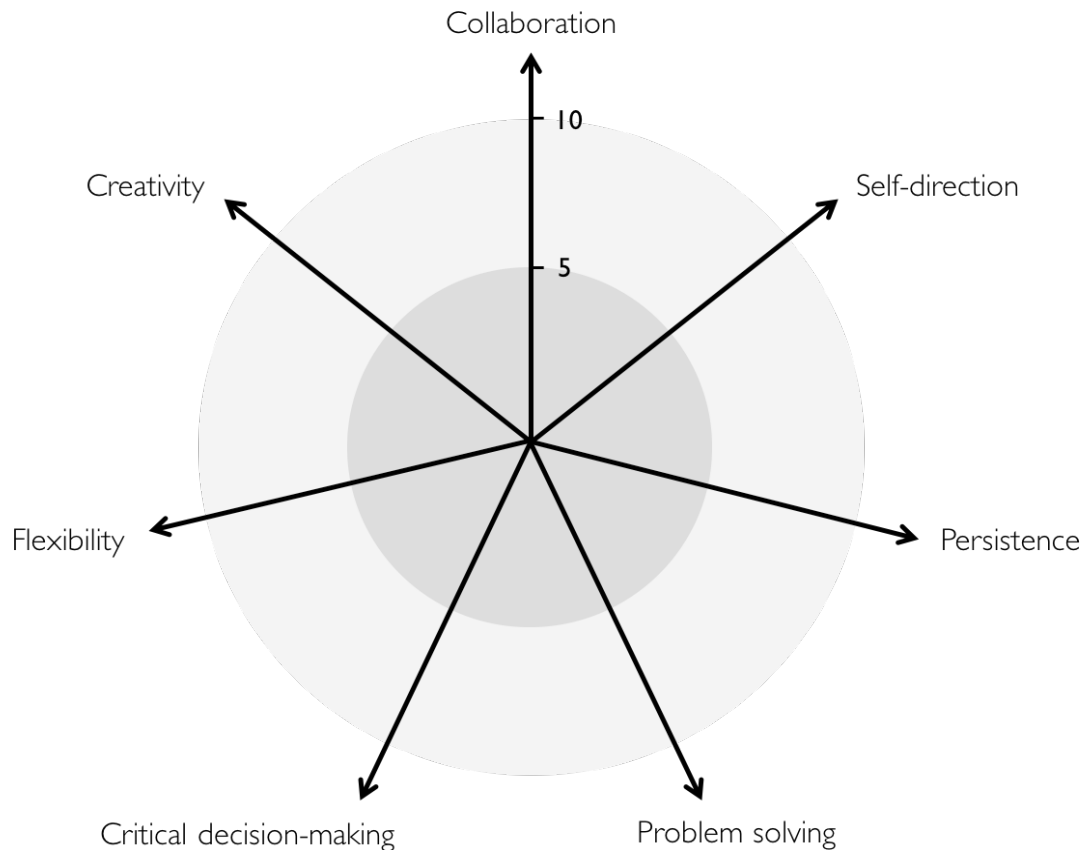
7.3. If you were able to design a brand new programme to provide access to higher education for refugees, what would you do and why?

7.4. Is there anything else that you think it is important for us to know that we have not talked about?

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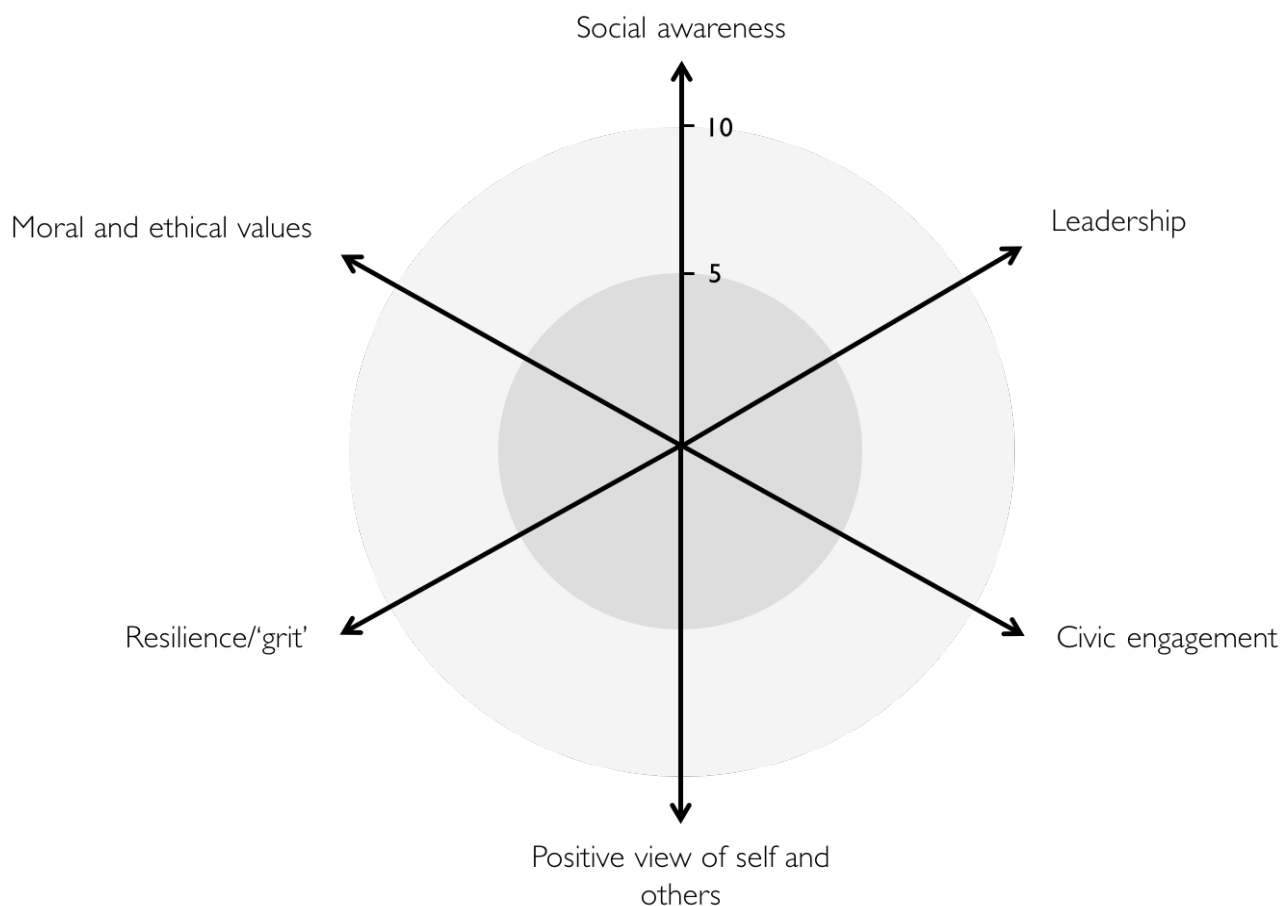
# Annex I. Learning outcome stars template and definitions

Below are the two types of outcome stars used to explore the impact of higher education on participant worldview and self-perception, and the definition sheet used for each star.



Term	Definition
Collaboration	Working well with other people
Self-direction	Making progress when no-one is telling you what you should do (For example, when you were a child you did something because your teacher told you to. Self-direction is doing something not because you are told to, but because you decide yourself that it will help you.)
Persistence	Keeping going when things are hard
Problem solving	Finding solutions for difficulties
Critical decision-making	Analysing information and different opinions to make a choice (not just making a decision on the basis of what you feel)
Flexibility	Willingness to do things differently to how you expected
Creativity	Ability to think of new and innovative ways of doing things





Term	Definition
Social awareness	How much you think about the needs of others and your community
Leadership	How much you lead others in their activities or attitudes
Civic engagement	How much you are involved in the broader life of society or community
Positive view of self and others	How much you have a good opinion of yourself and other people
Resilience/ 'grit'	Your ability to recover when hard things happen (NB. It can be useful to contrast this with persistence – people often think they are the same thing, but this is about your ability to pick yourself up and recover, rather than pushing through and persevering)
Moral and ethical values	The extent to which you have a strong sense of what is right and wrong and are able to live in line with this

# Annex J. The application of Ignatian pedagogy for higher education refugee students

This annex examines the Ignatian pedagogical approach and its role in the JWL programme, exploring how it is used and the impact it may have for refugee students.

## Background to Ignatian pedagogy

Ignatian pedagogy has developed from the sustained focus within the Jesuit community on education, social justice and social care, intellectual research, cultural pursuits and ecumenical dialogue. The Jesuits, a male religious congregation of the Catholic Church that was founded in 1539 by Ignatius of Loyola, have always considered education a central impetus to their movement. There are over 180 Jesuit HEIs globally. The core principles of Jesuit education have developed over centuries through a number of significant writings. However, the articulation of a firm Ignatian pedagogy based in the principles of Jesuit education emerged only more recently. The work of Father Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) played a major role in re-asserting the place of justice and education within the Jesuit community, and his 'Characteristics of Jesuit Education' (1980) set out a foundational framework for Jesuit education. More recently, 'Ignatian Pedagogy - A Practical Approach' (ICAJE, 1993) developed an Ignatian pedagogical paradigm that sought to incorporate Ignatian values into a practical pedagogy for use by classroom teachers. The distinctiveness of Jesuit education was condensed into a set of 28 characteristics. These are the foundational tenets of an Ignatian approach to learning.

### Key learning regarding impact and future

1. JE is world-affirming (radical goodness of the world, mystery and awe of creation)
2. JE assists in the total formation of each individual within the human community (God is especially revealed in each person)
3. JE includes a religious education that permeates the entire education
4. JE is an apostolic instrument
5. JE promotes dialogue between faith and culture
6. JE insists on individual care and concern for each person
7. JE emphasises activity on the part of the student in the learning process
8. JE encourages life-long openness to growth
9. JE is value-oriented
10. JE encourages a realistic knowledge, love and acceptance of self
11. JE provides a realistic knowledge of the world in which we live
12. JE proposes Christ as the model
13. JE provides adequate pastoral care
14. JE celebrates faith in personal and community prayer, worship and service
15. JE is preparation for active life commitment
16. JE serves the faith that does justice

17. JE seeks to form men and women for others
18. JE manifests a particular concern for the poor
19. JE is an apostolic instrument, in service of the church as it serves human society
20. JE prepares students for active participation in the church and the local community, for the service of others
21. JE pursues excellence in its work of formation
22. JE witnesses to excellence
23. JE stresses lay-Jesuit collaboration
24. JE relies on a spirit of community among all
25. JE takes place within a structure that promotes community
26. JE adapts means and methods in order to achieve its purposes most effectively
27. JE is a system of schools with a common vision and common goals
28. JE assists in providing the professional training and ongoing formation that is needed

Building on these foundational principles, pedagogy within the Ignatian paradigm is described as 'the way in which teachers accompany learners in their growth and development ... [something which] cannot simply be reduced to methodology. It must include a world view and a vision of the ideal human person to be educated' (ICAJE, 1993). Ignatian pedagogy rejects what it views as a growing trend towards an excessively utilitarian approach to education and, instead, articulates its ultimate goal as 'forming men and women for others' (ibid: 5). To that end, within Ignatian pedagogy, education should become a 'carefully reasoned investigation through which the student forms or reforms his or her habitual attitudes towards other people and the world', and where even academic subjects are taught from 'a human centeredness, with stress on uncovering and exploring the patterns, relationships, facts, questions, insights, conclusions, problems, solution and implications which a particular discipline brings to light about what it means to be a human being' (ibid: 6). This reflects the Ignatian belief that moral and emotional formation is as important as intellectual formation, and that the promotion of justice is an essential element of education.

## The Ignatian process of teaching and learning

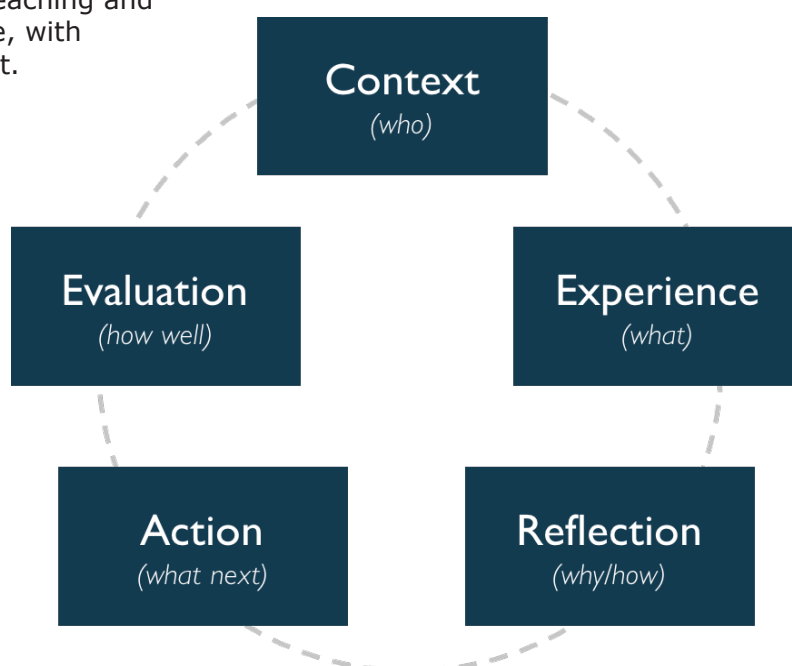
Within Ignatian pedagogy, the process of teaching and learning follows a continuous learning circle, with five distinct stages as visualised to the right.

### Context

The belief that pedagogy should be adapted to the local context is critical to the Ignatian model. Educators should give due consideration to the socio-cultural, political and cultural contexts in which the education occurs; the institutional setting itself; and the experiences and prior knowledge students bring to their learning.

### Experience

The educator should enable learners to recall their own relevant experiences, and then guide them into new information and more



experience in the given area of study.

### **Reflection**

The educator supports students in the use of memory, imagination, feelings and understanding. Learning how to reflect on experience enables students to better grasp the meaning and value of the content learned, the relationship of the new knowledge to other aspects of life, and any implications for future study and response.

### **Action**

The student should be so shaped by what he is learning that he is compelled to act. The teacher provides the opportunities for the student to do this. At times this involves an internal reordering of priorities and values, but often also extends to external action consistent with new values and priorities.

### **Evaluation**

This final step is not always included in the cycle, but aims to help reflect on the action taken and understanding gained. This includes regular evaluation of student growth, including academic mastery as well as an analysis of the students' growth in attitudes and actions.

## **Ignatian pedagogy in JWL**

The JWL programmes aim to 'empower those at the very edges of our societies ... through access to higher education in order to contribute their knowledge and wisdom to our global community of learners so that together we foster hope to create a more peaceful and humane world' (JWL, 2010). Within this, JWL services aspire to 'give life to the principles of Ignatian pedagogy, offering higher education capable of transformational learning' (ibid). The five stage process outlined above, along with the broader principles of Ignatian pedagogy, have shaped the development and delivery of JWL. The use of Ignatian pedagogy, with its focus on the generation of knowledge, personal reflection and the application of that knowledge to the circumstances at hand, is stated by the programme founders and management as key to maximising the impact of learning through JWL.

The five stages of the Ignatian pedagogical approach are integrated into the design of courses taught through JWL. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and faculty designing modules for the Community Service Learning Tracks (CSLT) and Diploma programme go through the five stages of the cycle as they prepare their courses. In order to facilitate this, an Ignatian Framework for Course Design has been crafted using the Ignatian Pedagogical model. This framework has proved particularly effective in enabling the production of courses that will in turn allow students to journey through the five stages of Ignatian learning. JWL staff based in the USA have found that requiring faculty and SMEs to work through this process leads to a higher level of student engagement and learning outcomes.

## **Learning outcomes and Ignatian pedagogy – context**

Visits to five JWL field sites were conducted within the fieldwork for this research (Jordan, Malawi, Kenya, Thailand, Myanmar). During these visits, outcome stars were completed with students to enable a rigorous qualitative assessment of non-academic learning outcomes (the outcome stars, and definitions of each learning outcome listed, can be viewed in Annex I). The categories of potential non-academic learning outcomes in the outcome stars are based on work carried out by the Brookings Institute Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF). While the recommendations of the LMTF present key indicators for tracking progress in foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, it is of particular interest in this context in that it also calls for indicators that go beyond these traditional measures. In particular, the task force calls for new global indicators to include skills and values needed for youth to be successful 'citizens of the world' (LMTF, 2013c). It proposes a small set of learning indicators across seven key domains. Two of these domains, 'Social and Emotional' and 'Learning Approaches and Cognition' are particularly aligned with the aims of Ignatian pedagogy, and the outcome stars used in this research study are based on the categories of change identified within these two domains by the LMTF. The 'Social and Emotional' domain examines how children and youth foster and maintain relationships with adults and peers, and how they perceive themselves in relation to others. Sub-categories of this domain include social and community values, civic values, mental

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health and well-being. The 'Learning Approaches and Cognition' domain examines how a learner engages in, participates in, and is motivated in learning. Cognition in this context is defined as the mental process of acquiring learning through various given approaches. Sub-categories in this domain include persistence and attention, cooperation, problem-solving, self-direction and critical thinking. Outcome stars are a form of self-assessment, enabling students to measure the changes that they have experienced as a result of their programme of study, full details are provided in the methodology chapter.

## Learning outcomes and Ignatian pedagogy – findings

The four most frequently-cited most significant changes (out of a possible 13 changes) in JWL students that completed outcome stars link directly to the key aims and values of Ignatian pedagogy. These four are social awareness, critical decision making, leadership, and positive view of self and others: each is explored below.

Social awareness, defined for students as 'how much you think about the needs of others and your community', was the most frequently cited area of most significant change, identified by 28% of the JWL participants. This increased level of social awareness within JWL students links clearly to the ultimate aim to Ignatian pedagogy to 'form men and women for others' (ICAJE, 1993:5), and relates to several of the Characteristics of Jesuit Education (17, 18 and 20) which have a clear focus on serving others and the importance of the community. For students, the combined 'reflection' and 'action' stages within the Ignatian learning cycle have helped to develop this awareness, as they report having to both reflect on the needs and perspectives of others and then take some form of action as a result of their reflection. The integrated community-focused elements of the CSLT and Diploma courses, be they community projects, research in the community, or community placements were noted as some of the most appreciated aspects of courses by over a third of JWL students, and as integral to their increased social awareness. Outside of the required course activities, this increased awareness had led to a multitude of different actions for the benefit of others, ranging from volunteering in or setting up community activities and returning as a volunteer assistant on the JWL courses, to simply being more generous and helpful in the context of families and friends.

Critical decision-making, defined for students as 'analysing information and different opinions in order to make a choice', was the second most commonly identified area of most significant change by JWL students, selected by 23% of respondents. Jesuit education as a whole has been described as 'a call to critical thinking ... a call to develop the whole person, head and heart, intellect and feelings', moving the learning experience 'beyond rote knowledge to the development of the more complex learning skills of understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation' (Fordham University, 2005). The stages of reflection and evaluation within the Ignatian learning cycle enable students to enhance their critical thinking skills, and the use of teaching and learning activities such as discussion groups, debates and reflective diaries were particularly appreciated by students. Several learners explicitly contrasted these participatory approaches with the more traditional rote learning methods to which they had previously been exposed.

Leadership, defined for students as 'how much you lead others in their activities or attitudes', was the joint second most commonly identified area of most significant change amongst JWL students, also selected by 23% of respondents. It is an explicit aim of Jesuit education to 'form leaders in service, men and women of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment' (Fordham University, 2005). JWL students who selected leadership as their area of most significant change talked about increased confidence and bravery, and being inspired by learning about other significant leaders that they are able to view as role models.

Having a more positive view of self and others (which was self-explanatory to students) was the fourth most frequently selected area of most significant change, with 18% of JWL respondents selecting this category. This links to the Jesuit focus on 'individual care and concern for each person' and encouraging 'a realistic knowledge, love and acceptance of self' (ICAJE, 1980). Ignatian pedagogy also emphasises human-interconnectedness by promoting the 'mutual sharing of experiences and reflective dialogue among learners' (Fordham University, 2005), and in the reflection stage of the learning cycle, encourages students to think about the perspectives of others as well as themselves. Students who identified this area as their most significant change talked about increased confidence and self-worth, with one student reporting that her course 'makes you feel like a human, you are something'

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(JWL, Student, Jordan). Another student explained: 'the course has helped me get back some of the confidence I lost through being displaced. I saw myself as inferior but today I have courage and confidence to move on and to see that I can help someone else in my situation' (JWL, Student, Malawi). Other students noted that their view of others had changed significantly, particularly with regard to forming a more positive opinion of other cultures and religions.

## Conclusions

The most frequently cited areas of most significant change in the lives of JWL students in refugee contexts clearly relate to some of the most important tenets of Ignatian pedagogy. Student perspectives on the elements of their studies that have facilitated these changes appear to be closely linked to their experiences of one or several stages of the Ignatian learning cycle. While the fruit of these significant changes is evident in the qualitative narratives that students provided, there remains a significant challenge in measuring and quantifying such outcomes. The Ignatian emphasis on lifelong personal transformation is an important contribution to the sector, however, it risks being overlooked in a context of evaluative frameworks that often value more easily quantifiable outcomes such as 'number of beneficiaries now in employment' within a certain time period. This annex draws attention to the value that refugee higher education students place on more holistic outcomes, and demonstrates the critical contribution that Ignatian pedagogy has made to the achievement of these outcomes in particular displacement contexts.

## Further reading

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LMTF (Learning Metrics Task Force). 2013b. Toward Universal Learning: A Global Framework for Measuring Learning. Report No. 2 of the Learning Metrics Task Force. Montreal and Washington: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

LMTF (Learning Metrics Task Force). 2013c. Toward Universal Learning: Recommendations from the Learning Metrics Task Force. Montreal and Washington, D. C.: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

