

**REFUGEE LEARNER EXPERIENCES: A
CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWEAN
REFUGEE CHILDREN**

**REFUGEE LEARNER EXPERIENCES:
A CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWEAN
REFUGEE CHILDREN**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled **Refugee Learner Experiences: A Case Study of Zimbabwean Refugee Children**, submitted for a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, is my own production, original in conception and execution, and has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university for examination. Further, all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a presentation of Zimbabwean refugee learner experiences. Children escaped political persecution and economic problems which affected Zimbabwe in the year 2008. Children were abused and they witnessed traumatic experiences in which their close relatives and neighbours were executed in cold blood. The study was guided by three critical questions: i) who are the Zimbabwean refugee learners? ii) what were Zimbabwean refugee learners' migration experiences? and iii) what were Zimbabwean refugee learners' school experiences? The study employed Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model as its overarching theoretical framework. The paradigmatic position of the study was interpretivism. A qualitative approach was used and the study was in form of a single case study of a refugee school in Johannesburg, South Africa. Twenty seven participants were selected using purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. The participants were 16 learners, five parents, four teachers, one principal and one counsellor. Data collecting tools used were semi-structured interviews with all participants, focus group discussions with learners only, autobiographical method, and documentary reviews (school records and profiles). Data was analysed using content analysis. Goodson and Sikes' timeline history was used as an analytical framework for learners' identities. Learners' experiences were presented according to the three stages of refugee experiences (pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration). Each stage of the refugee experience was described at each point in time in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model. The study found that refugee children from Zimbabwe were aged between 16 and 18 years. The majority of children lost their parents during Zimbabwe's political violence while others died of natural causes. Most of the children came from poor socio-economic backgrounds and they were raised by aunts and uncles prior to coming to South Africa. Children had traumatic experiences during

their pre-, trans- and post-migrations. They had unique and challenging school experiences which they overcome against all odds. The study concludes that refugee children's experiences lead to the development of fluid and emergent identities. A resilient framework of refugee learners was developed. Resilience among refugee children is informed by school experiences, emotional trauma, behavioural change and development, and physicality.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Zimbabwean refugee children encountered traumatising migration experiences while they were in their home country, on the journey to the host country, and when they arrived in South Africa. Children's basic rights were violated (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Their education was hopelessly compromised while they were in Zimbabwe and when they arrived in South Africa. Notwithstanding, Zimbabwean refugee children soldiered on, against all odds.

The experiences of Zimbabwean refugee children can be traced back to the country's unpleasant political dynamics in 2007 and 2008. Due to harsh political instabilities and chronic economic problems in Zimbabwe over the past years, many citizens including children, migrated to neighbouring countries to seek refuge, especially to South Africa (Bloch, 2010). This chapter introduces the study of Zimbabwean refugee learners' experiences. It analyses learners' experiences during Zimbabwe's political persecution that was rampant and widespread all over the country prior to and shortly after presidential elections in the year 2008. It also reflects on children's experiences during the country's economic doldrums which significantly contributed to their forced migration to South Africa. I cited several studies to demonstrate the existence of political violence and economic problems which were experienced by Zimbabwean children and forced them to seek refuge in South Africa. The chapter also provides a statement of the problem, rationale for the study, objectives and critical questions guiding this research.

1.2 Zimbabwean Exodus

This section analyses the situation in Zimbabwe that made many children to flee from their country to seek refuge in South Africa. It begins by providing information about the state of Zimbabwe and its economy during the 1980s after attaining independence. The section also provides comprehensive information about the political and economic situation which disrupted the country and made it a dangerous place in which to live.

1.2.1 The State of Zimbabwean Economy During the 1980s and 1990s

Zimbabwe, a former refugee receiving country, is currently the nation that is producing most refugees entering South Africa (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2011a). The country was once called the fruit and bread basket of Africa in the early 1990s when its economy was thriving and all sectors functioning. According to Richardson (2005) when Zimbabwe was politically and economically stable, it was in the top five best performing economies in the region. Education in Zimbabwe was ranked in the top five in Africa with a literacy rate of 94% in 1991. Richardson (2005, p. 1) said: “Zimbabwe had a sophisticated manufacturing base, strong banking sector, vibrant tourism, more dams than any other Sub-Saharan countries except South Africa”. There was peace and most people trusted the police.

The country had a secure rule of law and preservation of human rights. All these sectors contributed to a powerful Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, which averaged 4,3% per year after the country attained its independence in the year 1980 (Richardson, 2005, p. 1). Richardson (2005) states that as a result of the country’s strong resources and facilities, for a long period of time Zimbabwe was known as the “jewel” of Africa which had plenty of raw materials and very productive land for farming purposes. The farming sector was the backbone of the economy of Zimbabwe. The country produced more than enough farm products to supply its people and exported the surplus.

Despite the country’s historical background of peace and prosperity, things changed suddenly when political unrest and economic doldrums occurred. Zimbabwe suddenly became a dangerous place to stay. Both adults and children were vulnerable to political turmoil and economic problems which were affecting the country (Bloch, 2008). The political situation resulted in many children escaping from the country to seek refuge in South Africa.

1.2.2 The Political Situation in Zimbabwe

The greatest number of Zimbabwean nationals flocked to South Africa since 2007 because of political unrest. People’s lives, including those of children, were adversely affected before, during and after the presidential elections which took place in 2008. According to Chung (2010) the opposition party leader won the March 2008 elections by 47,9% of the votes, while the ruling

party leader had 43,2%. Since at least 50% of the votes was required, there was a re-run of presidential elections in June 2008. When the ruling party lost the March 2008 elections, they resorted to extreme violence and intimidated people to vote for them in the re-run of elections in June 2008.

According to Chitando and Togarasei (2010, p. 157): “The period between March and June 2008 represented one of the darkest periods in the post-colonial history of Zimbabwe”. There were more than 200 victims of political violence (including children and women), mostly from the rural areas, and figures continued to increase daily as the presidential election run-off date approached (Badza, 2008). According to Chitando and Togarasei (2010) the violence resulted in torture, persecution, harassment and death of many people, including children and women. Children were exposed to extreme violence. They witnessed their loved ones butchered. Some children were beaten and sexually abused (Eppel, 2009).

According to Chitando and Togarasei (2010, p. 157): “The state literally declared war on its citizens, as Mugabe’s retention of power became its major focus”. The consequences of political violence which happened in Zimbabwe negatively affected the lives of ordinary citizens. Politicians endangered, divided and impoverished families; they destroyed livelihoods, brutally executed people and also displaced them from their homes. The situation resulted in people losing their properties and young children getting separated from their family members (Alexander & Chitofiri, 2010).

Kruger (2012) echoed the same sentiments that many Zimbabweans including young children faced danger from politicians. The situation resulted in some people going to seek refuge in some religious organisations such as churches. The political environment in the country was so tense that people who were offering to help persecuted individuals were dealt with ruthlessly. Even non-governmental organisations which offered to provide young children with food were harassed (Kruger, 2012).

There was credible and verifiable reports of torture, intimidation, harassment, rape, violent attacks, and even murder of human rights defenders, political opponents, journalists, and other dissenting voices opposed to the government of Zimbabwe (Chitando & Togarasei, 2010). According to Alexander and Chitofiri (2010) children experienced horrific encounters which made them leave their home country to seek refuge in South Africa. They were forced to participate in political activities such as attending meetings and to take part in youth camps which were considered compulsory. According to Alexander and Chitofiri (2010 p. 675):

Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) considered a failure to participate in the activities at the bases as ‘criminal’ and deserving of punishment. Many parents sent their children to the bases as protection against attacks on their persons and property.

Some school going children who were considered youths were used by the ruling party to rape, murder and beat up innocent people (Ndhlovu, 2011). There were consequences for not supporting the ruling party. For example, children in Binga were starved to death because their parents were believed to be supporting opposition party, and hence did not receive donated food (Eppel, 2009).

Some children fled the country because of traumatising experiences they faced. Alexander (2010) states that one man was beaten to death on political grounds while his 11-year-old grandson witnessed the attack. Children travelled to South Africa because their loved ones were killed in Zimbabwe. Fritsch, Johnson and Juska (2010) claimed that a 14-year-old boy travelled from Zimbabwe to South Africa as an unaccompanied child after his father was a victim of political violence. Given Zimbabwe’s crippled economy and political unrest, the boy’s mother who was sick at the time encouraged him to go to South Africa for his safety and to find a job.

According to Alexander (2010 p. 501) one participant whose children witnessed horrible experiences in Zimbabwe, said: “I’m worried about my children. They’ve seen police firing shots, beating me, our house burning”. Children experienced bad things happening in the country. Several studies conducted about the political violence in Zimbabwe reported that children were victims.

Ndhlovu (2011) contends that due to massive political unrest in Zimbabwe, children were left idle and desperate. They saw frightening images in which there were people whose limbs were broken, burnt, bloodied and bruised. Some children were persecuted because their parents or close relatives escaped political attacks which were happening in the country. Thus, children were persecuted by politicians in order to reveal the whereabouts of their parents (Bloch & Heese, 2007; Eppel, 2009). According to Eppel (2009 p. 975):

In times of political tension, lists became ominous: in Matabeleland, the 5 Brigade often travelled with lists of ex-Zipra guerrillas, and those whose names were on the list were killed. If the named individuals could not be found then their wives or fathers or sons or whoever else was around was killed instead.

The violence accompanying the harmonised elections left the Zimbabwean people, including children, deeply traumatised and divided (Badza, 2008). The political tension negatively affected children's social lives and education. Many children were displaced and dropped out of school because of the political turmoil, conflict and violence (Alexander, 2010). Human Rights Watch (2008) states that some children ended up not going to school in Zimbabwe because learning institutions were no longer safe havens. Schools were sometimes used for political meetings in which both learners and teachers would be forced to attend. Teachers were abused (in front of learners) and accused of rallying behind the opposition party. There was persecution and beating of members of teachers unions who were accused of taking part in politics (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

Teachers and learners especially in rural areas were intimidated and beaten. As the election date drew closer, the police targeted particular groups that they perceived to be supporters of the opposition, including learners, human rights activists, and representatives of certain non-governmental organisations (Human Rights Watch, 2008). In major cities such as Mutare, Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo, many opposition party supporters including students who were famous activists were arrested (Phimister & Raftopolous, 2007). Politicians were merciless and determined to disrupt education in the country.

Children's education was grossly affected when their teachers were being persecuted. According to Human Rights Watch (2008) school-going children were severely affected by the political and economic conditions of the country. Some children in secondary schools were accused of working with teachers against the ruling party. They were beaten together with their teachers. The abuse of teachers and school children prompted Zimbabwean citizens to seek refuge in South Africa in order to have a chance to carry on with their education. Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa [CoRMSA] (2011) states that Zimbabwean children crossed the border into South Africa because of disturbing experiences they had in their country and also the need to access better education. Education in Zimbabwe was compromised by politics and the country was no longer conducive for teaching and learning to take place.

Many teachers left the country going to South Africa for better working environments. The situation affected children in schools and resulted in many accompanied and unaccompanied minors flocking to South Africa to attain quality education. Polzer (2010) avers that significant numbers of unaccompanied children crossed South Africa's borders to live, study and work. Human Rights Watch (2012) claims that in 2011 there was an increase in politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe. Violence was perpetrated by youths, some of them were children who were supposed to be in school.

The high level of political persecution which Zimbabwean children were experiencing was coupled with economic challenges. Hanke (2009) argues that the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe psychologically affected learners. Although the country had a national unity government, its economy and politics remained unresolved and that deteriorated the lives of many citizens including school going children. According to Rutherford and Addison (2007): "It is hard now in Zimbabwe. It is like you are in jail in Zimbabwe; the government is the new jail" (p. 622). The government was described as the new jail because of political and economic problems which were hard hitting the country and believed to be caused by the nation's leaders. This resulted in a large influx of citizens to different places. Hammerstad (2012, p. 1) contended that: "The political and economic debacle in Zimbabwe has led to a large-scale influx of Zimbabweans into neighbouring South Africa."

1.2.3 Economic Situation

It is believed that economic challenges in Zimbabwe began in 2000 (with land reformation) and came to a complete collapse in 2008. Ploch (2008) contends that the economic down turn of Zimbabwe began in the year 2000 with the land redistribution programme. The agricultural sector which contributed significantly to the growth of the economy of Zimbabwe was disrupted and that resulted in massive food shortages: “Five million Zimbabweans, almost half the population, received food aid in early 2006” (Ploch, 2008, p. 22). Grain silos across the country which used to keep food, more than enough for the citizens, were empty and people were starved (Ploch, 2008).

The economy of the country was shaken. Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007) claimed that by the year 2007, Zimbabwe had the fastest shrinking economy, the highest rate of inflation and the lowest life expectancy in the world. Coltart (2008) states that:

Since 1994, the average life expectancy in Zimbabwe had fallen from 57 years to 34 years for women and from 54 years to 37 years for men. Some 3,500 Zimbabweans died every week from the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, and malnutrition (p. 1).

Unprecedented levels of inflation hit the Zimbabwean economy. Hanke and Kwok (2009, p. 356) argued that the country’s hyperinflation of 2007–2008 was the worst to be experienced in the 21st century. The country had a monthly inflation rate of 79,600,000,000.00 which is equivalent to a daily inflation rate of 98.0. Inflation was the greatest enemy of the Zimbabwean economy (Beri, 2008), and was the hallmark of the country’s economic collapse. The country’s hyperinflation destroyed the economy and plunged many people into poverty and forced many citizens to go to neighbouring countries (Hanke, 2008). Given the malfunctioning economy and the political fall, Obe (2006) postulates that it can be argued that Zimbabwe is a failing state and equally a state of concern to its neighbours and the international community. The political violence and economic problems forced children to migrate to South Africa.

Bloch (2008; 2010) argues that Zimbabwean children migrated to South Africa mainly because of rampant inflation, violation of people’s rights and massive torture. Due to the economic collapse in Zimbabwe, all sectors, including education, begun to malfunction (Sisulu et al.,

2007). Schools and universities were closed and Zimbabwean children multiplied the numbers of refugees and asylum seeking children in South Africa.

1.2.4 Zimbabweans in South Africa

UNHCR (2011b) maintains that South Africa received more than 207,000 individual asylum applications in 2008 and a further 222,300 in 2009. The number is four times more than people who applied for asylum in 2007. UNHCR (2011a) states that about 100,000 applications launched in 2008 were from Zimbabweans in South Africa. The South African UNHCR's planning for 2011 was based on a projected 470,000 people. Fifty five percent of that number was from Zimbabwe alone, and the rest was from many other African countries (UNHCR, 2011b). Zimbabwe makes up the highest number of refugees in South Africa.

The situation in Zimbabwe has not fully stabilized that it can attract its citizens including refugee children who are in South Africa (Bloch, 2010). Currently, the overall context in Zimbabwe remains unstable. Although the economic and humanitarian conditions have improved from the way they were in 2009, the future of the country is still unpredictable because of instabilities.

In light of the economic and political problems in Zimbabwe, the South African Minister for Home Affairs stopped deporting Zimbabweans in April 2009. There was an arrangement that was made between the Zimbabwean and South African governments that Zimbabweans should legalize their stay by obtaining asylum and achieving refugee status (UNHCR, 2011b). About 1,5 million Zimbabweans are believed to be living in South Africa and the majority of them are illegal immigrants (without refugee status) (CoRMSA, 2011). However, many Zimbabweans (about half a million) benefited from the regularization of their stay in South Africa by applying for asylum and getting refugees status (UNHCR, 2011b). Many Zimbabweans in South Africa are seeking employment and education since the South African law accords basic rights to refugees (Igglesden, Monson & Polzer, 2009). Some children are in refugee schools, and one notable refugee institution is Chitate Street School for refugees, the focus of this study.

Zimbabwean children encountered traumatising life experiences in their country, and they faced hostile communities in South Africa. According to CoRMSA (2009, p. 12): “On aggregate, Zimbabweans face more acute social and human security challenges than South Africans or other non-nationals; these challenges include access to public services, assets and income, physical insecurity and xenophobia”. Zimbabwean men, women and children have often been particular targets in the rising xenophobia in South Africa (Muzondidya, 2010). This study sought to investigate the experiences of children with specific reference to refugee learners from Zimbabwe who are at Chitate School of Refugees in South Africa.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Bloch (2008); Ploch (2008) and Alexander (2010) Zimbabwean refugee learners in South Africa fled their country because of massive political persecution and the economic free fall in their country. The situation affected many school going children and their parents so much that the trauma lingers in their memories. One way of healing traumatised children is by using education to enable them to accept their losses and adapt to the current situation (Hamilton, 2004). In this case, children’s education was also disrupted and became an issue of concern. Given the experiences from Zimbabwe, refugee learners are expected to adapt to a new life in the South African context. Children are likely to experience severe challenges of exclusion and psychological trauma which could lead them to facing both physical and epistemic access issues which limit the extent to which the nation of South Africa could achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) both in the short and long term (Hanke, 2009). Children are also expected to adapt to the Cambridge curriculum that is followed by a school they are attending in South Africa. Regardless of all the challenges, refugee learners from Zimbabwe have to soldier on.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study stems from three fundamental dimensions. Firstly, from a contextual point of view, refugee learner experiences are under-researched (Velez, Sundararajan, Brown & Gifford, 2007). There is a need for more extensive research about the experiences of refugee children. Secondly, from a personal dimension, the researcher is a Zimbabwean citizen who has witnessed some schooling interruptions and the traumatic experiences in the country during its

political unrest and economic collapse, hence the desire to study Zimbabwean refugee learners' experiences. Thirdly, from an intellectual point of view, there is a need to understand refugee learners' experiences and how they cope in their new environment. Such knowledge helps to contribute to the field of refugee education.

1.5 Importance of the Study

It is hoped that the study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in host countries. This knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to the improvement of education for refugees in Africa. There is a dearth of research on refugee learner experiences. According to Williams (2010): "Very little empirical research has been conducted in the area of the ecology of refugee that actually describes experiences through the voices of refugees themselves" (p. 92). Thus, this study may contribute to the understanding of refugee education and their migration patterns.

This study enabled refugees to comment on their experiences, which may lead to more durable solutions to the refugee crisis in Africa. It is hoped that through interactions that I had with learners, this study developed information which can be useful to UNHCR's realisation of a long term vision about refugee children's education. The UNHCR's long term vision in terms of education is: "to provide quality education to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and returnees" (UNHCR, 2009a, p. 18). The study was influenced by Roxas' (2010) view that:

In order to improve education for refugee students, there must be a commitment to an ongoing and focused discussion amongst administrators, teachers, refugee students, and their families about how schools are meeting (or not) the unique needs of refugee students (p. 72).

This study generated new insights into the provision of quality education to refugees and how the interaction of different environmental systems affects them. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of refugees from the Maslow's hierarchy of needs' point of view. The study vividly brings to light the state of refugee children in terms of the full gamut of human needs. It also made a contribution to the resilient theory. The theory was expanded as it

relates to refugee children. This knowledge helps to have a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a refugee child and how resilience is a cornerstone to all forced migrants.

1.6 Focus of the Study

Hanke (2009) argues that the high political tension between parties and economic challenges in Zimbabwe resulted in the closure of schools and universities and the malfunctioning of many sectors. As a result, Zimbabwean learners migrated to neighbouring countries with the majority entering South Africa where they were faced with a hostile reception. This study focused on investigating Zimbabwean refugee learners' experiences in South Africa.

1.7 Research Objectives

The specific research objectives of this study are to:

- i) Investigate the Zimbabwean refugee learners' identities;
- ii) Examine Zimbabwean refugee learners' migration experiences; and
- iii) Investigate Zimbabwean refugee learners' school experiences

1.8 Critical Research Questions

- i) Who are the Zimbabwean refugee learners?
- ii) What were Zimbabwean refugee learners' migration experiences?
- iii) What were Zimbabwean refugee learners' school experiences?

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis on refugee learners' experiences comprises of seven chapters. Chapter one provided a comprehensive introduction and background to the study. It situated the study historically from the time when the economy of Zimbabwe was booming until it was paralyzed by political unrest and economic doldrums (Bloch, 2008; 2010; Ploch, 2008). The chapter also provides statement of the problem, rationale of the study as well as objectives and critical research questions guiding the study.

Chapter two reviews literature related to refugee learners' experiences. Refugee learner experiences have been divided into migration experiences and school experiences. Migration experiences comprise of what refugee children went through in their home country, on the journey to the host country and what actually happens when they settle in the host country (Anderson, Hamilton, Moore, Loewen & Mathieson, 2004; Bhugra et al., 2011). Literature on school experiences focused on the importance of education for a refugee child. According to Pacheco (2011) and Peterson (2003) education provides the primary means by which refugee children gain a sense of empowerment and independence. The chapter also presented insights on challenges faced by refugee children in accessing their right to education internationally and in the South African context.

Chapter three provides detailed information about conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. The conceptual framework guiding this research is based upon the ideas of Anderson et al. (2004) and Bhugra et al. (2011) who unanimously contend that refugee learner experiences can best be understood by looking at their pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration experiences. The theoretical framework guiding this research is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Social Ecological Model. The model was used as an analytical framework of refugee learners' migration and school experiences. Refugee learners' identities were analysed following the Goodson and Sikes' (2001) timeline history.

Chapter four outlines the research design and methodology of the study. It provides a detailed data production plan and justification for each selected method. The study employed a qualitative approach and followed an interpretive paradigm. Chapter five analyses data on refugee learners' identities and migration experiences using Goodson and Sikes' (2001) timeline history and Bronfenbrenner's model, respectively. Refugee learners' migration experiences were presented according to the three stages of refugee experiences (pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration). Each stage of the refugee learner experience was analysed in terms of Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model which looks at the development of a child by considering the interaction of environmental systems. Chapter six analyses the refugee learners' school experiences using Bronfenbrenner's model.

The final chapter presents an overview of research findings and evaluates how the study responded to critical questions that it set to explore, assesses the contribution made by this thesis, and also identifies directions for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented an introduction and background to the study where Zimbabwean political and economic problems were identified as the main causes of children's forced migration. Children left Zimbabwe mainly because of political instability and poor economic conditions which gripped the country. Zimbabwean learners encountered disturbing experiences when the country's economy fell apart. Their standard of living was severely compromised and education disrupted. This resulted in children leaving the country in search of a better life and quality education in the neighbouring South Africa. The chapter presented a statement of the problem, rationale for the study as well as objectives and critical questions guiding the research. It also presented an outline of the thesis. The next chapter reviews literature about refugee learners' experiences.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

According to Baker (2000) literature review is defined as a systematic analysis and evaluation of scholarly works focused on a particular topic. Among other reasons, literature review is done in order to delimit the research problem and to have a deep understanding of what is known and unknown around a specific area of study. This necessitates a critical review of the literature in which existing research is discussed and evaluated, thereby contextualising and justifying the project (Saunders & Rojon, 2011). I was able to justify the need for my study of refugee learner experiences after I read different literature about forced migration.

This chapter reviews literature related to refugee learner experiences. It begins by assessing the definition of a refugee set by the 1951 Geneva Convention. Scholars advocate for a revision of the definition in order to have a more responsive criteria for granting refugee status in this contemporary 21st century. The second section focuses on refugee learner experiences and is presented in three phases, namely: i) in the home country; ii) in transit; and iii) in the host country. At each of these stages children face traumatic encounters. The third section presents acculturation strategies.

The final section focuses on challenges faced by refugee children in the host country. In an atmosphere where countries ratified international and national legislation that advocate for the rights of refugees, one would think that children easily attain their principles of entitlement. However, there is a wide gap between what is in policy documents and experiences that refugee children actually face on the ground. In different countries, refugee children have difficulties in attaining their basic rights to health care, education and other social services.

Refugee children are disadvantaged in schools because they are often taught by unqualified teachers, grouped into inappropriate classes and learn with minimal teaching and learning resources such as textbooks. In the South African context, this chapter assesses literature which suggests that refugee children are denied opportunities to enroll in government schools. The

problem of refugee children's education in South Africa is exacerbated by the Department of Home Affairs which takes too long to offer refugee permits.

2.2 Who is a Refugee?

Identifying people who qualify to get refugee status is difficult. Hatoss (2012) argues that the question of identity development is complex in the context of refugee groups. Thus, it is important to have an understanding of who refugees really are in order to comprehend their experiences. Similarly, Pacheco (2011) argues that when doing a study of refugees, it is very important to begin by defining the context in which a person is considered a refugee. Defining refugees is important in order to understand the criterion used for a person to get that status. According to UNHCR (2005) it is essential to establish who refugees are. That enables host countries to implement the obligations as they are set in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol.

In everyday life, the word refugee simply means an individual who has been displaced or a person who goes to another country to seek refuge status because of political persecution in his/her home country (Papadopoulos, 2007). This definition differs slightly from the legal definition as determined by the United Nations. Prior to the Second World War, refugees were defined on an ad hoc basis with reference to their national origin (UNHCR, 2005). After the Second World War, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a specific criterion of establishing who can be a refugee. A comprehensive definition of a refugee was written in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

The United Nations 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees provides a comprehensive legal code regarding the rights of refugees at the international level and defines what it means to be a refugee (UNHCR, 2010). The 1951 Convention definition of a refugee provides protection of people who experience persecution and torture in their home countries. The Convention on the Status of a refugee views a refugee as a person who is incapable or reluctant to go back to his country of origin:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of

his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (United Nations, 1951, p. 2).

UNHCR (2005) asserts that the 1951 definition of refugees was expanded in Africa in 1969 by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union. According to the OAU's article 1 (2) of the 1969:

The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his [or her] country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his [or her] place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his [or her] country of origin or nationality (UNHCR, 2005, p. 6).

According to the UNHCR (2005) the 1969 definition of a refugee emerged as a result of civil and liberation wars which were happening in Africa in the periods that ranged between the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, in the African context, the African Union definition of a refugee came about because of atrocities of war and human rights abuses which were rampant in the continent. The definition was expanded to accommodate people affected by external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order (UNHCR, 2005).

The African Union definition makes a slight provision for the accommodation of the current movement of people because it specifies external aggression and disturbance of public order. It is contextualized to the African continent and makes more provision for refugees compared to the international definition which is rigid and concerned more with violence and persecution. It, however, does not clearly define the complex problem of refugees, asylum seekers and economic immigrants.

UNHCR (2005) postulates that the United Nations 1951 Convention is a status and rights-based instrument. Although different continents or countries may re-define a refugee to suit their contexts, the 1951 Convention definition is the main instrument that delineates people who qualifies. Its definition is the primary basis of determining a refugee and countries that ratified it are obliged to stick to its stipulations. The 1951 Convention provides protection for refugees. It defines fundamental principles for treatment of a refugee and also specifies the criterion of becoming one (Pacheco, 2011). In order for a person to become entitled to the protections

afforded by the Convention and Protocol, he/she must meet the criteria of becoming a refugee as defined by the United Nations.

The United Nations definition of a refugee is currently the keystone international text that is frequently used in response to forced migration (Steinbock, 1999). Through the 1951 convention, many nations have to incorporate a provision to accommodate refugees in their countries. The definition is emphatic on the protection of people from various politically related violence backgrounds and any form of persecution (UNHCR, 2010). There are different forms of persecution which refugees experience which make it impossible for them to go back to their countries. Some might have been tortured in their home countries whereas others may have been abused (Hamilton, 2004).

In some instances, children seek refuge because of economic conditions. Quintero (2009) postulates that some children may have come to seek refuge in a foreign country because of natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes. In the 21st century, the bulk of people seeking refuge in other countries do so because of poor economic and environmental conditions in their home countries. The problem, however, is that the definition of a refugee in terms of the 1951 Convention does not consider environmental and economic factors (Slobe, 2011). The definition emphasizes giving refugee status to people who have been persecuted or experienced conditions that may cause them not to be able to go back to their home country. The rigidity of the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees has caused some scholars such as Ott (2011) to challenge the definition and call for a revision of the conditions of accepting refugees. This has been done in order to encompass the refugee situation in the current global context.

A definition which suits current migratory flows should not only be restricted to wars and persecution, but should also consider environmental and economic factors. African countries such as Zimbabwe and Zambia suffered chronic economic problems (Bloch, 2010). Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo were once affected by floods and volcanoes respectively. This resulted in the massive exodus of citizens to other African countries. According to the Convention definition, none of these people ought to be given refugee status. The rigidity of the Convention definition of a refugee is being challenged by different scholars in the 21st century.

2.2.1 Problems with the Geneva Convention 1951 Definition of a Refugee

The 1951 definition of a refugee has been contested by various scholars in this new millennium. Slobe (2011) asserts that the main problem with the 1951 definition of a refugee is that it is old and does not accommodate some global issues arising in the 21st century. Lately, the definition is viewed as becoming less valuable since it does not adequately address the nature of refugee movements which are happening in different countries today (Slobe, 2011). The convention definition of a refugee is outdated; it was developed based on experiences of violence, exile and political motives (Ott, 2011). The experiences of war and violence are at the centre of the Convention definition of a refugee. It does not consider anything else other than some form of persecution which renders someone's inability to return to his country (Binder & Tasic, 2005).

Sidhu, Taylor and Christie (2011) argued that the convention was devised with a particular kind of refugee in mind. This is understandable considering the time period when the 1951 definition was adopted. The definition was not premeditated with the nature of environmental and economic refugee outflows that is currently happening in the 21st century (Ott, 2011). As a result of the gap that the definition of refugees leaves concerning environmental and economic migration, some countries granted refugee status not exclusively based on persecution. An example of this is where Mozambicans and Zimbabweans were given refugee status in South Africa because of the economic collapse of their countries (Bloch, 2010). Some scholars conclude that the 1951 definition is biased.

Binder and Tasic (2005) contend that the definition is biased because it is based on male refugees. For example, the definition says "owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (United Nations, 1951, p. 2). Binder and Tasic (2005) state that the assumption of the definition is that women are subsumed under men. The definition has some gender imbalances and requires some amendments to make it current and applicable to the situation on the ground.

The definition has to be responsive to current causes of migration such as earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and other natural disasters (Hyndman, 1987; Millbank, 2000; Paoletti, 2011; Quintero, 2009). Although Sweden grants refugee permits according to the criterion set by the 1951 Geneva Convention, it also goes beyond this. Hollander, Bruce, Burström and Ekblad (2011) argued that while Sweden grants asylum to people based on persecution and torture, it also gives refuge to victims of an environmental disaster in their native country. The Swedish criterion for granting refugee status is comprehensive and accommodates migration flows in the 21st century. It is more flexible than the 1951 Convention which was criticized for being rigid and unfair to host countries.

Ott (2011) argues that the definition in terms of the 1951 Convention is burdensome and unfair to the host country. The Convention simply states that the host country has to provide all rights of refugee children. It does not require the country where refugees would be fleeing from, to offer assistance to the host nation. As a result, host countries have a greater burden of looking after refugees with little international assistance. The host country has obligations to provide refugees with their rights to education, health care and social services (UNHCR, 2010). Host countries will do that with the little help that comes from UNHCR, and not from any other country. The burden could be too much on the host country because it has the obligation of providing rights to all its citizens as well.

According to Ott (2011) some African countries do not have adequate resources to support their own citizens, let alone refugees. However, as a result of the international law, they are forced to accept more refugees than they can support. The 1951 definition does not explain how the receiving country ought to sustain its people and refugees as well. The definition only provides an explanation of who qualifies to obtain refugee status. It does not clearly make provision for economic immigrants who are also important because they are often mistaken for refugees and asylum seekers.

2.2.2 Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Economic Immigrants

Fred, Chung and Pedersen (2003) argued that to truly understand the situation of refugees it is important to emphasize differences between refugees and economic immigrants, or forced versus free migration. Refugees are forced to leave their country of origin based on the 1951 Geneva Convention on the status of refugees. According to Fred et al. (2003) refugees are distinguished from other migrants such as immigrants, sojourners, or guest workers, mainly because of the nature of their departure which is involuntary. The departure of refugees is often caused by events outside their control such as war and political turmoil. The result of this abrupt departure is that refugees are not prepared psychologically and pragmatically for the rapid movement and transitions (Fred et al., 2003). They are faced with uncertainty, disarray, risky encounters and complete disruption of normal life (UNHCR, 2010). Refugees differ from asylum seekers.

An asylum seeker is a person who has left his/her home country and make a formal application for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been determined (Walker, 2011). In the same vein, the UNHCR (2009a) defines an asylum seeker as a person who desperately requires international protection, but his/her claim has not yet been processed by the host country in which he/she has sought asylum. In other words, when a person has applied to be recognised as a refugee and is awaiting a decision from the new government, he/she can be called an asylum seeker (Bhugra et al., 2011). Once a person (asylum seeker) who applied for refugee status gets a positive response from the government of the host country, he/she will then be called a refugee. UNHCR (2011d) asserts that all refugee children were once asylum seekers, but it does not necessarily mean that all asylum seekers would ultimately become refugees.

UNHCR (2009a) postulates that asylum seekers can not be given full rights like citizens of the host country because their applications for refugee status would be pending. This is different from refugees who have rights to education, health and social services just like citizens of the host country. Thus, refugees and asylum seekers differ in the sense that refugees have received their status, but asylum seekers are still in the process of obtaining refugee status. Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) argued that one thing that asylum seekers and refugees have in common is the fact that they both involuntarily lost their homes and they miss a place that they call theirs. They will both be in a foreign country to make ends meet because the situation was

tense for them in their home countries. Refugees and asylum seekers are different from economic immigrants.

UNHCR (2011d) defines economic migrants as: “Persons who leave their countries of origin purely for economic reasons” (p. 11). According to UNHCR (2011d) economic migrants do not satisfy the Convention definition of a refugee. Consequently, they should not be categorised in the same group with refugees. Stein (1981) argues that refugees differ from economic migrants because economic migrants may decide to move the whole family. They may bring resources with them and make preparations for a new life. This is different from refugee movements which result from an overwhelming push of persecution and threats in their home countries.

Another difference between refugees and economic migrants is that any destination will do for the refugee while the immigrants have a preferred destination (Stein, 1981). Economic migrants have a choice to make that would be best for themselves and families (UNHCR, 2011c). Refugees flee anywhere in order to reach safety and protect their freedom. Economic immigrants take time to study the economy of the country before they make a decision to move, and do not have a right to get refugee status.

Andrew and Shacknove (1985) argued that a criterion for granting refugee status occurs specifically when a government fails to provide protection to people whose lives are threatened mainly because of risky persecutions. In that respect, a person qualifies to get international assistance. This means a person who moves from one country to another seeking employment or voluntarily migrating to another country in order to get quality education for his/her children automatically risks losing being called a refugee (Qasmiyeh, 2011). Based on this interpretation, people who voluntarily migrate for the purposes of poor economy in their countries or for the attainment of better standards of education do not qualify for international protection.

Bhugra et al. (2011) claimed that refugee learners are perhaps the most vulnerable of all migrant groups in terms of mental and physical health. They encounter experiences which may be so traumatising that they will end up developing post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Tienda and Haskins (2011) contend that refugee families face many risks. Some families get separated when they reach the host country or some children will decide to travel from their home countries to a foreign country without the care of parents/guardians. Such minors are called unaccompanied children.

2.2.3 Unaccompanied children

The Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] (1989) Article 1 defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (p. 2). Based on the CRC definition of a child, any person who is below eighteen years is a child. The UNHCR (2006) defines unaccompanied children (or unaccompanied minors) as: “children who have been separated from both parents and relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so” (p. 5). Children can get separated from their parents because of wars, famines and natural disasters, among other factors. They will seek refuge in foreign countries without the company of parents/guardians. Couch (2011) maintains that many refugee young people enter Australia as unaccompanied children and arrive without any family or extended family. Children may have escaped persecution in their home countries and look forward to a peaceful life in a foreign country. Unaccompanied and separated children have long been a feature of asylum and refugee flows, particularly in the developing world (Crock, 2006).

Unaccompanied refugee minors are a distinct class of immigrants with a complex set of needs. They are an exceptionally vulnerable group of people (German & Ehntholt, 2007). They encounter harsh experiences in their home countries such as witnessing deaths of loved ones which may force them to seek refuge in a foreign country (Sidhu et al., 2011). Unaccompanied children experience greater challenges than their accompanied peers, both before and during resettlement. This is because unaccompanied children have to face all challenges by themselves, without parents/guardians to help them (Michelson & Sclare, 2009). Some unaccompanied

children may not have asylum which allow them to obtain services like education, health care and government support.

Bhabha (2004) argues that it is more difficult for separated or unaccompanied children to gain asylum as compared to adults. Children cannot stand up for themselves and pursue the application process that is long and sometimes cumbersome. They are too young to find proper legal representation. In many situations, their applications are continuously postponed and they take a long period of time to process until they are granted refugee status (Bhabha, 2004).

Crock (2006) postulates that unaccompanied and separated children face particular hurdles in trying to access asylum processes in Australia. In order for a child to gain access to Australia's asylum procedures, he/she has to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that he/she is in need of the country's protection. A child will have to do all that without legal assistance of any kind and prove that he/she is a person to whom Australia owes protection obligation (Crock, 2006). The problem is that most of the children may not be in possession of the legal papers that are needed. Some of them may have entered the country illegally and they could have lost their documentation.

As a result of illegal entry, children avoid officials because of fear of being caught and deported to their home countries (Elwyn, Gladwell & Lyall, 2012). They go through many challenges in the host country where they require help. Some experience psychosocial problems and will require assistance to cope with their situation. German and Ehntholt (2007) contend that psychosocial support groups can be helpful because of their capabilities of providing social contact to children that are isolated and finding it difficult to cope in their new environment. Elwyn et al. (2012) maintained that many unaccompanied minors suffer from guilt about the fact that they now live in safety, while their families in their home countries may still be at risk. Inability to contact their families often exacerbates this anxiety. Under the circumstances, children find it very hard to adjust in the places that they will be staying as well as in schools.

According to Bhugra et al. (2011) refugee children find it hard to adjust at home and in school. The situation results in some older children having a responsibility of looking after the young ones. Some unaccompanied refugee children face many problems in which they will be grappling to forget the past and trying to get to terms with the challenges in their new environment which could be very hostile (Papadopoulos, 2002).

CoRMSA (2009) contends that most of the unaccompanied children face the challenge of sexual abuse, exploitation, and a great deprivation of human rights. The greatest problem that unaccompanied children experience is the fact that hosting countries may not treat them as children who require basic needs, but regard them as mere refugees (CoRMSA, 2009). Huemer and Vostanis (2010) asserted that throughout Europe, unaccompanied refugee minors are exposed to an additional institutional conflict. They are treated according to their refugee or asylum seeking status, and not primarily as children and adolescents. The majority of unaccompanied children are often denied education and frequently have to work to survive. This raises the possibility of exploitation and family separation and can inflict psychosocial damage on children (Craig, 2010).

According to CoRMSA (2011) many unaccompanied children who come to the Republic of South Africa are faced with considerable risks such as working under abusive and exploitative conditions. Women's Refugee Commission (2011) echoed the same sentiments that displaced young people, both male and female, are vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups. Children may resort to dangerous jobs to meet their own survival needs or to criminal activities or drug and alcohol abuse. Female refugee children are at a greater risk of abuses such as physical violence and exploitation (Women's Refugee Commission, 2011). Unaccompanied children are vulnerable to all those inhumane treatments because they are minors who depend on adults for survival. Some adults take advantage of children's dependence on them to exploit and abuse them. This makes refugee children have difficult experiences.

2.3 Refugee Experiences

Refugees go through a lot of unbearable experiences which begin in their home countries and to the host country. Craig (2010) maintains that many refugee children are very reluctant to talk about experiences that they encountered in their home and host countries. This is because it is painful to review unpleasant experiences in their lives. According to Papadopoulos (2007) events that refugee children experience cause them to develop some degree of psychological distress, upheaval and confusion. They go through harsh experiences which include loss of their loved ones, losing homes and sometimes losing their identities (Muneghina & Papadopoulos, 2010). Some refugees go through experiences which may cause them to have a unique form of disorientation (Muneghina & Papadopoulos, 2010).

Refugee experiences can be categorized into three stages, namely: home country experiences (pre-migration), transit experiences (transmigration) and host country experiences (post-migration) (Anderson et al., 2004; Bhugra & Gupta, 2011; Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Lustig et al., 2004). All three stages of migration can pose stress to refugees (Weaver & Burns, 2001). Each stage has its distinct set of challenges which refugee children encounter. Bhugra et al. (2011) asserted that the first stage of home country experiences involves the decision and planning to move away. In the second stage (transit), refugees would physically relocate to another country. Both home country and transit experiences may cause a lot of stress to refugee children (Lustig et al., 2004). Henley and Robinson (2011) claim that pre-migration and transmigration experiences of refugees make them feel very stressed and sometimes traumatised that they would find it difficult to settle in the host country. The third stage is viewed as the absorption of the refugee within the social and cultural framework of the new society (Bhugra et al., 2011).

Marar (2011) asserts that refugee phases are complex mainly because children have to go through difficult circumstances in each and every stage. In some cases, children's experiences could be so traumatising that they may lose their identities during the course of migration. Children's experiences can be exacerbated when they arrive in the host country where they are expected to adapt quickly and move on with life in a new setting (Marar, 2011). Rousseau, Drapeau and Corin (1997) argued that refugee children are at risk of developing mental health problems on account of the acute stress and trauma associated with the refugee processes. This

stress comes as a result of massive challenges that children encounter on their homes, on the journey to the host country and complexities associated with living in a new society (Rousseau et al., 1997).

2.3.1 Experiences in the Home Country (Pre-migration Experiences)

Experiences in the home country refer to what refugee children go through prior to being forced to leave. This includes challenges and threats that children face which makes them seek refuge in another country (Moore & Shellman, 2006). Kelly (2010) postulates that many refugee children and asylum seekers face challenges in their home countries which affect their mental health and prompt them to relocate to other countries. Roxas (2011) asserts that refugee children could be exposed to harsh experiences that are so unbearable that they will decide to seek refuge in other countries. Some refugee children experience extreme violence which will traumatise them.

Craig (2010) postulates that it is very important to understand the nature and extent of pre-migration trauma and violence and the entire range of experiences that refugee children go through prior to their migration. Some of the traumatic experiences that children witness linger in their minds and affect them even when they have long settled in the host country. Some may be exposed to harsh experiences such as imprisonment, torture, witnessing murder, child soldier activity and loss of family members through violence (Sidhu et al., 2011), sexual and physical assault and the deprivation of human rights (Couch, 2011).

Schininà, Sharma, Gorbacheva and Mishra (2011) contend that several risk factors may characterise refugee children's pre-migration experiences. These include direct or witnessed experiences of violence and sexual abuse. Some children face traumatic experiences such as seeing a mother or sister raped or becoming victims of rape themselves in their home countries (Craig, 2010). Some would be exposed to some brutality of using animals to rape human beings or removing the unborn foetus from a pregnant woman (Weaver & Burns, 2001). Children's exposure to such experiences contributes to emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and conduct disorders (Bhugra & Gupta, 2011).

Somali refugee children in Boston, United States of America (USA) witnessed the execution of their family members, experienced war and disruption of lives (Williams, 2010). Rasmussen, Katoni, Keller and Wilkinson (2011) argued that refugee children experienced horrific incidents during the attacks by Sudanese military in Darfur. Children were shot, suffocated, strangled, kidnapped, drowned and starved to death. Refugees stated four different types of material loss: destruction of crops, destruction of homes, theft, and killing of livestock (Rasmussen et al., 2011). Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans and Asic-Kobe (2011) argued that:

Burmese refugee children in Australia had severe pre-migration traumas which include: lack of food or water; ill health without access to medical care; lack of shelter; imprisonment/detention; rape or sexual abuse; forced isolation from others; being close to death; forced separation from family members; murder of family or friend; lost or kidnapped and tortured (p. 303).

Weaver and Burns (2001) articulated that children from Sri Lanka who were refugees in Canada had traumatic pre-migration experiences in their home country. Some reported that they had cigarette burns and others had damaged joints and vertebrae. Some of the respondents described their families including children being immersed in a climate of violence where they had no safe place to turn to and could trust no one, including government officials and the police (Weaver & Burns, 2001).

According to Weaver and Burns (2001) Sri Lankan citizens had daunting pre-migration experiences. Adults and children had gun shots in various body parts such as the knee, neck and abdomen. Such experiences are devastating and they result in refugees losing their homes during the period of conflict. Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) contend that involuntary loss of homes which refugee children experience is not only about the mindful loss of the house that belongs to a family or material possessions that they like. This loss also creates a more fundamental psychological disturbance of their whole sense of belonging. Refugee children, like other human beings, get attached to a place that they call home. Therefore, losing that home over-night will have immeasurable repercussions on their well-being.

2.3.2 Transit Experiences (Transmigration)

The second stage, transit, involves refugees on a flight (journey) to the host country. Anderson et al. (2004) affirmed that the transit phase includes experiences that occurred in the transition from home to host country. This could be a short transition that includes the plane trip from home to host country or could involve years spent hiding or confinement in refugee camps, prior to moving to the host country (Anderson et al., 2004). A journey to a country of refuge can be stressful and burdensome to refugees. Children may experience perilous journeys, arrest, detention, sexual assault and torture during their journeys to the host country (Kaplan, 2009). They may be arrested because of not having travel documents or for trying to enter clandestinely. Children and women are the most vulnerable groups of people on transit.

Kira, Smith, Lewandowski and Templin (2010) stated that the experience of traveling from one country to another is much more difficult for women and children because they are more vulnerable to assaults and exploitation by people that they come across at the border and in refugee camps. According to Bryant and Ahearn (1999):

For the African refugee child who is forced to leave home, relatives, friends, and familiar surroundings, the process is fraught with danger and often times involves additional traumatic events. For example, many Angolan refugees were brutalized, robbed, raped and killed by soldiers. Mozambicans fleeing war in their country were exposed to a long, dangerous and traumatic journey to safety, and many Somali refugees died of starvation as they fled their country en route to areas where they could find food (p. 80).

Transit experiences can be more traumatising to children because they may encounter worse problems than they had prior to departing from their home countries. Some children may be lost while others may witness tragic experiences on the way to the host country. Kirkbride and Jones (2011) suggest that transit in itself is a major life changing event and may put considerable stress on individuals. It involves a series of losses, such as the family and the familiar society, and both emotional and structural losses are experienced. The aspect of loss is very common to refugee children. It starts in the pre-migration phase when children lose their relatives, homes and other belongings. The loss continues in transit where children will be losing their culture and societal norms when they move to a new country.

The refugee children's journey to the host country is very stressful and can involve border jumping, river crossing, walking in deserts, and also lengthy stays in refugee camps (Henley & Robinson, 2011). Refugees face challenges such as walking long distances and being denied entry into the host country by immigration officials. The major trauma reported by the South East Asian refugees in USA was walking very long distances in order to reach the border (Rousseau et al., 1997). According to Rutter (2003) almost all Vietnamese refugees in the United Kingdom have made perilous journeys in small boats to Hong Kong and other South East Asian countries in which at least 10% of refugees perished from dehydration, drowning or pirate attacks.

Transit experiences often become a big challenge because refugees make unplanned journeys to countries of refuge. They may have been forced to run away from their home country without having ample time to prepare for the journey (Henley & Robinson, 2011). In such a situation, refugee children take chances of trying to cross borders illegally by slipping passed immigration patrols. This makes refugee journeys risky because women and children can be taken advantage of and get abducted and raped by people who may have helped them to make clandestine entries. Henley and Robinson (2011) stated that as a result of illegal entries into a foreign country, children may sustain physical injuries. This is because the process of transmigration implies a high level of stress and consequences which may have repercussions on the mental health of immigrants (Kirchner & Patiño, 2011).

In South Africa, migrant children who cross borders illegally are at the risk of rape, abduction and even murder by people who pretend to be willing to offer help to unaccompanied minors (CoRMSA, 2009). One of the main characteristics of the transit experience is that migrants pass borders illegally. They may be caught before or after they reach host communities, and are deported back home (CoRMSA, 2008). Vijayakumar and Jotheeswaran (2010) asserted in the European context, that in many instances refugee children are detained, dispersed and ill-treated mainly because they will not be in possession of legal papers. The absence of legal papers makes some refugees and their children make their journeys in the evenings. This endangers their lives because they may be robbed and murdered by criminals in the host country.

Paoletti (2011) postulates that despite tighter security policies, the number of refugees in Libya remains high and those who used clandestine entry had reached unprecedented levels in the history of that country. With immigration controls tightened, more children end up being placed in the hands of smugglers to cross the border which endangers their lives (Ayott & Williamson, 2001). CoRMSA (2009) states that many Zimbabwean children who try to enter South Africa through clandestine channels experience distressing and life threatening encounters. Children are tempted to do this because of the absence of travel documents.

Absence of travel documents make refugee children run away from the police all the time. They will avoid the police because of a fear of deportation. Some may be detained and forced to live as prisoners for a long time before they are finally deported. Some refugees may be detained and deported before they make it to settlement communities. CoRMSA (2009) indicates that a total of up to 50 000 non-South Africans are detained at the Lindela Detention Centre. Non-nationals will eventually be deported to South African borders so that they go back to their home countries. While some refugee children may be deported before they reach their areas of settlement, others may be deported after they lived in the host country for many years (CoRMSA, 2008). They may be detained and forced to return to their home countries because of a lack of legal documents.

Some refugee children experience trafficking. According to Keogh (2010) trafficking in persons entails the enrolment, transporting or harbouring of persons in an illegal manner. Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu and Cook (2011) argued that there are two main types of human trafficking: sex trafficking and labour trafficking. According to Rutter (2003) sex trafficking involves the recruitment of people in order to participate in sexual activities. Women and children are more vulnerable to sex trafficking where they would be raped and sometimes used in activities that involve pornography and prostitution. Busch-Armendariz et al. (2011) contend that traffickers use victims as lucrative commodities. Male refugee children are vulnerable to labour trafficking which involves work and maximizing profits at an organisation or facility. Men and young boys are more exposed to this type of trafficking because of their power and ability to offer cheap industrial labour (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2011).

Refugee children who experience trafficking often require professional help in order to get rid of memories of their bad encounters (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2011). Rutter (2003) states that refugee children require emotional and psychological help to assist them to get over trafficking experiences. They may have been ill-treated and exposed to experiences beyond their ages such as pornography. Some children would suffer from trauma after they have been trafficked (Papadopoulos, 2007). As a result, they require emotional and psychological help when they are in the host country.

2.3.3 Experiences in the Host Country (Post-Migration)

The third stage, host country experiences, is the adjustment of refugees to the social, political, economic and cultural framework of the new society. Bhugra and Gupta (2011) argued that post migration involves adaptation to a new culture and re-defining one's identity and place in the new society that has to be negotiated. Many people find themselves maladapted to their surroundings. Host country experiences entail refugee challenges associated with settling and adapting to the new environment in a foreign country. Henley and Robinson (2011) affirmed that host country experiences may be as traumatic and distressing as home country experiences. There will be a need for education of children, employment for adults and counselling to get over the events that precipitated flight from their home countries (Bhugra & Gupta, 2011).

Papadopoulos (2002) argues that when re-located in a new country as asylum seekers, refugees endure endless efforts and procedures to secure their refugee status. They will also attempt to start their new lives, struggle to fit in a different environment (educational, professional, social, cultural and psychological), and also endeavour to process all their past experiences and address all their losses (Papadopoulos, 2002). Refugees may settle in very hostile communities which will compound their pre-migration and transmigration experiences.

They often face prejudice, discrimination and racism from their host communities that compound already difficult transitions to a new culture, setting and educational system (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). Refugees may escape violence in their home countries and face another form of violence in the host country. According to Sibula (2009) refugee children are prone to develop trauma related disorders because of their pre-migration experiences and massive persecution which they

encountered in South Africa. It would be too much for forced migrants to cope with losses they had in their home countries and handle persecution and torture that they experience in the host nation. The situation of dealing with pre- and post-migration experiences is not only unique in developing countries. In some western countries, refugees are troubled and distressed by host communities that they go to settle in.

In Australia, Christie and Sidhu (2006) postulated that refugees flee violence in their home countries and face persecution in the host country. Refugees often do not have a smooth transition of movement from their home countries to the host country. They encounter strenuous circumstances that are mainly perpetrated by hostile communities (Roxas, 2011). Schweitzer et al. (2011) maintained that the Burmese experienced a range of post-migration difficulties since arrival in Australia. They had communication difficulties as well as worries about family not being in Australia, lack of employment, problems of accessing education, health and welfare services for their children, problems of getting asylum, problems of adjusting to the cultural life in Australia and racial discrimination (Schweitzer et al., 2011).

Some refugees face massive exploitation in work places mainly because of their status. Anbesse, Hanlon, Alem, Packer and Whitley (2009) claimed that Ethiopian women who migrated to Middle Eastern Countries described inhumane working conditions, physical and sexual abuse, and denial of basic freedoms such as meeting with their children. They were exploited because they were refugees. It is crucial to mention that it is not always the case that every refugee faces hectic post-migration experiences.

Kirkbride and Jones (2011) argued that post-migratory experiences differ vastly across and within different immigrant groups and their offspring. Some refugee children settle into good communities where they meet hospitable people who sympathise with their experiences. This contrasts with other communities where refugee children are hated. Rutter (2003) argues that although refugees' circumstances vary throughout the world, refugee camps have many things in common, namely:

- Camps are often located in border areas where refugees are sometimes at risk of attack and bombardment by the government from which they have fled.
- Refugees in camps are often deliberately segregated (Hamilton, 2004) from local people, to prevent them from integrating into local society and becoming permanent migrants.
- Barriers, such as visa requirements, may prevent asylum seekers gaining entry in countries of choice.

Crisp (2003) argues that one of the striking characteristics of refugees in the African continent is that they are accommodated in areas that are considered very poor and in most cases in marginal places around the border. Such places would be very insecure, weather conditions would be un conducive and the land surface may not be suitable for farming. Refugees and their children are often placed in such under-developed areas where production is low and the places are less prioritized by government in terms of development. For example, the part of northern Uganda where Sudanese refugees were accommodated had a history of economic under-development (Crisp, 2003). Such areas hardly have citizens of the host country living there because of the absence of socio-economic infrastructure.

All these factors may place increased stress on already traumatised refugee children. This makes acculturation to the new environment difficult for refugee children who will be challenged with the need to adjust to social and cultural rules as well as understanding the norms and customs of the host country (acculturation) (Kirkbride & Jones, 2011).

2.3.3.1 Acculturation Strategies

The fundamental aspect that characterises host country experiences is acculturation. Culture can be defined as norms values, beliefs and behaviours that a group of people agree to accept. It is a process in which people from different cultural backgrounds begin to follow the norms and values of a new society that they live in (Papadopoulos, 2007). Taloyan, Johansson, Saleh-Statinn and Al-Windi (2011) defined acculturation as cultural changes and consequences of long contact between two different cultural groups. McBrien (2005) views acculturation as the change that occurs to an individual as a result of coming into contact with people from a different cultural

background. Acculturation would occur in the sense that the person would be influenced to follow the ethos and general lifestyle of people in the new culture.

According to Kaplan (2009): “acculturation is related to culture shock and it refers to the process of transition that is brought about by the meeting of peoples from two different cultures” (p. 51). When refugee children move to a new society, they will be faced with a challenge of understanding the culture of the host country. They have to understand the norms, values and principles of the new culture so that they may adjust. Acculturation and adjustment are encountered by refugee children when they settle in the host country (Bhugra, et al. 2011). They will have to abandon their home culture and follow the cultural norms of the host country.

Acculturation of refugee children is characterised by stressful activities that include learning the new language and values of the new culture and also worrying about basic needs such as food, shelter and education (Gonidakis et al., 2011). Acculturation is very stressful to refugee children; (Kaplan, 2009) in the sense that it requires them to quickly adjust to a new culture and deal with the difficult task of establishing life in a new country. There could be some opportunities for refugees, but they may be hard to attain because they will be struggling to fit into the new society.

Taloyan et al. (2011) argued that Kurdish refugees in Sweden viewed life in a new setting as having the following facets: opportunities, resources and difficulties. Opportunities that Kurdish refugees had were the provision of rights and a chance for identity constructions. They however had difficulties in getting jobs. This caused parents to find it hard to pay for their children’s education costs. They did not have adequate resources and it was not easy for them to adapt to a new environment (Taloyan et al., 2011).

Dodds et al. (2010) contend that refugees from Somalia who went to reside in Australia had often experienced challenges of resettlement. This was because they did not have financial resources to support their families and they did not have opportunities to advance their studies. Thus, resources, opportunities and difficulties characterise refugees’ lives in different host communities. Refugees have to understand the culture of the host communities so that they may

integrate and make use of different emerging opportunities (Dodds et al., 2010; Taloyan et al., 2011).

Hanson-Easey and Augoustinos (2010) affirmed that cultural differences can impede refugee integration. This is because culture plays a big role in distressing refugees and causes them to be sick and tired of trying to fit into a society that may be very hostile to them (Bhugra et al., 2011). Acculturation is characterised by psychosocial challenges (Kirchner & Patiño, 2011). The process is very demanding. The acculturative stress is usually high when refugees just arrive in the host country and it lessens when they get accustomed to the new culture. A study of immigrants living in Athens about the relationship between acculturation factors and depression symptoms showed that the more acculturated the immigrants were, the less depressive symptoms they would display (Gonidakis et al., 2011). When refugees are still new to the environment, they learn from people in the host communities until the time they understand the norms, values and culture of that society (Dicum, 2005).

According to Berry (1997) some refugee children may not adhere to all facets of the culture of the host country. They may practice some norms and values of their home countries. Other refugees may not take time before they put their cultural practices aside and follow what people of the host country would be doing. Thus, acculturation is marked by accepting or rejecting cultural practices of the host country.

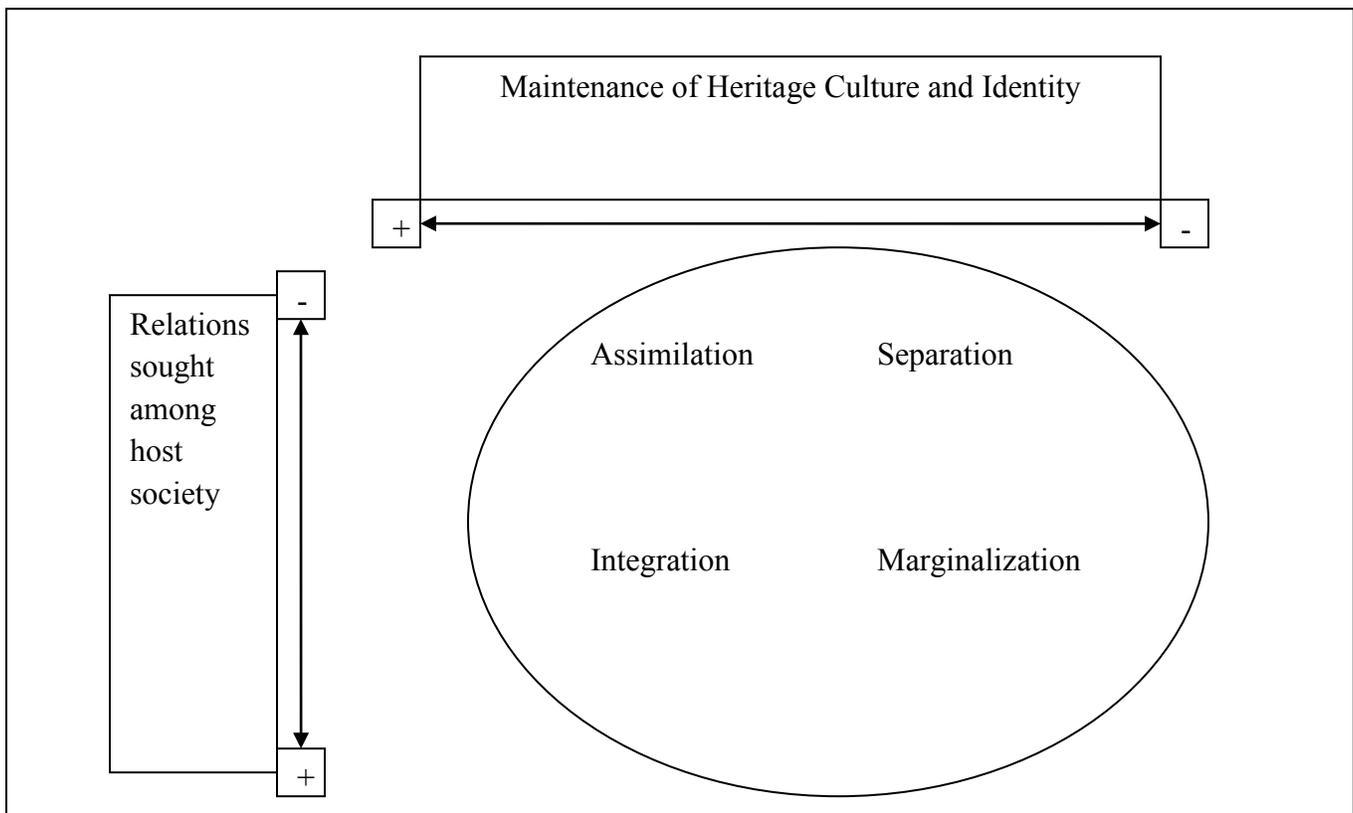
Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya and Gonzalez (2008) contend that frameworks of acculturation emphasize several patterns consisting of rejecting or accepting host communities' cultural values and practices, as well as rejecting or maintaining immigrants' home cultural values and practices. Berry designed a framework of acculturation which can be used to explain the predicament of refugee children. According to Berry (1997) two factors underlie the framework, namely: i) the factor to which people wish to maintain their heritage, culture and identity; and ii) the factor to which people seek involvement with the larger society. The former implies that people decide whether or not to keep their original cultural identity and characteristics. The latter implies whether or not to acquire the host culture's identity and characteristics (MacLachlan & McGee, 2007).

According to Berry (1997) there are four acculturation strategies:

- i) Assimilation (Adapting to the culture of the host country completely);
- ii) Separation (Following culture of the home country only);
- iii) Integration or biculturalism (Following cultures of host and home countries); and
- iv) Marginalization (exclusion by both cultures) (Perez-Escamilla & Putnik, 2007).

According to Berry (1997) the intersection of the two factors, whether positive or negative, influences the four strategies. The acculturation strategies of refugee children are illustrated in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Acculturation Strategies of Refugees



Source: (Berry, 1997, p. 10)

Berry (1997) asserts that an assimilation strategy would be formed when refugee children decide to follow the culture of the host country. They would not be maintaining their cultural identity nor seeking to integrate the different cultures. According to Beiser (2009) assimilation theory postulates that immigrants abandon their heritage customs, beliefs and values and begin to take part in what happens in the dominant culture. Refugee children would try by all means to become like host country citizens. They will have no interest in keeping their cultural principles. They will adhere to the culture of the host country in terms of its norms, values and behaviours (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). Tienda and Haskins (2011) contend that large numbers of refugees who migrate to America assimilate with the host society. Perez-Escamilla and Putnik (2007) claimed that Latinos ended up giving up their Hispanic culture completely and totally assimilating into the Anglo-American mainstream culture, following the 'melting pot' social concept. According to MacLachlan and McGee (2007) a 'melting pot' occurs when refugees assimilate by choice.

When individuals are forced to assimilate, this forms a 'pressure cooker' situation (Berry, 1997). Pressure cooker occurs when refugee children are compelled to abandon their cultural identities in order to follow that of the host society. In contrast to assimilation, Berry (1997) argues that when people stick to the cultural practices of their home country without following the norms and values of the host country, this would be the separation strategy. Berry et al., (2006) contend that separation happens when an individual seeks to maintain the culture of his/her home country and avoid practicing norms and values of the new culture. Choi (2011) argues that Sae-ter-mins who arrived in South Korea faced numerous problems adjusting and adapting to South Korea. They sought to maintain their original culture and separated themselves from the culture of the host society.

Integration occurs when there is an interest in following the host country's culture and at the same time maintaining one's original norms and values. A person would be maintaining cultural practices from his/her home country and at the same time taking part in the culture of people who live in the new society that he/she settles (Berry, 1997). According to Beiser (2009) integration is about balancing two competing cultures (home and host countries cultures). There would be no domination of cultures since values, beliefs and practices of both countries would be

retained. Refugee children will follow the culture of the host country and at the same time maintain the integrity of their original culture (Berry et al., 2006).

Language acquisition plays a fundamental role in the integration strategy. If one can speak the language of the host country, it would be easier for him/her to follow other cultural practices. Phillimore (2011) states that in order to evaluate whether or not refugee children acculturated through integration, it is important to look at the level of their language acquisition. Pacheco (2011) states that refugee children's ability to speak the language of the host country enables them to successfully integrate into a new culture. If refugees cannot speak the language of the host country, they are likely to be isolated and face different kinds of ill-treatment from citizens.

Taloyan et al. (2011) contend that the majority of Kurdish people integrated their culture and Swedish culture and were able to handle the stressful experiences and to adjust to life in Sweden because they grasped the language. In contrast, refugees in Australia faced tremendous cultural differences as they attempted to maintain their culture and at the same time faced the challenge of following the culture of the host community (Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010). Somali refugees in America had problems to settle and adapt because of the need to integrate their culture and that of the host country (Roxas, 2011b). It becomes difficult to sustain both cultures, and that is why refugee children who try to acculturate by integration find it very challenging.

When children try to integrate culture, they will end up having acculturative stress because it is difficult to maintain different competing cultures at the same time. Birman et al. (2008) are of the opinion that acculturative stress among refugee children is a result of challenges that they encounter when they integrate their original culture and the host country's. In some instances, when children try to integrate their culture, they may end up having one culture dominating the other. With the passage of time, the home culture can be marginalized.

Marginalisation results when a person decides not to follow cultural practices of the home and host countries (Berry et al., 2006). Some refugees encounter traumatic pre-migration experiences such as prolonged persecution and they will not have an interest in maintaining their cultural identities when they get to the host country. They may want to follow the culture of the host

country, but may decide not to as a result of negative experiences such as xenophobia, discrimination and violence. As a result, refugee children will not have any culture that they would be following. According to Berry (1997) marginalization occurs when refugees do not maintain their culture or follow the culture of the host country when they settle.

Berry's model was criticised for not explaining whose culture refugees would be following when they adopt a marginalization strategy. It is important to note that Berry's model of acculturation has been challenged and continues to be a subject of critical debate (MacLachlan & McGee, 2007). Perez-Escamilla and Putnik (2007) acknowledged the four acculturation strategies in Berry's model, but also reported that many more phases (other than the four) exist on acculturation. Regardless of the acculturation strategy that a refugee child adopts, the process is strenuous and stressful. Kelly (2010) postulates that the need to negotiate a new culture results in some refugees experiencing discrimination, depression, and PTSD.

2.3.3.2 Post Traumatic Stress Disorders

Papadopoulos (2007) asserts that in Greek, trauma means wound and injury, and it comes from the verb *titrosko* – to pierce. This concurs with the view of Marlowe and Adamson (2011) who stated that the etymology of the term trauma goes back to the Greek word for wound. Thus, the original meaning of trauma is a wound, or mark that occurs when skin is taken off (Papadopoulos, 2007). Trauma in refugee children is when they are hurt or wounded by experiences that they encounter. They may be hurt or wounded physically, socially or emotionally. Some refugees may experience trauma when they are stressed. According to Rutter (2003) the greater the duration and intensity of traumatic and stressful experiences, the greater the likelihood that a child will suffer from the psychiatric disorder or PTSD. Bendall, Alvarez-Jimenez, Hulbert, McGorry and Jackson (2012) maintained that most children who are exposed to trauma later develop PTSD. This is because there is a thin line between severe trauma and PTSD.

Kinzie (2006) avers that it is highly probable that refugees who experience trauma will have PTSD and depression. When children are traumatised, they may experience psychological disturbance which can manifest itself as PTSD when they settle in a country of refuge (Björn, Bodén, Sydsjö & Gustafsson, 2011). Post-migration problems are significantly associated with PTSD symptoms (Carswell, Blackburn & Barker, 2011). PTSD is an illness that refugees have as a result of trauma. Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) contend that due to trauma, some refugee children develop diagnosable psychiatric disorders and the most common one is PTSD, which requires professional intervention. When refugees suffer from mental health problems, it can also be linked to PTSD because it manifests in different ways.

Refugee children encounter trauma in different ways. They can be traumatised in all stages of refugee experiences (Birman et al., 2008; Papadopoulos, 2007). Hollander et al. (2011) contend that stress caused by children's experiences (such as torture and losing homes and family members) in their home countries can lead to depression and PTSD. PTSD involves intense fear, helplessness, or terror. PTSD occurs in children when they re-experience a certain traumatic event (Flouri, 2005). Durio and Schneider (2007) listed the symptoms of PTSD which include:

- Flashbacks to the original traumatic event
- Sleep disruptions (nightmares, sleep disturbances)
- Depression
- Irritability or anger, sometimes to the point of violence
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and previously enjoyed activities
- Emotional numbness
- Loss of attention and ability to focus on work or family (p. 63)

Flashback is when children remember and visualise painful memories that they had. This is prominent among children because they tend to meditate about their losses and find it difficult to put those memories aside in order to move on (Papadopoulos, 2007). Sleep disruptions and depression are also common among refugee children. They will find it difficult to sleep at night which explains why some sleeps at school during the day. As children would be sleeping, the elements of isolation and depression come into play. Thus PTSD occurs in a series of ways to young children.

According to the American Psychiatric Association [APA] (2000) PTSD can be grouped into three categories:

- i) Re-experiencing of the traumatic event. Hart (2009) argues that re-experiencing of traumatic events can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and intrusive thoughts;
- ii) Avoidance, whereby children will be evading discussing their previous experiences or keep away from situations that might make them remember their traumatic experiences (Durio & Schneider, 2007); and
- iii) Numbing, which entails increased arousal. Children may be feeling very numb and have no sensation as a result of the experienced PTSD.

Finding ways to cope with children's traumatic experiences and protecting themselves from re-experiencing injuries of the past is another major challenge that refugees encounter which can exacerbate PTSD (Lin, Suyemoto & Kiang, 2009). This is because they may be living under harsh circumstances which will not permit them to forget the past. Some refugee children may potentially experience trauma in both their home countries and in hosting nations and will require some form of therapy. Without professional help to get rid of PTSD, some refugee children end up isolating themselves (Lin et al., 2009). According to Lin et al. (2009) high rates of PTSD among Cambodian refugees were manifested through avoidance, accompanied by silence as a coping strategy. Some refugee children may develop symptoms such as feeling sad and getting bored all the time.

As a result of severe traumatic experiences, some Darfur refugees developed symptoms of PTSD that include severe headaches, forgetting things, thinking deeply about some things, fear of demons, feeling very miserable and hopelessness (Rasmussen et al., 2011). PTSD negatively affects children's education because of forgetfulness and general sickness of the child which results from constant recurrence of trauma.

2.4 Challenges Faced by Refugees

When persons are forced to flee from their homes and move to a new country to seek refuge, they understandably experience a variety of challenges which affect almost every single aspect of their lives (Muneghina & Papadopoulos, 2010). The frustrations which refugee children and asylum seekers face in their entire lives are very complex and demotivating. The barriers they encounter can be financial and accessibility challenges (Elwyn et al., 2012). They may face barriers and challenges such as hardships in accessing health care, becoming victims of xenophobia, being placed into large groups regardless of their educational backgrounds and having language difficulties.

2.4.1 Access to Health Care

Rowe and Paterson (2010) argued that many refugee children experience health hazards while in their home countries and on the journey to the host country. Some children may be exposed to some contagious diseases and deadly viruses because of poor living conditions they lived under. Human Rights Watch (2009) postulates that in the South African context, asylum seekers, refugee children and other migrants are particularly vulnerable to illness and injury. This is because of different factors including poor living conditions, violence and food insecurity in their home countries. As a result, when refugee children arrive in a host country, they need to be accessible to a health care facility so that they can obtain treatment.

Peterman, Silka, Bermudez, Wilde and Rogers (2011) argued that refugee experiences (trauma, violence, persecution) increase the risk of health problems. Daun (2011) asserts that refugees are very vulnerable to communicable diseases because places in which they settle could be dangerous. Post-migration changes in lifestyle also increase the risk of diseases. They may have post-migration dietary changes which may affect their health (Peterman et al., 2011). Thus, refugees are a group that is vulnerable to disease and require accessible health care facilities.

Although the law in South Africa protects refugees' rights to seek and obtain health care, many migrant children are isolated and denied health care in various hospitals across the country. CoRMSA (2011) states that in South Africa, foreign migrants, including refugee children, suffer disproportionately from the challenges of accessing health care. Health care plays a significant

role in the lives of refugee children (Tienda & Haskins, 2011). If the children are denied health care, they may suffer from PTSD and find it hard to live in the host country. Some children are denied health care because of their inability to speak the language of the host country.

Anstiss, Ziaian, Procter, Warland and Baghurst (2009) affirmed that refugees find it hard to obtain their right to health care because of their inability to convey themselves in the language and also distances that they stay away from medical centres. Al-Qdah and Lacroix (2010) argued that Iraqi refugees in Jordan could not obtain health care because the facilities were located far from dwelling areas, there was insufficient specialised medical staff and a shortage of medication in clinics.

CoRMSA (2009) maintains that refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa continue to have negative experiences with public health care providers. In the case of migrants without documentation, the fear of arrest or deportation can be a serious barrier to seeking health care. Some even fail to obtain treatment for HIV/AIDS because of fear of victimization (CoRMSA, 2011). Preventable and curable diseases such as malaria remain a significant cause of child mortality in refugee camps in Africa mainly because they face difficulties in obtaining health services (Hershey et al., 2011).

The root cause of denying refugees' rights to access health care stems from departments responsible for processing refugee permits. All forced migrants obtain their asylum and refugee status from the immigration controls of the host country. In most cases, refugee permit processing happens very slowly and at the expense of children. According to Human Rights Watch (2009) refugee children in South Africa were denied health care outright because they lacked documentation or simply because they were perceived as foreigners and charged illegally high fees that precluded them from obtaining care.

Elwyn et al. (2012) states that children with pending applications for asylum or extensions of leave, whether as unaccompanied minors or as dependents of another applicant, are often required to send various documents to the Department of Home Affairs. Documents can be held for months or years before they are processed in order for asylum seekers to get refugee status.

This is a common problem of refugee children. They wait for a long time for their refugee permits to be approved. During that waiting period, it would be very difficult for children to access health care.

In the United Kingdom, Rutter (2003) postulates that displaced children go through a lot of difficulties to obtain their refugee status. This subsequently affects their right to obtain health care services because they are supposed to show legal refugee papers in order to be treated like citizens of the host country (Rutter, 2003). Some refugee children may not go for health care because of a fear of interacting with locals who may discriminate and make xenophobic comments regarding their status as refugees.

2.4.2 Violence and Xenophobia

In recent years, series of xenophobic attacks happened in some parts of South Africa, leaving an estimated 62 people dead, more than 30,000 displaced, and countless victims injured and robbed of their property (Mwilu, 2010, p. 1). Marar (2011) asserts that discrimination and prejudice contribute significantly to xenophobic attacks experienced by refugees. Violence against non-nationals has been a prominent feature in post-apartheid South Africa (CoRMSA, 2009). It is believed that violence and xenophobic attacks in South Africa and other international countries is caused by meager resources which migrants and citizens would be scrambling for. Non-nationals including refugee children are viewed as a threat by locals because of competition they pose on government grants and social services (Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh & Singh, 2004). McMahon (2011) contends that the greater the numbers of immigrant populations, the more citizens are likely to feel threatened. There is a perception that refugees and other immigrants increase competition for jobs and services.

Anti-foreigner violence in South Africa in May 2008 was because citizens felt threatened by foreigners in the job market (CoRMSA, 2009). Mwilu (2010) postulates that xenophobic violence in South Africa was a result of too many foreigners competing with citizens for limited resources. Some claimed that the violence was a result of too many foreigners and the social problems they had brought to South Africa such as crime, diseases, drug peddling, and prostitution (Mwilu, 2010).

CoRMSA (2011) argues that incidents of xenophobic violence are still happening in South Africa today. There have been ongoing attacks on foreigners and looting of foreign owned shops (CoRMSA, 2011). Sibula (2009) states that xenophobia is still happening in South Africa, however, it is less than the xenophobic attacks which occurred in 2008 where adults and children were raped and killed. According to Sibula (2009) some refugees cited the fact that when they entered South Africa and were treated badly, they started to ask themselves if they had done the right thing by leaving their countries of origin and finding themselves faced with many unexpected problems. They mentioned that they would prefer to go and die in their home countries as they could foresee that they might die even here in the host country. Some mentioned that they thought of committing suicide because they felt they were going to die anyway and it was no use delaying the process of death (Sibula, 2009).

Hectic post-migration experiences faced by refugee children in South Africa are contrary to Clause 9 (3) of the South African Constitution (1996) which forbids the nation from practicing any form of discrimination based on: “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.” Discrimination is prohibited on any grounds, but refugee children are always marginalized and isolated in South Africa. They are denied basic rights and they find it hard to make a living because of violence that they experience in communities they live (Crush, 2000). All humans have inalienable rights, but this hardly applies to refugee children who experience difficulties getting support from the South African host government.

In some instances, refugees and their children are persecuted and forced to join the ruling party of the host country in order to get support. A good example is that of Palestinian refugees in Libya who were detained by Gaddafi’s forces after they refused to join his regime in 2011 (Qasmiyeh, 2011). Palestinian refugees together with their children suffered because they were reluctant to join Libya’s ruling party (Qasmiyeh, 2011). In some instances, xenophobia and discrimination happens in schools. In Georgia (located in the USA), displaced children were happy to attend school with fellow displaced learners because they said there was no discrimination and xenophobic attacks compared to attending school with non-displaced people (Farmer & Birkeland, 2011). Children from the host country tend to discriminate and hurt

refugee children when they are placed in the same classrooms. This is why refugee children in Georgia preferred learning with other displaced learners.

2.4.3 Refugees' Right to Education

All refugee and asylum seeking children have the right to quality education. Education is a right that both national and international frameworks emphasise. It is also believed to be the main instrument that can be used by the UNHCR to achieve its goal of providing protection and finding durable solutions to refugee crisis (UNHCR, 2009c). The long term vision of UNHCR (2009c) is to:

Ensure the right to education for all people of concern to UNHCR by achieving universal primary education and creating increased opportunities for post-primary education (secondary, vocational training, non-formal and adult education) with special focus on girls, urban and protracted situations (p. 4).

Regardless of refugees' situations when they are in the host country, they are entitled to achieving quality education like nationals. The UNHCR (2010) states that education is a right of every child. As a result, all people should attain it regardless of their status, nationality and socio-economic background. Pinson and Arnot (2007) argued that refugee children require education as their basic right which also works as a strong tool that can be used to heal their psychological and social problems. Peterson (2003, p. 5) postulates that the UNHCR values education of refugee children because of four main reasons:

- i) Education is a human right. This is from the human rights laws and convention which was passed at the Geneva Convention in 1951 (Kirk & Winthrop, 2007);
- ii) Education is a tool of protection. When refugee children are educated, they would be in a better position to deal with exploitation and abuses that they experience;
- iii) Education helps to meet psychosocial needs; and
- iv) Education promotes self-reliance and social and economic development by building human capital.

The rights to education of children who are seeking asylum or are refugees are enshrined in international and national legislative frameworks. UNHCR (2011d) argues that a child's rights to education are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Statute of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol to assist and protect refugees dictates that all refugee children should be afforded equal right to quality education. The South African Constitution (1996) states that all children in the country must go to school.

This shows that refugees and asylum seeking children are entitled to have similar quality education afforded to them like nationals in the host country. Refugees and other displaced people are entitled to quality education even during the time of displacement and crisis. Farmer and Birkeland (2011) stated that the right to education may not be suspended at any point during displacement; governments (with the support of other actors) must re-establish education as soon as possible after the start of the crisis. This means internally displaced children must have access to meaningful education throughout their displacement period.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) defines the right to education in Articles 28 and 29, asserting that states must, among other duties, make both primary and secondary education accessible to all children. The CRC (1989) is emphatic on children's right to education because of potential benefits that comes after educating refugee children. Thus, the curriculum must be developed considering the fact that children come from different backgrounds and they have different needs. A curriculum that is responsive to the needs of refugee children enables them to gain access to schooling and obtain their basic right to quality education (Dicum, 2005; Women's Refugee Commission, 2011).

Education provides a normalizing routine which can help displaced young people to deal with the hardships endured both in their country of origin and en route to the host country (Elwyn et al., 2012). Bacakova (2011) argues that education should be made available and accessible for refugees. More specifically, schools should have an adequate number of classrooms and should be reached by all refugee children regardless of their status and socio-economic backgrounds. Displaced youths need opportunities to complete their education and acquire skills.

According to Pacheco (2011) schools can play a big role in meeting the unique needs of refugee and asylum seeking children. They (schools) play a significant role during children's settlement since they are the primary institutions where learners meet and interact. Hek (2005) argues that schools are recognised and valued by most refugee communities. Refugees attribute their success in education as the main key to positive change. Sae-ter-min youths (North Korea) who moved to South Korea accredited their positive change to education (Choi, 2011). This is because education provides hope and a better future for displaced people. Walker (2011) reiterates that for refugee and asylum seeking children, education provides stability and hope for a better future.

There is increasing recognition that young Africans are the key to realising an African renaissance and that is only attainable through investing in education (African Youth Report, 2011). Pacheco (2011) postulates that Sudanese refugees acknowledged that education empowered them to be able to provide for themselves and improve the lives of their children. Education provides hope and it is capable of transforming people's life situations for the better. Thus, investment in education must be geared towards providing refugee children with the knowledge needed to compete in the job market, whether locally or globally (Galabawa, 2005).

According to Marar (2011) Palestinian refugees viewed education as the only tool that they could use to fight against poverty and better the lives of young children who lost everything in their home countries. Education was believed to be a path towards upward mobility in the lives of Palestinian children. Similarly, Stefan (2010) argues that for children whose lives are characterised by disruption, education plays an important role. It is typically considered a highly desired goal for refugees because of its prospective future benefits (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). According to Watson (2012) education enables refugees to learn language among other fundamentals and be able to move from dependence to independence.

2.4.3.1 Refugee Children's Access to Education

Despite the fact that education plays a pivotal role in the lives of refugees, access remains a greater challenge. Refugee and internally displaced people find it very hard to access schools in different countries. For example, there were no secondary schools inside camps for internally displaced people who were in Darfur, Sudan in 2008 (Women's Refugee Commission, 2011). Children only went to school up to the primary level. Similarly, refugee children in the Czech Republic did not have proper access to education opportunities and could not fulfil their educational potentials (Bacakova, 2011). Refugee children are deprived of their rights to education because schools are generally inaccessible in host countries.

In the USA, Sirin and Ryce (2010) claimed that refugee children's inaccessibility to schooling is because they live in shabby areas which make it difficult for them to reach schools. Refugee parents are so poor and oppressed that they can not take their children to school. Many refugees are marginalised and find it extremely difficult to pursue educational endeavors (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007). As a result, they abandon education and focus on survival in the host country. According to Zeus (2009) Burmese refugees in Thailand are lacking access to higher education institutions. The situation is similar to many refugee children who, all over the world, are having difficulties in learning institutions.

Both refugee and asylum seeking children find access to schooling very difficult. Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber and Tousignant (2014) contend that refugee children in the United States had long wait for screening in order to be accepted for pre-school education. Refugee children's education is delayed which results in many learning in classes that are lower than their ages. Refugee children are denied access to education because of their foreign statuses. Some find it difficult to adapt to the new environment (Tienda & Haskins, 2011). Hamilton (2004) states that: "one of the major tasks facing the refugee child when arriving in a new country is to adapt to a new school environment" (p. 83). Refugee children find it hard to adjust to a new school setting because they could be marginalised and discriminated against by other learners (Quinn, 2014). The problem of refugee children's adaptation is exacerbated by little support and insufficient resources in schools. According to Anderson et al. (2004):

Although some countries have experience in accommodating the special needs of refugee children, many educational systems currently do not have special support systems in place to assist schools, refugee families and students in the process of adapting refugees to their new schools (p. 2).

UNHCR (2009d) states that in Uganda, refugee children drop out of school because: “buildings are dilapidated and in need of repair; equipment is damaged or missing and needs replacement; teaching and learning materials are insufficient and teachers are poorly paid and trained” (p. 21). Furthermore, “classrooms are overcrowded; the school environment is generally not very child-friendly, infrastructure and facilities like classrooms, water and latrines are run down, and few teacher training programmes are offered to improve the quality of teaching (UNHCR, 2009d, p. 21)”. Refugee schools are usually under-developed in order to encourage learners to go back to their home countries. In some cases, they are denied access to schools or their institutions are closed so that they return to their countries. According to Smith (2013) schools for refugees were closed in Tanzania in 2010 in an attempt to encourage repatriation. This negatively affected Burundi, Somali and Congolese refugee children who had settled and adapted to education in Tanzania.

Refugee education is taken as inconsequential in various countries all over the world. This is evidenced by the way it is administered by governments of host countries. The quality of teachers who often teach in refugee schools are usually unqualified or under-qualified.

2.4.3.2 Unqualified Teachers

Many schools which refugee children attend hardly have qualified and permanent teachers. The schools are heavily dependent on volunteer teachers who would be unqualified since institutions cannot afford paying competent salaries (Stefan, 2010). Teachers in refugee schools earn very little and much of their salaries come from donations not from children’s tuition fees. According to Roxas (2010) teachers working with refugee children are consistently overworked, understaffed and underpaid. Most qualified teachers prefer working in schools where they get decent salaries and better working conditions as compared to refugee institutions.

Some teachers in refugee schools would be untrained and unqualified to teach children who would have experienced trauma and refugee related challenges (Sidhu et al., 2011). Jones and Rutter (1998) argued that teachers are not generally trained nor do they feel competent to deal with the complex range of issues related to trauma. Refugee children often join regular schools where teachers have not received special training to handle refugee children. As a result, refugee children experience hardships in classrooms. UNHCR (2009d) argues that most of the classroom practitioners who teach refugee children lack sufficient training to deal with traumatised children. For example, in Kenya, teachers are not adequately trained in general and in particular to handle refugee children. They get very poor monthly salaries and their status in society is very low. Such teachers cannot adequately help ordinary learners let alone traumatised refugee children who require special assistance (UNHCR, 2009d). Due to the shortage of trained teachers, many refugee children end up dropping out of school.

Al-Qdah and Lacroix (2010) stated that Iraqi refugee children in Jordan faced major problems at school. The dropout rate was high mainly because they did not have skilled teachers to teach them. Some teachers perpetrate the refugees' situation by allowing other learners to humiliate refugees (Rutter, 2005). A real scenario observed by Rutter (2005) was that of a teacher who invited learners to formulate their own definitions of refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the more vocal learners described asylum seekers as money-grabbing terrorists. Permeating such hatred between local and refugee learners would have been caused by a teacher who is not trained to handle learners who may have experienced loss (Rutter, 2005).

Roxas (2010) states that teachers often find it challenging to cater for the needs of refugee children. They often lack knowledge and experience of how to handle children who come from diverse backgrounds. This will have a negative impact on refugee children. A combination of lack of qualified teachers (Sirin & Ryce, 2010) and shortage of resources (Stefan, 2010) greatly hamper successful learning of refugee children.

It is important, therefore, for teachers to take part in some in-service training programmes where they could learn more about teaching a refugee child and how to handle traumatised children in a classroom situation (Frater-Mathieson, 2004). This would help refugee children cope in schools and adapt quickly to the new environment. When refugee children's needs are improved in schools, this would increase the rate of their access and success in education. Some refugee children do not perform well in schools because of inappropriate and insensitive grouping.

2.4.3.3 Grouping of Refugee Children

Different schools in various countries group refugee children in a way that may not be appropriate for learning and integration. UNHCR (2011d) postulates that the way refugee learners are placed in grades when they join a new school is very consequential. When children are inappropriately graded, that would hamper their academic studies and this often results in learners dropping out of school.

There is a lot of inappropriate grade placement of several refugee children, given their age and educational history. For example, one student aged 18 was placed in a class of the Czech Republican pupils aged 14 (Bacakova & Closs, 2013). Schools tend to downgrade learners or just place them into higher grades without carefully considering their prior education levels. Sarr and Mosselson (2010) argued that education institutions should properly assess previous levels of studies of refugee children joining their schools. This is because the inappropriate groupings of refugee children exacerbates their horrific experiences and makes adaptation very difficult for them in host countries.

There is a one size fits all approach in which all children, regardless of their ages and educational backgrounds, are subjugated to the same treatment. Sirin and Ryce (2010) asserted that refugee children are placed into one group and treated as if they have similar problems, with common backgrounds. In school, they are grouped into one class regardless of their prior educational backgrounds and experiences. They are treated as if they are a homogeneous group. However, refugees are not a homogenous group, they have a range of different needs, experiences and expectations and backgrounds (Hek, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).

Refugee learners' education experiences vary a lot depending on their backgrounds such as socio-economic status, religion, gender and pre-flight encounters (Walker, 2011), and should not be treated as if they went through similar challenges. Some would have experienced health problems, trauma and poor education backgrounds, but they will all be treated the same (Walker, 2011). In the context of the USA, Congress Report (2010) stated that irrespective of important factors such as education level, health condition or psychological background, each refugee child is initially afforded one-size-fits-all assistance. Children are treated as if they went through similar traumatic experiences and require a common way of overcoming their problems.

Sarr and Mosselson (2010) argued that Congolese and Sudanese refugee children arrived in the USA with little or interrupted schooling experiences. Some had higher levels of education in their home countries, whereas others had little or sometimes no educational background at all. This is because they came from war torn nations and they spent a long time on journeys to a country of refuge. Regardless of the different school experiences of Congolese and Sudanese children, they were treated as if they had never been to school (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). This was a disadvantage to children who had obtained a high level of quality education in their home country.

Sirin and Ryce (2010) argued that some newly arrived refugee learners in the USA enter schools with minimal prior formal schooling experiences, but with extensive informal education and knowledge. This requires special grouping of learners so that they may have a smooth continuation of their schooling rather than placing them into one homogenous group. A study about refugees in the Czech Republic conducted by Bacakova (2011) revealed that there was inappropriate grade placement of learners. Learners' placement was unsuitable in terms of children's age, educational history, academic performance and cognitive development. Placement of learners was done randomly without any prior assessment to support learners' grades (Bacakova, 2011).

Similarly, Roxas (2010) maintains that in Australia, many refugee learners were also grouped inappropriately. They were placed in special education classes where there were learners with diverse learning barriers. Such placement does no good to refugee children as their chances of

advancing with their studies would be minimal. Some children had strong educational backgrounds, but they were placed in special classes (Roxas, 2011). The heterogeneous and diverse natures of refugee children defy generalization (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). In the 21st century, classrooms all over the world are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse (Miller, 2009), hence, the need for teachers to be conscious about differences that exist, especially among refugee children. Some children may need special health care such as mental therapy prior to resuming classes.

Beiser (2009) argues that not all refugee children suffer from mentally related problems. Depending on the nature of trauma that they experience, some may have mental problems and some may not. Those who develop mental problems will require specialist attention. Refugee children encounter different experiences and should not be treated in the same way. According to Papadopoulos (2007) the only aspect that all refugee children have in common is the loss of home that each one of them experienced. Homelessness is not a choice that children make freely (Couch, 2011). They will share the loss of homes because it is an inevitable experience that is caused by intensive persecution in their home countries. Other than that, refugee children's experiences are different and they should not be afforded the same treatment or grouped into one.

Christie and Sidhu (2006) asserted that refugee children who came to Brisbane schools in Australia did not have similar characteristics which the government policies state. Some children had been to school for a very long period of time while others had not been in any learning institution for many years. Sidhu et al. (2011) revealed that teachers reported that at their school in Brisbane: "they had a large number of refugee learners who had significant gaps in prior education. They said some students were coming to join the school with virtually no prior education" (p. 13). Some talked about having been to school but this was often in a camp, irregular, and perhaps without a trained teacher (Sidhu et al., 2011). Some children were traumatised so much that they required psychological support in order to cope, but others did not want such support.

Hoot (2011) argues that it is imperative for teachers to have correct information about refugee children's backgrounds including their age and sex before placing them in a particular grade. One teacher did not know the age and sex of her refugee children. She thought one of the children was a boy, and later discovered that it was a girl when learners were on the queue to use bathrooms (Hoot, 2011). Similarly, a study of Somali refugees conducted by Roxas (2011b) indicates that teachers did not have detailed information about refugee children's families and academic backgrounds. According to Roxas (2011b) one interviewed teacher said:

We never get this kind of information when these [refugee children] students are put in our class. The students are just dropped in our laps, and we are never given any idea of what they already know and how they know it (p. 521).

Bacakova (2011) argues that one of the major setbacks faced by the interviewed refugee children and their families in schools in the Czech Republic is that principals and teachers lack information about refugee learners. The schools receive very little and sometimes no information concerning the educational background of learners that they teach. Teachers do not get any information that may help them group learners into appropriate grades, neither do they get indications about the specific needs of each child. Making matters worse, teachers do not get information about the availability of materials for the Czech Republic as an additional language (Bacakova, 2011). It is vital for teachers to be familiar with individual refugee learner's experiences and needs. That will enable teachers to be in a better position of knowing how best they can place and help refugee children.

It is important to know individual refugee learners and to provide appropriate psychosocial support rather than placing them into one group and assuming they have similar needs (Sarr & Mosselsson, 2010). Learners should not be taken as having common experiences which can be addressed by grouping them into one. Some learners may require psychosocial support (Miller, 2009), some learners may need help with language and others may need to go to school for the first time. Learners who may have had interrupted education because of instabilities in their countries may be sent for Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs).

UNHCR (2011d) argues that when learners have not been in school for many years, ALPs are an ideal alternative to placing children into grades which are lower than they should be in. According to UNHCR (2011d) an ALP, as the word ‘accelerated’ suggests, is a speedy learning programme that is offered within a mainstream school. ALPs enable children to compensate for the time they have not been in school by quickly learning the new information so that they may move to their appropriate grades. It enables older learners to complete an academic course in a short period of time, and it also helps refugee children who may be having language barriers to do intensive learning of the language prior to joining other learners in mainstream classes.

2.4.3.4 Language barriers

A common refugee problem all over the world is that of language (Miller, 2009; Walker, 2011). Learning the language of a host country is difficult, but fundamental in order for refugees to achieve independence, self-sufficiency and becoming part of the local community (UNHCR, 2009b). A study conducted by Phillimore (2011) in the United Kingdom about refugees’ language achievement revealed that learning English was the main priority of children in order to succeed in life. The majority of interviewees argued that they “wanted to learn English in order to facilitate self-sufficiency in everyday life” (p. 322). Some said they “wanted to improve their language ability in order to gain work or to enter vocational training” (p. 322).

Learning the language of a host country is also a means for refugee children to gain confidence, have some dignity and a sense of self-worth (UNHCR, 2011d). Without learning the language, refugee children cannot really enter a new society (Beiser, 2009). Linguistic fluency affects refugees’ well-being and the ability to successfully integrate into a new society. Refugee children need to understand the language used in the host country because a lack of language (knowledge) compromises their learning, chances of employment after school, and ability to take part in different activities such as entertainment (Beiser, 2009).

Normally, people flee to countries where a different language is used. Faltis and Valdes (2010) argued that most of the refugee children who come from non-western countries where they do not speak English, seek refuge in countries such as the USA. They will struggle to learn English and any other subject because of language barriers. According to Roxas (2011) children may

face difficulties in understanding instructions given in a foreign language. The situation is worse because some refugee children may have had interrupted education in their home countries, and it would then be difficult to resume classes in another country using a foreign language.

Miller (2009) argues that refugee children with interrupted education find it difficult to cope with different subjects in schools. This is because different subjects have topic-specific vocabularies which should be applied. For example, in science, children should know terms like photosynthesis, osmosis and respiration. The specialised vocabulary cannot be substituted. If learners do not understand that specialised vocabulary, this makes it very difficult for them to do well in school. Sudanese learners who were schooling in Australia had problems with English, especially grammar, spelling and vocabulary in subject areas such as science (Brown, Miller & Mitchell, 2006). If refugee children's understanding of the medium of instruction is limited, it becomes hard for them to make meaningful academic progress.

Language issues do not end at primary and secondary schooling. It is also an issue in tertiary institutions. A study conducted by Harris and Marlowe (2011) about the educational challenges faced by African refugee students in a university in Australia revealed that some lecturers reported that they were setting refugees to fail. That is, the university enrolled refugee students who did not have a good mastery of the English language which is the medium of instruction. Worse still, lecturers did not have time to engage with students with language barriers in order to improve their writing and comprehension (Harris & Marlowe, 2011). If students at tertiary institutions battle with their studies because of language impediments, the situation is likely to be chaotic with children in primary and secondary school. A language barrier does not only affect refugee children's abilities to perform well at school, but also to obtain some basic services such as health care.

A language barrier often impedes the ability of refugee children to navigate local health care systems with a potential to impact on general public health (Congress Report, 2010). For example, a study conducted by Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) states that as a result of language barriers, medical service providers never believed that refugees had health problems. Furthermore, translators did not translate correctly and they communicated with gestures most of

the time. This was because refugees had language problems and it was difficult for them to convey their messages. Refugees also have challenges to communicate with officers during emergency situations (Congress Report, 2010).

The enrolment into a school may be complicated for young refugees and asylum seekers who have a lower level of English language acquisition (Elwyn et al., 2012). Affordability and language barriers may discourage refugees from going to school (Tienda & Haskins, 2011). Furthermore, some teachers find it extremely difficult to teach learners who hardly understand the medium of instruction that is used. For example, Somali Bantu refugee children (who relocated to the USA) had many academic problems throughout the year. They hardly understood the medium of instruction, and they also had reading problems which made them submit their assignments late or sometimes not hand them in for marking at all (Roxas, 2011b).

Teaching refugee children becomes very complex when children have problems with language. Bacakova (2011) claims that seven out of eight schools did not have prior knowledge of teaching learners with limited Czech Republic language proficiency, or coming from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. A study conducted by Miller (2009) about teaching refugee learners with interrupted education reveals that learners could hardly perform because of their inability to comprehend the language.

Teachers may be unable to explain fully because simple words that they use could be new to refugee children. Thus, refugee children fail not because they lack cognitive and pedagogic content knowledge, but they just do not understand the language (Harris & Marlowe, 2011). Such hurdles require a teacher trained to help children with their language problems. Language barriers do not affect refugee children alone, but their parents may not be able to be involved in their children's learning.

As a result of poor language ability, parental involvement which is important to strengthen the school-home partnership that extends to the greater community will be weakened (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). In a study of refugee learners in the Czech Republic, Bacakova (2011) postulates that the level of communication between schools and parents was very limited because

of language impediments. Parents' inability to speak the language limited them from actively taking part in the learning of their children. The situation of refugee education in the Czech Republic and other metropolitan countries differs slightly from South Africa.

2.5 Refugee Education in South Africa

At a macro level, South Africa is one of the countries in the world that has the most progressive constitution. According to Crush (2000) South Africa's Bill of Rights which is in the 1996 Constitution guarantees a variety of political, cultural and socio-economic rights to all who are resident in the country. The country has made tremendous efforts of moving from exclusion of refugees to inclusion from 1991. Table 2.1 presents a timeline of events showing the move from exclusionary to inclusive policies for refugees in South Africa.

Table 2.1 A Timeline of Refugee Policies in South Africa.

Year	Acts/Policies
1991	Government participates with UNHCR regarding repatriation of exiles from apartheid.
1993	Basic agreement with UNHCR, first office is based and government agrees to start administrative procedures for determination of refugee status.
1995	South Africa ratifies 1969 OAU Convention governing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa.
1996	South Africa ratifies 1951 UN Convention and the 1969 Protocol relating to the status of refugees.
1997	Refugee protection is seen separate from immigration concerns, leads to a draft green paper on international migration.
1998	Draft white paper is published, includes a draft refugee bill.
1998	Refugee Act (Act No. 130 of 1998) is adopted by parliament.
2000	Refugees Act and refugee regulations

Source: (Human Rights Commission, 2001, <http://www.sahrc.org.za>)

Inclusive refugee policies in South Africa can be traced to the transition to democracy between 1990 and 1994. The government entered into an agreement with the UNHCR to begin the procedures for determining refugee status in 1993. A year after the demise of apartheid, in 1995 South Africa ratified the 1969 OAU Convention. The country implemented its democratic and inclusive constitution in 1996. In the same year, South Africa ratified the 1951 UN Convention and the 1969 Protocol relating to the status of refugees. In 1998, the Refugee Act was adopted by the South African Parliament. The Refugees Act (1998) provides for the right to access health care and education services.

According to Section 29 of the South African Constitution (1996), every child has a right to quality education. This is inclusive of refugee children. According to the Human Rights Commission (2012, p.2):

The right to a basic education is a constitutionally protected right that is unequivocally guaranteed to all children in South Africa. It is considered a central facilitative right that is not qualified by expressions such as 'available resources', 'progressive realisation', or 'reasonable legislative measures' which are applicable to other socio-economic rights enshrined in the South African Constitution.

The right to education is given to all children who reside in South Africa without any condition. However, execution of the right to basic education to refugee children in South Africa is a big challenge in reality.

2.5.1 Challenges of Accessing Education in South Africa

There is a big gap that exists between what inclusive policies in South Africa say about refugees and what children actually get on the ground. Refugee children continue to experience discrimination and exclusion from all spheres that they come into contact with citizens in South Africa, for example, in health facilities and education (CoRMSA, 2009; 2011). Many refugee and asylum seeking children in South Africa are not in school despite the constitutional provisions (Baalen, 2012). Rugunanan and Smit (2011) asserted that South Africans in general are ignorant of the rights of refugees. This is contrary to the 1996 Constitution and 1998 Refugee Act which make provisions of inclusive education for all people, including refugees and asylum seekers. According to Walton (2011):

There is ample reason for despair about the progress of inclusive education in South Africa. Despite sound and well-intentioned policies, exclusion from schools and within schools remains the experience of many children and young people in this country (p. 244).

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant learners have problems in accessing education in South Africa (CoRMSA, 2011). They are denied access mainly because of their refugee and asylum seeking status. In some instances, refugee children cannot access education because they are unable to meet school costs. CoRMSA (2009) claims that 24% of the children of asylum seekers in the school-going age category were not in school in South Africa. The reasons for this include inability to meet school costs such as fees, transport costs, and buying textbooks and uniforms. In

some instances, many refugee children were out of school because of lack of documents. Some were turned away by school principals who claimed that their institutions were full (CoRMSA, 2009).

Similarly, Buckland (2011) contends that barriers to refugee children's access to schooling in South Africa include: lack of infrastructure, parents and children's inability to pay tuition fees, and lack of documentation which include birth certificates, immunization records and report cards from the previous school. Most refugees' needs are usually unmet in South African schools. First preference is given to local children when enrolling in schools. Refugee and asylum seeking children are marginalized and non-attendance is common among them (Livesey, 2006).

Rugunanandan and Smit (2011) contend that refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who were in Pretoria, South Africa, were having difficulties accessing employment and education for their children. The Burundian and Congolese children were denied access to South African government schools because of their refugee status. Children were asked by school principals to try private schools because government institutions are not allowed to take people with refugee status (Rugunanandan & Smit, 2011). Some principals in South Africa think that it is illegal to admit refugee children in their schools.

Baalen (2012) reports that a woman and her son who was disabled traveled from Zimbabwe to South Africa because of fear of political persecution. They were both given refugee permits in South Africa. However, the son was not accepted in schools because of his disability and refugee status. Once school principals learn that children are refugees, they begin to be skeptical about giving them places to study in South Africa. Not all principals in South Africa are exclusive, some are inclusive. Findings of a study done by Sharghi (2000) about Congolese refugee children in South Africa reveals inclusivity. Sharghi (2000, p. 69) states that:

As far as the education of children was concerned, none of the refugee families had any problems registering their children in local schools. Four out of 6 fathers with school age children indicated satisfaction with the way that the teachers were treating their children and generally were content with the quality of education their children received.

Although some South African government schools are inclusive in nature, the majority are exclusive to refugee children. Some refugee parents end up taking their children to refugee facilities because government institutions will not accept them. This contrasts with the stipulation of the Refugees Act (1998), Section 27(g) which states that: “a refugee is entitled to the same basic health care services and basic primary education which the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time”.

2.5.2 Department of Home Affairs in South Africa

Despite the stipulations of the Act, many refugees are not in school in South Africa. According to UNHCR (2009d) it is a general trend that many refugee children are not in African schools for various reasons that include the lack of regulations that govern the admission of learners. Some children in South Africa fail to go to school because the Department of Home Affairs takes too long to process permits. Livesey (2006) argues that considering long delays of processing asylum and refugee permits at the Department of Home Affairs, many children end up not going to school because principals require permits on registration. It is not easy to obtain a refugee status in South Africa. Vigneswaran (2008) states that South African officials who work at the Department of Home Affairs often go out of their way to prevent asylum seekers from submitting their applications in order to enter the system. Asylum seekers, especially unaccompanied children, spend hours and days queuing at the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa, but they do not get served in time.

Ndlovu (2009) asserts that the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa is very inconveniencing. Staff members do not have customer care and they are very inefficient. Foreigners who go to apply for refugee permits at the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa do not get assistance. They spend a lot of time queuing for their documents (Mwilu, 2010). This affects children because they will be unable to join schools or tertiary institutions without legal papers. It would also be very difficult for refugee children to access health care facilities in the host country without refugee permits.

An anonymous asylum seeker waiting for asylum outside the Pretoria Refugee Reception Office in South Africa said: “You get stepped on. You are tired, you are bored and thirsty. You feel like you are dead and not human anymore” (Vigneswaran, 2008, p. 41). People’s failure to get refugee status is causing many children to be out of school in South Africa. Nnadozie (2010) claims that refugee and asylum seeking children in South Africa spend some of their school time trying to obtain refugee permits. One learner said:

We go to Home Affairs for our permit and we end up sleeping there; we sleep outside in order to get our documents from Home Affairs. These are the problems we are experiencing with the Home Affairs. These problems affect our schooling because before we register we need identity documents (Nnadozie, 2010, p. 87).

When refugee and asylum seeking children find it hard to legalise their stay in the host country, they often are unable to go to school. Some children would resort to drug abuse and crime in order to raise money.

2.6 Conclusion

The United Nations provides a comprehensive definition of a person who qualifies to get refugee status. What is central to the definition is a well-founded fear of persecution. If a person cannot go back to his/her home country because of a fear of persecution or threats, he/she automatically qualifies to obtain refugee status in another country. The United Nations definition of a refugee has been criticised for being outdated and was developed in the context of the atrocities of the Second World War. However, the current refugee flow in this contemporary era is a result of civil wars, famines, economic problems and natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes. These are not contained in the 1951 definition which requires revision.

This chapter discussed literature related to refugee learner experiences. The experiences have been presented following the pattern of what children encountered in their home country, in transit and in the host country. Literature showed that refugee children face multiple challenges that include acculturation, access to health care, education and other social services. Children’s education is heavily compromised as they are put into inappropriate groups where they are taught by unqualified teachers. In the South African context, refugee policies moved from exclusionary to inclusive. The country is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the status of

refugees, and its 1996 Constitution states that all children (including refugees) have a right to quality education. Despite all that, CoRMSA (2011) argues that asylum seeking and refugee children are finding it extremely hard to access education in South Africa. This is contrary to international frameworks which stipulate that education should be accessed by all children regardless of their status. The next chapter presents theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on review of literature related to refugee learner experiences. This chapter presents theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. A conceptual framework can be defined simply as a set of emerging interrelated concepts that are put together to explain a particular phenomenon. There are several different conceptualisations of a theoretical framework. According to Anfara and Mertz (2006) there is no clear and consistent definition of the term theoretical framework. For the purpose of this study, a theoretical framework is conceptualised from a comprehensive definition provided by Kerlinger (1973, p. 73): “A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.” Both theoretical and conceptual frameworks provide lenses through which research can be conducted and it is essential to have them in an academic piece of writing (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). In this study, conceptual and theoretical frameworks were used as analytical frameworks of refugee learner experiences.

This study adopts Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Social Ecological Model (as its theoretical framework) which asserts that context and environment play fundamental roles in the development of a child. The model highlights that during the process of human growth and development, a person interacts with microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems and chronosystems. McBrien (2011) postulates that refugee experiences can be looked at from these systems’ perspective. Refugee children’s experiences are influenced by the context and environment which surrounds them. This chapter begins by discussing the social ecological model where each of the five systems is presented. The chapter also focuses on strengths and some criticisms leveled against the model, and an analytical context for understanding refugee learners’ experiences is provided. A conceptual framework for understanding refugee learners’ experiences is presented at the end of this chapter. The conceptual framework articulates that refugee learner experiences occur in three fundamental stages, namely: pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model

Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that human development can best be understood by considering the entire social ecological context in which growth takes place. Human development is a result of the mutual interaction between persons and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). A person has to interact with other people in his/her environment and that influences growth and development. Swart and Pettipher (2011) postulated that underlying Bronfenbrenner's theory is the proposition that when there is the interaction of an individual and the environment, development will certainly take place. When there is no interaction among humans in a given environment, children's growth will be compromised.

Kail and Cavanaugh (2010) contend that in the social ecological theory, human development cannot be separated from the environmental context that a person inhabits. Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach proposes that there is a close interconnection between various aspects of human development. The interconnection is very close, just like the threads of a spider's web are intertwined, so that no aspect of development can be isolated from others and understood independently (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 3) argues that "all aspects of development are interconnected like a set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls". Thus, understanding the growth and development of children requires a close examination of the environment in which they live. Environment influences children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model assesses the development of children through the interaction of systems. This system is made up of five socially organised subsystems which help understand growth and development of humans. The subsystems are: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

3.2.1 Microsystem

The microsystem refers to the environment in which a developing person lives and the relationship that he/she has with proximal settings of family, school and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In other words, the microsystem entails an individual's interaction with proximal settings. It marks the first level of interaction and experience with other people and it begins with a child

interacting with family. From family, the child interacts with peers and people at school. The microsystem analyses the relationship between the individual child and the immediate settings which have a direct impact on the developing child (Anderson et al., 2004). Peers, family, school and neighbours are very important in furthering growth and development of a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

3.2.2 Mesosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994) the mesosystem comprises the link and various processes that take place between two or more settings surrounding the developing person, for example, relations between family and school, peers and neighbours, family and peers, and school and neighbours. The mesosystem comprises two or more microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). It manifests itself when there is an interaction of microsystems, for example, when peers become difficult to work with at school. Bronfenbrenner (1986) states that a common example of a mesosystem is that events that take place at a child's home have the potential of affecting his/her academic progress, and vice versa.

Bronfenbrenner (1992) refers to a mesosystem as a series of microsystems. It (mesosystem) shows the constant interaction and interdependence of schools, peers and family in the development of a child. In short, the mesosystem is a system that shows the interaction of microsystems (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). It is also formed whenever a child moves from one setting to another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When a family relocates to a new place, children will interact with new neighbours, peers and the school. When these new microsystems interact, the mesosystem will be formed.

3.2.3 Exosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 25) an exosystem is defined as:

One or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person.

Kail and Cavanaugh (2010) postulate that an example of exosystem could be the change of governmental policies concerning welfare of poor children. When policies change, it lessens

opportunities for the attainment of school experiences by poor children. The exosystem also refers to the influence that a community has. This includes the community's established norms, values, standards and general social networks (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). A developing learner may not be directly involved in the community activities, but he/she will be influenced by living in it. Bronfenbrenner (1986) asserts that in modern, industrialized societies, three different exosystems are likely to impact on the growth and development of the child. The impact occurs primarily through influence on family processes, and these are:

- i) The parents' workplace;
- ii) The parents' social networks; and
- iii) The community influences on family functioning (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

When parents are stressed and affected in a negative way at their work place or social networks, this will subsequently affect children at home who have direct contact with them (parents). Bronfenbrenner (1986) postulates that an exosystem occurs when a developing child is affected not only by events happening around him/her, but also by what happens to parents or caregivers in their respective settings such as work and social places. Although children do not enter into their parents' settings, they are affected by what affects their caregivers. Thus, the exosystem has an indirect impact on a developing child.

Although the influence of an exosystem is indirect, its effects on human development can be quite strong (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). For example, Bronfenbrenner (1986) postulates that a husband's unemployment can result in a loss of status in the family, a strong increase in tensions and disagreements, and a decrease in social life outside the home. That results in the father becoming depressed, moody and impolite to his children at home. The father's loss of job indirectly affects the developing child because of disruptive behaviour that he may show through his emotions.

Another domain of exosystem which children have limited access to, but would be affected by indirectly is their parents' social acquaintances with friends (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). When parents are unhappy or affected in their social networks, this may eventually come down to a child who will have direct contact with a parent when he/she comes home. An exosystem entails experiences in which a developing child does not have an active role to play. It includes the

influence of the education system, local health care, welfare services and family friends (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). When a child is affected by broader issues such as national policies, political and economic structures, the macrosystem will be formed.

3.2.4 Macrosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 40):

The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems.

The macrosystem can be seen as the norms, values, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies which someone gets from the society in which he/she will be living. It can be viewed as a societal blueprint for a particular culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1992). In this study, the macrosystem represents interaction on a broader scale when refugees are influenced by the social and cultural norms of a country. The macrosystem forms when an individual is influenced by political issues and economic status of a country. The progression of all the systems (micro, meso, exo and macro) happens over a period of time and that forms the chronosystem.

3.2.5 Chronosystem

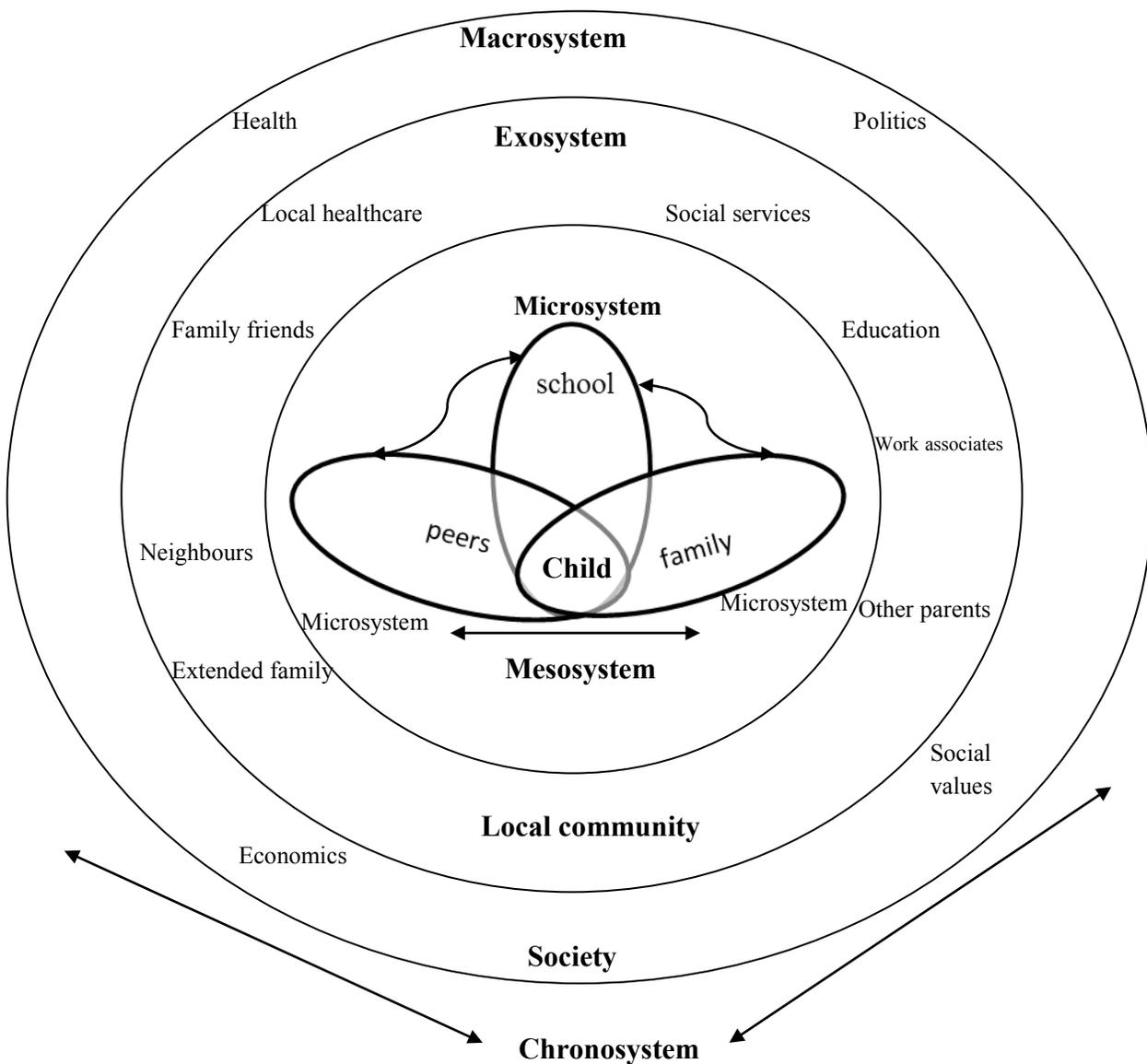
Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 40) states that:

A chronosystem encompasses change of consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person, but also of the environment in which that person lives (e.g. changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life).

According to Swart and Pettipher (2011) the chronosystem summarises the length of time and how it relates to the interactions between micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems, and their influences on the growth and development of a child. An example of this would be the apartheid system and how its history has impacted on many children in many different ways in South Africa (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

Bronfenbrenner’s model provides a good theoretical framework to analyse the influence of the environment on a developing child (Hook, 2009). The model seeks to explain the development of humans by taking into consideration the existing various levels of systems which are in the environment (Smith, 2002). Figure 3.1 illustrates the social ecological model. It shows the systems and the way they interact and influence the growth and development of a child.

Figure 3.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Social Ecological Model



Source: Adapted from (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 13)

3.3 Critical Reflections on the Bronfenbrenner Model

Sudbery (2010) asserts that practitioners and researchers using many different approaches have no difficulty using the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. The model is user-friendly and its systems directly apply to experiences that children encounter in their different environments. The model significantly influences the way in which children interact, use language and grow in different contextualised ways (Newbury, 2011).

Tomovska (2010) contends that the model is useful in trying to understand how children from poor families may negotiate their educational endeavours to attain resources. Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000) argued that the ecosystem's perspective is a conceptual lens that adds to understanding of the various ways children may adapt to a changing environment in order to cope, survive and compete for resources in schools. The model illuminates children's barriers to learning and it is inclusive in nature. Swart and Pettipher (2011) contend that Bronfenbrenner's model is inclusive in the sense that it provides a framework for the interaction of parents and teachers about children's education. Despite strengths of Bronfenbrenner's model, it has some notable criticisms.

According to Hook (2009) the social ecological model can be criticised because it may be difficult to apply and to measure. It is difficult to measure whether children can indeed be affected by the mesosystem or exosystem in a way that Bronfenbrenner says they will. It is also difficult to determine the applicability and measurability of the extent in which a child may be affected by his parents' social areas (Hook, 2009). Sudbery (2010) argues that although the model outlines the grand schema, it has not told us anything about the strength of micro versus meso influences, of parental influence in comparison with peer influence, and neighbours in comparison with the school. In other words, the model is criticised for not adequately explaining the extent in which the mesosystem affects children's development. It is not very clear how mesosystems interact in children's growth and development.

3.4 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and Refugee Learner Experiences

Bryant and Ahearn (1999, p. 85) said: "Bronfenbrenner's work on the understanding of a child's development within the context of family, neighbourhood, and community has potential applicability to the study of refugee children". According to Serdarevic and Chronister (2005, p. 25) Bronfenbrenner's social ecological framework can be applied to the study of refugees and other immigrants because it provides:

- i) A visual representation of how different individual and contextual variables are related to immigrants' development;
- ii) A framework for examining multiple individual and contextual factors affecting immigrants' acculturative adjustment and mental health; and
- iii) The impact of larger social contexts on individual immigrants and vice versa. The impact of immigrants on larger contexts, include their families, communities and the host society.

The model can reveal how refugee children are influenced by different systems during their migration process. Anderson (2004a) states that the development of the refugee child is influenced by the ever-changing ecologies that surround and interact with the child. For the refugee child, the potential for major changes in the nature of, as well as the presence or absence of systemic influences within the ecologies can occur due to pre-migration, trans-migration and post-migration factors (Anderson, 2004a).

According to Pinson and Arnot (2007) Bronfenbrenner's model is suitable for establishing good practice and interventions which are very essential to refugee children in order to rebuild their social support systems. The approach can be used to develop a comprehensive understanding of a refugee child's experiences and how to address the needs of every child in school. Pinson and Arnot (2007) contend that the social ecological approach can assist in the understanding of complex relations of refugee experiences, education and environment.

It is imperative to study refugee learners' experiences by examining their context and environment when they are in their home countries, during flight and when they settle in a host country. Bronfenbrenner's model provides a platform in which one can examine the psychological consequences of displacement and trauma which many refugee children encounter during the migration period (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999).

Drumm, Pittman and Perry (2004) claimed that in addition to the traumatic experiences faced by refugee children, understanding their surroundings is crucial in determining their outcomes. Thus, the need for a model which considers refugee learners' environment. The social ecological model is directly related to refugee learners' experiences because it considers a person's development from the environmental and contextual points of view (McBrien, 2011).

The model "provides a useful conceptual framework for considering the needs of refugee children as it allows us to consider the impact of personal and environmental factors on the development of refugee children" (Anderson et al., 2004, p. 4). It enables readers to have a comprehensive understanding of the growth and development of refugee children as well as what happens in the environment that surrounds them. The model conceptualises development as a social interaction that occurs in a person's life and helps him/her to adapt to changing environments (Anderson et al., 2004). Refugee children need to abruptly adapt to the changes that occur in the environment. This is different from other people whose adaptation to a new environment would be gradual (Anderson et al., 2004). Thus, understanding refugee children's environmental processes enables researchers to comprehend their adaptation capacities to a new place.

Hamilton and Moore (2004) proclaimed that through the use of the ecological model as the theoretical framework, one is able to understand the significant role played by families, schools and other helping services in the adaptation of refugee children to their new host country as well as to monitor their educational progress. The model can help conceptualize different factors that may lead to the successful or unsuccessful adaptation of refugee children in a particular setting (Hamilton & Moore, 2004).

Harney (2007) asserts that an ecological perspective provides a framework that helps in the understanding of complex ways of macro-and-micro level contexts which shape the psychological processes which improve or hinder refugee experiences. Refugee children's experiences may be imbedded with cultural shock when they find it hard to acculturate in a new society (Harney, 2007). Children may face discrimination from people that they interact with in all systems.

McBrien (2011) asserts that refugee children can experience discrimination at many levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model: from one's immediate contacts (microsystem), from networks of microsystems, such as schools (mesosystem); and from one's experience with the community (exosystem) and society at large (macrosystem). Refugee children encounter discrimination at school, with peers, in the community and society at large (Marar, 2011). The ecological approach allows researchers to look at refugee learners' experiences through its lens and get a better understanding of how the different overlapping and interacting systems influence the refugee child's development (Anderson et al., 2004).

3.4.1 Refugee Learners and the Microsystem

The microsystem refers to an individual's interaction with proximal settings such as the school, peers and the family. Frater-Mathieson (2004) avows that the family is a dimension of the child's microsystem which is essential for the understanding of refugee experiences. Family has a big responsibility in the development of a child. It is through the family that a child learns norms such as respect and tolerance which are acceptable in the society. A child's psychological growth is greatly influenced by the family's unique characteristics (Frater-Mathieson, 2004). The school also plays a big role in understanding refugee learners' experiences.

Anderson (2004a) argues that schools promote learning and interactions between a refugee child and other learners. The interaction can help a refugee child deal with trauma. According to Anderson (2004b, p. 63) schools: "can help the children deal with the effects of the traumatic experiences they have had in the past and recognise that some refugee children might have great needs for therapeutic interventions". Schools play a fundamental role in Bronfenbrenner's

model. They may be very effective in helping refugee children to adapt quickly to the new environment.

A defining feature of the ecological model is the interdependence of the different ecosystems. Bronfenbrenner (1992) postulates that a child influences and is also influenced by the environment. Similarly, Hamilton (2004, p. 83) argues that refugee children are influenced by the school and they in turn influence it (the school): “not only will the refugee child be required to adapt but schools, teachers and existing students will also need to adapt”. Thus, it can be argued that the relationship between refugee children and schools is marked by a strong element of reciprocity. Both refugee children and schools mutually benefit from their interactions.

Schools can also help reduce the stress which children experienced by smoothing the transition in the unfamiliar new school and by facilitating the development of social support networks (Anderson, 2004b). Schools play a pivotal role in the socialisation of refugee children. It gives refugees a chance to meet with people from different backgrounds who may be instrumental in offering social support to them (Anderson, 2004b). Schools are also responsible for educating refugee children about technical subjects as well as general information about the country in which they would be living (Anderson, 2004a). Thus, the school enables refugee children to settle down and begin life in a new setting.

Hamilton (2004) asserts that schools play a major role in the settlement and adjustment of refugee children in a new country. The culture and characteristics of schools and teachers have an impact on refugee children. Children follow the culture of the school and define themselves with the institution’s values. By using the Bronfenbrenner’s model, it is possible to understand how schools can be made more responsive and helpful to refugee children (Hamilton, 2004). Teachers find the ecological model to be useful in providing for refugee children in school (Pinson & Arnot, 2007).

It is not always the case that refugee children get help from schools. In some instances, schools cause traumatising experiences. Children may be isolated and discriminated against because of their refugee status. Hamilton (2004) affirms that when refugee children join a new school, it is

highly probable that they become victims of bullying, racism and discrimination because of their foreign status. This makes refugee children's socialisation with the school very hard and it subsequently becomes difficult for them to fit into the community and society as a whole. Hamilton (2004) contends that adaptation to a new school is a very big challenge to a refugee child. It is very hard for a refugee child because other peers could be scolding him and making his life at school very unpleasant. It would be hard for a refugee child to cope in school considering the fact that he/she would be going through traumatic experiences of losing close relatives. Schools have the potential to either facilitate or hamper the integration of refugee children in a new society.

Peers fall under the microsystem and they play a crucial role in creating a safe and supportive environment for refugee learners (Hamilton, 2004). According to Hamilton and Moore (2004) peers are most likely to have a positive effect on refugee learners. The interaction of refugee children with local peers, whether at home or at school, forms the microsystem which influences them either in a positive or negative way.

3.4.2 Refugee Learners and the Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979) postulates that the mesosystem is a system of microsystems. It is formed or extended whenever an individual moves into a new setting. This applies to refugees because they are forced to migrate from their home countries to settle in another country. Hence, refugee children need to join a new school. Consequently, parents/guardians of refugee children have to interact closely with the school, when that happens, a mesosystem would be formed. According to Hamilton (2004, p. 88): "How a school is organised, its relationship with parents and community, and how teachers interact and instruct students are all factors that will dramatically influence the success of students in general, and refugee children in particular". The interaction of teachers, parents and community is what Bronfenbrenner called the mesosystem while interaction of teachers and learners is the microsystem. The mesosystem features prominently in refugee education when parents/guardians get involved in their children's education.

Moore (2004) contends that refugee education needs to be enhanced by providing initiatives that can increase children's access to schools and parental involvement. An ecological approach enables parents to be active participants in their children's education. Parents would be involved in planning, decision-making and the general running of schools which their children would be attending (Hamilton & Moore, 2004). Hamilton (2004) argues that one way of increasing refugee parental involvement in their children's learning is by developing parental education and some outreach programmes. Schools would have a responsibility of enlightening parents through these programmes about the need for their involvement in their children's learning.

3.4.3 Refugee Learners and the Exosystem

According to Swart and Pettipher (2011) an exosystem applies to the study of refugee learners in the sense that when their parents/guardians happen to be ill-treated in the community, this will also affect learners. In the case of unaccompanied children, when their social welfare funds are not released by social grants to their school, this will affect them. If a person in charge of unaccompanied children happens to be affected by events in the country, this will subsequently impact on refugee learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

3.4.4 Refugee Learners and the Macrosystem

Newbury (2011) postulates that the macrosystem includes notions and systems such as the legal framework for children's rights. Such a notion play an important role in the life of a refugee child. Macrosystem factors include a country's beliefs about immigrants and the prejudices, racism and xenophobia towards refugees that may result at the micro-, meso- and exo- systemic levels (Serdarevic & Chronister, 2005).

Watters (2008) argues that at macro level, the policies developed by national and local governments impinge on refugee children's education. These include, for example, the impact of legislation relating to education and policies relating to asylum and immigration. Moore (2004) claims that the success of educational interventions within schools will require clear government policies to support the education of refugee children: "This aspect of the macrosystem may determine the direction and viability of local level initiatives intended to enhance the education of the refugee child" (Hamilton & Moore, 2004, p. 110).

Hamilton and Moore (2004) claimed that in order to ensure the possibility of success of school interventions, countries need to consider the development of a comprehensive national policy on refugee education. Such a policy should address governance, coordination and the financial support for services for newly arrived refugees: “A national policy will need to support and address two strategies for teaching refugees providing for the needs of individual students and providing for changing the knowledge and understanding of teachers, parents and communities” (Hamilton & Moore, 2004, p. 110).

3.4.5 Refugee Learners and the Chronosystem

The outermost layer is the chronosystem, “an especially important layer to observe with refugees” (McBrien, 2011, p. 79). Serdarevic and Chronister (2005) claimed that the chronosystem represents the evolvement of time as refugees migrate from one country to another. The period in which refugees acculturate is also another example of how time affects the various levels of ecology and individual development (Serdarevic & Chronister, 2005). The chronosystem features prominently because it shows the time span of events when a refugee learner moves from pre-migration, transmigration to post-migration. Refugee learners’ school experiences also happen in a period of time which can be summed under the chronosystem.

3.4.6 Refugee Learners and All the Systems (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems)

According to Bronfenbrenner’s theory, the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems are at the core of understanding what a person experiences in life. Each of these systems is prominent in the life of a refugee due to the traumatic events that occur before, during, and after flight from one’s homeland and the rapid physical and psychological effects on one’s sense of identity (McBrien, 2011, p. 79). Refugee children experience events which are all represented in Bronfenbrenner’s systems. Thus, the ecological approach is the most appropriate framework for this study.

Kail and Cavanaugh (2010) argued that an ecological theorist would emphasize that in order to understand why refugee children behave as they do, there is a need to take into consideration different systems that influence them. These systems include parents, teachers, peers, television, the neighbourhood, and some social policies. These factors fall under micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems. Watters (2008) postulates that an examination of the education of refugee children includes consideration of macro, meso and micro aspects; from laws and policies at international and national levels, to the formation of educational services through the interrelationship between key agencies at local levels.

Hamilton (2004) claims that one cannot fully comprehend and be in a better position to develop suitable interventions that are needed in order to improve the education of refugee children without considering the following contextual factors: the child, school, family, community and the service providers. Children's interaction with different people helps them ease problems that they may be having in the back of their minds. When refugee children arrive in the host nation, they would have so many needs and they require some services which would facilitate their way into the new cultural environment (Hamilton, 2004). Their experiences are better understood from the systems perspective because they interact with them in their daily lives. Microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem influence, directly and indirectly on refugee children's opportunities for second language learning (Loewen, 2004).

According to (Loewen, 2004) language acquisition is very important in the life of a refugee child. It is the key determinant of refugee children's educational performance and their adaptation in to the society. Anderson (2004a) states that refugee children need to acquire the host language so that it would be easy for them to become part of the new society. This will clearly require intervening at multiple levels within the ecology of the family and child.

3.5 A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Refugee Learners' Experiences

This section presents a conceptual framework guiding this study. The framework consists of three stages of refugee learners' experiences, namely: pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration experiences. The section analyses the different stages of refugee experiences and their application to Bronfenbrenner's model.

3.5.1 Stages of Refugee Experiences

Twenty first century authors who wrote about forced migration generally agree that refugee learner experiences can be categorised into three fundamental stages. These are: pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration experiences (Anderson et al., 2004; Bhugra & Gupta, 2011; Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Lustig et al., 2004; Papadopoulos, 2007). Each of the three refugee stages poses its own challenges in the lives of refugee learners. Pre-migration experiences happen while refugee learners would still be in their home countries. Papadopoulos (2007) argues that refugee children experience traumatic events in their home areas which prompt them to escape. Children face intensive persecution, loss of families, imprisonment, sexual abuse and kidnappings which will force them to flee from their countries and seek refuge elsewhere (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999).

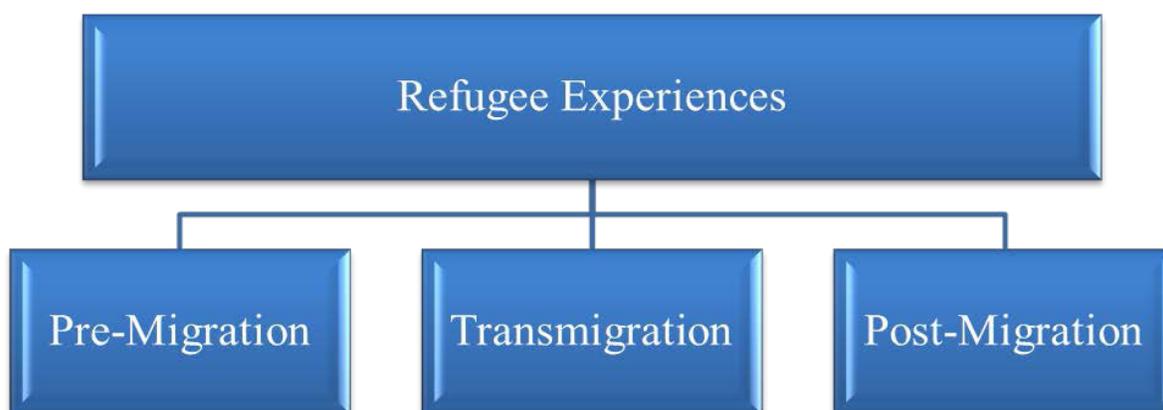
Transmigration is the second stage. It entails experiences that refugee children face on their journey to the host country. It is what refugee learners go through from the period that they leave their home countries to the time they settle in communities in the host country. Bhugra and Gupta (2011) argued that some refugee learners' transmigration experiences could be more devastating and traumatising than their pre-migration experiences. Some children may be kidnapped, sexually abused, tortured and murdered during transmigration. The situation could be worse to unaccompanied children who would not have an adult to stand up to their challenges.

Some refugee learners' transmigration experiences include children hassling with customs officials in order to cross borders. Since children may have made abrupt departures from their home countries, they may not have traveling documents such as a passport. Children may end up trying to enter the host country clandestinely by getting smuggled across borders. Transmigration also involves refugee children walking long distances, living in camps and being exploited before they make it to an area of settlement (Anderson et al., 2004).

Post-migration experiences occur when refugee children settle in the host country (Bhugra & Gupta, 2011). They are experiences that refugee learners encounter during acculturation. Refugee learners often face traumatic experiences in post-migration because of hostile people in communities in which they settle. Some refugee learners develop PTSD which may have been

caused by experiences that they had during pre-, trans- and post-migration. Refugee learners are at risk of experiencing xenophobic attacks and discrimination in post-migration. Some have difficulties in accessing social services such as education, health care and social grants. The three stages of refugee experiences are illustrated in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Stages of Refugee Experiences



Source: Anderson et al. (2004)

3.5.2 Relationship Between Stages of Refugee Experiences and the Bronfenbrenner Model

The three fundamental stages of refugee experiences (pre- trans- and post-migration experiences) are closely related to Bronfenbrenner's ecosystems model. When refugee children move from pre-, trans- to post-migration, they have to adjust to the new social systems. Anderson et al. (2004) argued that the ecosystems feature prominently in each of the three phases of refugee experiences. By using the ecological model, one will be able to understand refugee children in a more comprehensive way. Anderson et al. (2004, p. 9) stated:

By using Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development one will be able to capture snapshots of the different ecologies that refugees find themselves in at different points in time: pre-migration, trans-migration, and post-migration. These snapshots represent the kind of ecological and individual factors to consider at each point.

Hamilton and Moore (2004) claim that experiences which occur within each of the stages can impact on refugee learners' development and adaptation within the host society schools. Stressors that occur within the different stages cannot be considered in isolation. Refugee learners carry their past experiences with them, including their understanding of their roles and expectations within their former social ecosystems and the disjuncture that have either caused or been caused by the process of forced migration (Hamilton & Moore, 2004). They have to adjust to new demands caused by marked and frequently concurrent changes to their social ecosystems which occur as they move from pre-migration to trans-migration and post-migration contexts (Hamilton & Moore, 2004).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Stages of refugee experiences were used as a conceptual framework while Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model was adapted as a theoretical landscape. Bronfenbrenner (1994) states that in order to understand the growth and development of a child, it is important to consider the context and environment. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) during a child's growth and development there is an interaction of systems namely: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Interaction of these systems applies to refugee learners' experiences just like any other child depends on the relationship of systems in order to prosper.

The chapter also presented justification for using the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model in a study of refugee children. The model provides a lens that is compatible with refugee children's experiences which begin from their home countries, on the journey and when they settle in the host country. The model has more advantages than disadvantages when it is applied to the study of refugee learners' experiences. It helps to understand how refugee children intermingle with their proximal settings and how they are affected by interaction of mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. This chapter focuses on research design and methodology used to conduct this research. The chapter presents detailed information about the research approach, paradigm, design, and study area. It also provides comprehensive information about sampling techniques employed, data collection methods used, and how the data was analysed. Since the study dealt with a vulnerable group of people (children), a detailed explanation of ethical related issues is also provided in this chapter.

4.2 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach designed to provide an in-depth analysis of a specific programme or setting (Mertens, 2010). The approach has been preferred mainly because I was working with a vulnerable group of people (refugee children). According to Liamputtong (2007) qualitative methods are especially appropriate to the study of vulnerable people because they allow the researched to express their feelings and experiences in their own words. Children were able to give detailed narratives of their experiences and engaged in meaningful discussions because of the use of the qualitative approach. The approach provided an opportunity to tap into the richness of children's thoughts and feelings about themselves, their environments and the world in which they lived (Mishna, Antle & Regehr, 2004).

The approach was ideal for this study because it allowed me to collect data by interacting extensively and closely with participants during the study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001) qualitative research enables a researcher to interact with respondents in order to gain insight about the nature of a particular phenomenon. Qualitative approach allowed me to gather data by fully intermingling with respondents when they were giving complex details of their experiences. Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2005) argued that the qualitative approach is suitable to use when the researcher intends to obtain complex textual descriptions of people's experiences. The approach was preferred because it is non-numerical in nature and the

context was not controlled which enabled me to capture respondents' views concerning their refugee experiences.

4.3 Research Paradigm

According to Mertens (2012) paradigms are frameworks of philosophical assumptions that guide researchers. The theoretical framework for most qualitative research emerges from an interpretivist perspective. In support of that view, Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012) argued that every qualitative research has an interpretive perspective which focuses on uncovering participants' views. Since this research was qualitative in nature and was about children's experiences, the interpretivist paradigm was ideal to guide this study.

Lincoln (2010) argues that interpretivists theories long to answer why. They often come with stories and are derived from pure lived experiences. Consequently, interpretivism was the ideal paradigmatic position for this study since I focused on refugee learners' stories and their lived experiences. Schultz and Hatch (1996) contend that the interpretivists paradigm seeks to understand and describe meaningful social actions and it creates opportunities for the researcher to understand meanings of phenomenon. The paradigm also allows the researcher to acquire information by engaging in a dialogue with participants. According to Neuman (2011, p. 107): "interpretive paradigm is the foundation of social research techniques that are sensitive to context, that are more concerned with achieving an empathic understanding of the phenomenon".

4.4 Research Design

According to Yin (2003b, p. 19): "every empirical study has a research design and a research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study". This study was done in the form of a case study design. According to Punch (2009, p. 119): "The case study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case". In this research, the case study design was useful for an in-depth study of refugee learners to understand their lived experiences.

A single-case explanatory approach was used in this study to explain refugee learners' migration and school experiences. According to Yin (2003a) single-case studies often do not seek to test a theory or hypothesis, or even to generate one. Rather, they aim to understand a single case with the ultimate goal of understanding similar cases (Vogt, Gardner, Haeffele & Baker, 2011). Yin (2003a) postulates that explanatory theories are most suitable for designing and conducting single-case studies. In this research, explanatory theory is compatible with the chosen research approach (qualitative). It could allow participants to give detailed explanations of their experiences as refugees.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argued in the same vein that most qualitative studies are explanatory and exploratory. Explanatory studies show relationships between events and meanings as perceived by participants. They seek to describe and explain the patterns related to the phenomenon being studied, and in this study, the focus was on understanding refugee learners' experiences. Rule and John (2011, p. 8) had similarly argued that: "explanatory case study attempts to explain what happens in a particular case or why it happens".

Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano and Morales (2007) contend that case study and narrative researches may look the same, especially when the focus is on a single case study. However, significant differences exist. A case study's main purpose is to provide an in-depth description, exploration, or explanation of a specific subject that is under study (Lee, Mishna & Brennenstuhl, 2010). Creswell et al. (2007) asserted that unlike narrative research which is centred on a person and his/her story, a case study focuses on the issue which the individual case is selected to illustrate.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) case studies are very specific. They identify one participant, one setting, one situation or one event (Creswell, 2008). A case study was ideal to use in this study because it had one setting (Chitate Street School of Refugees), one group of participants (Zimbabwean refugee learners) and one situation (refugee experiences). Yin (2003b) argues that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. The use of a case study was preferred because it could help to

illuminate a detailed record of contemporary experiences (in real-life context) of Zimbabwean refugee learners in South Africa.

4.5 Study Area

The Chitate Street School of Refugees was the case study chosen for this project. The school was closed during the apartheid era in 1958 for serving black children in a white designated area (Principal's speech, 2009). After its closure, the school was mainly used for church purposes by the Roman Catholic Church until it reopened as a refugee school in 2008. In 2008, during and soon after xenophobic attacks, people fled from different places in and around Johannesburg seeking refuge at a Roman Catholic Church. As a result, there was an influx of men, women and children to the building (Kandowe & Shumba, 2012). During that time, elections which were marred by extreme violence and torture were taking place in Zimbabwe.

Many Zimbabweans, including children, flocked to Johannesburg and settled in the Roman Catholic Church building. There was a need to make sure that these children went to school. The Bishop identified many school-going children loitering around the Roman Catholic Church and suggested an educational programme which would help them (children) desist from drugs, alcohol and criminal activities (Principal's speech, 2009). The school was opened (in 2008) not with the intention of becoming a formally established facility, but as an urgent response to the crisis (Kandowe & Shumba, 2012).

The school has refugee children who are accompanied and unaccompanied. It accepts children without conditions such as with or without legal documents, and whether or not they can pay fees and with or without a transferring letter from a previous school (Kandowe & Shumba, 2012). The school is located in the centre of Johannesburg, the largest city of South Africa. A map that shows location of the school was deliberately left out for ethical reasons and participants' safety. Refugee institutions are easily targeted by criminals and some hostile citizens in South Africa. All participants did not want their school to be identified because of fear of xenophobic attacks. This is why I did not include a map of the school.

The school was preferred for this study because it initiated primarily to help refugee children (Chitate School Profile, 2010). Learners at Chitate Street School come from 12 different African countries namely Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Malawi, South Africa, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Rwanda (Principal's speech, 2009). The majority of learners come from Zimbabwe, hence the suitability of the Chitate Street School of Refugees for this case study.

4.6 Sampling Procedures

According to Neuman (2011, p. 240): "When we sample, we select some case to examine in detail and then we use what we learn from them to understand a much larger set of cases". There are different sampling procedures that can be used in a study depending on the availability of resources (Kothari, 2004). In this study, 'quota sampling' and 'purposive sampling' which are types of 'non random sampling' that is qualitative in nature, were used. Snowball sampling was used in the selection of refugee learners.

4.6.1 Quota Sampling

Quota sampling is sometimes considered a type of purposive sampling (Mack et al., 2005). Neuman (2011) postulates that in quota sampling, a researcher first identifies relevant categories among the population to capture diversity among units (eg. male and female; or under age 30). Next, the researcher determines how many cases to get for each category - that is quota sampling. In this study, 'quota sampling' was used to come up with a category of learners in forms three and four (forms three and four are equivalent to Grades 10 and 11 respectively). The category had both males and females. There were fewer females in the category because the school has less girls than boys. It was ideal to use quota sampling in this research so as to ensure gender balance and to have a diverse representation of learners' experiences from upper forms.

4.6.2 Purposive Sampling

In almost all qualitative research, purposive sampling is adopted in which researchers use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). In this study, 'purposive sampling', a qualitative sampling procedure which allows the researcher to deliberately select participants, a learning site and

research techniques was used (Creswell, 2008). Purposive sampling was used to select a refugee school, Zimbabwean refugee learners, school principal and parents/guardians.

4.6.3 Snowball Sampling

According to Creswell (2008) in certain situations, the researcher might not know the best people to include in the study because of the unfamiliarity of the place or the complexity of events. In such a situation, snowball sampling is used when the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals who can be included. In this study, the principal was purposefully selected. He (principal) was used to select Zimbabwean teachers and a counsellor who is also from Zimbabwe. Teachers helped to select Zimbabwean learners. Learners helped to select parents/guardians. Creswell (2008) argues that when using snowball sampling, there is an apparent need for getting expert informers who in this study were the principal and teachers.

Since I did not know Zimbabwean refugee children at Chitate School, I employed snowball sampling to select learners. I used school teachers and the principal to help identify Zimbabwean refugee learners among refugees from 12 different African countries. Teachers were asked to recommend learners whom they thought would be most suitable participants to the study. Learners were chosen from forms three and four classes for the following reasons:

- i) Forms three and four classes had the highest number of refugees from Zimbabwe;
- ii) Forms three and four are the highest level classes at the school. They had mature children who could respond to interview questions and participate in group discussions meaningfully; and
- iii) Forms three and four learners have been at the school longer than all other children in other classes. Their school experiences were broader than other children who were just arriving at the school. Hence, they were in a better position to engage in a discussion about their curriculum experiences at Chitate Street School.

Learners who were selected had comprehensive refugee experiences and rich information to offer.

4.6.4 Concept/Theory Based Sampling

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 326): “concept/theory based sampling is a type of sampling by case which entails selecting information-rich persons known to experience the concept or to be attempting to implement the concept/theory”. Concept/theory based sampling is used when a study requires an examination of a particular type of case. Examples of sampling by case type are extreme-case, intensive-case, typical-case, unique-case, reputational-case, critical-case and concept/theory based-case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Concept/theory based sampling was ideal for this study because it enabled me to target information rich learners who had robust migration and school experiences to share.

4.7 The Sample and Size

There were 27 participants in this study:

- i) Sixteen learners (10 boys and six girls),
- ii) Four teachers,
- iii) Five parents/guardians,
- iv) One school principal, and
- v) One counsellor

Learners were chosen because the study is about their experiences. There is a need to understand their migration and school experiences. Only 16 learners (out of 219 learners from Zimbabwe) were preferred because I intended to do an intensive case study of their experiences. Thus, a small number of learners allowed me to do that more effectively. As a result of using 16 learners, I managed to fully mix and mingle with learners during discussions and to engage with them in interviews.

Teachers were included in the sample because they were people who welcomed refugee learners when they first arrived at the school and they taught them. It was important to have teachers in the sample so that they could comment on the learners’ curriculum experiences. However, circumstances beyond my control made it impossible to have teachers participate in the study on my first visit to the school. They were very furious about their low remunerations and by the fact that they had not been paid for a month. The school relies heavily on donor support to operate. If

there is no donation made to the school, it subsequently means no salaries for teachers. If donations are in form of kind, teachers will be given a little and the rest goes to the school. So, teachers refused to participate in this study (in March, 2012) claiming that they needed their salaries first. They claimed that other researchers who came to the Chitate Street School promised them better salaries, but that did not materialise. It was not easy to gain access to participants in this study because of the nature of the school. It is a school for refugee children who are very vulnerable to attacks by South African citizens on xenophobic grounds.

I made two visits to the school for data collection purposes. The first visit was in March 2012 and the second was in May 2013. The reason for having the second visit was to make a follow up on learners and the principal. During the second visit, I managed to interview four teachers after they were spoken to by the principal and they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Teachers offered a lot of information about learners' curriculum experiences and challenges that the school was facing.

Parents/guardians were included in the study in order to understand their children's experiences from Zimbabwe to South Africa. They were chosen mainly because they could comment on experiences they went through with their children. Since the study is about children, I found that they (children) might not be able to give all details of the trauma they went through in Zimbabwe and challenges they are still facing here in South Africa. This is why parents/guardians were included in the study. There were three accompanied children who took part in this study. Parents of these three accompanied children participated in this study. Two other parents/guardians had children who were studying at Chitate School although their children were not among the 16 learners who were selected to take part. Hence, a total of five parents/guardians were interviewed.

The principal was included in the sample so that he could share information about the school. The principal provided information that concerns background and current information about the school, how learners are admitted or retained, type of curriculum offered, background information of refugee learners (accompanied/unaccompanied) and challenges faced by the

school. The school counsellor was included in the study because he works closely with refugee children who faced trauma; and also engages with parents and teachers.

4.8 Data Collection Methods

According to Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) data in the case study approach are collected by multiple methods. Consequently, different data collecting tools were used in this study. Kothari (2004) argues that research data can be categorised into primary or secondary data. Primary data for this research was obtained from interviews (semi-structured) and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from learners' autobiographies and documentary sources which in this research were school records.

4.8.1 Semi-Structured interview

Interview is one of the most important sources of case study information (Yin, 2009). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009): "Interview is literally an inter view. An inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 145). Interviews are best means of collecting people's stories (Seidman, 2006). They enabled learners to freely talk about their experiences (stories) beginning from events that took place in their home countries up to events happening in the host country. Interviews were good for this study because they allowed children to give voice to their own experiences and understanding of their world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In-depth interviews which were conducted enabled children to share their perspectives of what it means to be refugees. Mack et al. (2005) argued that in-depth interviews are ideal to use when the research is about experiences of vulnerable people. They (interviews) allow participants to freely express their views about a sensitive topic. Interviews elicited refugee learners' experiences during pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration, and also enabled me to make a comprehensive meaning of their occurrences. Seidman (2006) reported that in-depth interviews are associated with understanding somebody's lived experiences. Thus, semi-structured interviews enabled me to understand refugee children's lived experiences.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the school principal, parents/guardians teachers, counsellor and learners. The key feature of semi-structured interviews is that participants have the freedom to express their views about the subject. They are not restricted by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspective of the researcher (Creswell, 2008). Semi-structured interviews were ideal in this case because they enabled me to ask for more information from the respondents by probing questions based on their responses and, at the same time, remained focused on the study. The main focus of interviews was on learners' identities and their migration and school experiences. Participants who consented to the use of audio tapes had their interviews recorded. Some interviewed learners refused to be recorded, notes were taken during interaction with them.

4.8.2 Documentary Sources

According to Punch (2009, p. 158): "Documents both historical and contemporary are a rich source of data for education and social research". Reviewed documentary sources for this study include school records and profiles. Yin (2009) said: "except for studies of preliterate societies, documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic" (p. 101). Information obtained from documents is likely to be more informative because participants would have carefully written it. Creswell (2009) argues that documents represent data which are thoughtful because participants would have given attention when compiling them.

School records and profiles provided statistical numbers of learners at the school since its inception in 2008. They also provided information about the curriculum, learners' academic performances over the years, and some contextual information about the school and challenges it is facing. This information was used to make arguments and to provide detailed information in response to critical questions guiding the study. McCulloch (2004) argues that information from documentary sources is useful to support a particular argument.

4.8.3 Autobiographies

Autobiographies were reviewed in order to examine learners' experiences as they were written by children themselves. Autobiographies provided detailed stories of refugee children's lives which was very essential in making meaning of their experiences. McCulloch (2004) said "autobiographies are often important as recollections of the individuals' life, the struggles in which they have been involved and the changes they have witnessed" (p. 102). Information from autobiographies was corroborated with information from interviews and group discussions to support the experiences of refugee children in the study.

4.8.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative method that consists of about six to 12 people discussing a topic guided by a facilitator (Greenbaum, 1993). FGDs are conducted in a way that a researcher will ask questions and elicit responses through discussions (Creswell, 2008). FGDs have been chosen in this study because they allowed respondents to embark on an extensive discussion of a particular subject (refugee experiences) thereby enabling the researcher to obtain collective and in-depth information regarding learners' experiences. FGDs can yield a vast amount of information within a short period of time (Mack et al., 2005).

As a result of FGDs, I was able to gather a wide range of information within a short period of time. FGDs are usually lively and very informative because participants can recall information, elaborate and corroborate some points and discuss critical issues. King and Horrocks (2010) claim that the very nature of being part of a group can engage participants. Group discussions allow participants to feel motivated to speak more about the topic than they could have done in a one-on-one interview. In FGDs, stated views can often be amplified, qualified, amended or contradicted when expressed as part of a group interview (King & Horrocks, 2010). They encourage greater candor and may be more acceptable to participants reluctant to take part in one-on-one interviews (Barbour, 2007).

All 16 learners selected to participate in the study took part in FGDs. There were two FGDs with learners. Each FGD had eight learners. Teachers helped me to divide learners into two groups in order to avoid systematic bias and friendship groups. Learners who were in FGDs were asked to

discuss their experiences prior to leaving Zimbabwe, on the way to South Africa and while they were in South Africa. Learners were probed about their experiences at the Chitate Street School of Refugees. The FGDs were recorded using an audio tape. All learners agreed to the recording of the discussions arguing that nobody would identify their voices in a group. This is unlike individual interviews where some learners did not want to be recorded claiming that they would be easily identified. A conducive environment for FGDs to be conducted was created. Roulston (2010) postulates that in a FGD, it is vital to facilitate an environment in which participants are comfortable to discuss sensitive topics. I created a pleasant environment (by prohibiting jeering and despising others) that made learners feel comfortable to freely discuss their diverse views about their experiences. I made a point that all learners had the platform to express themselves freely.

4.9 Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

A pilot study was done for pre-testing FGD and interview questions. A pilot study was conducted in 2011 with seven refugee children in a private school in South Africa. The exercise helped bring to light the weaknesses of the research techniques and questions asked. Corrections were made based on the noted weaknesses. Reports of school meetings and profiles contained valid information about the facility and the challenges it is facing. I went back to participants to show them the transcribed data and how their experiences were represented. That exercise enhanced validity by ensuring trustworthiness and credibility (Rolfe, 2006).

I personally transcribed and did all the work, and also enhanced the validity by ensuring that there were adequate resources for the research to be undertaken. I avoided the following: biased choice of research participants, poor coding of data and subjective interpretation of data (Cohen et al., 2007). Data which came from focus groups, interviews and autobiographies were triangulated in order to enhance validity of the study. An important strategy to ensure the validity of a case study is the triangulation of different sources of data (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010).

4.10 Data Analysis

I analysed data by using content analysis. According to Cohen et al. (2007) content analysis is a process that involves classifying text data into categories and themes. Content analysis allows the researcher to have a subjective interpretation of text data and to develop some codes which would later be collapsed to themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Data in this study was organised, transcribed and analysed. I read the data thoroughly, divided it into segments of information and labeled each segment of information with thematic codes. I searched for patterns in coded data to categorise them and information overlapping as redundancies was removed from codes. Lastly, codes were collapsed into themes and each theme was discussed in detail.

A theme is a collection of ideas that are closely related (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Thematic analysis was applied which is a method for organising, analysing and reporting categorised ideas (themes) of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was ideal in this case because it helped me to organise and describe data in rich detail. Information from all data collecting instruments was presented concurrently on each research question, to enhance validity and reliability of the findings. The conceptual framework of Anderson et al. (2004) and Bhugra et al. (2011) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model were used as analytical frameworks for children's experiences. The use of the conceptual framework deepened the understanding of experiences which refugees went through. The experiences were categorised under pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration. At each point in time, experiences were presented according to the ecological model. Refugee learners' identities were analysed following the Goodson and Sikes' (2001) timeline history.

4.11.1 Ethical Issues

Turner and Fozdar (2010) stated that ethical responsibility is fundamental in all research, especially with refugees who are a particularly vulnerable group. Strict ethical issues had to be observed because this study involved refugee children. In any research, children are considered vulnerable because of their dependency on adults, small size and less strength (Lahman, 2008). Children were required to discuss private and poignant details of their life experiences as refugees, hence ethical issues were to be maintained in order to protect them from any harm. Cohen et al. (2007) argued that there are three main areas of ethical issues, namely: informed

consent, confidentiality and consequence of the research. In order to attain ethical issues and to gain the trust and support of respondents, I complied with all the concern areas of ethical issues. Respondents were requested to participate in the study voluntarily and were also informed about the purpose and consequence of the study.

Mertens (2012) argues that children should not be made to sign consent forms. Generally, researchers are required to obtain consent from the children's parents/guardians. However, children can then provide consent, meaning that they understand and agree to participate in the research. In this study, permission was asked from parents/guardians to have their children (learners) participate in the research. Three parents/guardians (whose children were among 16 selected learners) signed two consent forms, one for the participation of their child and the other one for their (parent/guardian) participation in the study. The Bishop, who is in charge of all the unaccompanied children, signed a consent form for all unaccompanied learners.

Children were later notified about the study and given consent forms to sign prior to the commencement of interviews and group discussions. Children were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point in time. They were also notified that they were not compelled to participate in the study because their parents/guardians consented to their participation. Mishna et al. (2004) asserted that if parents consent to the participation of their children, researchers must tell children that they have a right not to participate if they do not want. All children were given consent forms to sign that they were aware that they were not compelled to be part of the study. Informed consent was obtained prior to the commencement of the research, and re-established during the research process.

Researchers are ethically obligated to promise confidentiality to participants in a study (Mertens, 2012). I ensured participants' confidentiality and observed maximum respect for both individuals and the school as a whole. I promised all respondents that I would not report or publish data in a way that would identify them. Learners' dignity was kept intact and trust was developed throughout the research process. Deception of any kind was avoided with respondents, but instead, they were guaranteed maximum confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability and non-traceability. Pseudonyms were used in the analysis section to further enhance privacy. Palmer

(2008) affirms that confidentiality and anonymity are especially relevant considerations when researching forced migrants.

Ensign (2003) reported that homeless youths are vulnerable groups in research, hence the need to avoid exploitation and abuse of participants. I took into consideration participants' vulnerability and exercised extreme caution. I created a conducive environment for learners to freely participate in the study. They (learners) were encouraged not to talk about others in the interview so that privacy of other people may not be breached (Liamputtong, 2007; Swartz, 2011). This enabled learners to feel free to retell their sensitive stories and the exercise also helped them feel better after they shared and heard other refugee children's stories. According to Liamputtong (2007) researching the vulnerable is essential because some victims of circumstances may get therapy through participation.

The proposal was handed to the University's ethics committee to check if the study would not infringe on human rights of the respondents. An ethical certificate was awarded by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee. The Chitate Street School of Refugees works closely with trained counsellors who are responsible for counselling traumatised children. I requested a counsellor to be on the standby throughout my entire data collection period at the school. Some children faced traumatic experiences both in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. This is why I decided to involve a trained counsellor to help children who could have been re-traumatised by retelling their stories. Fortunately, neither re-traumatisation nor any negative experience occurred throughout the interview and group discussion sessions. Rapport building was used in order to gain learners' trust to participate in this study.

4.11.2 Rapport Building as an Ethical Strategy

In a sensitive research project like this, learners are usually reluctant to be part of the study and to share their experiences. Stevens, Lord, Proctor, Nagy and O'Riordan (2010) argued that recruiting participants is one of the challenges common to sensitive topics. In order to do such a study, rapport building has to be done. Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2009) contend that establishing rapport building is fundamental to every qualitative research which is considered sensitive. Rapport makes participants feel relaxed and free to discuss very sensitive

issues in their lives. It enables children to share their experiences or poignant moments in their lives.

King and Horrocks (2010) said: “rapport is essentially about trust-enabling the participants to feel comfortable in opening up to you. There are no guaranteed recipes for rapport, but there are things you can do to encourage a positive relationship that enables trust to develop” (p. 48). Similarly, Ready and Burton (2012) maintained that there are different models and approaches to rapport building, but one prominent is the relationship building approach. The relationship building approach entails formulating a working connection with participants in order to gain their trust and confidence (Ready & Burton, 2012). In that respect, I established rapport by building a relationship with the learners. I shared my experiences with learners as a Zimbabwean who also went through horrific and traumatising experiences.

Stevens et al. (2010) claimed that sharing your personal experiences with participants makes them free to share their experiences with you in the interview. Sharing experiences with the children made them feel free and encouraged to share their own experience as well. I familiarised myself with the children prior to interviewing and engaging in discussions with them. I spent a day at the school interacting with learners and their teachers before interviews and FGDs began. Some of the learners felt close to me to the extent of asking me to help them with their history homework. King and Horrocks (2010) argued that rapport can be made by introducing your project, sharing expressions, spending time at the school and familiarising with participants.

4.12 Delimitations of the Study

There are many refugees from different countries in South Africa, but this study was delimited to Zimbabwean refugees. This is because the number of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa is on the rise and is unlikely to decline because of the economic instability and political tension in Zimbabwe. The study was also delimited to refugees in higher grades because they are likely to respond fully unlike learners in lower grades. The study mainly used purposive sampling techniques because of the need to select learners who had more refugee experiences to share.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter focused on research design and methodology used to carry out this study. The qualitative research approach was employed in order to answer critical questions in the study. The qualitative approach was ideal for this study which focuses on stories of refugee children. The paradigmatic content of the study was interpretivist. The interpretivist paradigm is compatible with the qualitative and it allowed me to have a comprehensive understanding of children's migration and school experiences through interactions that I had. The study was done in the form of a single case study. A case study identifies one participant, one setting, one situation or one event. Since the study had one setting (Chitate Street School of Refugees), one participant (Zimbabwean refugee learners) and one situation (refugee experiences), a case study was identified as the most suitable research design to use.

The study was done at a refugee school located in the central business district of the commercial city of Johannesburg, South Africa. It was closed in 1958 during the apartheid era for helping black people in a white designated area. The school was re-opened in 2008 as a refugee school after the Bishop in charge felt pity for many Zimbabwean children of school-going age milling around the Roman Catholic Church. The school has learners from 12 different African countries.

The sampling procedures used for this study are quota, purposive and snowball sampling. Quota sampling was used to identify a category of refugee learners in forms three and four, and to put them into groups of males and females. Purposive sampling, which is characterised by deliberate targeting of respondents, was used to identify the school and all participants. Since I did not know who refugee learners from Zimbabwe were among children from 12 different African countries, I had to use snowball sampling to select them. Snowball sampling was used to select learners from Zimbabwe who were in forms three and four. Through snowball sampling, I selected the school principal who in turn helped to select a counsellor and teachers. Teachers helped to select Zimbabwean learners who were both accompanied and unaccompanied. Accompanied learners helped to select their parents/guardians.

The study had a total of 27 participants: sixteen learners, five parents/guardians, four teachers, one counsellor and one principal. Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews with all participants. FGDs were conducted with learners. An autobiographical method was used and lastly, documentary sources of school records and profiles were reviewed. Data was analysed by using content analysis. Since the study was sensitive and dealing with vulnerable children, strong ethical issues had to be observed. Participation was voluntary and consent was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study and all participants were notified that they were free to withdraw at any point. The next chapter focuses on analysing refugee learners' identities and migration experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

Refugee Learners' Identities and Migration Experiences

5.1 Introduction

Chapters five and six of this thesis analyses the data by using a content analysis method. This chapter begins with data about refugee learners' identities and migration experiences. Refugee learners' identities were analysed following Goodson and Sikes' (2001) life history timeline method. Refugee learners' migration experiences were presented, analysed and discussed in light of the three stages of refugee experiences by (Anderson et al., 2004) (pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model. As was previously discussed in chapter three, the ecological model consists of systems in which a growing child interacts with, beginning from proximal settings (microsystem), interaction of microsystems (mesosystem), indirect influences of the community (exosystem), to cultural and societal influences (macrosystem). Except where grammatical errors are corrected, quotations are presented verbatim. Pseudonyms were used throughout the entire study for ethical reasons. Participants were not involved in the assigning of pseudonyms. I did that after completing data analysis. The chapter begins by analysing refugee learners' identities and then refugee learners' migration experiences.

5.2 Zimbabwe Refugee Learners' Identities

This section focuses on answering the first critical question of this study: Who are the Zimbabwe refugee learners? Refugee learners' identities have been analysed following Goodson and Sikes' (2001) life history timeline. Life history timeline is a tool to provide a visual representation of the main events in a person's life and for engaging the interviewee in constructing this story (Adriansen, 2012). According to Goodson and Sikes (2001) the life history timeline could touch on the following six components: i) description of place and date of birth; ii) explanation of a person's family background (parents' occupations, their general characters and interests, brothers' and sisters' place and date of births and a description of extended family including their occupations and character); iii) description of community and context; iv) education (academic performance, subjects taken, subjects favoured, awards achieved, general character of the school

and relations with teachers); v) description of the person's other interests and pursuits; and vi) the person's future ambitions and aspirations.

5.2.1 Lloyd

Lloyd was interviewed on 6 March 2012. He gave his autobiography which is described below:

My name is Lloyd and I am an unaccompanied boy. I am 18 years old. I grew up in Harare. I am the last born in a family of four children. My three sisters are married. Two are here in South Africa. I am not sure about where they stay in South Africa because I lost their contact details. My other sister is in Lusaka, Zambia. My parents both died in 1998 when I was four years old. I stayed with my grandmother from 1998 until 2008 when I came to South Africa. My grandmother used to work as a bank teller. She was very loving and she raised me and my sisters just like her own children. I went to a school in Harare for all my primary and part of secondary education. I passed all four subjects which I wrote for primary school leaving examinations.

Primary schooling in Zimbabwe ranges from Grades one to seven. Learners do four main subjects namely, mathematics, English, Shona and content. There are other subjects which fall under content which children do at primary school, for example social studies, music and environmental science. Learners write primary school leaving examinations for the four main subjects when they are in Grade seven:

My favourite subject at primary school was mathematics. I was very good at it and I liked the teacher who taught us. He was very competent and loved his profession. I was in the mathematics club during primary schooling. I joined it because all my friends spoke highly about it and it was conducted by my favourite mathematics teacher. I do not do any sport at school although I am a big fan of volleyball. I enjoy watching and cheering my friends when they are playing volleyball. I tried playing it but I was not good at it. Although my secondary education was interrupted for two months when I was forced to participate in politics, I managed to catch up. I am doing well in all my subjects here especially mathematics. It is still my most favourite subject. I would like to study medicine at a university here in South Africa. I would like to be a doctor. There is a lot of suffering in Africa, so I would like to make a difference in other people's lives. I do not intend to go back to Zimbabwe because people who forced me to join the youth league may still want to kill me.

Lloyd was forced to join the youth league where school children were abused by politicians. Children dropped out of school to take part in politics. Failure to do that resulted in a punishment such as persecution and massive torture.

5.2.2 Mary

Mary is an unaccompanied girl aged 18. She was born on 8 April, 1994 in Bikita. She was born into a family of two children (herself and brother). Her brother was born on 16 September, 1989. She is all alone now because she lost her parents and her brother is in jail. Mary was interviewed on 6 March 2012. When she was asked to talk about her story, she said:

Reviewing my memories of the past and trying to recover from the wounds of my painful experiences that bring tears to my face. It all started when I was at the age of eight when my mother, brother and I were coming from a birthday party driving in the middle of the night. It began to rain when we were half way to home. The road was slippery. My mother lost control of the vehicle and crashed onto a stationery truck. My brother and I survived the accident. My mother died on the spot and seeing blood streaming all over, I cannot really express in words how I felt. My father had died long back before I was two years old. I became an orphan from the day my mother died. I realised that life could be so cruel when my mother passed away. Everything turned upside down and that is the time the economy of Zimbabwe was falling. My brother struggled very hard for me to get the best of all I wanted. He struggled for me to go to school. I managed to finish primary education. I passed my primary school leaving examinations well. I was lucky to be taught by good teachers who were very committed and helpful. They helped me a lot with my studies towards examination time.

The economic situation continued to fall and the political situation rose sharply and it became difficult for me to continue with my secondary education in Zimbabwe. I attended secondary education for two years until a dark cloud came and covered my life again. One day police officers came to our house. They said our house was not registered and it must be demolished immediately. They said an operation was being held which was called *Murambatsvina* and it was a strict order from the government that they had to demolish our house.

Murambatsvina was an operation which happened in Zimbabwe in the year 2005 when houses which were built illegally were demolished. Many houses were destroyed during operation *Murambatsvina* which was believed to be politically driven (Kriger, 2012). Most residents in Epworth's informal settlements were evicted from their homes in Harare's high-density suburbs during operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005. ZANU PF threatened to deny people residential stands in the informal settlements unless they participated in the ruling party's activities (Kriger, 2012). Mary believed that their house was destroyed for political reasons:

They showed us proof and documents of the law but my brother and I were not convinced because we knew it was politically related. My brother tried to stop them from destroying our house, but they slapped and silenced him. Tears streamed down my cheeks while I stood helplessly watching politicians destroying our house and everything that was in it was looted.

Mary's situation worsened when her brother joined a gang:

Hoping to succeed and plan for a brighter future, my brother joined a gang in order to raise money for me to continue with education and to provide shelter for us. Within two weeks, he got arrested and was jailed. I was now left alone in a dark world. My dreams of studying and becoming a medical doctor were shattered and I was hopeless about living and becoming a better person.

5.2.3 Susan

Susan is a 17 year old unaccompanied girl. She was interviewed on 6 March 2012 and said: "I was born on 17 February 1995 in the northern part of Zimbabwe. We are three girls in my family and I am the first born. My two sisters, Millicent and Memory are aged 13 and 14 respectively."

Susan's parents died long before Zimbabwe's political and economic problems began:

When my parents passed away, our house and all property were taken by our relatives. My uncle who took most of the property promised to look after me and to take me to school up to university level. My other two sisters were taken, one (Memory) by my sister in law and the other (Millicent) by my cousin's brother. My uncle lived with his wife and their two children in Chegutu. Their children were studying in boarding schools while I attended Hillside School. It was not a good school because there were no resources and most of the teachers were untrained. I struggled to adapt to that school because I used to go to a better school. I did not have a choice but to study hard and make use of the opportunity of staying with my relatives. All things seemed okay in the beginning. I had friends at Hillside School. A problem came when my uncle's wife travelled abroad. My uncle raped me twice and threatened that if I reported it to anyone, he would kill me and my two sisters who were staying with my other relatives.

In the Shona traditional culture, when a person dies, his/her property is distributed to relatives. Foster, Makufa, Drew and Kralovec (1997) argued that due to a shortage of accommodation in Zimbabwe, it is difficult for children to hold on to their house when their parents die. Property of the deceased would be distributed to relatives shortly after burial. The distribution of property should be done considering children of the deceased. They must be given more of the property so that they do not suffer during the absence of their parents. The way property was taken away by Susan's relatives was marked by greed. Relatives took property on the pretense that they would look after the children. But Susan's uncle did not do that. He abused her and threatened her not to report the matter:

I could not report to the police what my uncle did to me for the sake of my sisters. I was very afraid of living with my uncle. I went to live with my cousin where my young sister was living, but I could not disclose why I was running away from my uncle. When my

uncle learnt that I had gone to my cousin's place, he came to fetch me. He asked me if I told my cousin about what he did to me. I told him that I did not. He ordered me not to tell anyone or else he would kill me and my sisters.

Many children who are victims of rape often cannot talk about it because of fear. Some children will talk after they have been persuaded by their caregivers. Susan reported the case to her uncle's wife after she was persuaded to talk about why she did not want to live at her house anymore. Susan confided with her aunt, hoping to get protection but things did not go as she anticipated:

When my uncle's wife came back from overseas, I told her that I was not comfortable living at her house anymore. She asked me if there was a problem, but I told her that everything was okay. I just wanted to live with my sister at my cousin's house because I was missing her. My uncle's wife continued to persuade me to tell her what was going on and why I was in such a hurry to leave her house. I eventually told her what her husband did to me. She was shocked and did not believe me. Instead, she accused me of trying to make up a story in order to get her husband arrested. She was very bitter with me. She chased me out of her house and called me hurtful names. I was afraid of going to my cousin's place because my uncle would know where I was and kill me.

Susan stopped schooling and began to live in Zimbabwe as a street child until she was persecuted and escaped to South Africa. Susan wants to be a doctor. "I would like to study medicine. My favourite subjects are sciences. I am very good at biology and chemistry."

5.2.4 Nancy

Nancy was born in 1995. She is an unaccompanied girl aged 17 years. She was born in Binga to a family of three (two boys and a girl) and was the first born. Her parents divorced in 1998 and she was raised by her father and step-mother. When Nancy was interviewed on 6 March 2012, she said:

When my step-mother died in 2008, my father decided to migrate to South Africa. He left me to look after my two young brothers. My father used to support us by sending money for our upkeep and school fees. As time went on, his phone numbers were no longer going through. He changed his numbers and there was no more communication with him. Life began to be very difficult for me. I could not continue looking after myself and my two brothers and go to school. We did not have money for food and we had to stop going to school. My mother is married to another man in Binga. She told us that she was unable to help us.

My brothers and I decided to relocate to my aunt's place who was staying in a rural area. We explained to her our situation and she accepted us and begun to provide for our education, clothing and food. She took full responsibility for us. There never was communication anymore from my father who was still in South Africa. My aunt did not have a good job. She was really struggling to support us. I dropped out of school because my aunt could not pay fees anymore and there were a lot of political disturbances happening in our community. I did not go to school for one-and-a-half years. That affected my performance because I missed a lot. I wish to become a journalist. I am very interested in writing and my most favourite subjects are English language and English literature. I was in the debating club when I was at school in Zimbabwe. I am a good story teller. I write all my day-to-day experiences in my diary. That helps improve my writing skills.

Although Nancy claims that she is a refugee, her story does not qualify her to get that status according to the Geneva Convention on the Status of a Refugee. She was not persecuted and her life was not in danger. She acknowledged that there was persecution which was happening in the country but she was not a victim. According to her, she is an economic migrant who left Zimbabwe specifically for a job and education. Nancy reported that she is an asylum seeker, meaning she sent her application for refugee status. She was awaiting response from the Department of Home Affairs at the time the researcher interviewed her.

5.2.5 Nomsa

Nomsa was interviewed on 8 March 2012. She narrated her identity story below:

I am Nomsa. I am an 18 year old girl, who was born on 17 June 1994. I was born in Shamva, Zimbabwe, where my parents were working at a mine. We were two children in my family. My brother died of a lung infection in 1999. When my parents lost their jobs at a mining company in 2005, we relocated to South Africa. We travelled to South Africa as economic migrants. I attended a school in Pretoria, here in South Africa, from 2006 to 2008. I was living with my parents who were now working in Pretoria. My mother was working in a clothing shop as a sales woman while my father was driving taxis. My parents lost their jobs in 2008 when xenophobia broke out in South Africa. My father was severely beaten during xenophobia. My mother decided to let us go back to Zimbabwe because the xenophobic attacks were very brutal and scary.

According to Mwilu (2010, p. 1) about 62 people were killed in South Africa as a result of xenophobic attacks which occurred in 2008. Black foreign nationals were targeted. Many foreigners went back to their home countries in fear of brutal killings which were happening in South Africa (CoRMSA, 2009). Nomsa said:

We were victims of xenophobia. My parents and I went back to Zimbabwe in fear of attacks happening in South Africa. My mother could not get a job and the political violence was looming in Zimbabwe. My father died of wounds he received through xenophobic attacks. My mother and I returned to South Africa in 2009. My schooling was interrupted when we relocated to South Africa, back to Zimbabwe, and then South Africa again. I did not go to school for about four months. That affected me a lot. I used to perform well when I was at Shamva Primary School. My favourite subject is mathematics. I would like to be a statistician when I finish school. I enjoy using numbers.

Nomsa and her mother had to go back to South Africa where they had escaped xenophobic attacks. They found the political situation and economic problems negatively affecting the lives of people in Zimbabwe. This is why they decided to return to South Africa in 2009 after xenophobic attacks were over.

5.2.6 Oliver

Oliver, who was interviewed on the same day as Nomsa (8 March 2012) said: “My name is Oliver. I am an unaccompanied boy aged 17 years. I was born in 1995 in Watsomba District in Mutare.” Mutare is the fourth largest city in Zimbabwe. This is Oliver’s story:

I am a second born in a family of three children. I lived with my father and mother in Watsomba and then relocated to Mutare in 2002. We relocated because my father who was working in the Department of Labour was transferred to work at the head office in Mutare city. My mother was a house worker. My oldest brother who is 34 years old lives in Canada. He is married and stays with his family there. My family lived a happy life in the country and I was proud to be Zimbabwean before violence separated us. My young sister who is 16 years old went to live with my aunty in Harare after my parents were murdered by politicians in 2008. My parents were not into politics, but they were killed together with many other people in our community. I was forced to join the youth league when I was 13 years.

Oliver was not very good in school. He said:

I passed only one subject (Shona) out of four which I wrote for my primary school leaving examinations in 2007. My father was not happy with my school performance. He transferred me from a boarding to a day school for my secondary education. He hired private teachers to provide extra lessons for me. He was very keen to let me do well in my studies. He was looking forward to see how I would perform in my secondary school final examinations.

Oliver is a fine soccer player who joined the school team when he was in primary school: “I am a fine soccer player. I began playing for the senior school soccer team when I was in Grade four. I love soccer. I wish to become a doctor and to continue playing soccer during my free time.”

5.2.7 Jonathan

Jonathan is an unaccompanied boy who is 18 years old. He was born on 24 January 1994. He was interviewed on 8 March 2012 and his story is below:

I was born and bred in Murewa district. We are four children in my family. My father who was a soldier passed away when I was eight years old. I was raised by a single mother who was working in the offices of the registrar general. My mother worked very hard to provide everything that her children needed. She is my role model. My two young brothers and a sister are staying with my mother back in Zimbabwe.

Jonathan emulates his mother’s hardworking ethos. He claimed that his mother used to advise him to work hard so that he may pass examinations and go to university. Jonathan worked very hard when he was in Zimbabwe. He said: “I used to get high grades in end of year examinations. I did not want to fail my mother because she sacrificed a lot for me to continue with my education.” Jonathan’s schooling was interrupted when he was forced to join the youth league. He wants to be a doctor when he finishes schooling.

5.2.8 Joseph

Joseph was interviewed on 8 March 2012:

My name is Joseph and I am a boy aged 17. I come from Masvingo in Zimbabwe. I am the only child in my family. My parents died when I was one year old. My mother suffered and died of a hernia and later my father died after a very short illness. I was raised by my grandmother who lived in Mutawatawa district. My grandmother lived with my uncles’ children in Mutawatawa. Life was very difficult because my grandmother was unemployed and she did not have anyone to support her. My uncles who were in Harare were battling to make ends meet for themselves hence they were unable to support my grandmother. It was hard for my grandmother to raise money to pay for my school fees.

Joseph used to do some odd jobs in order to raise money for his fees: “For all my primary school education, I was doing some odd jobs so that I could pay for my school fees. I passed all subjects in my primary school leaving examinations”. Joseph would not have proceeded to secondary school due to financial constraints if it was not for a sponsorship he obtained: “I did not have

money to proceed to secondary education. Fortunately, I got a sponsorship from the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM)". BEAM helps Zimbabwe's orphan and vulnerable children with their education costs. It (BEAM) was, however, affected by the economic challenges which crippled the nation:

In 2008, BEAM suddenly stopped sponsoring my education for reasons which they did not disclose to me. I think it was because of economic challenges which were hitting the country hard. As a result, I stopped going to school. My life turned upside down when I stopped going to school. I was forced to participate in the country's politics.

Joseph wants to finish school and go to a university to study law: "My most favourite subjects at secondary school are English language and history. I would like to become a lawyer so that I could advocate for justice and stop any form of child abuse happening in societies." Joseph is a visionary young man whose ambition is clear. He wishes to right the wrongs happening to children such as forcing them to take part in politics at the expense of their schooling.

5.2.9 Byron

Byron is a 17 year old boy who travelled to South Africa as an unaccompanied child:

We were only two children in my family, my brother Sje and I. Sje was born in 1997. My father died in 1999 and mother in 2002. Sje and I were raised by my grandmother in her rural home in Chivi. I was a caregiver to my grandmother who was a widow. My grandmother tried to apply for funding from organisations which assist orphans with school fees, but nothing came up. I am a very intelligent, humble and respectful boy. I did my primary schooling at Mavhudzi School. The school principal helped me by paying for my fees because he was impressed by my academic progress and contact that I had with teachers and other school children. I obtained distinctions in all four subjects that I wrote for my primary school leaving examinations. When I was in Grade seven, I was made a school prefect. I enjoyed being a prefect. I joined Mavhudzi Secondary in 2007. In 2008, our school was used as a camping base by soldiers and politicians. I was forced to cook food for politicians and other people who were in meetings at our school. My grandmother's house was set on fire and my brother Sje was burnt when I stopped taking part in the duty of cooking that was assigned to me. I would like to become an electrical engineer when I finish school (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Some schools were invaded by politicians during the time of political instabilities in Zimbabwe in 2008. Kriger (2012) argues that bases were located anywhere, even in private properties such as farms and business centres, and in public institutions such as schools. Many schools were closed because teachers stopped going to work as they feared for their lives. The takeover of

Mavhudzi secondary was very common especially in rural areas where school programmes were disrupted by politicians. Badza (2008) postulates that most violence and school disruption was happening mainly in rural areas in Zimbabwe.

5.2.10 Alexio

Alexio was interviewed on 9 March 2012:

My name is Alexio and I am an 18 year old boy. I was born in Harare on 16 July 1994. I am the only child in my family. My parents divorced when I was young. My mother got married to another man and later divorced. She is now staying with her sick mother in the rural areas. I was raised by my father who was a famous politician and top official in the government. He was respected by many people in the ruling party because of contributions that he made since he fought for the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. My father was murdered during the period of political violence in Zimbabwe. Politicians wanted to kill me too. I went to live with my mother in the rural area. Politicians followed me and I escaped to South Africa.

Children whose parents or close relatives were famous politicians were at risk in Zimbabwe. Alexio did not have any safe place to hide in Zimbabwe, whether at a boarding school or in rural areas. This was because many people knew who his father was and what he used to do to people. This is why they killed his father and sought to kill his child in revenge. Leaving the country was Alexio's only option because politicians were determined to kill him. Violence in Zimbabwe disturbed Alexio, who enjoyed living and schooling in the country:

I enjoyed living and studying in my home country. My father used to provide everything that I needed. I was very good in school. I liked all the subjects I was doing at primary level. My most favourite subjects at secondary school are sciences. I am very good in science subjects as opposed to arts. I like mathematics, science and geography. I have three awards in mathematics and two in science. I wish to pass well, go to university and begin my life free of fearing politicians. I wish to go back to Zimbabwe as a medical doctor.

5.2.11 Memory

Memory is an 18 year old girl. She was born in Bulawayo. Bulawayo is the second largest city in Zimbabwe. The largest city is Harare. This is Memory's story:

We were only two children in my family (my sister and I). We lived a luxurious life in Zimbabwe. We were staying in low density suburbs and my parents used to provide everything that my sister and I asked for. All that was possible because my father had a good job at an insurance company. My mother was a senior member who had a big post in the ruling party. My parents both had company cars and were respected by people in our community. Things turned upside down in 2008. My mother was abducted and my father

was killed on political grounds. I do not know where my sister is after my family was disrupted.

I was an average learner at primary school. My most favourite subjects are science and geography. I like these subjects most because I always score high marks in them. I am not good with mathematics. I obtained an average pass mark in maths in my primary school leaving examination and I am not sure if I can make it at secondary level. I wish to better my life with education so that I may become a pilot. It has been my passion to fly an airplane. I even told my parents when we were still together in Zimbabwe that I would like to be a pilot. My father encouraged me to do science subjects and study hard. That is what I am doing at this refugee institution. I wish to go back to Zimbabwe after accomplishing my goals (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Just like Alexio, Memory's life was in danger because her mother was a politician. Violence which occurred in Zimbabwe affected all citizens, including children, especially those whose parents were active political members. Memory's education was affected because she had to flee to South Africa.

5.2.12 Hillary

Hillary is a 16 year old unaccompanied boy:

I was born in the city of Bulawayo on 3 March 1996. I grew up in the City of Kings (Bulawayo). I never met my father. I heard he was never married to my mother, he only impregnated her. My mother died when I was two months old. I was raised by my grandmother in a village until I was eleven years old, when she got sick and died. I grew up in a very poor family and life was not pleasant at all for me. My grandmother was so dear to me. She was very loving and she struggled a lot for me to eat and to go to school. When she died, I did not have any relative to go to. I went to live with another man who I was not related to. I just called him uncle.

I was abused by people in the community. They asked me to work in their gardens and fields and they would pay me very little. Sometimes they would not even pay me. I was being used like a donkey and treated like a slave by everyone. I dropped out of school and went to live in the streets because of abuse that I was experiencing in the community. The uncle that I was living with did not do anything to stop people from abusing me. He did not protect me from political violence which was happening around. I, therefore, decided to come to South Africa to get a better living. My education was interrupted in Zimbabwe. I did not do well in my primary school leaving examinations because of absenteeism. I know that if I study hard, I can pass all my subjects. My most favourite subjects are English literature, Bible knowledge and science. I wish to become an engineer when I finish school (Interview, 9 March 2012).

5.2.13 Peter

Peter was interviewed on Saturday 10 March 2012. He said:

My name is Peter. I am an 18 year old unaccompanied boy. I was born on 4 July 1994 in Mbizo Township, Kwekwe, Zimbabwe. I am an orphan. My parents died in a car accident when I was four years old. My uncle raised me and handed me over to my grandmother when I was 11 because he was relocating to a country overseas. My uncle supported me and my grandmother even though he was no longer staying with us. He made once off payments of my school fees at the beginning of each year.

During the country's economic collapse in 2008, people from the Zimbabwean diaspora used to send money to their relatives back home. Peter had the privilege of getting money from overseas which made his situation better than other children in Zimbabwe who were relying on their parents' incomes. He did well in the primary school leaving examinations:

I passed all my subjects at primary school and I am looking forward to doing the same with secondary education. I wish to become a paediatrician. I like it because it involves assisting children whom I have at heart. My favourite subjects are mathematics, English language and science.

Peter's problems began in 2008 when he was very desperate to leave the country because of persecution which was happening in his community:

I called my uncle overseas and told him what was happening in Zimbabwe, but he told me that there was nothing he could do. He asked me to stay in the country just like everybody else, but that was not easy. I decided to travel to South Africa alone. My uncle was not happy with my idea of traveling to South Africa. He asked me to go back to my grandmother in Zimbabwe, but I chose not to. He stopped sending me money for my education. That is why I decided to join a refugee school where I heard that the Bishop was paying for all children.

5.2.14 Jacob

Jacob was born on 17 September 1994 in Jerera, Masvingo. His story is below:

I am an unaccompanied boy who is 18 years old. I am the only child in my family. My parents worked at a farm which was owned by a white man. I attended primary and secondary schools which were located close to our farm. My parents loved me and we lived happily. A problem began in the year 2000 when farming inversion commenced in the country. War veterans frequented our farm. They claimed that the farm was supposed to be owned by a black Zimbabwean. They announced that all white farmers must leave the country. That affected my life because my parents lost their jobs and we had to resettle to a place where schools were located very far away (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Richardson (2005) argues that farming invasion which took place in Zimbabwe resulted in the displacement of many families and had a negative impact on the economy. Zimbabwe had an agro-based economy. Many children whose care givers worked in farms relocated to different places when the farms were confiscated by war veterans and government officials. Jacob's situation was aggravated in 2007 when the economy of the country was down and political persecutions increased ahead of presidential elections in 2008.

Jacob wanted to become an accountant. He said: "I wish to be an accountant so that I may earn a lot of money and travel all over the world. My favourite subjects are Bible knowledge, English language and geography."

5.2.15 Natasha

Natasha is an accompanied child who traveled to South Africa with her mother because of violence which was happening in their community:

I am Natasha and I came from Harare. I was born on 13 February 1996 at the Avenues clinic in Harare. I am 16 years old now. My father died in 1997 after battling with cancer for a long time. My mother is a senior nurse at the West End Private Clinic in Harare. She is very dear to me and I love her so much. She is understanding, reasonable and considerate to other people. She is kind hearted, merciful and likes children a lot. She was a member of a charity organisation which was responsible for the upkeep of children in Harare. She is my role model and I aspire to be like her. We were two children born of my father and mother. My young sister died after a short illness. My mother is married to another man who is a doctor. They have one child (Jill) together who is 11 years old. Jill and I attended the same school (Hartmann Primary) in Zimbabwe. I passed all my primary school leaving examinations in Zimbabwe. My most favourite subjects at secondary school are mathematics and Bible knowledge. I like Bible knowledge because I find it easy since I am a Christian. I attend Bible school every Sunday after the church service. What we learn at Sunday school also applies to the Bible knowledge subject that we do at school. I had to flee from Zimbabwe because it was no longer safe to live there (Interview, 10 March 2012).

5.2.16 Reuben

Reuben is an 18 year old boy who was raised in Mutoko District. His story is below:

I was born on 4 August 1994. I was born at Mutoko Hospital and went to Mutoko Primary School. My father who worked at the Mutoko Central Secondary School as a clerk died of HIV/AIDS in 1998. My mother is HIV positive. She worked as a nurse aid at Mutoko Hospital. She is a hard worker who sacrificed a lot for me and my sisters to make a living

in Zimbabwe. She was not gainfully employed but managed to send me and my sisters to school until hell broke loose when the economy was down and the political situation on the rise in Zimbabwe. My two sisters, Jane and Nyasha are twins, who were born on 15 May 1996. I am very close to my sisters. They are free to tell me everything that happens in their lives. When Nyasha was sexually abused at school by her teacher, she told me first. I told my mother who then reported the case to the police and the teacher was arrested.

I liked my school very much before politics began. I liked Shona most because it was the easiest subject for me since it is my mother language. I passed all my primary school leaving examinations. I would like to be a doctor when I grow up (Interview, 10 March 2012).

A one page summarised version of identities of Zimbabwean refugee learners is shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of Zimbabwean Refugee Learner Identities

Names	Refugee status & Age (years)	The Family	Community and context	Education	Future Career
Lloyd	UB, 18	Parents died when he was four years. Raised by grandmother	Education interrupted with politics	Passed PSLE	Medical doctor
Mary	UG, 18	Both parents died. Affected by <i>Murambatsvina</i> . Brother was arrested.	Affected by political and economic situation	Disrupted	Medical doctor
Susan	UG, 17	Parents died long ago. Raped by uncle. Became a street child	She was persecuted in the streets.	Likes science subjects	Medical doctor
Nancy	UG, 17	Parents divorced. Father relocated to South Africa and lost contact.	Education affected by politics.	Likes English	Journalist
Nomsa	AG, 18	Came to South Africa, Zimbabwe and then South Africa again. Victim of xenophobia	Affected by political and economic problems	Good at math	Statistician
Oliver	UB, 17	Parents murdered in political matters	Forced to join youth league	Passed only one PSLE	Doctor and soccer player
Jonathan	UB, 18	Father died, raised by a single mother.	Forced to join youth league	Passed PSLE	Doctor
Joseph	UB, 17	Parents died, raised by poor grandmother. Used to do odd jobs.	Forced to participate in politics	Passed PSLE	Lawyer
Byron	UB, 17	Parents died, He and his brother were raised by grandmother. Sje was burnt	Forced to cook for politicians	Passed PSLE	Electrical engineer.
Alexio	UB, 18	Father was a famous politician. He (father) was murdered on political matters.	Politicians wanted to kill Alexio.	Passed PSLE	Medical doctor
Memory	UG, 18	Mother had a big post in the ruling party. Mother was abducted and father killed	Affected by politics in the community.	Passed PSLE	Pilot
Hillary	UB, 16	Raised by grandmother in a poor environment. Lived with a stranger.	Abused by people in the community.	Failed PSLE	Engineer
Peter	UB, 18	Parents died. Raised by uncle who relocated overseas	Affected by political persecution	Passed PSLE	Paediatrician
Jacob	UB, 18	Family affected by farming inversion.	Affected by politics and economy	Likes Arts subjects	Accountant
Natasha	AG, 16	Father died of cancer. Mother is a nurse	Community became dangerous	Passed PSLE	Nurse
Reuben	UB, 18	Father died of HIV/AIDS, mother has the virus.	Affected by political and economic problems	Passed PSLE	Doctor

Key

UB – Unaccompanied Boy

UG – Unaccompanied Girl

AB – Accompanied Boy

AG - Accompanied Girl

PSLE – Primary School Leaving Examinations

5.3 Interpretation of Refugee Learners' Identities

Refugee learners' identities have been interpreted using the Goodson and Sikes (2001) life history timeline which consists of six components (place and age/date of birth, family background, community and context, education, interests and pursuits, and future ambitions and aspirations).

5.3.1 Place and Age/Date of Birth

All 16 learners who participated in this research were born in different parts of Zimbabwe. Some were born in rural areas and others in urban areas. Ages of children ranged from 16 to 18 years old as of May 2012 when they were interviewed. There were only two learners who were 16 years old. Five were 17 years old and nine were 18 years old. Refugee children who were 18 years old were two years older than their level of study. Kanyongo (2005) states that the primary level in Zimbabwe is a seven-year cycle and the official entry age is six years. Most children in Zimbabwe begin Grade one at the age of six years and reach form six at 18 years (Alwang, Ersado & Taruvinga, 2001). The majority of children who participated in this study were 18 years old yet they were still in form four (Grade 11). This was because of interruptions that each child had experienced in their education while they were still in Zimbabwe and the challenges they faced in South Africa.

5.3.2 Family Background

Refugee children had complex family backgrounds. The majority of them were orphans. Some children were orphans because their parents were killed during the political violence in Zimbabwe, for example Oliver and Memory. The majority of children were orphans because their parent(s) died of natural causes long before political uprisings in Zimbabwe. For example, Reuben and Natasha's fathers died of HIV/AIDS and cancer respectively. According to Foster et al. (1997) HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly the main cause of orphanhood and formation of child-headed families in Zimbabwe. Parents are dying and families end up scattered all over. Some children lost their parents at tender ages. Only two children (Nomsa and Jacob) had both their parents at the time of interviews.

Most of the orphans were raised by their relatives such as grandmothers, uncles and aunts. Foster et al. (1997) contend that in the traditional culture of Zimbabwe, children who lost both parents are looked after by members of the extended family. These include grandparents, aunts and uncles who would take the responsibility of raising orphaned children of their relatives. Children who are looked after by relatives may not be cared for in the same way as caregivers would look after their own children. For example, Susan was not cared for by her uncle in the same way he was caring for his children. In some cases, relatives would not accept taking responsibility of caring for their relatives' orphaned children.

Foster (et al. 1997) argued that many relatives who take the responsibility of raising orphaned children in Zimbabwe do not care for the children in the same way they would do with their biological offspring. The reason could be because they do not want to end up providing less for their own children. If forced by economic circumstances to give preferences, they would offer more to their own than to fostered children. Refugee children do not belong to anybody, they are orphans with pseudo and fluid identities. They do not really know who they are because they lost their close relatives and they are wandering in South Africa. Their lives are full of uncertainties.

5.3.3 Community and Context

Children came from different communities. Many pointed out that their respective communities were inhabitable because of child abuse which was rampant. Masuka, Banda, Mabvurira and Frank (2012) contend that although Zimbabwe has put in place arguably one of the best child social protection systems in Africa, there are many children who are being abused in their communities. Chitereka (2010) claims that in spite of the fact that Zimbabwe has ratified local, regional and international conventions that purport to protect children, child abuse is still rampant in the country. The country has ratified both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child (Chitereka, 2010). But, child abuse is high in communities. Children were forced to take part in political activities and to drop out of school. This had a negative impact on children's education.

5.3.4 Education

All children's education was affected in Zimbabwe. This is one of the reasons why they had to come to South Africa for quality education. The children's education was not only interrupted by political and economical issues in Zimbabwe. Most of the children could not go to school because they were from very poor backgrounds, especially those who were living in rural areas. Alwang et al. (2001) argued that rural poverty in Zimbabwe was more prevalent, severe and deeper than that in urban areas. As a result of poverty, many children dropped out of school. Orphaned children who participated in this study were raised by relatives who could not afford to send them to school. Consequently, children had to work and provide for their schooling.

Some children were getting sponsorships from social welfare organisations, for example Joseph who was assisted by BEAM. BEAM is administered by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MoESC) in collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Ministry of Labour and Social Services (Masuka et al., 2012). According to Masuka et al. (2012) BEAM offers assistance to vulnerable children in Zimbabwe with the payment of school levies, tuition and examination fees. This programme caters mainly for children who come from very poor socio-economic backgrounds including orphans. Children who benefit from BEAM are carefully selected by school committees made up of teachers and parents (Masuka et al., 2012). Under normal circumstances, most of the children who participated in this study qualified to obtain assistance from BEAM, but the social service was affected mainly by political and economic challenges which gripped the nation (Masuka et al., 2012).

Despite refugee children's poor backgrounds, the majority of them performed well in school. They passed primary school leaving examinations except Oliver and Hillary. Kanyongo (2005) states that performances in the primary school leaving examinations are important, but they do not necessarily stop learners from going to secondary education in Zimbabwe. However, some secondary schools in Zimbabwe are adamant that children must meet a certain pass mark in order to be accepted to study secondary education. All refugee children who participated in this study are from Shona speaking tribes in Zimbabwe. None of the children studied Ndebele nor wrote it in their examinations.

5.3.5 Interests and Future Ambitions

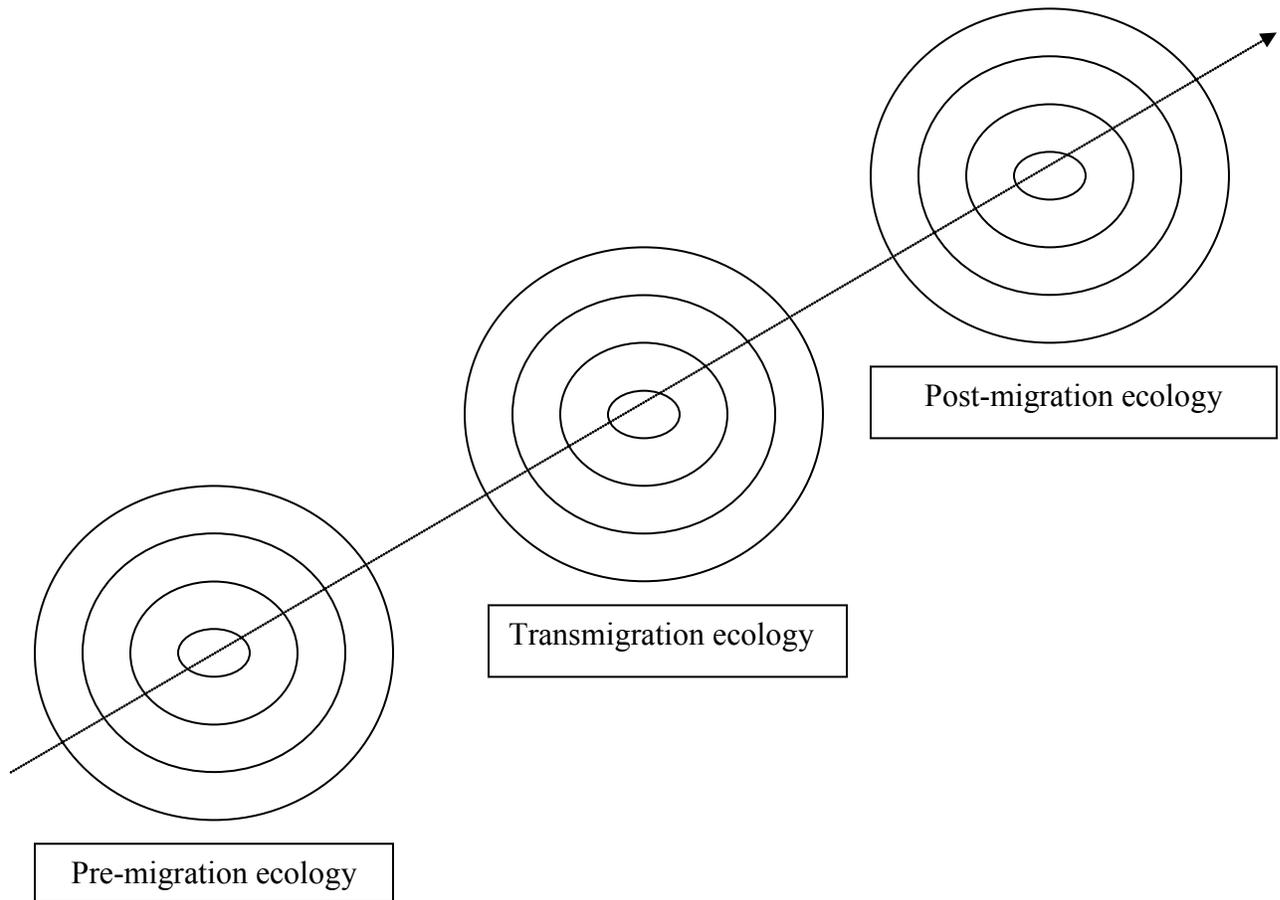
Children were determined to shape their interests and future ambitions by using education as the main tool. According to Galabawa (2005) education is one of the fundamental tools that can be used in a global society to eradicate poverty and shape children's futures. Each child aspired to obtain a better future after they pass their secondary education and go to a university. They all identified different professions which they wish to do. The majority of children want to become medical doctors. Some children aspired to become pilots and engineers. Some children's ambitions were in line with their parents' careers, for example, Natasha wanted to become a nurse because her mother was also a nurse.

This section presented refugee learners' identities. Children's identities were analysed using the Goodson and Sikes (2001) timeline history. The next section presents refugee learners' migration experiences.

5.4 Zimbabwe Refugee Learners' Migration Experiences

This section analyses the migration experiences which were faced by Zimbabwean children. Children's experiences have been presented according to Anderson et al.'s (2004) and Bhugra et al.'s (2011) three stages of refugee experiences, which are pre-migration experiences, transmigration experiences and post-migration experiences. Each stage of the refugee learner experience is analysed in terms of Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model which looks at the development of a child by considering the interaction of the environmental systems. Figure 5.1 depicts the integration of an ecological approach to a refugee child's development with the three different stages of refugee experiences. According to Anderson et al. (2004) refugee children have to adjust to new ecosystem demands and relationships which occur as they go from pre-migration to transmigration to post-migration contexts.

Figure 5.1 Integration of Ecological Approach on the Stages of Refugee Experiences



Source: Anderson et al. (2004, p. 8)

5.4.1 PRE-MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Hamilton (2004) maintains that experiences which refugees face differ from one refugee to another. All learners who participated in the study noted different pre-migration experiences which caused them to leave their country and seek refuge in South Africa. Of all the noted experiences, political persecution and poor economic conditions were reiterated by all learners as well as parents/guardians who participated in the study. Learners reported that they went through traumatic experiences during the political upheaval and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe. All 16 learners unanimously reported that their education was disrupted by instabilities in the country. Child abuse was rampant and uncontrollable in Zimbabwe.

5.4.1.1 Political Persecution

Prior to presidential elections in 2008, Zimbabwe was marked by intensive political persecution, torture and human rights abuse. Learners commented on political persecution as one of the main reasons for leaving Zimbabwe. The politics of a country falls under the macrosystem in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. The macrosystem includes political situation of a country among other broad issues which affect a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When the macrosystem is affected, other systems (exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem) will also be disturbed.

Prior to Zimbabwe's presidential elections in 2008, the country was immersed in a political crisis. The country was driven by dictatorial political motives which affected ordinary citizens, including children. Children suffered the most as a result of the country's political unrest. The main antagonism was between the ruling party called Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (Human Rights Watch, 2008). ZANU PF wanted to retain its political powers at any costs as the MDC was becoming popular with the electorate.

As the presidential elections approached, people were intimidated to vote for ZANU PF. Ordinary citizens, including children, were displaced by the extreme violence in Zimbabwe (Bloch, 2010). It was believed that violence and massive persecution which was prevalent in Zimbabwe was sponsored by the government in order to intimidate people to vote. One parent said: "prior to presidential elections, the whole country was no longer safe because of state sponsored violence."

Learners believed that the government was involved in the brutality against ordinary citizens because it did not make efforts to stop persecutions from happening. Peter said:

I witnessed some dangerous encounters in which people were killed for not supporting political parties. Our community was scaring because people were killed on broad day light regardless of whether they were into politics or not. I was afraid of continuing to live in Zimbabwe because people were dying and there was no government protection (Interview, 10 March 2012).

One guardian whose daughter experienced horror reported that there was no security in the country and people were getting killed anyhow: “My child witnessed death of her parents in a cruel manner when she was only 13 years old. Her brothers and sisters disappeared during the political persecution. Human rights violation was the order of the day in Zimbabwe” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Another guardian who was interviewed on the same day (13 March 2012) said: “There was imprisonment, enforced disappearance, murder, torture and rape which were experienced by all people in the country including children”. Such harsh experiences made Zimbabwean children leave the country for South Africa hoping to get security and peace. A learner from FGD1 said: “I believed the political situation in Zimbabwe was dangerous because soldiers and policemen who were supposed to stop violence were involved too. So, it became unsafe to continue living in a country where you know that there is no security” (Interview, 14 March 2012).

Weaver and Burns (2001) contend that Sri Lankan Tamils had terrible pre-migration experiences before moving to Canada. They were exposed to extreme violence and had no place of safety and could not trust anyone, including government officials and the police. Similarly, Zimbabwe law enforcers who include policemen and soldiers were actively involved in the perpetration of violence and persecution. Alexio said: “In my neighbourhood, soldiers used to go to people’s houses and beat them for no reason. They could force them not to vote for the opposition party” (Interview, 9 March 2012). Children, particularly without adult care, were the most affected people by political persecutions which occurred in Zimbabwe.

Mary who did not have an adult to care for her when political persecution was happening in Zimbabwe said: “I was beaten by soldiers who were campaigning for the ruling party. They caught me walking on the street and tortured me because I told them that I did not support a political party” (Interview, 6 March 2012). Bhugra et al. (2011) and Roxas (2011) who wrote from the United Kingdom and American contexts respectively, contend that when children are faced with torture and persecution in their home countries, they will seek refuge in other countries. Similarly, children who were troubled, distressed and tortured during political violence in Zimbabwe went to seek refuge in South Africa. Children who were staying on the streets were very vulnerable to political persecution which was very rampant in Zimbabwe. Just like Mary

who was tortured while walking on a street in Zimbabwe, Susan had a similar experience. She lived on the streets (after her uncle's wife chased her away for claiming that she was raped) where she was attacked by politicians. Susan said:

I lived on the streets for a month. I saw people getting persecuted, tortured and killed on political grounds. I was a victim of torture. I was beaten and burnt by an iron rod by youths who were harassing people who were walking on the streets. I decided to run away from the country because of politics and economic problems (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Adults and children were intimidated to join political parties in Zimbabwe so that they may be protected from other parties. Mary and Susan decided to come to South Africa as unaccompanied children because Zimbabwe was too dangerous and they did not have adults to care for them. Bhugra et al. (2011) contend that among all groups of people who face persecution, children are the most vulnerable. They are defenseless and they get easily affected by the country's instabilities. Political instabilities made people see no future ahead of them in their home country as was reported by one learner from FGD2: "It was insecure, pointless and hopeless to continue living in Zimbabwe because of politically related violence" (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Political persecution in Zimbabwe forced both adults and children to flee away from the country to obtain refuge in the neighbouring South Africa. Zimbabwean children were politically persecuted and they were afraid of going back to their home country. Bloch (2010) asserts that the political situation in Zimbabwe ahead of the 2008 presidential elections was very dangerous and people were dying. One learner in FGD1 said: "I ran away from Zimbabwe because of political reasons" (FGD, 14 March 2012). Children were affected, especially those whose parents or close family members were political activists. From an ecosystemic perspective, when children are affected by what affects their parents, that would be classified under exosystems.

According to Drumm et al. (2004) the exosystem has indirect impact on a developing child. It occurs when a child is affected by what happens in a community or when a parent is affected at his/her work or social place. This would in turn affect the developing child although he/she does not go to the parent's work place. Refugee children whose parents were active politicians were affected in different ways.

Alexio claimed that his father, who was murdered, was a well known active political member who campaigned for ministers in Zimbabwe:

My father was a famous politician and top official in the government. He was respected by many people in the ruling party because of contributions that he made since he fought for the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. My father was murdered by people suspected to be from the opposition party. The same people who killed my father wanted to have me killed. I do not know why they wanted me dead when in actual fact they killed my father who was into politics. I went to live with my mother and grandmother in the rural areas, but people who killed my father followed me and wanted me dead. I realised that my life was in danger because politicians were determined to put me down. I escaped to South Africa as an unaccompanied child (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Alexio was followed to the rural areas by politicians who were determined to kill him. The learner had to seek refuge in South Africa because of political persecution which was very high in the country. Coltart (2008) argues that Zimbabweans were physically attacked for political reasons. People who were actively involved in politics were the most vulnerable together with their children. Polzer (2008) who also wrote extensively about the Zimbabwean context, asserts that the political situation in the country was so tense that there were a lot of killings, especially among people who came from families which were active in politics. Politicians were killing one another and the brutality would spread to other members of the family too. Bloch and Heese (2007) claimed that in some incidences, if a political figure runs for his life to another place of safety within Zimbabwe, other family members would be persecuted or killed for not revealing where he went to hide. Memory's life was at risk in Zimbabwe because her mother was an active politician. In her words, Memory said:

My mother had a high position in the ruling party. She received death threats and anonymous letters warning her that she was going to pay for what she did. My mother felt that it was no longer safe for me to continue schooling at a boarding institution which was far from home. I was transferred to a day school which is close to our house. One day, some men came to our house in the evening. Four came inside the house while others remained in the car. I do not know how many men remained in the car. The four men began to accuse my mother of misleading and influencing youths to participate in the killing of people in our community. My father tried to get the men out of our house, but they shot him in the head right in front of me. My father's blood spilled over my skirt and I fainted. My mother was taken away. I do not know where she is now. Whether she is alive or dead, I do not know. Whether she is still in Zimbabwe or South Africa, I do not know either (Interview, 9th of March 2012).

Memory was affected by her experience in Zimbabwe. It was a traumatic experience which was similar to Alexio's in the sense that they were both children of famous politicians who held high positions in the ruling party. Children whose parents were famous politicians or government officials were very vulnerable. People from the opposition and ruling party would strive to attack the children in order to hurt their parents. Children were traumatised in the process. In the American context, Williams (2010) postulates that Somali refugee children experienced trauma in which they were almost killed and they saw their family members getting butchered on political grounds.

In Sudan, children witnessed their loved ones getting burnt, beaten, suffocated and strangled to death (Rasmussen et al., 2011). Such harsh experiences affected children and forced them to escape their home country. Memory left the country fearing that people who abducted her mother and killed her father would come back for her. After having such horrific experiences of witnessing parent(s) dying at that young age, learners decided to leave the country and hoped for a better life in the neighbouring country (South Africa).

According to Masten and Obradovic (2008) exosystem refers to the community level influence. A developing learner may not be directly involved in the community activities, but he/she will be influenced by living in the community. Refugee learners departed from Zimbabwe because of violence and killings which were happening in their communities. They were directly and indirectly affected by political violence which was prevalent in communities. Oliver decided to escape the country as an unaccompanied child because his parents were killed as a result of political tension which was prevalent in his community. Oliver said:

I decided to come to South Africa without any company because my family was targeted by soldiers who were forcing people to take part in political campaigns. My parents were killed on political grounds. My brother and sister ran away from Zimbabwe fearing for their lives. It was no longer safe for me to continue living in Zimbabwe where I was experiencing abuse and forced to harass people (Interview, 8 March 2012).

Oliver's experiences were harrowing and traumatising. Losing family members because of political instabilities is difficult for a child to handle. Worse still, he was forced to join the youths who were responsible for perpetrating violence in communities. Such hectic experiences make

children develop PTSD. Bhugra and Gupta (2011) who argued from the United Kingdom context stated that children who were exposed to traumatic experiences later develop emotional stress, anxiety, depression and conduct disorders. Some learners whose parents were not actively involved in the country's politics were attacked because of not supporting the ruling party. Some children were tortured and witnessed their close relatives dying for what one learner described as: "dirty politics which was happening in Zimbabwe."

Susan said: "People were forced to participate in politics or risk losing their lives. I was once tortured by some men who claimed that they were fighting for the liberation of the country" (Interview, 6 March 2012). There was no control of the political crisis that was happening in the country. Some learners reported that they had traumatic experiences of losing their families in Zimbabwe. Jacob witnessed his mother dying a painful death because of the political situation in his community. He said:

The youth league stormed into our house and accused my mother of not attending political rallies which were compulsory. They beat my mother together with other neighbours who also did not attend meetings. I tried to stop them, but could not. My mother's heart problem worsened so much she wanted her pills. I tried to get them for her, but the youth league stopped me. My mother died and after a month, my father passed away too. It was no longer safe to live in our community. That is why I came to South Africa as an unaccompanied child (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Oliver, Alexio, Memory and Jacob decided to leave Zimbabwe because they were afraid of getting killed by politicians who were responsible for the deaths of their parents. Such experiences for children are stressful, indescribable and debilitating (Kelly, 2010). Zimbabwean learners' pre-migration experiences of witnessing their loved ones dying were daunting and traumatising. Some learners' parents were not killed, but they were traumatised by witnessing persecution and deaths of their other family or community members. The principal said: "at this school, we deal with children who have seen frightening scenes and witnessed their loved ones dying painful deaths" (Interview, 12 March 2012). Byron said:

I will never forget the trauma that I experienced in my home country. My grandmother told me not to take part in cooking food for people in political meetings. When soldiers learnt that I was not doing my duties anymore, they tortured my grandmother and set our thatched house on fire where my young brother Sje was sleeping. I ran away from Zimbabwe fearing for my life. I was so disheartened by my country and I began to fear politicians from that day. That is why I decided to come to South Africa. I was afraid that people who

killed my young brother and were forcing me to work for soldiers would come and kill me too (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Such harsh pre-migration experiences were encountered by Sudanese in Darfur who were reported to have been attacked by the military, they were shot, burnt, had limbs cut off, strangled and suffocated (Rasmussen et al., 2011). Some Zimbabwe learners escaped the country because they saw horrible things which their neighbours were experiencing. Natasha said: “Our community was immersed with violence. There was a lot of persecution, torture and human rights abuses. People were harassed and brutally killed for no reason.” Natasha confessed that she was not physically attacked, but saw many things happening:

A friend of mine who stayed next door to our house died. He was severely beaten by some youths. They were accusing him of supporting the opposition party. When the youths were beating him, I could hear my friend crying and mooing like a cow. I was so frightened to hear someone dying and worse still, he was a person that I knew. I decided to run away from Zimbabwe because youths were moving from one house to another beating people (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Similarly, Nomsa said: “My mother and I were not interested in political violence which was happening in the country. We decided to run away in fear of the attacks” (Interview 8 March 2012). Natasha and Nomsa did not directly experience violence in Zimbabwe. Their parents decided to leave the country because they feared that they could be harassed and tortured in the same way people in their community were being persecuted. In the context of Nepal, Schininà et al. (2011) claimed that some people’s pre-migration experiences could be indirect in the sense that they heard or saw other individuals’ persecution experiences.

In addition to losing their neighbours and loved ones, refugee children from Zimbabwe also lost their homes. The loss of a home was a common characteristic of refugee’s pre-migration experiences. In the context of the United Kingdom, Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) argued that one thing that asylum seekers and refugees have in common is that they both lost their homes involuntarily. What is most painful is not losing the physical structure, but a place that one calls home.

Refugees, like any other human being, get attached to a place that they call home. So, losing that home overnight will have immeasurable repercussions on the well-being of refugee children (Muneghina & Papadopoulos, 2010). Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) affirm that children can be traumatised by losing their home. Byron experienced more than just losing his home, as his brother was burnt inside the house. This was a daunting and traumatic experience which can have a durable impact on the life of a child.

Due to rampant political persecution in Zimbabwe, children's education was disrupted by politicians who had easy access to schools. Teachers were persecuted and this negatively affected school-going children. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the exosystem's influence on children is interactive. It occurs when children's proximal settings are affected. In that context, Zimbabwean teachers who experienced political persecution in turn affected children because they ended up not going to school. Teachers in Zimbabwe were accused of supporting the opposition party and teaching people to go against the ruling party.

Teachers together with their unions were affected. This negatively affected children's education because teachers were staying away from work. Some teachers were going to neighbouring countries because of threats and persecution which they were experiencing. According to Human Rights Watch (2008) there was massive persecution and beating of members of teachers unions in Zimbabwe, who were accused of taking part in politics. Teachers' unions were dysfunctional and could not represent teachers' grievances. This led to a massive exodus of qualified teachers and subsequently affected the quality of the education system.

All teachers from Zimbabwe who were interviewed in this study confirmed that there was a lot of tension between political parties in the country. One teacher said: "teachers were targeted by politicians because they were accused of supporting the opposition party." Another teacher said: "It was very dangerous for me to continue living and working in Zimbabwe because of persecution which was happening. I was tortured for attending a teachers' union. Politicians accused me and other teachers of teaching children about politics in class". Teachers experienced a deep sense of insecurity in the country.

The principal said: “It was hard to live and work in Zimbabwe” (Interview, 12 March 2012). Similarly, Rutherford and Addison (2007, p. 622) said: “It is hard now in Zimbabwe. It is like you are in jail in Zimbabwe; the government is the new jail”. Teachers’ unhappiness at work resulted in absenteeism and that negatively affected children who were supposed to be learning in schools. Children were affected by politics which disrupted their families, schools and peer relationships. When children are affected or their proximal settings (family, school and peers) are disturbed, this forms the microsystem in Bronfenbrenner’s model.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994) microsystems entails a child’s interactions with proximal settings (school, family and peers). Children’s interaction with other family members was disrupted because they were separated. One learner in FGD1 said: “I had to leave my grandmother whom I was living with because it was no longer safe for me to be in Zimbabwe” (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Jonathan similarly said: “Due to political tension in Zimbabwe, I was separated from my mother when I went to my aunty’s place and to South Africa. I missed the parental care that I was getting from my mother” (Interview, 8 March 2012). One learner in FGD2 said: “We all left our close relatives whom we were staying with back in Zimbabwe” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Children’s interactions with their families were disturbed especially for unaccompanied minors who had to leave everyone and travel alone to South Africa.

Children’s interaction with the proximal setting of the school was reported by all learners to be the main cause of their departures. A school is a key microsystem feature which all Zimbabwean children negatively felt when it was affected by politics. Politicians decided to use some schools as their meeting points and learners were recruited into youth league structures. Learners were forced out of school to join youth leagues which were well known for perpetrating violence. All learners knew about youth leagues and others were forced to become members. One learner from FGD2 said:

Soldiers came to our school and recruited all big boys to join the youth league. I was one of the school boys who were forced to join the youth league. We were asked to beat people who were not attending political rallies. I ill-treated many people in order to save my life from politicians who were forcing us to participate in politics (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Oliver had a similar experience: “I was forced out of school to join the youth league and to attend political meetings. I was made to punish people who were not attending meetings. I walked door to door with other youths beating people who were not attending political rallies” (Interview, 8 March 2012). Hillary was a victim of torture by the youth league for not attending a meeting. He said: “I was beaten with a wooden stick for not attending a political meeting in our village. I could not live like that anymore. So, I decided to run away from the country” (Interview, 9 March 2012). Attending political meetings was made compulsory and youths were forced to make sure that people attended. This was regardless of whether the youths were in school or not. Lloyd, who was forced out of school to join the youth league, said:

I was forced to join the youth league where we were beating people and burning their houses if they did not support the political party that was dominant in our communal area. We were asked to beat people and burn their houses if they did not attend political rallies. I ill-treated many people in order to save my life from politicians who were forcing us to participate in politics. I lost my values when I was made to join the youth league because we were forced to kill people who were not obedient to our commanders. I eventually ran away from Zimbabwe because I could not continue harassing people anymore. I cannot go back to Zimbabwe because politicians know that I disobeyed their order by running away from the country (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Jonathan who was forced to drop out of school when he was 12 years old, said:

Politicians made me drop out of school. They forced me to join the youth league and to attend *pungwes*, also known as night vigils, when I was 12 years old. They made us (children) sing and dance to political songs all night. They forced me to ill-treat people. They made me beat, steal, lie and kill people who were against the ruling party. After the political tension between parties settled, people whom I was forced to ill-treat sought revenge on me. My mother was so frightened. She advised me to relocate to my aunt’s place. Unfortunately, my aunt refused to take care of me because she was afraid of being persecuted. I escaped the country to come to South Africa (Interview, 8 March 2012).

Pungwe was an overnight meeting where politicians would scheme and allocate duties to youths to do the following day. *Pungwes* were common in Zimbabwe. Joseph said: “I was taken to attend *pungwe* where I was tasked to beat innocent people, lie to my grandmother and also rob and kill my fellow Zimbabweans. These *pungwes* consumed most of my study time” (Interview, 8 March, 2012). There was organised violence in all provinces in Zimbabwe. This was perpetrated by war veterans, youth militia and rural district councillors. Youths in Zimbabwe were reportedly forced to go for training (Kriger, 2012). Youths who were not going for

compulsory training were risking persecution or they would not be accepted for study in tertiary institutions or training in job industries. Rutherford (2010) noted that some young men cried that they could not find work in Zimbabwe because they refused to enrol in the Border Gezi youth camps for training.

Sometimes political meetings were held in schools during the day. A learner in FGD2 said: “My schooling was disturbed by the political situation in Zimbabwe. One day we were pulled out of class and we were asked to attend political meetings. We sang liberation songs and repeated the ruling party’s slogans” (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Children were forced to do some duties such as cooking food for people who were in political meetings. A girl from FGD1 said: “I did not study well due to political instability. As a rural girl, we were forced to attend rallies during school times. Cooking for soldiers was a duty that was assigned mainly to girls” (FGD, 14 March 2012). A lot of abuses of girls were happening in the soldiers’ camp as was reported by one guardian that: “My children were forced out of school to join the youth league, cook for soldiers and they were sexually abused” (Interview, 13 March 2012).

Youth leagues were famous for all kinds of ill-treatment that they perpetrated on people, particularly those who were not attending political meetings. They would punish them severely so that all other community members would learn that they should not abscond from political rallies. A boy in FGD2 said:

We were forcing people to join the ruling party whether they liked it or not. Youths were forced to harass people who were anti-ruling party and those who were not attending rallies. That was not a good thing because we were being forced to join and support the party. Whether we liked it or not, we were obliged to participate as youths. We were forced to attend meetings; failure to do that would result in our deaths (FGD, March 2012).

Compulsory participation in politics was stressful to children and they could not take the stress any more. This is why they decided to leave their home country. Roxas (2011) argues in the Australian context that when children are exposed to stressful conditions that are unbearable, they would be forced to seek refuge in other countries. Parents/guardians concur with the view of

children about compulsory participation in political meetings. One parent said: “I was politically persecuted. We were forced to join political parties. I did not go to attend a party meeting one day and I got into trouble. They threatened my life and my children’s. They threatened to burn my house like they did to my neighbour’s” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Another parent said: “my children witnessed our neighbour’s house on fire and their friends getting killed.” Another parent said: “I was beaten by the youth league for not allowing my son to attend compulsory political meetings” (Interview, 13 March 2012).

Forcing children to join the youth league in Zimbabwe was tantamount to recruiting child soldiers which Sidhu et al. (2011) described in the Australian context as a harsh experience for youngsters. Rasmussen et al. (2011) maintained that the Sudanese military group was recruiting child soldiers. Children were forced to drop out of school and train to become soldiers. According to Human Rights Watch (2008) recruiting children into young soldiers is classified as child abuse. The pre-migration experience of children (in this study) being forced to attend political rallies is tantamount to child abuse as well. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) explicitly states that forcing children to do something beyond their age is abuse. Forcing school going children to take part in politics is a form of child abuse which is unacceptable.

Although political issues were stated by children as the factor driving them out of their country, poor economic conditions were also noted as devastating and this pushed them away from their home areas. All participants acknowledged that they were living a sub-standard life in Zimbabwe because of the country’s harsh economic conditions, which were directly related to power implosion in that nation.

5.4.1.2 Harsh Economic Conditions

According to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) model, economic conditions fall under the macrosystem. Economic policies and decisions which were made in Zimbabwe such as devaluing the Zimbabwean dollar, printing more currency and restructuring economic sectors such as agriculture are macrosystems which resulted in escalating inflation, high levels of poverty and a shortage of basic goods. These factors subsequently affected children in all spheres of their lives,

including education. Children's relationships with parents and other peers (microsystem) were also adversely affected by economic problems.

The relationships between schools and parents (mesosystem) were disturbed. Children ended up not going to school because of the education system which was heavily compromised. Parents lost their jobs (exosystem) due to the economic problems in the country. The microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem were all affected because of the economic policies which form the macrosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (1992) the macrosystem affects microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem. Refugee children reported that they experienced harsh economic conditions together with massive political persecution. This is why they migrated to South Africa. Similarly, a study conducted by Schweitzer et al. (2011) asserted that Burmese refugees migrated to Australia because of both political persecution and poor economic conditions.

All learners in both FGDs and interviews articulated that the economy of Zimbabwe was in a very bad shape. Ploch (2008) argues that the downturn of the economy of Zimbabwe was reported to have begun in the year 2000 by the land reform programme. Land was redistributed and that affected the farming sector which is the greatest contributor to the country's economy. Agriculture is at the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy. When it was adversely affected, all sectors felt the heat and by the year 2007, the economy was malfunctioning. Land redistribution policy was a macrosystemic issue in Zimbabwe which eventually had an impact on children and their education. The situation was aggravated by political persecution which took place in 2007/2008. All that fuelled the fall of the economy. A guardian who migrated with his children because of the fall of the economy and political persecution said:

The Zimbabwean dollar was valueless, corruption was rampant, land grabbing was very disorderly and it caused the economic collapse because Zimbabwe had an agro-based economy. There was poverty and people were dying. Unemployment was high. I lost my job as a result of politically related matters and I could not get another one to support my kids (Interview, 13 March 2012).

The Zimbabwean economy was in a very bad state. The country had the fastest shrinking economy and the lowest life expectancy in the world. The economy was bad because there was an acute shortage of resources. The situation left many people in the country without welfare,

food, or the ability to afford healthcare (Sisulu et al., 2007). Children experienced harsh macro economic conditions which made them leave the country. People were dying because the country did not have basic commodities such as fuel for ambulances to carry people to hospitals. One learner from FGD1 said: “Ambulances were grounded as well as public transport which takes people to and from work. This was because there was an acute shortage of fuel in the whole country” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Natasha, whose friend died on the way to the hospital commented that if there was fuel in the country her friend who was attacked by the youth league would have been saved:

My mother called the police while the beating was taking place. Policemen could not come; their cars were grounded because there was no fuel. The police asked my mother to organise transport to pick the policemen up from their station to come and help the boy who was under attack. My mother did not have any money to hire a car for the policemen to come and do their job. The youths left my friend half dead. The neighbours called an ambulance to come and take him to the clinic, but the ambulance did not come, because there was no fuel (Interview, 10 March 2012).

The poor state of the economy of Zimbabwe coupled with political persecution was reported by Pausigere (2010) to be the main cause of emigration of both adults and children. Peter said: “The economy was in a big mess. There was no electricity most of the time, there was a shortage of food, sewage pipes were broken and raw sewage was the order of the day in the town that I was living” (Interview, 10 March 2012). Similarly, Lloyd commented that: “The country was very dirty and food was expensive. We were importing basic food stuffs from South Africa because the Zimbabwean economy was in a mess” (Interview, 6 March 2012). Emigration caused by hunger and poor economies is currently happening in different countries. Paoletti (2011) who wrote in the context of Libya, claims that famines and changing economic circumstances across northern and Sub-Saharan Africa have affected migrant movements significantly. People are migrating to other countries with their children in order to obtain better living standards in countries with good economies and peace.

Rutherford and Addison (2007) argued that the poor economy in Zimbabwe exacerbated deficient service delivery and fuelled corruption. All learners commented that a bad state of the economy of the country was one of the reasons they left Zimbabwe. Even those learners (like Natasha and Nancy) who reported that they were not directly affected by politics, acknowledged

that they had the worst experiences of their lives because of the country's poor economy. Susan said: "I did not have many problems other than an economy that was falling down and people dying" (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Nancy said: "Inflation was very high and everything was expensive" (Interview, 6 March 2012). Reuben also said: "the economy was so bad that you could have ten trillion Zimbabwean dollars but you would still be hungry. We were hungry billionaires" (Interview, 10 March 2012). Prices of basic commodities were reported to have been changing every day. Nancy said: "Life was very difficult in Zimbabwe because the Zimbabwean dollar lost its value. I could not pay for my school fees despite the fact that I had millions in my pocket."

Zimbabwe recorded the highest inflation rate in the world. According to Hanke and Kwok (2009, p. 356) the country had a daily inflation rate of 98.0 %. Inflation was the greatest enemy of the economy and it led to mass departure of many citizens (Bloch, 2008). The Zimbabwean currency lost its value and there were food shortages in the country. One parent said: "You would have money but failed to get food to buy" (Interview, 13 March 2012). There was chronic shortage of food in the whole country which made life very difficult. Ploch (2008) asserts that grain silos were empty and by the year 2006, about five million Zimbabweans received food aid. There was such hunger in the country that some people went for days without food. One parent said: "My children and I had some days and nights which passed without having decent meal." (Interview, 13 March 2012). There was hunger and malnutrition in the country. Coltart (2008) affirms that people were dying of HIV/AIDS, poverty and malnutrition in Zimbabwe. There was a shortage of food on the shelves and money in the banks.

The huge scarcity of the Zimbabwean dollar in the country prompted the government to print more money. Printing more money fueled inflation and there was less cash in circulation. Even the banks were running out of money which made life extremely difficult for people. A learner from FGD1 said: "People would stay overnight queueing at a bank to collect money. Money that they would get from a bank was so limited and valueless that it was not enough to take them back to where they traveled from" (Interview, 14 March 2012). The situation was so bad that there was a big exodus of people out of the country. Nomsa said: "There was no life in

Zimbabwe because basic food and money were hard to get. That caused people to starve to death” (Interview, 8 March 2012).

Zimbabwean people opted to leave their country, but it was not easy because politicians were stopping them. Politicians did not want people to leave the country because they wanted to intimidate them to vote for their parties. Despite politicians’ efforts to stop people from escaping from Zimbabwe, many professionals such as engineers, doctors, lawyers and teachers left the country for greener pastures. Bloch (2008; 2010) asserts that Zimbabweans migrated to South Africa mainly because of a high rate of unemployment, poor economic conditions, human rights violation and intensive persecution. Learners reported that they experienced economic hardships which led them to leave their home country for good.

Most of the children, especially the unaccompanied, commented emphatically on the state of the poor economy of Zimbabwe. However, the problem with economic migration is that people are not granted refugee status on the grounds of economic problems. According to the international law, people should neither be granted refugee nor asylum status because of poor economic conditions in their countries. The 1951 Geneva Convention definition of a refugee states that one has to face some kind of persecution which will make his/her life threatened. The definition does not cover natural disasters such as earthquake and volcanoes and economic conditions (Quintero, 2009).

Children in this study qualified for refugee status because they reported that their lives were in danger because of political instabilities in Zimbabwe. In addition to that, they reported bad state of the Zimbabwean economy where people were dying. Alexio said: “I obtained my refugee status because I cannot go back to Zimbabwe. Even if the economy stabilizes, I cannot go back to Zimbabwe. There are politicians still hunting for me” (Interview, 9 March 2012). Due to massive political instabilities and economic challenges, the education system in Zimbabwe was affected and this resulted in many children flocking to South Africa to obtain better learning standards.

Their parents lost jobs and could not get any other form of employment as a result of macrosystem economic policies which were in place. When parents lose their jobs, that is an exosystem issue which affects a developing child because he/she will be unable to continue with schooling. The macrosystem and exosystem overlaps in terms of the refugee learners' experiences. The meltdown of the Zimbabwean economy negatively impacted on the education system and learners had negative school experiences. All participants in this study commented that the Zimbabwean education system was disrupted by poor economic conditions. School drop out rates were high and learners in this study reported that it was mainly because of the adverse political and economic conditions in the country.

A parent said: "I had to come to South Africa because the situation in Zimbabwean schools was hopeless" (Interview, 13 March 2012). Another parent who was also interviewed on the same date (13 March 2012) said: "Learners did not go to school for two terms because teachers were on strike and the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) was not working properly." Parents were taking their children out of schools because there was no learning taking place anymore. The situation followed a model that was suggested by Szente, Hoot and Taylor (2006) that there are two types of refugee children: one that has never been to school before and the other that has been to school, but dropped out because of negative experiences.

Hillary who was interviewed on 9 March 2012, said: "We came here (South Africa) to seek education because for the whole year nothing meaningful was happening in Zimbabwean schools. A school that I was attending was closed because there was an outbreak of cholera." A guardian said: "My children were forced out of school because of harsh economic conditions. They were out of school for nearly one year. They wrote Zimbabwean examinations and never got their results back" (Interview, 13 March 2012). The economy was so poor that it could not retain qualified teachers. This is in line with what the principal said: "I personally left my job as a teacher in Zimbabwe because of political persecution and poor economy. This affected school-going children who eventually moved to South Africa where many Zimbabwean teachers went" (Interview, 12 March 2012). A teacher said: "Our conditions of working in Zimbabwe were extremely poor. We could not afford a decent life because our salaries were too little" (Interview, 28 May 2013).

One parent who was interviewed was a teacher in Zimbabwe. She is currently working in South Africa as a social worker. She and her daughter, who is schooling at Chitate School, left Zimbabwe because of political unrest and an economy that directly affected her salary. She said:

My life was threatened by politicians because I did not comply with their call for meetings. The money I was earning could not buy 150 rands. I was supposed to send my children to school, pay rent, travel to and from work, inflation was high, I just could not make ends meet with what I was earning and my life was in danger. That is why I quit my job and took my children to South Africa for better education (Interview, 13 March 2012).

The state of the economy of Zimbabwe affected education badly. The government could not pay meaningful salaries to teachers to teach and mark national examinations. Strikes were the order of the day. Children dropped out of school. Nomsa said: “I left Zimbabwe because the education system was stopped. The examination centre did not have money to pay teachers to mark exams and teachers were not paid good salaries. So, education was malfunctioning in the country” (Interview, 8 March 2012). A teacher said: “I left my teaching job in Zimbabwe because we were getting peanuts. I used to mark national examinations, but I stopped because the examination board did not have enough money to pay examiners” (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Education in the whole country was generally in a bad state. This caused parents/guardians to send their children to neighbouring countries for better standards of education. Shoeb, Weinstein and Mollica (2007) argued that some children may seek refuge in another country because of interrupted education. Children may be exposed to traumatic experiences that it would be hard for them to continue schooling in their home countries, for example, witnessing people dying as a result of economic hardships which was experienced by Zimbabwean learners, made them decide to go to South Africa.

The economic hardships affected not only schools, but also tertiary institutions. For example, a learner in FGD2 said: “Some universities (like the University of Zimbabwe) and colleges were closed because of the economy” (Interview, 14 March 2012). Another learner in FGD2 said: “Many tertiary institutions closed because there was no water and food for students to have before they went to attend lectures”. The economic situation in Zimbabwe psychologically

affected children. Some encountered problems which lingered in their minds for a long time and resulted in relocating to South Africa.

5.4.2 TRANSMIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Transmigration entails experiences that refugee children face while traveling from their home countries until they reach their intended destinations. Anderson et al. (2004) proposed that transmigration experiences include occurrences that take place on the journey from home to host country. Transmigration is a microsystem experience that refugee children encountered while crossing the border and living in temporary shelters until they settled in communities. Journeys to the host country can be very stressful and traumatising to refugee children, especially if they do not have enough financial resources and traveling documents such as a passport. The majority of learners who participated in this study did not have traveling documents. As a result, they crossed the Zimbabwe-South Africa border, called Beitbridge Border Post, in different ways.

5.4.2.1 Crossing the Border

Learners without traveling documents commented that they had to find ways to cross the border to enter South Africa. They acknowledged that it was very risky to cross the border illegally, but they had to do it because they saw other people doing it. One learner in FGD2 said: “I knew that crossing the border through illegal means was risky, but it was a necessary risk compared to risking staying in Zimbabwe where people were dying anyway” (FGD, 14 March 2012). In this study, both parents and learners reported that they crossed the border illegally through immigration officials, hiding in buses and trucks and by swimming through the Limpopo River which is infested with crocodiles. This concurs with the view of Henley and Robinson (2011) who argued from the Australian context that the refugee’s journey involves border jumping, river crossing and lengthy stays in refugee camps. Since learners experienced forced migration, they did not have traveling documents. This is why they resorted to illegally entering South Africa by two main ways: i) crossing the border through immigration officials; and ii) swimming through the Limpopo River.

i) Crossing the Border through Immigration Officials

All learners reported that they saw many people crossing the border from Zimbabwe to South Africa with or without passports. One learner from FGD1 who did not have a passport said: “People were paying a lot of money to drivers to pay immigration officers and policemen so that they could cross the border without passports.” Another learner from the same FGD said:

I did not have a passport together with other girls whom I was traveling with. We gave our money to the driver to give to immigration officials and security guards. When security guards were searching for passports while passengers were getting into the bus, the driver pointed at us and the officer did not ask for any document (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Natasha, who was accompanied by her mother, had the same experience of passing the border free of hassles. Her mother paid officials at the border and they were allowed to cross over to South Africa without any problem. Corruption is very rampant and widespread at the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa (CoRMSA, 2009). Regardless of tightened security at the border of South Africa, people still entered illegally through immigration officials. Similarly, Paoletti (2011) contends that despite tight security policies, the number of illegal foreigners in Libya remained high. This is because corrupt border officials increased clandestine entries. People easily pass through the border when they bribe immigration officials.

A learner said: “I bribed policemen on both the Zimbabwean and South African sides of the border. The problem I faced on the South African side was that police were demanding a lot of money.” People could pass through the border as long as they had enough money to pay officials. Those who did not have money were sent back to the Zimbabwean side, an experience that Jacob encountered:

I did not have any document. I paid guards at the border to help me cross from the Zimbabwean side. The problem came when I was on the South African side. They wanted more money which I did not have. I stayed at the border for two days eating nothing, trying to find someone to help me cross. I desperately needed to cross the border but it was hard because I did not have money which border officials were asking for. I finally pleaded with a Mozambican driver to hide me at the back of his truck in order to cross the border. I was hidden at the back of the truck which was full of empty containers of some smelling chemicals. I stayed inside one big container and I covered my nose with a towel to avoid breathing that strong chemical. The immigration officials checked the truck, but they did not open the containers. I crossed the border and the Mozambican driver did not ask for any money (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Byron, together with two other people he met on the way to South Africa, crossed the Beitbridge Border Post by hiding in a truck. Byron said: “When we arrived at the Beitbridge Border Post, we crossed by hiding in an oil truck. We heard immigration officials talking and searching the truck, but they did not see us” (Interview, 9 March 2012). It was very common for people to hide in trucks or buses when they were crossing the border. A parent said: “I saw young children being hidden in a trunk of a bus where luggage was kept. People were doing that because they were desperate to cross to South Africa” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Hiding children in either trucks or trunks of buses was very dangerous. Children could have been hurt or suffocated to death inside containers or trunks of buses. The majority of learners who did not have documents reported that they crossed the border by swimming in the Limpopo River and walked long distances through the forest at night.

ii) Crossing the Border through the Limpopo River

The Limpopo River demarcates Zimbabwe and South Africa. It has crocodiles and for a person to swim in that river to get to the other country, he/she would be very desperate and running out of options. There is a forest close to the river which is manned by soldiers to avoid illegal immigrants moving into both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Many Zimbabweans illegally entered South Africa by swimming in the Limpopo River (Bloch, 2010). Parents/guardians and learners who participated in this study acknowledged that many Zimbabweans entered South Africa by crossing the river. There were gangsters whom learners identified as *Guma Gumas* who illegally charge people money to help them enter South Africa by swimming through the Limpopo River. *Guma Guma* is a Shona language expression which is used in Zimbabwe. The expression refers to people who solicit money or material things like clothes in order to render services.

A learner in FGD2 described *Guma Gumas* as: “gangsters at the Limpopo River who will help you to cross but you have to pay them in cash or kind” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Another learner in FGD2 which was held on the same day (14 March 2012) said: “*Guma Gumas* would kill, rob, rape, take clothes and do anything evil to you”. According to Rutherford (2008, p. 405)

People whom border-jumpers most commonly encountered on the Zimbabwean side were young men called *maguma Guma*; those ‘parasites’ (as one farm worker put it) who seek money and goods ‘the easy way’. Although such men might offer services for a fee to help

border-jumpers to get into South Africa, they are more commonly depicted as thieves who could rob, beat, rape or kill you.

A learner in FGD1 said:

Since I did not have a passport, I met people (*Guma Gumas*) at the Beitbridge Border Post and they asked me if I wanted help to cross to the other side. I agreed and joined other people who were getting the same help. We walked a long distance to the river. They told me that they wanted money in order for them to help me cross the river. They asked for my jersey and shoes to compensate for money which I did not have so that they may help me cross the river. When we were in the river full of water holding hands like this (learner demonstrated how their fingers were interlocked with someone else's) they (*Guma Gumas*) said we need some more money. People had to continue paying them until we reached the other side of the river (FGD, 14 March 2012).

One learner in FGD1 said: “It was extremely dangerous to swim in a river that has crocodiles and to walk in a forest dominated by gangsters (*Guma Gumas*)” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Learners reported that they did not have any choice other than taking the risk of swimming in the Limpopo River. Similarly, Rutter (2003) asserts that almost all Vietnamese refugees in the United Kingdom made perilous journeys in small boats to Hong Kong and other South East Asian countries – journeys in which at least 10% of refugees perished from dehydration, drowning or pirate attack. Refugees would be aware that it is risky to cross a border through the river, but they took their chances. In this study, learners knew about the risk of drowning, being eaten by crocodiles and wild animals and attacked by gangsters, but they took the risk. A learner from FGD 1 swam through the river. He reported that some people did not make it to the other end of the river and those who made it were robbed:

Some people who swam with us did not make it to the other side of the river. They just disappeared. I am not sure whether they drowned or were eaten by crocodiles. When we made it to the other side of the river, on the side of South Africa before reaching razor wire, there were some people (*Guma Gumas*) waiting for us. They demanded money in order to help us cross razor wire and take us out of the forest (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Rutherford (2010) contends that some Zimbabweans drowned in the Limpopo River when they tried to cross the border illegally into South Africa. Those who were lucky enough to cross the river were accosted by gangsters. On both sides of the river, there were *Guma Gumas*. One learner from FGD2 said: “by the time we reached the South African side, we had lost all our

money, clothes and valuables such as cell phones and watches to *Guma Gumas*.” Another learner said: “the *Guma Gumas* slowly took everything from us” (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners experienced what they described as the worst moments of their lives on their journeys to South Africa. They were too young to witness some brutality of *Guma Gumas* while crossing the border illegally. They were ill-treated and traumatised by experiences that they had with *Guma Gumas*. One learner in FGD1 said:

The same person (*Guma Guma*) who helped me to cross from the Zimbabwean side came to me and pointed a knife at my sexual organ and said he wanted money. I told him that I did not have money. He removed my shoes, trousers and took everything that I had (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Ill treatment faced by refugee learners at the South African border concurs with challenges faced by refugees in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. According to Sibula (2009) refugees encountered traumatising relocating experiences at the South African border. Some were raped, tortured and stabbed by *Guma Gumas*. Rutherford (2010) maintains that people who crossed through the Limpopo River had cuts and bruises after being beaten up by *Guma Gumas*. Some lost their money, clothes and other belongings they had.

Some learners reported that *Guma Gumas* were stripping people naked in front of their relatives and children. One learner from FGD1 said:

Guma Gumas knew that women carrying babies were hiding money and cell phones in their babies’ diapers. There was a woman who was carrying a baby on her back. *Guma Gumas* removed the baby from her mother and strip searched both the mother and baby looking for hidden money. I saw all that happening with my own eyes (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Women were not only stripped, but also raped by gangsters in front of other people. One child from FGD2 said: “I saw many people running from the Limpopo River naked and they said they were robbed and raped by gangsters in the forest” (FGD, 14 March 2012). An unaccompanied girl said: “women were raped in the forest. If they resisted or if anybody from a group of illegal immigrants tried to stop gangsters from raping women, he/she would be killed”. Women and children are at more risk of attacks by gangsters during transmigration. In the context of the USA, Kira et al. (2010) contend that women and children are at most risk during transmigration

because they are more vulnerable to assaults and exploitation. Girls and women can easily be sexually abused as was experienced by learners on their way to South Africa.

Learners from FGD1 reported that they witnessed some women getting raped by *Guma Gumas* for not having money or valuables to pay them after crossing the river. Mary, who crossed the border through the river, said:

I was lucky not to be abused by these men (*Guma Gumas*). Some girls who were in our group were repeatedly raped. It happened in the evening. For example, one night when we were walking towards Musina, a girl was pulled into the forest and she was raped. Some girls who I knew were also raped. Some ladies reported to us that what they were experiencing (sexual abuse) was worse than what they were going through in Zimbabwe (political persecution and economic problems) (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Parents who used the Limpopo River to enter South Africa also reported that their children went through tormenting experiences of sexual abuse while walking in the middle of the night. In the South African context, CoRMSA (2009) postulates that many Zimbabwean women and girls are seriously exposed to rape. One parent said: “My children and I were sexually abused by *Guma Gumas*. We were robbed together with all other people who were also trying to cross to South Africa” (Interview, 13 March 2012).

Learners encountered harrowing experiences at the river and in the forest. Memory opted to join a group of people who were crossing through the river. She was a victim of *Guma Gumas* and soldiers who were manning the place. Memory said:

I did not have a passport and I had to join other people who were crossing illegally. I went to the forest where *Guma Gumas* took all my money. They robbed everyone in our group and helped us to cross. When we were in the middle of the bush, we came across soldiers who had police dogs. We ran and dogs were released. I was bitten by two dogs. I still have the scars today. I will never forget such a painful experience in my life (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Memory was taken to the Musina refugee camp by South African soldiers. Learners acknowledged that people were going through a lot because soldiers were merciless, especially to people who tried to escape. One guardian reported that her two children experienced a horrific incident of seeing people shot to death in the forest. She said: “Two men were shot dead by soldiers who were in front of us when they tried to escape. We stopped when the soldiers asked

us to stop, that is how we were not shot” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Children were too young to be exposed to such experiences. Some reported that they saw real guns and spoke to soldiers for the first time in their lives. A boy reported that he was trembling when he was speaking to soldiers. He was not beaten by soldiers, but he was scared of them since it was his first contact with people holding real guns.

Some learners explained that they saw some mysterious things happening in the forest. One boy in FGD1 narrated an inexplicable event which took place in the forest:

There is one thing I can recall. There was another guy. He knew the way and he said he had enough money to travel to Johannesburg and to Cape Town. He just disappeared in the evening. The next day we saw his clothes. We are not sure about what happened, whether he was killed or he ran away. We don't know what happened to him. His money and clothes were there, but the body disappeared. No one took his money (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Border jumpers risked attacks from wild animals (Rutherford, 2010). The forest between Zimbabwe and South Africa has stray wild animals which made children's journeys more risky. The hectic transmigration experiences that learners went through did not end at the border or in the forest. All learners who did not have passports reported that they walked long distances.

5.4.2.2 Traveling Long Distances from the Border

In the context of Australia, Henley and Robinson (2011) contend that refugee children face a challenge of walking long distances when they travel from their home to the host country. All learners who crossed the border through the Limpopo River walked in the forest for a long distance to reach the South African side. One learner in FGD2 said: “*Guma Gumas* told us that the best time to cross was at 23:00 hours. We walked the whole night in the forest from the Zimbabwean side of the border to Musina refugee camp” (FGD, 14 March 2012). The Musina refugee camp is 10 kilometers away from the border on the South African side. Musina is the first town one reaches in South Africa when coming from Zimbabwe.

Some learners who managed to slip past immigration officials, but were caught after crossing the border at the police road block, reported that they walked long distances and experienced hardships during the night. Learners reported police brutality and ill treatment from law

enforcers because they did not have money to bribe them. Jacob, who was caught by policemen at a roadblock few kilometers away from the border, said:

The police found that I did not have documents and they asked me to get out of the truck. I slept outside at that roadblock. Police refused to let me inside their tents. It was cold and I did not have a blanket. The next morning, policemen asked me to walk to Musina camp (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Learners faced some ill treatment on their transmigration journey. The ill treatment could be perpetrated by police officers or citizens of the host country. A learner from FGD1 reported: “I was detained by police at a roadblock. They took me to the police camp and made me wash police cars before they sent me away” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Similarly, Natasha and her mother reported that they were detained by the police at a roadblock for not having travel documents. They were verbally abused by policemen. Natasha said: “Policemen verbally abused my mother accusing her of increasing the rate of crime in South Africa. They released us the next day. We had to walk long distances to the nearest town” (Interview, 10 March 2012). Among learners who walked long distances, Natasha and her mother had the longest walk from Pretoria to Johannesburg (a distance of about 60 kilometers). Natasha said:

We rode in a truck which was going to Polokwane. We spent the whole day and night in Polokwane near the sports complex. My mother asked a white man who had a truck that had horses for a ride to Johannesburg and told him that we did not mind traveling in a horses’ compartment. We got a ride until Pretoria. From Pretoria, we walked on foot to Johannesburg. It took us two days to reach Johannesburg from Pretoria (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Kaplan (2009) postulates in the Australian context that refugees face perilous journeys which were very rough and miserable. Refugee learners from Zimbabwe experienced rough journeys which were full of misery. Walking long distances and traveling in a truck full of animals was too harsh and an unimaginable experience. A parent who was interviewed also confirmed that the journey that she had with her children was very disturbing. She reported that she had to have sex with a truck driver in order to get a ride to Johannesburg since she did not have any more money. The parent said: “A truck driver asked to sleep with me as payment for a ride with my children from the border. I was desperate and I did not have a choice but to do it so my children could have a safe journey” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Children’s exposure to such incidents may affect them so much that they may develop mental problems (Kirchner & Patiño, 2011).

A critical shortage of money was reported by learners as the greatest problem which made their journey to Johannesburg very difficult. Alexio reported that he experienced the worst when he used a metered taxi and failed to pay the bill that the driver was demanding. The learner had told the taxi driver that he did not have enough money prior to boarding the car. He was accepted by the driver, but was later asked to pay the full amount. Alexio said:

After having walked for a long distance, I negotiated with a taxi driver to drive me to the Park Station in Johannesburg. He agreed to take me for the little money that I told him that I had. Upon arrival, he asked me to pay more money which I did not have. He locked me in his cab for three days. He (cab driver) told his friends (in their mother language) who were also drivers that I used his cab and I was refusing to pay the bill. The cab driver lied to his friends that we were three passengers, that two ran away and he managed to catch me. Other cab drivers got the impression that three people used the cab and they tried to run away from paying but only one was caught and that was me. They beat me with iron rods, threatened me and said they would take me back to Musina so that I would be deported back to Zimbabwe. I did not have any money and the suffering that I experienced was worse than what I encountered in Zimbabwe (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Transmigration experiences are sometimes stressful and traumatising to refugee children. In the context of the United Kingdom, Kirkbride and Jones (2011) assert that transmigration is a relatively major life event that is characterised by stressful events. To some refugees, transmigration experiences can be more hectic than pre-migration because they go through rigorous and traumatising moments on the journey (Williams, 2010). What children may experience on the way to the host country may leave a permanent mark in their lives so that they may become pessimistic about a new life in the host country. In most cases, refugees' journeys take longer than the regular time.

All learners in both focus group discussions confirmed that their journeys from the border to Johannesburg took longer than it usually takes. The journey is about 600 kilometers and it is usually travelled in six to seven hours, but learners spent days and months to complete it. A guardian said "it took us long to reach Johannesburg because we were once caught by police and deported back to the border and then started the journey again" (Interview, 13 March 2012). CoRMSA (2008) contends that illegal immigrants in South Africa are always deported when they are caught. Due to a shortage of money, learners reported that they got jobs and stayed in temporary shelters such as the Musina refugee camp.

5.4.2.3 Temporary Shelters and Jobs

CoRMSA (2009) reported that the Musina refugee camp was established in order to accommodate growing numbers of Zimbabweans who were flocking into South Africa, and other foreigners who were victims of xenophobic attacks. Temporary shelters were pitched by non-governmental organisations which offered to help people who were starving and homeless. Zimbabwean learners who crossed the border through the Limpopo River and others who were caught at the road block stayed at the Musina refugee camp for some time. Staying at a refugee camp or any temporary shelter is part of transmigration experiences. Anderson et al. (2004) contend that transmigration could involve years spent hiding or in refugee camps.

Children reported that they had bad experiences at the refugee camp in Musina because the place was overcrowded and there was no food. One learner from FGD2 said:

I stayed in Musina for two weeks in a refugee camp. They were not feeding us, but we had to survive. I remember, we survived by eating a fruit that I have never seen in my life, but because we were starving, we began eating it for the first time. That fruit became our daily meal (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Henley and Robinson (2011) argued that refugees' transmigration experiences in Australia involve lengthy stays in refugee camps and a lot of suffering. A learner from FGD2 said: "We could sleep without eating anything. There was an outbreak of cholera at the Musina refugee camp. I saw someone dying of the disease. It was very scary because cholera is deadly and it spreads very fast" (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners argued that they had to stay temporarily at the Musina refugee camp because they did not have anywhere to go and they did not have money. Children had to do several jobs in order to raise transport money to reach their destination, Johannesburg. Some were selling sweets, biscuits, fruit and vegetables while others went to work in nearby shops, farms and restaurants.

Mary said: "we were working (selling bread, polony, sweets) at the Musina camp" (Interview, 6 March 2012). Some learners reported that they experienced oppression in the jobs that they were doing, but they did not have a choice because they wanted to raise money to take them to Johannesburg. Oliver said:

I stayed in Musina working for a woman as a cook. I was cooking pap (stiff porridge) so as to raise money to reach Johannesburg. I travelled up to Louis Tritchart. That is where my money could take me. I stayed in Louis Tritchart for one-and-a-half months working as an assistant builder. I raised a little money and then travelled up to Polokwane where I stayed for two months working. I joined other guys who were working in a factory. The payment was very low, but I was just doing the job to raise transport money. I arrived in Pretoria and stayed there for two weeks. It was hard to get money because I could not get a job in Pretoria. A friend gave me money to travel from Pretoria to Johannesburg (Interview, 8 March 2012).

Employers paid low salaries because they knew that children could not complain to the authorities because they were illegal immigrants who did not have documents. Peter, who was working at a poultry farm, had a bad experience:

I was employed to raise chickens for market. I worked there for six months. The greatest problem was that, for all the six months I worked there, I was only paid for two months. The rest of the months the farm owner would say he would give me a lump sum salary, but he deceived me. In the sixth month I asked for all my money, but he threatened to call policemen to come and arrest me since I did not have a valid passport (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Refugee children and other foreigners are exploited and taken advantage of in work places. Ethiopian women who migrated to Middle Eastern countries worked under exploitative and inhumane conditions because they did not have legal documents (Anbesse et al., 2009). In some cases refugees could be made to work and failed to get salaries because of their status as illegal immigrants. They could not report to the policemen because they were afraid of getting caught and being deported back to the Zimbabwean border. Learners in FGD2 explained that they were working like slaves, but they did not have a choice but to do it in order to get food and accommodation. One learner from FGD2 said:

I learnt that there were people who were taking advantage of desperate foreigners. They employed me and promised that they would pay me at the end of each day. I worked and got nothing. They told me to continue working and expect a salary at the end of the week, but they did not pay me. I was doing the worst kind of job, but with no pay. The employer was taking advantage of my desperation and the fact that I did not have any legal document. I was forced to stay at his place because I needed money, food and shelter. So, I ended up working not because I wanted money but because I wanted a place to live and food to eat since I could not provide those basics for myself (FGD, 14 March 2012).

The trend of refugees working during their transmigration journey is very common. Sadouni (2009) contends that among Somalis who travelled to Johannesburg to seek refuge, some sold their gold and jewellery in order to raise transport money. Others had to work while they were still in Tanzania and Mozambique in order to raise money to get them to Johannesburg.

Some learners reported that they lived on the streets before they eventually reached the Chitate Street School. One learner from FGD1 said: “I was living on the streets selling cigarettes and sniffing glue” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Memory reported that she went through bad experiences when she was living on the streets:

I lived in Johannesburg as a street child for 22 days. I was sleeping on the streets and eating food from dusty bins. I covered myself with plastic and cardboard boxes during the night. I was begging on the streets of Johannesburg every evening and day (Interview, 9 March 2012).

Lloyd said:

When we arrived in Johannesburg, we lived at the Roman Catholic Church as street children. We would only come to the church to sleep, but spent the whole day making money by pick pocketing. That is how my friends and I raised money for food (Interview, 6 March 2012).

The Roman Catholic Church building where many Zimbabweans were living is in Johannesburg. The building is used mainly by street children and desperate homeless people. Some learners who participated in this study reported that they lived in the Roman Catholic building before the Bishop enrolled them at Chitate Street School. The majority of unaccompanied children who are schooling at Chitate Street School sought accommodation at the Roman Catholic Church before they joined the school. Learners found out about the refugee school in different ways.

5.4.2.4 Finding the School

All parents and learners reported that they heard about Chitate Street School of Refugees from other people. Learners reported different ways in which they enrolled at the school and eventually found a permanent area of settlement. One unaccompanied boy from FGD1 reported that when he was in Johannesburg, he asked for an Adventist church. He was shown the Roman Catholic Church instead. The learner said: “I asked a woman where I could find a church that I go to

(Adventist), but the woman said there is a church for Zimbabweans called the Roman Catholic Church”. The learner in FGD2 said:

I went to the Roman Catholic Church. I slept on the floor outside the church for a week. It was difficult because I never did that before. I saw another learner who was wearing a uniform. I asked him where he learnt and he said at Chitate Street School. When I went to the school, it was closed for the weekend. There was only a security guard. I stayed with a security guard sleeping on the floor without a blanket from Friday evening until Monday morning when offices were opened. When the principal learnt that I was unaccompanied, he told me to join other learners who were staying in Glenview (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Glenview is a township where all unaccompanied children were staying. Some learners who were street children reported that they heard about the school from other street children. Memory said: “I learnt about Chitate Street School from some street children from Zimbabwe who were with me. They did not want to go to school because they claimed that they were making money”. Nancy, who had come to South Africa to look for a job, said:

I learnt about the school from fellow girls I was walking on the streets with. They told me that the school accepts refugees and street kids and it is free of charge. Since I did not get a job, I decided to go to the school (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Some children had been out of school for such a long time that they did not see the point of going back again. Lloyd reported that he never wanted to go back to school. He joined Chitate Street School because he was desperately in need of help. Lloyd narrated his experience of how he joined the school:

When I first heard about Chitate Street School, I ignored it because I was making money from begging, stealing and smoking glue. I was asked by the Bishop to either join the school or leave the church building. My friends and I decided to leave the building because we did not want to go to school. I did not want school any more. I was able to buy good food sometimes from food shops like Chicken Inn. One day I was caught by the police trying to steal from an old woman. I was beaten so badly that I thought of going home. I could not go to the clinic because I was afraid that I would be arrested since I was an illegal immigrant. All my friends ran away from me and I decided to try Chitate Street School. I joined the school. They welcomed me with open arms and without any conditions. They provided me with uniforms and a place to stay with other unaccompanied children in Glenview (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Most of the unaccompanied learners reported that some of their friends were making a living on the streets and did not see a future in going to school. The situation was completely different from reports that came from accompanied children who joined Chitate Street School when they

arrived in the city. Accompanied children were encouraged by their caregivers (parents/guardians) to pursue schooling because they were too young to work or do any business.

One parent said:

I heard about a school for refugees from the farm that I was working at. I was so intrigued because I wanted to let my children continue with their education. I left my job and went to stay in Johannesburg so that my children could go to school (Interview, 13 March 2012).

Parents wanted to send their children to government schools near their work places, however, their children could not be admitted because of their status as refugees. Worse still, many caregivers did not have legal documents and grounds to apply for asylum. One guardian said: “I had problems enrolling my daughter at a government school. Principals were refusing to accept her because she did not have documents. All schools rejected her until I heard about Chitate School of Refugees” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Even children who had asylum were not admitted into government schools by principals.

A parent said: “I tried to look for a government school to enrol my son, but it was difficult. In all schools that I tried, principals rejected him because he had asylum status. Principals said they do not take people with such a status, even refugees” (Interview, 13 March 2012). Some principals believed that it was illegal to accept refugees in their schools. This made refugee children from Zimbabwe roam around the streets until they got places to study at Chitate Street School of Refugees.

Children who were rejected in government schools because of their status went to join Chitate Street School which takes children with or without legal documents. This is in line with the words of the principal of Chitate Street School who said: “At this school, we accept children unconditionally. Whether they are from poor families, blind communities, and foreign countries and with or without legal documents, we enrol children and teach them” (Interview, 12 March 2012). Refugee children eventually settled at Chitate Street School of Refugees. Accompanied children stayed in different locations close to the school. Unaccompanied children settled at a community centre in Glenview Township, close to the Johannesburg city centre. Refugee children began to go through post-migration experiences from the refugee school and their respective areas of settlement.

5.4.3 POST-MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Post migration is the last stage of refugee experiences and it consists of its own set of challenges associated with settling in a new community. Post-migration experiences are encounters faced by refugees when they settle in communities and adapt to the new culture of the society. Bhugra et al. (2011) contend that post-migration is viewed as the incorporation of the immigrant within the social and cultural framework of the new society. This section analyses the refugee learners' post-migration experiences using Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model. All learners who participated in this study reiterated that they faced hostile post-migration experiences from communities in which they settled. Some learners argued that although they faced hostile communities in South Africa, their post-migration experiences were far less horrific than encounters they had during pre- and transmigration. One learner from FGD1 said:

Challenges that we are facing here in South Africa are bad, but they can never be compared to what we faced in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, they exercise rights. Rights are given even if you are a foreigner, but when I was in Zimbabwe, I did not even know anything about rights because we were never granted any. Basic rights such as the right to freedom and to live were violated everyday (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Refugees have rights in South Africa. This is because the country is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees. Despite the fact that basic human rights are enshrined in South Africa's 1996 Constitution, refugee children's rights are usually sidelined, and they face discrimination and xenophobia.

5.4.3.1 Discrimination

Rwandarugali (2011) argues on the South African context that while the country (South Africa) has a history of successfully integrating refugees from Mozambique during the apartheid regime, the integration of refugees today in this post-apartheid era is critical. Most refugees who come to South Africa are traumatised by events of that country. Refugee children in South Africa are experiencing discrimination and xenophobia. Children are discriminated against because they are foreigners who cannot speak local languages well. They mainly encountered discrimination in two spheres: i) in health care centres and communities because of language problems; and ii) when they were legalising their stay at the Department of Home Affairs.

i) Language as the Main Cause of Discrimination in Health Care Centres and Communities

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological model, when a child is affected by denial of health care in the community, that falls under the exosystem. The exosystem has an indirect influence on the child (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). Refugee learners at Chitate Street School were denied their right to obtain health services in South Africa. Learners who went to a hospital described their experiences of discrimination in different ways. A learner in FGD2 said:

I went to a hospital where there were donors offering free optical services and providing eye glasses to needy people in our community. My eyes were painful and I wanted an optician's help. When nurses at the hospital learnt that I am non-South African, they stopped me from meeting an optician and they said they did not have the type of glasses suitable for my eyesight problem. If I was a citizen of this country, I would have been assisted (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Similarly, another learner in the FGD2 who had problems with his eyes said:

I was not served at the clinic because I do not speak IsiSutu language. The receptionist had a negative attitude when I spoke to her in English. On my hospital card it was written 'cannot afford to buy spectacles.' The doctor directed me to another medical practitioner to help me with spectacles. When I went there, the doctor said 'we do not have this type of spectacles', but if I was a South African citizen, they would have ordered those glasses for me (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Refugee learners are deprived of their right to health care because of discrimination. Farmer and Birkeland (2011) affirm that discrimination in hospitals, in the community and local schools in Georgia remains a problem for some refugees. Children are discriminated against and denied basic rights mainly because they are foreigners who are not conversant with local languages. Children are forced to learn local languages so that they may not be identified as foreigners. In other words, refugees' language learning in South Africa is not only for schooling purposes, but security in order to attain social services. If one cannot speak a local language, it will be hard to obtain basic services like health care. One learner in FGD1 said:

As a result of the fact that we are Zimbabweans (foreigners) who are not proficient in local languages, we are not getting medical care. Some people are even dying. If you call for an ambulance and speak in English, they may not come because they know you are a foreigner (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Service providers are reluctant to offer assistance to refugees. A study conducted by Baalen (2012) about the rights of refugee children in South Africa found that one of the critical problems facing refugee children is the refusal to attain health care facilities. Asylum seekers and refugee children in South Africa are desperately in need of basic health care. Although basic health care is guaranteed by law, refugee and asylum seeking children are still not getting medical treatment in South Africa. They are excluded from accessing primary health care (Baalen, 2012).

Community members have negative attitudes towards foreigners. They do not want foreigners to get medical treatment or to use ambulances. The inability to speak local languages is used to separate citizens from foreigners so that health care will be given only to South Africans. A learner from FGD2 who had a problem with varicose veins said:

At a local clinic close to where we stay in our community, if you are waiting for your turn to be served in a queue, they will ask you whether you speak IsiSutu or IsiZulu languages. We do not know how to speak these languages well and if they realise that you do not, they will not provide you with any treatment. I remember one day when I went to the clinic to get treatment of my veins, I asked for medication at a pharmacy and I was told that it was out of stock, but some people who were coming after me were getting the medication. I was not given it because they learnt that I am a foreigner because of my language (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Refugee children and asylum seekers are usually not treated in hospitals and they are denied a full course of prescribed medicines in South Africa (Pursell, 2005). They are blatantly discriminated against in public hospitals. Landau (2007) contends that refugees and asylum seekers in Johannesburg were isolated in hospitals. They were made to wait for long periods of time before they were served. First preference was given to South African citizens even if they joined the queue last. Refugees were accused by nurses of having too many babies in South Africa and consequently using too much money and resources of the government. Other hospital staff in Johannesburg described their facilities as being infested with foreigners including refugee children (Landau, 2007). Once nurses realised that patients were refugees or foreigners, they turned their shoulders and ignored them.

Congress Report (2010) articulates that language often impedes the ability of refugees to navigate local health care systems in South Africa. Refugees find it difficult to obtain medical care because sometimes there would be communication break down with doctors. In the context of the United Kingdom, Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) state that language plays a big role in the attainment of health services by refugees.

If refugee children fail to speak local languages, they encounter discrimination from their community members. All learners agreed that they did not have a problem with language at school but in their communities. English language is the medium of instruction at Chitate Street School and they can speak it fairly well as was evident during interviews and group discussions. The majority of the children at the school are from Zimbabwe and they also use Shona (Zimbabwean official language) to interact among themselves. Learners reported that they face language problems when they are in their respective communities. One learner from FGD2 said:

I do not speak IsiSutu because I hardly practice it. I spent most of the time at school using English and I play with my peers from Zimbabwe who speak Shona like me. So I have not mastered IsiSutu which is why I avoid talking when I am on the train so that my identity remains anonymous (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners agreed that speaking a local language can make them less vulnerable to attacks because community members have a tendency of asking questions in IsiZulu to people they suspect to be foreigners. One learner from FGD1 said:

We can understand basic words in both IsiZulu and IsiSutu. We understand words like come here, go, eat, or to describe our body parts. Sometimes community members put people to a test in order to find out if they can speak their language. They will ask you to name a body part in IsiSutu which they will point at. For example, they once came to me and said in IsiSutu: *lyi ni Leyi?* (What is this?). They could point at an elbow which you might not know in their language. If you fail to name that body part in IsiSutu, they know that you are a foreigner and they will ill-treat you. So, the first thing that one has to understand is naming body parts and describing him/herself in the local language. So, it is very vital to understand the local language. You will be less vulnerable (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Language is the main cause of discrimination because children would be identified as foreigners when they speak. A learner said: “We avoid speaking on trains or in taxis because if citizens realise that we are foreigners, they will attack us and threaten to take us to the police to be deported for illegal entrance into South Africa.” Language problem was not only peculiar to

Zimbabwean citizens only. Morris (1998) contends that Nigerians and Congolese who were in South Africa got hostile reactions from citizens because they were unable to speak local languages. A Nigerian said:

I don't like the taxi because when you are in a taxi the first thing you will find is that people will do their best to ask you questions in their home language. They ask you questions and when you don't know how to answer those questions, it's not good. Some of them are saying bad things to me, like "go home" (Morris, 1998 p. 1124).

It is notable that refugee children at Chitate Street School require local language for integration purposes. Learners believe that if they master the local language together with its accent, they will not encounter experiences which they are facing. One learner reported that she mastered IsiSutu language which is spoken in her area, but people always tell that she is a foreigner because of her accent (FGD, 4 March 2012). Refugee children's ability to speak local languages plays a vital role in their learning as well as integration into a society. As a result of discrimination caused by inability to speak local languages, refugee learners from Zimbabwe had to follow the South African culture in order to hide their true identities.

According to Hamilton (2004) when children follow the host country's culture, the macrosystem will be formed. The macrosystem occurs when a developing child is affected by the culture of a country. Some of the children in this study integrated into the South African community by following norms, values, language and principles of the host country, and at the same time maintained their own. One learner from FGD2 said: "We respect elders in our community, we are learning the language and we also practice our Zimbabwean culture and language. That enables us to easily access basic services" (FGD, 14 March 2012). Children showed that they adapted to the South African culture and at the same time did not lose their original cultures. This concurs with the view of Berry (1997) who states that integration occurs when refugee children get involved in the host country's culture and at the same time maintain their own.

Phillimore (2011) postulates that one way of assessing whether refugee children integrate successfully is by evaluating their language acquisition. It is crucial to monitor achievement in language acquisition and understanding of norms and values of a given society (Phillimore, 2011). One guardian said: "My child and I had to learn the South African language, norms,

values and culture when we arrived in this country. That helps in the day to day interactions that we have with community members” (Interview, 13 March 2012).

It is not easy to learn a new language, but refugee children in this study reported that they understood benefits of speaking a local language and they were trying to learn it. Children can be integrated into communities and reduce discrimination if they can speak like local people (Phillimore, 2011). Through integration, refugees learn a new language and follow the culture of the host country, and at the same time maintain integrity of their original home culture.

The study found that although the integration strategy of acculturation occurred among learners, assimilation was the dominant strategy. Most of the learners abandoned their Zimbabwean culture to follow the culture of their community. Berry et al. (2006) postulate that assimilation is a process defined when people adhere to the way of life of a host country in terms of its norms, values, beliefs and behaviour. Most of the children showed that they had either assimilated or were still in the process of assimilating. They are compelled to assimilate because of discrimination against foreigners which happens in their communities. Learners assimilate into the culture of the community so that they will not be singled out as foreigners and subsequently get isolated.

One learner from FGD1 said: “We are learning the language; we hardly speak our mother language in public because of fear of discrimination” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Another learner from the same focus group said: “we practice cultural activities which are done by people in our community, for example, we dress like locals and participate in youth programmes”. A learner from FGD2 said: “If we do not follow the culture of our communities, we will be discriminated against. As a result, we are forced to abandon our cultural practices in order to fully participate in the new culture of the host community” (FGD, 14 March 2012). This is similar to the assimilation theory which posits that immigrants put aside their home cultural practices and follow norms and values of the host country (Beiser, 2009).

The majority of both accompanied and unaccompanied children at Chitate Street School for Refugees decided to become as much like members of their local communities as possible. They did this for their safety. It can be argued that refugee children at Chitate Street School are being forced by circumstances to assimilate. They are not assimilating following the ‘melting pot’ pattern, but under ‘pressure cooker’ circumstances. When assimilation is done by choice, it is called the ‘melting pot’ (MacLachlan & McGee, 2007), but when individuals are forced to assimilate, that will become more like a ‘pressure cooker’ (Berry, 1997). Children are forced by circumstances (fear of xenophobia and discrimination) to abandon their culture and identities in order to follow traditions of their new society.

One parent said: “We speak the language of our community well and we practice everything that is done by our community. That helps us a lot because many people do not know that we are Zimbabweans” (Interview, 13 March 2012). UNHCR (2009b) asserts that although learning a language of a host country is difficult, it is important in order for refugees to achieve independence, self-sufficiency and to become part of the local community. Refugees also experience discrimination at the South African Department of Home Affairs when trying to legalise their stay.

ii) Discrimination at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA)

All learners reported that discrimination at the DHA in South Africa is on the rise. Learners faced hardships when they were applying for their refugee and asylum seeking statuses because of discrimination and corruption which was rampant at the DHA. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) exosystem is formed when a developing child is affected by what happens in the setting. Refugee children were affected by discrimination and corruption that was looming at the DHA. Learners applied for their refugee status by going to the DHA. Accompanied children went with their parents/guardians while unaccompanied children were alone. Sometimes unaccompanied children were escorted to the DHA by assigned caregivers who they stayed with at the community hall in Glenview. Each unaccompanied learner was given a letter by the Bishop confirming that he/she was under his guidance and studying at Chitate Street School. They presented that letter to the DHA when they were applying for refugee status. Both accompanied and unaccompanied refugee children reported that they experienced

massive discrimination. It took them a very long time to submit their applications because of discrimination and there were restrictions of number of people who were supposed to be served per day. Hillary said:

There is a lot of corruption at the Home Affairs. They serve people who bribe them. They also serve people who are brought to them by people that they know or whom they are related to. They do not serve all people who come to submit their applications for asylum, but a limited number per day (Interview, 9 March 2012).

The application process for refugee status was very cumbersome for unaccompanied children who were overlooked and sometimes disregarded because they did not have adults to represent them. Jonathan said: “I was discriminated against because I was unaccompanied and I did not have money to bribe officials in order to process my asylum” (Interview, 9 March 2012). Joseph said:

Trying to legalise your stay is very hard in South Africa. I spent almost three weeks in Pretoria trying to submit my asylum seeking application. They take only 100 application letters per day. I tried to submit my application, but they were saying I must bring my parents/guardians to apply for me. I told them that I am an unaccompanied child, but they disregarded that. The Bishop assisted me by writing letters to confirm that I am a learner at Chitate Street School, but nothing materialised. I was eventually served after three weeks of persistence (Interview, 8 March 2012).

Learners reported that discrimination and corruption were very high at the DHA. They did not have money to pay bribes in order for their documents to be processed. Muzumbukilwa (2007) postulates that in order for a refugee child to legalise his/her stay in South Africa, there is need for money to bribe officials. Without money, children do not get any assistance with their applications at the DHA. One participant from Nigeria who was in South Africa said:

My application for refugee status was rejected after undergoing an interview, then a friend of mine from Nigeria told me that he would be able to help me on condition that I pay an amount of R800. Two days after I made the payment, a refugee status was issued to me (Muzumbukilwa, 2007, p. 119).

An accompanied learner in FGD1 said: “It took us very long to obtain our refugee status because of discrimination and corruption at the DHA” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Clacherty (2006) argues that as a result of massive discrimination and isolation in South Africa, many refugees and asylum seekers are not given opportunities to enter government offices if they are unable to pay bribes. Foreigners, who are unable to pay bribes would be put on waiting lists for many years

before their asylums were processed in order to get refugee status. Some immigration officials work together with police against foreigners who do not pay bribes, but apply for refugee status. Police would be informed by immigration officials to arrest the children for being in the country without any legal documents (Clacherty, 2006).

It became easy for learners to send their applications for refugee status after the South African government agreed to offer asylum to children from Zimbabwe (CoRMSA, 2009). According to CoRMSA (2009) the agreement was made between the Zimbabwean and South African governments to legalise the stay of many Zimbabweans. According to McGregor (2010) the South African government's decision to roll out temporary protection for Zimbabweans was only announced in April 2009 in the context of the fragile agreement between ZANU PF and MDC. The need for such protection measures reflected the inextricable entwining of state violence and economic crisis that provoked the exodus from Zimbabwe (McGregor, 2010). All Zimbabweans who were living illegally in South Africa were asked to go and apply for temporary refugee permits while the political and economic conditions in their country were stabilizing. This is how the majority of refugees at Chitate Street School managed to legalise their stay in South Africa.

One learner from FGD1 said: "It was through the agreement of the Zimbabwean and South African governments that we managed to apply for refugee status easily. Had it not been for that agreement, we would have been illegal immigrants even today" (FGD, 14 March 2012). It is difficult to get refugee papers in South Africa because of discrimination. One learner from FGD2 said: "Citizens do not like us because they say we are taking their jobs and increasing crime in their country" (FGD, 14 March 2012). Similarly, a Nigerian said: "People are not accepting us, especially black men. They think that we are coming to take their jobs, and they prefer white men to black men. They think that white men are bringing jobs and black men are taking them" (Morris, 1998 p. 1123). This resulted in the outbreak of xenophobic attacks against foreigners in South Africa in May 2008.

5.4.3.2 Xenophobic Attacks

In the South African context, Crush and Pendleton (2007) stated that xenophobia entails dislike of foreigners. It is mainly experienced by black foreigners including refugee children who are hated and accused of exacerbating the country's problems such as unemployment and poverty. In May 2008, there were brutal xenophobic attacks which also affected refugee children from Zimbabwe who had escaped political persecution in their home country. Xenophobia is a macrosystem occurrence which was happening in South Africa. It affected refugee children negatively because their school, parents, communities and lives were disturbed.

The 2008 xenophobic attacks were described by both accompanied and unaccompanied children as unbearable. One accompanied girl (Natasha) said:

We were badly affected by the xenophobic attacks. Our shack was burnt and I lost all my clothes. I was left with a school uniform alone because I was wearing it when the fire broke out. I witnessed people getting necklaced (putting a burning tyre on someone's neck) in Alexandria. Some people from Zimbabwe, Congo and Ethiopia were victims of xenophobia. When our shack was burnt, we were provided with some temporary accommodation by UNICEF. We stayed in tents. I could not go to school for about three months because the tents were located very far and my mother did not have money for me to pay for two taxis to school. I also could not go to school because people were getting killed on xenophobic grounds. Life was very difficult in the tents because there was no school and food (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Natasha reported that she and her mother eventually moved to Diepslout which is located close to Chitate Street School. She lives in fear even today because there are xenophobic comments that she hears people making in her community. Learners reported that when they came to South Africa, they thought they were going to live a peaceful life, unlike death threats they were getting in Zimbabwe. Some learners subsequently believed that coming to South Africa was a big mistake because of xenophobic killings. Lloyd said: "I would rather go back to Zimbabwe because of fear of xenophobia. I prefer going back to my country to die than in a foreign country" (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Nomsa, who lived in South Africa from 2006 up to 2008, and then went back to Zimbabwe because of xenophobia, said: "When my father was attacked, my mother decided to let us go back to Zimbabwe. We thought it would be better in our home country" (Interview, 8 March

2012). Nomsa and her mother returned to South Africa because there was political violence in Zimbabwe. They went to Johannesburg after xenophobic attacks eased. Although xenophobia is documented in books and journals as something that happened in May 2008, refugee children felt that it is still happening today. One learner from FGD1 said:

Even though the South African government stopped xenophobia which happened in May, 2008, it is still happening in communities. We are still experiencing xenophobia today. People are not doing it physically, but in a different way. For example, if you go to a hospital or social services office people make xenophobic comments about you (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Xenophobic activities happen in South Africa today. This is evidenced by the daily broadcast of foreign nationals who are victimised by South African citizens in schools, work places and communities. Parents/guardians agreed that there is a problem of xenophobia in communities today. One guardian said:

I hear a lot of xenophobic threats. We always live in fear of victimization because we are not welcome in the community that we live. We foreigners are always robbed. We are afraid of reporting it to the police because robbers once threatened us that if we got them arrested, they would murder our whole families. I wish I could move away from this community, but it is hard because I do not have money to relocate and I cannot take my children far away from school. I would not be able to afford transport money (Interview, 13 March 2012).

Some learners reported that they live in communities with high levels of crime where they always fear for their lives. One learner in FGD2 said: “We were told in 2010 that there was going to be violence against non-nationals in our community after the world cup. We were living in fear and some foreigners were killed” (FGD, 14 March 2012). Xenophobic threats against foreigners after the 2010 soccer world cup were widely spoken about by learners and repeated in the media in South Africa. Refugee learners were scared for their lives because they witnessed people dying during the 2008 xenophobic attacks.

Unaccompanied children who live at the community centre in Glenview reported that they experienced the worst treatment from their communities. They are blamed for all ills that happen in their surroundings. They are disliked by community elders as well as youths because of their refugee status. A learner from FGD1 said:

Anything bad that happens in South Africa is blamed on foreigners. We had a problem of electricity where we unaccompanied children are staying. A transformer got burnt. The community blamed us (refugees) saying the transformer was burnt because we are using too much electricity. They said we are stealing heaters from trains and connecting them to electrical appliances and consuming more electricity. So, they accused us of two things, vandalizing national property by stealing heaters from trains, and using too much electricity in the community. Only we refugee learners are accused of doing that when in actual fact we do not do that at all (FGD, 14 March 2012).

All unaccompanied children reiterated the view that they were not wanted in their community. South African elders and youths are always on a fault finding mission in order to tarnish images of refugee children so that they will leave the Glenview community where they are currently living. An unaccompanied learner from FGD1 said: “Water taps and door handles were stolen at our community centre in Glenview. We caught a guy who was doing that, but the community protected that South African thief and blamed refugee children for stealing those taps and door handles” (FGD, 14 March, 2012). Similarly, another learner from the same FGD (1) said:

Some South African youths come to throw stones at the place that we stay. They break windows with those stones in the evening. Nothing is done about that except blaming us refugees for vandalising property. Some youths come to the surrounding area of our community centre. They drink alcohol, litter the whole place, have sex and throw used condoms everywhere, but community elders say it is those refugee children who stay at the community centre (FGD, 14 March 2012).

A learner from FGD2 said:

When youths from our community come to mess our place at the community centre, they do not want us to chase them away because they say we are chasing them from their homeland. We cannot report them to the police because we were given a warning that if we do, there will be deaths. We do not report them to community elders because they do not like us at all. That is what is happening even today. They know us, but they do not like us. They do not want us to stay at the community centre. They hold community meetings and make false accusations that we are walking around late in the night, but our gate at the community centre is locked at 8pm. Everything bad that happens in our community such as robbery, murder, stealing and drugs, the community members blame us (FGD, 14 March 2012).

CoRMSA (2011) argues that xenophobia is still happening in South Africa. Citizens attack foreigners, including refugee children. Mwilu (2010) concurs with the view that xenophobia is still happening in South Africa and asserts that citizens blame foreigners for bringing diseases to their country. There is a common belief that HIV/AIDS began in South Africa because of

foreigners who brought it from their countries (Landau et al., 2004). One learner from FGD1 said:

We are blamed for bringing HIV/AIDS to South Africa. People in our community accuse us of being HIV positive and that we are trying to spread the disease all over South Africa. Sometimes community members accuse us of not bathing and having a bad smell all the time. If you are on a train and you happen to speak any language, they can tell that you are a foreigner because of your accent. Once they see that you are a foreigner, women may begin to spray perfumes in the air where they will be seated to show that there is a foreigner smelling. Some women once said, you refugee children do not bath, come to my place to shower, I will provide you with roll on and deodorants (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Similarly, Mann (2002) asserts that numerous Congolese refugee children in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, endured mockery and insults on the bus, in the school yard and in their neighbourhood. These children described being reduced to tears on a regular basis and said their lives were “miserable” because they could “never feel at ease” (Mann, 2002, p. 119). Hatred and blame which refugee children experience in the host country leads to xenophobic attacks.

Refugees are blamed for everything bad that happens in the life of a South African. Even when a person loses a job or is expelled from school because of absenteeism, foreigners are blamed. As a result, refugee children are treated badly all the time. Learners from FGD2 echoed the same sentiments about ill treatment. They argued that they faced ill treatment while using public transport. One learner said: “we are always treated as if we are not human beings by our fellow black South Africans. They can be jealous of us using buses, taxis or trains. They abuse us and I do not like it” (FGD, 14 March 2012).

A boy from FGD1 said: “sometimes they call us by hurtful names such as *kwerekweres*” (FGD, 14 March 2012). A foreign visitor to a South African township is called a *kwerekwere*. When the foreigners came to the townships, they could not speak any of the local black languages. The sound of their babble sounded like *kwerekwere* to the locals, hence they were nicknamed *Kwerekweres* (Clacherty, 2006). Shona speaking Zimbabwean migrants are projected as babblers who speak incomprehensibly (Muzondidya, 2010). Clacherty (2006) argues that the word *kwerekwere* is very common in South Africa. It is used on all black foreigners including young children. Once a person is labeled a *kwerekwere*, it means he is at risk of xenophobic attacks by

South African citizens who claim that foreigners are taking over their education, jobs and houses. Sookrajh, Gopal and Maharaj (2005) claimed that in South Africa, illegal immigrants are believed to be taking away jobs from locals and increase competition on houses.

Learners are forced to follow the South African lifestyle in order to avoid getting labeled as *kwerekweres*. Nnadozie (2010) found that refugee children in South Africa are not seen as ordinary human beings by local children. One participant in a study done by Nnadozie (2010) said:

Anytime I am in the group of South African learners, they do not treat me like a black person, they treat me like someone else. They do not even call me a person. If I tell them that I am a *muntu* (human being), they will say no, there is no *muntu* like you, a *muntu* is a person from South Africa, you are a *kwerekwere* (Nnadozie, 2010, p. 90).

Refugee children in South Africa are downgraded, socially excluded and viewed merely as nothing more than just *kwerekweres*. Similarly, Mann (2002) affirms that Congolese refugee children described their life in urban Tanzania as characterised by discrimination, social exclusion, and harassment. It was always the case that whenever Tanzanian adults or children came across Congolese refugee children, they would call out to them: “*wakimbizi! wakimbizi!*” “This Swahili term for refugees is widely considered to be derogatory and, in the opinion of one child, even a poor man or a thief is better than a *wakimbizi*” (Mann, 2002, p. 119). The way Congolese refugee children were viewed by Tanzanians as merely *wakimbizi* is more or less the same as the way refugee children at Chitate Street School are looked at by South African youths as *kwerekweres*.

The refugee situation is very critical to school children who face hatred in communities they live. One unaccompanied learner from FGD 1 said:

The situation of hatred is so bad in our community that we are forced to leave our residential area early in the morning to go to school and go back in the evening. We do this to avoid mixing with many people because of what they do to us. Even when we do not have classes at school or during weekends, we prefer spending most of our time at school where we are all refugees just to have piece of mind and to concentrate on our studies (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners reported that hatred and xenophobia which they experienced did not only come from people who lived in their community, but also from some South African law enforcers. An unaccompanied learner from FGD2 said:

Policemen have negative attitudes towards foreigners and they do not care whether they are asylum seekers, refugees or learners. For as long as you do not show them a study or work permit, they treat you as an illegal immigrant (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners in both FGDs agreed that they were treated badly by the police because of refugee asylum seeking status. Lloyd, an unaccompanied boy, said:

The greatest problem here that also contributes to xenophobia is police brutality and illegal treatment of us refugee children. They do not care whether you have documents or not. I always live in fear regardless of the fact that I am a refugee who has the right to live in South Africa. One day I was caught by the police when I was walking with my classmates who are also from Zimbabwe. Police heard us speaking in Shona and they asked us for permits. We told them that we were refugees at Chitate Street School. Policemen refused to verify our story with the school which was just 100 meters away from where they caught us walking. We pleaded with them to take us back to the school so that they would be informed by the principal that we are learners, but they said no. We showed them our learners' identity cards which had our names and name of the school, but they said they wanted passports with study permits. One of the policemen said, 'you refugees from Zimbabwe are causing problems here. You must go back to your country'. They put us in their police truck and drove around with us picking up more illegal immigrants. In the evening, we were released. The policemen asked us to go back to the school which was now 15 kilometers away. We walked all the way from there up to the school. When we arrived at the school, all other learners were dismissed and we did not have money to take us to Glenview where we stay. We slept in a classroom until the next morning (Interview, 6 March 2012).

Some learners reported that they avoided the police by all means because they attacked rather than protected them. They needed bribes, and if they did not get them, they would find any small fault and punish refugee children mercilessly. Jonathan said:

Some policemen are very xenophobic. I was beaten by policemen many times on separate occasions. If they catch you and realise that you are a refugee, they ask for money or bribes. If you do not have money to give them, they ill-treat you and threaten to call robbers to attack you (Interview, 8 March 2012).

A learner in FGD2 said:

I have witnessed many asylum seekers and refugees getting beaten or sent to Lindela detention centre even if they had legal papers. They are only freed at the detention centre, not by the police on the streets. The fact that we are black foreigners is what citizens of this

country dislike because they claim that we are competing with them for their jobs, houses, health care and education (FGD, 14 March 2012).

As a result of xenophobia looming in communities and ill treatment which children experience from police, refugee learners live a miserable life in South Africa. One learner from FGD1 said: “there is no peace in this country. I am tired of living like that.” According to the principal of Chitate Street School, children from Zimbabwe are living miserable lives as refugees in South Africa. The misery dates back to the time they ran away from their country in 2008 until now when they are experiencing isolation in South Africa. The progression of events and lapse of time from the period when refugee children left Zimbabwe and settled in South Africa forms the chronosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 40) “Chronosystem encompasses change of consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person, but also of the environment in which that person lives”. The chronosystem compresses time and how it relates to micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

5.4.3.3 Conclusion

Refugee children’s lives are filled with challenges. They went through agonising and traumatising moments and yet they soldiered on with their lives. This chapter presented refugee learner’s identities and migration experiences. Learners’ identities were analysed by using the Goodson and Sikes’ (2001) life history timeline. Generally, refugee children’s identities showed that the majority of them were orphans who were raised by aunts, uncles and grandmothers. Children came from very poor socio-economic backgrounds, except a few whose parents were active political members. They were hoping to start afresh by using education as a tool to achieve their aspirations.

Learners’ migration experiences were analysed using the three stages of refugee experiences (pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration) proposed by Anderson et al. (2004) and Bhugra et al. (2011). In each of the three stages, data was presented using Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model as the analytical framework. Data showed that learners’ pre-migration experiences were a result of political persecution and economic problems which affected Zimbabwe. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) political and economic issues fall under the

macrosystem. The exosystem was affected in the sense that communities in which children were living became danger zones because of the degree of which politically related violence was happening. This resulted in the formation of the microsystem where children's education was grossly affected to an extent that they had to drop out of school and decided to travel to South Africa.

All children experienced traumatising transmigration experiences. They did not have travel documents and crossed the border illegally. Children crossed the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa through two main ways: i) through immigration officials by hiding in trucks and buses, and by bribing officials; and ii) by swimming through the crocodile infested Limpopo River. Children who crossed the river were attacked by gangsters popularly known as *Guma Gumas* who beat, robbed and raped people. After crossing the border, children walked long distances, sought temporary shelters and some lived in the streets until they eventually joined Chitate Street School of Refugees. Arrival in South Africa initiated a new set of challenges. Children were affected by macrosystem issues that included discrimination, xenophobic attacks and acculturation problems. The next chapter presents analysis of refugee learners' school experiences at Chitate Street School of Refugees.

CHAPTER SIX

Refugee Learners' School Experiences

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the refugee learners' identities and their migration experiences. This chapter analyses the refugee learners' school experiences. The chapter begins by providing a comprehensive history of Chitate Street School of Refugees. The school's history dates back to 1958, a period when apartheid was dominant in South Africa. The chapter also evaluates the curriculum offered at the school. A brief discussion of the Zimbabwean curriculum was presented in this chapter in order to understand learners' experiences of curricular transition in South Africa. The chapter illuminates problems hampering the successful teaching and learning process at Chitate School. Lastly, refugee learners' school experiences are interpreted using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Rutter (2006) a range of ecological factors influence refugee children's educational progress. As such, learners' school experiences in this chapter were discussed in light of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological model.

6.2 History of Chitate Street School

The history of the school was narrated by the principal during an interview held on 12 March 2012. According to the principal, the history of the school could be traced back to the Roman Catholic Church. In 2008, as a result of the outbreak of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, streets were not safe for everyone especially foreign nationals. Foreigners were killed by South African citizens who claimed that non-nationals were competing with them for jobs, houses and resources. Many foreigners were left homeless, especially in Johannesburg, where the attacks were believed to have begun. Many displaced people went to live at the Roman Catholic Church which is located in the central business district of Johannesburg. The number of people who sought shelter at the Roman Catholic Church in 2008 escalated rapidly. This was because many Zimbabweans who ran away from their country's economic doldrums and elections which were marred by extreme violence and torture gathered at the Roman Catholic Church for shelter.

According to the principal, the largest number of people staying at the Roman Catholic Church were Zimbabweans, particularly children who were unaccompanied. Children would beg on the streets during the day and return to the church to sleep on the floor. The rate of crime increased in the area because many children were involved in gangs and drug abuse. Some children were being used by adults for criminal activities such as robbing and hijacking cars. They could not enroll into either government or private schools in South Africa. They were rejected by principals because they did not have documents such as the green book (South Africa's national identification), passports, birth certificates, and asylum or refugee papers.

Zimbabwean children who crowded the Roman Catholic Church led the Bishop to realise the need for a school to help them. According to the principal, "the school was begun in order to counteract children's ill behaviours and to give them a chance to study". The school is on a street called Chitate, hence the name Chitate Street School of Refugees. Chitate Street School of Refugees is located in the Johannesburg city. According to Chitate School Profile (2010) the facility was historically used as a school for black working-class labourers' children during the apartheid era. It was shut down in 1958 during the apartheid era because it was serving black people in a white designated area.

The school was re-opened by a Bishop in 2008 as a refugee institution after considering the sympathetic situation of Zimbabweans in South Africa (Principal's speech, 2009). Children were registered at the school with or without documents. The pioneer's vision was to "see less privileged people uplifted, empowered, healed and reconstructed in their own lives from disasters such as violence, war and poverty" (Elias Fund, n.d). The school aims to rebuild hopes of children whose educational careers were shattered because of economic and political unrest in their countries. It is in this light that teachers at the school go beyond ordinary teaching duties, by providing psychosocial support and parental care to all the children (Elias Fund, n.d).

The Chitate School Profile (2010) revealed that at the school's re-opening in July 2008, there were only 17 learners. By the end of the week, there were 35 learners who joined the school and they were all Zimbabwean nationals. There were five teachers and two cooks. All the work which was done in the first month was voluntary. According to Chitate Street School records, by the end of 2008, the school had a total of 127 children. They were all in the secondary schooling level. The principal said: "In 2009, school authorities began to have the challenge of many parents/guardians who wanted to register for their children" (Interview, 12 March 2012).

Chitate Street School records indicated that by January 2009, the school had a total of 560 learners. The number included both primary and secondary school children. Primary school began with only Grades 5 and 6. Before the end of the year 2009, learners filled all grades in both primary and secondary levels. A creche was opened in 2008, but later closed because there was no space. The principal said: "The number of children in both primary and secondary increased tremendously to such an extent that school authorities had to turn away some kids because of lack of space to accommodate them all" (Interview, 12 March 2012).

The school currently has both accompanied and unaccompanied children. Pausigere (2010) argues that the school was initially opened to cater for unaccompanied learners but this thrust has changed over time as it also admits accompanied children. As of May 2013, when I last visited the school, Chitate Street School records showed that there were 292 learners who came from 12 different African countries. According to the principal, the school had 16 teachers (including one volunteer Afrikaans teacher), two cooks, two cleaners, one librarian and three security officers. Except for the South African Afrikaans volunteer teacher, all teaching and non-teaching staff members at Chitate Street School are refugees from Zimbabwe. Table 6.1 below shows fluctuating numbers of refugee children who joined the school and the number of teachers.

Table 6.1 Number of Refugee Learners at Chitate Street School

Date	Accompanied				Total Accompanied	Unaccompanied				Total Unaccompanied	School Total Enrolment	Number of Teaching Staff
	Primary School		Secondary School			Primary School		Secondary School				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls			
10/ 07/ 2008	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	3	1	8	5	17	17	5
14/ 07/ 2008	2	1	1	2	6	5	3	13	8	29	35	5
7/ 12/ 2008	9	5	6	4	24	13	10	51	29	103	127	8
5/ 01/ 2009	108	96	35	21	260	20	13	177	90	300	560	21
20/ 07/ 2009	103	92	31	20	246	15	10	170	82	277	523	20
11/ 12/ 2009	103	92	31	20	246	15	10	174	86	285	531	21
15/ 01/ 2010	103	92	31	20	246	15	10	174	86	285	531	21
20/ 06/ 2010	106	93	33	24	256	15	10	174	86	285	541	21
30/ 12/ 2010	100	90	31	25	246	10	11	170	81	272	518	21
15/ 01/ 2011	93	81	27	21	222	06	05	165	77	253	475	18
20/ 06/ 2011	97	80	32	24	233	11	09	176	81	277	510	19
30/ 12/ 2011	91	73	24	20	208	05	04	163	72	244	452	16
15/ 01/ 2012	84	70	20	15	189	05	04	153	72	234	423	16
20/ 06/ 2012	61	73	18	16	168	05	04	153	67	229	397	16
30/ 12/ 2012	61	63	17	15	156	04	04	141	57	206	362	16
01/ 05/ 2013	25	34	36	30	125	35	42	50	40	167	292	16

Source: Adapted from Chitate Street School records.

In the years 2009 and 2010, there were more than 500 children at the school. Unaccompanied children outnumbered their accompanied counterparts throughout the history of the school. There are more boys at the school compared to girls. The number of refugee children who joined Chitate Street School has fluctuated all the time since its inception in 2008. According to the principal, the number of refugee children joining the school has stabilized a little bit compared to when the school opened in 2008. Many children used to join the school in 2008 and then drop out.

Some were overwhelmed by traumatic events that they experienced and consequently dropped out of school. It is in this context that the school began to send traumatised children for counselling. In the context of helping children who were traumatised and showing signs of PTSD, the school works closely with some social workers who provide counselling services to children. The principal said: “Some children were experiencing PTSD. They benefited from the initiation of working in collaboration with counsellors which we introduced in 2008” (Interview, 27 May 2013).

6.3 Counselling Services Initiated by Chitate Street School

The school is making strides towards helping children who experienced trauma to cope with their studies. The principal said: “parents/guardians work closely with teachers, the principal and school counsellors in order to assist children who went through trauma and later developed PTSD” (Interview, 27 May 2013). Interaction of parents/guardians, teachers and counsellors in the school about a developing child forms the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model. The mesosystem is an interaction of microsystems. It occurs when there is a relationship between family and school, peers and family and peers and the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). A teacher said:

We teachers identify learners with signs and symptoms of PTSD. We liaise with parents/guardians and then send their children for some counselling sessions. After children have been counselled, parents/guardians, teachers and counsellors interact extensively as they would be monitoring progress of children at home or at school (Interview, 28 May 2013).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the mesosystem would be formed when parents and teachers interact to support a developing child. The principal said: “We identified learners who required counselling after noticing signs of PTSD such as depression, crying every now and then, isolation, loneliness and lack of concentration in class. We notified their parents/guardians and then sent children for counselling” (Interview, 27 May 2013). The school works closely with parents/guardians and counsellors. Such an initiative resonates with the view of Bacakova (2011) who argues in the context of the Czech Republic that there is an apparent need for schools to take appropriate measures in cooperation with pedagogical counselling services to provide every child with quality education. Learners who had PTSD were counselled at the community centre whereas others met counsellors at their offices near Chitate School. The counsellor said:

We work closely with teachers and the principal. They report to our offices about children who may be showing signs of PTSD. We take children for counselling at our offices or we counsel them at school or at the community centre in Glenview. After we successfully counsel children, we ask teachers to closely observe them to see if they are still showing signs and symptoms of PTSD. If children show signs and symptoms again, we give them another round of counselling until they get better and are in a position to move on with their lives (Interview, 29 May 2013).

Counsellors also work with parents/guardians in order to offer assistance to their accompanied children with PTSD. According to Hamilton and Moore (2004) the mesosystem develops when parents, teachers and social workers interact on matters that concern refugee children. The counsellor at Chitate Street School said: “We do offer counselling sessions to both accompanied and unaccompanied children.”

Counselling sessions are not exclusively for children only. Sometimes counsellors assist parents/guardians so that they may be able to create a conducive environment for their refugee children. The majority of learners at Chitate Street School were once street children. Most of the accompanied children come from very poor families which rely on begging for a living. Parents/guardians used their children to beg on the streets, hence the need for counselling (for parents/guardians) in order to encourage them to take their children to school. The counsellor said:

Some parents/guardians used their children to beg on the streets. We counsel the parents/guardians and also teach them some handy skills such as art, weaving and plaiting hair. Such skills help parents/guardians to be able to make a better living and to refrain from taking children onto the streets, but rather to school (Interview, 29 May 2013).

The mesosystem continues to exist in a scenario where refugee learners' parents/guardians are counselled at the school. Counselling services are offered to some parents/guardians in order to help them to understand the need to take their children to school. Hamilton (2004) articulates that teachers have the responsibility of teaching or counseling parents so that they would be in a better position to support their children's education. Counselling parents is a criterion to promote parental involvement in refugee learners' education. Hamilton (2004) postulates that schools can promote parental involvement by developing education and outreach programmes such as counselling of refugee caregivers.

Counsellors at Chitate School also work with parents/guardians by assigning them duties to observe and report children's behaviour when they are at home. One guardian said: "I discovered that my child was affected by experiences that she had at the border. I reported the matter to the school principal and he sent her for counselling" (Interview, 31 May 2013).

The principal of the school reported that some refugee learners from Zimbabwe were taken for counselling because they could not cope with education as a result of stress, depression and contemplation of experiences they had in Zimbabwe. The principal said:

Whenever we see children affected psychologically, we seek professional help. For example, we have children who came to this school at the age of 13 and 14. They witnessed deaths of their loved ones and caregivers. Some were raped and brutally ill-treated and those painful memories remain in their minds. Such children cannot do any school work unless they get counselling to get over their bad memories. For example, we had a girl who was raped by seven men. When she came here, she was always isolating herself and in tears. We took her for counselling the first time, but it did not help. We eventually took her to a different counsellor. She was taken away from the school for seven days. She was counselled and now she is doing well in school (Interview, 27 May 2013).

Four refugee children (Mary, Memory, Jacob and Byron) developed PTSD as a result of their pre-migration experiences. Two distinctive characteristics which appear from all four children who were taken for counselling are that their traumatic experiences recurred and they were

avoiding talking about their experiences. They did not want to be reminded about trauma they experienced in Zimbabwe. The recurring of traumatic experiences and avoidance were described by the APA (2000) as prime signs and symptoms of PTSD in children. Jacob said: “The way I saw my mother dying was always in my memory even when I was at Chitate School. I was taken for counselling because I saw my mother dying in my mind’s eye every day and night” (Interview, 10 March 2012). The counsellor said: “Most of the Zimbabwean refugee children whom I counselled were disturbed by atrocious killings of their close relatives and abrupt loss of houses. They were traumatised by what they experienced in Zimbabwe” (Interview, 29 May 2013).

Rasmussen et al. (2011) contend that PTSD manifests itself in children who constantly think about the trauma. Recurrence of the awfulness experienced by children is a common sign of PTSD among refugee children (Bhugra & Gupta, 2011). Williams (2010) postulates that Somali refugee children in Boston (America) witnessed execution of their family members, experienced war and disruption of lives. The experiences were so unbearable that children developed PTSD.

Mary, who was raped by her uncle, said: “I was psychologically affected by what my uncle was doing to me. I could not forget that. That is why the school sent me for counselling” (Interview, 6 March 2012). The refugee file of Mary which was reviewed showed that she was recommended for counselling because she used to be depressed, silent and was avoiding interaction with males. Rasmussen et al. (2011) contend that depression, avoidance and silence are some of the characteristics of PTSD. Mary was sent for counselling because of visible signs of PTSD which were coming out through avoidance and silence.

Memory and Byron also reported that they were taken for counselling. They witnessed their close relatives getting killed by politicians. Memory and Byron were affected by their pre-migration experiences so much that they only managed to cope at Chitate School because of counselling sessions they received. Byron, who witnessed the death of his brother, said: “Memories of my brother who was burnt to death recurred every time I was in class” (Interview, 9 March 2012). Byron was mentally affected by experiences of loss which led him to develop PTSD. Flouri (2005) postulates from the context of the United Kingdom that persistent re-

experiencing of traumatic events in one's mind is a sign and symptom of PTSD which particularly occur when children experience loss. Jacob had signs and symptoms of PTSD. He continued to re-experience death of his loved ones and to have bad dreams which were affecting his studies.

The principal said: "Refugee children from Zimbabwe would not have been in a good position to overcome trauma that was in their minds if they had not received counselling sessions". Spouse (1999) asserts that if refugees do not get professional help to get over trauma that they experienced, they develop serious PTSD. According to Elklit, Nielsen, Lasgaard and Duch (2013) PTSD is a long-lasting consequence of trauma among children. Hosin (2001, p. 141) said: "approximately 25 to 30% of individuals who witness a traumatic event may develop chronic PTSD and other forms of mental disorder, such as depression." PTSD disturbs learners' school performances.

PTSD occurs when children are exposed to traumatic experiences (Hart, 2009; Papadopoulos, 2007). Such experiences cause a psychiatric disorder which results in PTSD (Rutter, 2003). Refugee children from Zimbabwe reported that they witnessed horrific and traumatising incidences in Zimbabwe. In Australia, Bendall et al. (2012) contend that most children who are exposed to trauma usually develop PTSD at a later stage. There is a close relationship between trauma and PTSD. Keller (1975) states that traumatic experiences that refugee children go through result in PTSD. This is because there is a thin line between trauma and PTSD.

Due to trauma, some refugees in the United Kingdom developed diagnosable psychiatric disorders and the most common one was PTSD (Muneghina & Papadopoulos, 2010). Kinzie (2006) claims that chances are high for traumatised children to later develop PTSD and depression. It is not always the case that every traumatised child develops PTSD. Some children may have gone through traumatic experiences in their lives, but they do not get any form of counselling. This is because children have different resilient and coping strategies. What could be horrific and traumatising to one child can not necessarily be a big issue that requires professional help to another minor (Dowd & McGuire, 2011).

Some refugee children from Zimbabwe who experienced trauma were not counselled at the refugee school. Alexio was not counselled despite harsh experiences he went through. The counsellor said:

Zimbabwean learners experienced horrific encounters in their lives. We counselled them and it helped a lot since most of them are able to focus on their studies. Some learners experienced trauma during their pre-migration and transmigration, but they were not counselled for PTSD (Interview, 29 May 2013).

Rutter (2003) postulates in the context of the United Kingdom that not all children who experienced trauma would be affected in the same way. Some refugee children may require strong counselling sessions while others are more resilient. They adjust quickly and cope well in school. One learner from FGD1 said: “my parents were killed and I was tortured by policemen when I tried to cross the border illegally” (FGD, 14 March 2012). The learner managed to adjust and cope with his schooling without any sign of PTSD. In the United Kingdom, Hodes (2000, p. 62) postulates that: “the majority of young refugees will cope well with the terrible events to which they may have been exposed and the very difficult circumstances under which they and their families have to live.” Despite experiences of PTSD, refugee children from Zimbabwe were faced with the need to negotiate a curriculum which has striking similarities, but also differences with what they were familiar with.

6.4 The Curriculum at Chitate School

According to Pinar (2012) the word curriculum comes from the Latin word ‘*currere*’, meaning to run a course. As a result, curriculum can be defined as a race course. With time a race course became a course of study. According to Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (2008) curriculum entails any material that the school intends to let children experience. Curriculum is everything in the sense that it can be understood as historical, political, racial, gendered, phenomenological, postmodern and autobiographical (Pinar, 2004). It is everything that happens to a learner in the past, present and future (Pinar, 2012).

Grumet (2004) states that curriculum is viewed as thought and something that we live, hence it is autobiographical. It is anything that children ought to experience by going to school. The curriculum can be viewed as components that students ought to know in the teaching and

learning process (Grumet, 1995; Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Chitate Street School offers comprehensive curricular for primary and secondary learners, short adult professional courses and adult education for school leavers.

6.4.1 School Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Learners

The school offers a full educational programme for primary and secondary education to children of all ages. Table 6.2 below shows a list of subjects done at Chitate Street School of Refugees. The Refugee curriculum was slightly modified by the school management team to incorporate life skills/orientation, computer studies, music and drama, arts and physical education, which are done by learners from Grade 3 to Form 4 (Pausigere, 2010).

Table 6.2 Chitate Street School Curriculum

Subjects	School levels				
	Primary school		Secondary school		
	Grade 1-3	Grade 4-7	Form 1-2	Form 3-4	Form 5
Maths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
English language	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Science		✓	✓	✓	
Life skills/orientation*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Computers*		✓	✓	✓	
Art and craft*	✓	✓			
Music*	✓	✓			
Drama*	✓	✓			
Physical education*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Commerce			✓	✓	
Geography			✓	✓	✓
History			✓	✓	✓
English literature				✓	✓
Bible knowledge/Divinity				✓	✓
Accounts				✓	✓
Business management					✓
Sociology					✓

*Subjects added to the Cambridge curriculum for learners to study from Grade 3 upwards.

Source: Adapted from Chitate Street School records

According to the principal, primary and secondary school learners are doing different curricula at the school. The primary level, which extends from Grades 1-7, follows South Africa’s Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The primary level is registered and accredited by the Department of Education in South Africa. It meets minimum requirements of a school to operate in South Africa.

The secondary school level follows the Cambridge curriculum which is completely different from the CAPS. The principal said: “The decision to use Cambridge at the secondary school was agreed upon by the school (teachers and Bishop) and refugee community” (Interview, 27 May

2013). When the school and a community decide a curriculum for children to learn, that forms the mesosystem which, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) occurs when parents and teachers interact to develop a child concerning his/her education. In an interview held on 27 May 2013, the principal said:

The school teachers and refugee community decided to follow the Cambridge curriculum for three main reasons, namely:

- i) The Cambridge curriculum is international. Certificates obtained through Cambridge are accepted everywhere in the world. Since the school has children from 12 different countries, it was agreed by the Bishop, parents and teachers and refugee community that the Cambridge curriculum was better than CAPS because it enables children to go back to their home countries and integrate into tertiary education or the job market without problems.
- ii) At the school's inception, there were children and teachers from Zimbabwe only. Currently, the majority of learners and all teachers are refugees from Zimbabwe. This was another reason for adapting the Cambridge curriculum because of the very high numbers of Zimbabwean children in the school. Zimbabwe used the Cambridge curriculum before and after it obtained independence in 1980. The Cambridge curriculum was then substituted by the then Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC). ZIMSEC was heavily influenced by the Cambridge system because the two curricular systems once operated in collaboration in Zimbabwe. Chitate School adopted the Cambridge system because of its closeness to the ZIMSEC as compared to CAPS or any other curriculum.
- iii) Learners were rejected by South African schools because they did not have documents. This meant that learners were not going to be eligible to write South Africa's matric examinations. This was different to the British-based Cambridge curriculum which allowed learners to write examinations without necessarily having refugee status papers. The Bishop requested and was granted permission by the British Council to let children study the Cambridge curriculum while their refugee papers were being processed. In 2009 the Cambridge examination centre in South Africa, which is run by the British Council, allowed refugee children to write without asylum or refugee status documents. Learners used their school identification cards during examinations.

The way in which the curriculum decision was made by the school and refugee community resonates with the ideas of Marsh and Willis (1995). According to Marsh and Willis (1995) there are two focal points around which decisions about curricular can be made. The first focal point is the nature of society. The curriculum takes into consideration the nature of the society so that it covers them in order to make students learn more about what is happening in their environments. (Marsh & Willis, 1995). This aligns with the principal's view that the decision of following the

Cambridge curriculum was arrived at because the refugee school has learners from different societies.

Consequently, they required an international curriculum which would be acceptable in their home countries. As a result of the Cambridge curriculum which learners are studying at Chitate Street School, they would be able to acquire useful knowledge which will enable them to integrate into their home countries (societies) and contribute significantly towards development. Marsh and Willis (1995) argued that the curriculum should acquaint learners with knowledge and skills that can be applied instrumentally within their societies.

The second focal point around which decisions about curricular can be made is the question raised by Marsh and Willis (1995) of whether the curriculum caters for the needs and interests of individual learners. Chitate Street School and the refugee community unanimously pointed to Cambridge as the right curriculum for their children because of potential benefits that it had for every learner. The curriculum is comprehensive in terms of its content, aims and objectives, and assessment standards (Lim, 2012). The principal said: “We chose the Cambridge curriculum because it is comprehensive and it fully equips individual learners to be competent in different fields” (Interview, 27 May 2013).

The view of the principal of Chitate Street School that the Cambridge was chosen because the Zimbabwean population which constituted the dominant group was in favour of it concurs with literature. Hoadley and Jansen (2002) argued that the school curriculum at any one time reflects the values of the dominant group in society, and thus tends to serve this group while marginalising the others. The Cambridge curriculum was supported mainly because at the schools’ inception, it had only Zimbabwean learners and Zimbabwean teachers. Although the school now has children from other African countries including South Africa, Zimbabweans are the dominant group which selected the Cambridge curriculum.

The principal reported that the Cambridge curriculum is studied by learners who are in secondary school. Whenever it is examination time, the school registers with the British Council which is located in Johannesburg. Over and above the primary and secondary education, the school also runs an adult programme offering academic subjects and professional short courses.

6.4.2 Adult Short Courses and Adult Education

According to the principal, Chitate Street School of refugees offers short courses to adults as part of its community service. The school offers short courses to interested adults on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 5pm to 7pm. It has a current enrolment of 50 adult students. This includes interested former refugee learners from Chitate School who do short courses while they are waiting for their external examination results. Some refugee learners who may have passed Cambridge examinations but failed to get sponsorship to go to universities, do adult education short courses and obtain certificates. The principal said: “Skills that we provide students in adult short courses enable them to get employment and to raise funds for distance learning with the University of South Africa (UNISA)” (Interview, 27 May 2013). According to the Chitate School Profile (2010) short courses offered are: hotel catering, bartending, waitering and computers. Under computer courses, the following are taught:

- i) Office package;
- ii) Personal Computer (PC) engineering; and
- iii) Assembling of computers.

The school’s vision is to empower the African child who has experienced social, political and economic crisis (Chitate School Profile, 2010). It uses education and skills development to restore human dignity through educational and recreational activities. The principal said:

Adult short courses that we offer are taught by teachers at the school. I teach PC engineering. Other teachers teach hotel catering, bartending and waitering. It is our way of trying to empower adults. It also benefits our former students who would be waiting for their Cambridge results. They do some adult short courses which help them get some basic skills to be employable in restaurants, hotels and organisations as secretaries (Interview, 27 May 2013).

The principal also said: “After finishing courses, we book for examinations with accredited private colleges here in Johannesburg. When students pass examinations, they are issued certificates” (Interview, 27 May 2013).

In addition to adult short courses offered, the school also teaches adult academic education. Teachers provide lessons to interested people in the community who would like to write Cambridge examinations either in June or November each year. The principal said:

ZIMSEC examinations are written in June and November each year. The main examination is written in November. It is mainly written by learners who would have completed their ordinary or advanced levels of study. However, if learners are interested in writing June examinations, they are allowed to. June examinations are mainly written by people doing adult education (who could be working) and also by candidates who may have failed in the November main examinations (Interview, 27 May 2013).

According to ZIMSEC (n.d.) June examinations are offered for two main reasons: i) They give candidates the opportunity to offload some subjects before the main examination session in November; and ii) some candidates cannot sit for their examinations in November due to work commitments. As a result, they sit for the June examinations.

Adults register for any subjects among those in the Cambridge curriculum that they want teachers to teach them. One teacher said: “I have 16 students that I am teaching English language and mathematics” (Interview, 28 May 2013). Some of the students doing this adult education could not finish their secondary school studies because of instabilities in their home countries. Some wrote examinations years back. They passed a few subjects and now they wished to supplement so that they may have a complete secondary school leaving certificate which would allow them to enroll at a tertiary institution for a career. Adult students attend classes in the evenings in order to prepare for examinations so that they may pass and have full high school certificates and be able to study for a career.

The principal said:

Most of the adult students that we have are refugees and immigrants from Zimbabwe although there are a few from other African countries. They come to register for academic education subjects particularly mathematics, English and science. Some failed these subjects while they were in Zimbabwe, while others did not have the chance to complete

their secondary education. So, they study at this school after they finish work (Interview, 27 May 2013).

The adult education programme is free of charge to students. However, each student has to raise money to pay for Cambridge examination fees. If, for instance, an adult student cannot pay for examination fees, the school cannot help because they struggle to raise funds for learners.

6.5 Curricular Transition

The curricular transition which was experienced by Zimbabwean learners forms the macrosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model. The macrosystem is formed by the way children experienced a change of curricular at national level from ZIMSEC offered in Zimbabwe to the Cambridge which is done at the Chitate Street School. The ZIMSEC curriculum which children were doing in Zimbabwe was greatly influenced by the Cambridge system. This is because Cambridge was the curriculum that was offered in Zimbabwe until the country gained independence in 1980, and the localised ZIMSEC curriculum was introduced from 1984.

It is vital at this juncture to briefly describe curricula transition which occurred in Zimbabwe. This is important because learners who joined Chitate Street School were familiar with the Zimbabwean curriculum which was developed along the lines of the Cambridge system. Consequently, in order to understand Zimbabwe learners' curricula experiences, it is fundamental to illuminate the transition that occurred in Zimbabwe.

Musarurwa and Chimhenga (2011) stated that Zimbabwe's examinations were controlled from the United Kingdom before the country got its independence. Three overseas examination boards controlled the setting and marking of examinations in Zimbabwe before 1984. The boards were the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), the Associated Examinations Board (AEB), and the University of London School Examinations Board (ULSEB) (Nembaware, 2004).

Shortly after Zimbabwe got its independence in 1980, the country was determined to run its curricular and setting its own examinations locally. In 1983 the Zimbabwean government announced the localization of the examination system (Abraham, 2003). The government did not abruptly break the bond with Cambridge and take over the curriculum overnight. There was a smooth transition of the curriculum from Cambridge to ZIMSEC. The Zimbabwe examinations branch sent a team of people for training in the United Kingdom.

Nembaware (2004) who was one of the persons who went to the United Kingdom for instruction, asserts that the officers who went for training got skills of question paper setting, syllabus design and administration of examinations. When the officers went back to Zimbabwe, they began to train Zimbabwean teachers in what they were taught at the Cambridge University about the curricular and administering of examinations.

The transition was gradual and it took many years before curriculum and examinations were completely handed over to ZIMSEC. The localization of examinations occurred from 1984 to 1994, and emphasis was initially on ordinary level examinations (Nembaware, 2004). ZIMSEC was established on 13 October 1995 (Abraham, 2003). ZIMSEC took over activities from the examinations branch in Zimbabwe and the UCLES of the United Kingdom (Musarurwa & Chimhenga, 2011). Refugee children who participated in this study did not have experience in the Cambridge curriculum while they were in Zimbabwe. Some were born in 1995, the time when localization had already begun. However, their education was heavily influenced by the lingering influence of the Cambridge curriculum in Zimbabwe.

According to Musarurwa and Chimhenga (2011) the localisation of examinations in Zimbabwe reached its completion in 2002 when ZIMSEC eventually had the control of advanced level examinations. The transition happened in such a way that initially, the ZIMSEC was running the curriculum and administering examinations in collaboration with Cambridge. Later on, when the ZIMSEC gained momentum and experience, it began to run the Zimbabwean curriculum and examinations autonomously (Musarurwa & Chimhenga, 2011). The long period that the Cambridge curriculum was being used in Zimbabwe and the smooth changeover (from

Cambridge to ZIMSEC) that occurred enormously influenced ZIMSEC. This explains why there are so many similarities between the two curricular (ZIMSEC and Cambridge).

The main argument behind the transition of curricular from Cambridge to ZIMSEC was to reduce the colossal amounts of foreign currency which Zimbabwe was paying to the United Kingdom (Nembaware, 2004). The costs were for setting, marking, grading and printing of examinations. The costs became insurmountable for Zimbabwe to continue following the Cambridge curriculum and examinations. Kanyongo (2005) claims that all the setting and marking of Zimbabwean examinations was done by UCLES in the United Kingdom. Thus, the localization of the examinations greatly reduced the vast amounts of foreign currency which the country was paying every year. The Zimbabwean dollar was not stable against the British pound and as a result, the cost to run national examinations continued to rise every year, hence the need for localisation (Nembaware, 2004). Localisation of the curriculum and examinations saved large sums of foreign currency from flowing out of the country.

Localisation was also done in order for Zimbabwean teachers to have the opportunity to be involved in the marking of candidates' scripts (Nembaware, 2004). If teachers participated in the setting and marking of national examinations, it made them more equipped to teach children. This is because teachers would gain experience in examination techniques and they would be in a better position to assist children in more realistic and practical ways.

Localisation of curriculum and examinations was done in order for children to learn more about the Sub-Saharan context in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. This is opposed to the Cambridge curriculum which was mainly Eurocentric. Nembaware (2004) argued that the objective of the localisation of the curricula was to develop syllabuses that were consistent with the policies and national goals of Zimbabwe. The British syllabuses that had been used in the schools in Zimbabwe were designed for international students and a few aspects of the syllabuses were given some local flavour (Nembaware, 2004). The Cambridge curriculum which Zimbabwean children were studying prior to 1984 was mainly Eurocentric and it favoured the white minority.

Jansen (2003) states that the curriculum in Zimbabwe was described as Eurocentric because it was dominated by a history of European ideas and events to the exclusion of African history, ideas and movements. It was denounced as divisive and demeaning because it justified, social, economic, and political segregation among the races in favour of the white minority rule. Strong anti-colonial themes dominated the curriculum in Zimbabwe with the shift to ZIMSEC (Jansen, 2003). According to ZIMSEC (n.d.) “indigenisation of the curriculum in Zimbabwe was done to ensure that education was made relevant to the socio-economic environment. In particular, teaching and assessment materials would be drawn from an environment with which learners were familiar and to which they could relate and apply their learning” (www.zimsec.co.zw).

6.6 Refugee Learners’ Experiences of Curricula Transition

There are many issues happening around the curriculum at Chitate School. Refugee learners from Zimbabwe experienced what can be described as curriculum switching. Every Zimbabwean learner at Chitate Street School changed curricular at least twice. That is, from ZIMSEC offered in Zimbabwe to Cambridge which is done at Chitate Refugee School in South Africa. One may think that refugee children had a smooth curricular transition from ZIMSEC to Cambridge because the two curricular have a lot of similarities since the latter influenced the former. Despite so many similarities between Cambridge and ZIMSEC, all teachers unanimously agreed that curricular switching experienced by children affected their performance.

Refugee learners from Zimbabwe experienced content, contextual and conceptual differences between ZIMSEC and Cambridge. The content, contextual and conceptual differences which refugee children experienced at Chitate Street School forms part of the microsystem in the ecological model. The microsystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) entails a developing child interacting with proximal settings including the school and curricular. Refugee learners interacted with teachers, different subject matter and the entire environment. This resonates with Schubert’s (1986) conceptualization of curriculum as the continuous interaction among the four common places: teachers, learners, subject matter and the milieu.

6.6.1 Learners' Contextual Experiences of Curricula

ZIMSEC and Cambridge curricular use different contextual orientations. While ZIMSEC contextualizes its phenomena to Southern African countries in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, Cambridge focuses on global issues. Where learners would give western examples in Cambridge curriculum, they are required to use local examples (from Zimbabwe and Southern Africa) in the ZIMSEC. In all subjects, ZIMSEC would require learners to have comprehensive understanding of issues surrounding Southern Africa and to have a little bit of reference to Western countries. This is contrary to Cambridge which requires learners to understand what is happening in the whole world including all African countries.

In geography, the Cambridge curriculum is designed in a way that children learn world geography which makes them imagine things in a world view. A geography teacher said:

Cambridge curricular is designed in a way that children learn topography of the whole world for example prairies of Canada. On the contrary, ZIMSEC required children to be in touch with reality of geographical features in Southern Africa. For example, they learnt about the Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa or Mountain Kilimanjaro in Tanzania (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Zimbabwean children who were used to localized information in the ZIMSEC had a challenge of adjusting to the world view which is a pre-requisite of the Cambridge curriculum. Children struggle to understand the switch of curricula from locally-based to international examples.

There was a similar challenge in conducting experiments in science. A science teacher said:

My learners were used to ZIMSEC where they would use locally available plants such as a potato when carrying out an experiment of osmosis in science. This is different from Cambridge which requires learners to use *rubab* (a foreign plant) to demonstrate the movement of molecules from a region of high to low water concentration. Children did not know what *rubab* was. They thought that osmosis could be done with a potato only. They did not know that the use of a potato in ZIMSEC was a way of using readily available fleshy plants. Such minor differences confuse children and that they require a lot of help to fully understand the Cambridge curriculum (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Another teacher said:

In my view, our Zimbabwean children are sharp. The only problem which they have is that they were used to ZIMSEC which confined them to one area (Southern Africa), whereas Cambridge opens them to the world. The experience of opening up to the world confuses

children. They do not know how to integrate different phenomenon from different parts of the world (Interview, 29 May 2013).

Learners' confusion about the curricula switching happens at different levels, depending on how long they have been doing ZIMSEC. A learner who was doing ZIMSEC longer is likely to be more confused because he/she is used to localised information. A geography teacher gave an example of a student who experienced learning through ZIMSEC longer than the Cambridge curricular. The teacher said:

One student joined the school from Zimbabwe a few months before writing Cambridge examinations. He did not do well in the geography examination although he had all the notes that he got from his teachers in Zimbabwe. He did not know that he was supposed to have a broader view since it was going to be Cambridge he was going to sit for (Interview, 28 May 2013).

The view that learners with long experience of ZIMSEC are likely to find it more difficult at Chitate School was challenged by another teacher. The teacher argued that ZIMSEC is more challenging than Cambridge. Hence, a child who did ZIMSEC longer is likely to find Cambridge easier as long as he understands contextual differences which exist between the two curricular:

A child who did ZIMSEC for a long time can also be at an advantage when he comes to do Cambridge. This is because it is a fact that although ZIMSEC is a copy of Cambridge, it has far more challenging concepts and examinations. A learner who has been doing ZIMSEC for a long time might find Cambridge easy if only he understands contextualisation (Interview, 29 May 2013).

In history, Zimbabwean children were used to focus on African history and do a little of European history, but they had to adjust upon joining Chitate Street School. A history teacher said:

The main challenge is that ZIMSEC syllabus covers both African and European history. Fifty percent of the content is African history while the other 50% is European. Yet, the Cambridge syllabus focuses on the whole world, but it involves much of European history. In the Cambridge curriculum, African history is just a section and examiners usually ask one question (out of five). The rest of the questions are centred on European history. So, the challenge that children who are used to do ZIMSEC would have is that they will be more familiar with African history which is less emphasised by Cambridge. Our children with ZIMSEC curriculum background may not do well in the Cambridge because there will be only one question about African history while the rest will be centred on European and other continents (Interview, 28 May 2013).

As a result of learners' experiences of different curricular, some children are leaving the school.

One teacher said:

A challenge that we face is that some of our learners transfer to other schools because they think Cambridge curriculum that we are doing is very difficult. Like that guy I was talking to (a person whom the teacher briefly spoke to during the interview), he joined this school from Zimbabwe. He did not stay long with us because he felt that we were doing a challenging curriculum. He transferred to a private school which does Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). He learnt that he is supposed to pass at least one South African local language in order to have a full certificate. He decided to come back to this school, but it was too late to master every difference between ZIMSEC and Cambridge. He failed his examinations (Interview, 29 May 2013).

Learners agreed that some of their fellow learners decided to leave Chitate School because they found the curriculum challenging. One learner said:

Cambridge is very tough compared to CAPS curriculum. I had a friend who transferred from this school. He was not very bright and was not in the top ten best performing students here. But when he transferred to a school where they were using CAPS, he was the top performing student. So, in my opinion, Cambridge is more demanding compared to CAPS (Interview, 30 May 2013).

6.6.2 Learners' Experiences of Curricula Content

Content is considered a central curriculum concern (Schubert, 1986). It is selected in terms of the readiness and interest level of the learners (Macdonald, 1974). Tyler (1949) looks at curriculum content as learning experiences which have to be meticulously selected in order to attain stipulated objectives. According to Hoadley and Jansen (2002) curriculum change occurs in different ways. It could be in curriculum content of learning areas. Refugee children experienced a slight change of content when they changed curriculum from ZIMSEC to Cambridge. There are some minor differences which exist between ZIMSEC and Cambridge curricular in terms of content. There are some topics which are in ZIMSEC which are not in the Cambridge curriculum. Sometimes both curricula may have a common topic but the depth of content would be different.

A science teacher said:

Learners from Zimbabwe usually make wrong judgments about some specific topics in the Cambridge curriculum. When they see topics (like photosynthesis) in the Cambridge syllabus, they think that they have to approach it with the same depth as they were doing it in Zimbabwe. That is wrong because ZIMSEC takes photosynthesis as a sub-topic meaning to say teachers would not go deeper when teaching it. On the contrary, Cambridge would take photosynthesis as a main topic meaning teachers have to make an in-depth analysis of the topic together with its related concepts (Interview, 28 May 2013).

The transition of curricula from ZIMSEC to Cambridge is a big challenge to learners because they were used to studying basic ideas about specific topics. This is different from the Cambridge approach which is emphatic on some themes. Sometimes learners would not know areas which they have to do in-depth studying. One learner said:

I find it difficult to understand the topics which we have to go into greater detail with. Sometimes we would think that we exhausted the question in a test, but we scored low and teachers would guide us to provide more details and international examples (Interview, 30 May 2013).

Zimbabwean learners who had a ZIMSEC background had a tendency of underestimating some topics in the Cambridge curriculum. They had a misconception that topics which they found in Cambridge were dealt with in the same way as they were dealt with in ZIMSEC. A science teacher said:

A challenge that Zimbabwean children have is that when they first see the topic that the teacher is teaching, they would think that it was easy and it contains everything that they were doing in Zimbabwe. Some children may say that they had already covered the topics and may not take the lesson seriously because they had the background. But, when I do a revision with them, they begin to wonder and ask where some of the unfamiliar information would be coming from. An example of this is children used to work out only word equations in the ZIMSEC syllabus, but they are required to work out both word and chemical equations in Cambridge. That confuses learners. They wonder where some unfamiliar topics and concepts would be emerging from (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Teachers observed that Zimbabwean learners were sometimes failing to score higher in tests. This was not because they were not studying hard, but they misunderstood the Cambridge syllabus. One teacher said:

At first, learners from Zimbabwe struggled with the Cambridge because they thought it was exactly the same as ZIMSEC which they were familiar with. But, as time elapsed, they began to understand the slight differences which exist. Despite the fact that learners know

that there are slight differences between the two curricular, some of them still make some errors of writing examples which apply to the ZIMSEC (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Sometimes learners mislead one another during discussions in their respective study groups. They may revise Cambridge and ZIMSEC past examination papers. An English teacher who was interviewed on 28 May 2013 said:

I had a situation whereby learners revised ZIMSEC past examination papers instead of Cambridge which they are doing now. Sometimes, they do not understand the actual paper which they are supposed to write in their final examination. This is because Cambridge has three different examination papers for different English speakers. These are:

- i) English for first additional language speakers;
- ii) English for home language speakers; and
- iii) English for non-English speakers

Our learners do English for additional language speakers, but you find that sometimes they revise the other two papers (for home language speakers and non-English speakers) which are practically irrelevant to them. This is different from the ZIMSEC which takes English holistically. There is only one English paper in the ZIMSEC. That paper is written by all three different speakers (additional language speakers, home language speakers and non-English speakers).

In history, a teacher claimed that although similarities exist between ZIMSEC and Cambridge, it is not possible for a child coming from Zimbabwe to write Cambridge without coaching. There are different examination papers for history for the two curricula. Cambridge curriculum is more rigorous than the ZIMSEC. A history teacher said:

In ZIMSEC history, there are two examination papers (Papers 1 and 2). But in the Cambridge examination, there is only one. Unlike ZIMSEC, Cambridge syllabus does not just require learners to list or name issues. It requires them to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the content. Learners are required to critically analyse, discuss, criticise, synthesize and to evaluate different aspects. This is unlike ZIMSEC. Its paper one requires learners to list and mention some aspects. Paper two requires learners to do a little bit of explanation, but it cannot measure up to the rigour that is in the Cambridge. Part of the Zimbabwean history syllabus covers source-based questions, for example, learners are required to describe what is in a picture. That does not exist in the Cambridge curriculum (Interview, 28 May 2013).

The Cambridge curriculum is very challenging to learners. One learner said: “I find the Zimbabwean curriculum easier than the Cambridge. It is not easy to adjust to the Cambridge, but I am coping because we have Zimbabwean teachers. We understand their English and they understand us very well”.

Zimbabwean learners encountered subject content which was different from what they were familiar with in their home country. A learner said: “I used to do synoptic gospels at school (Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) during Bible knowledge studies. But here, the curriculum allows us to do only one gospel (Gospel according to Luke) and Acts of the Apostles.” The Bible knowledge teacher similarly argues that children from Zimbabwe are faced with the challenge of doing a new book of the Bible (Acts of the Apostles). They find it challenging because they were used to only doing synoptic gospels.

Learners were acquainted with the ZIMSEC curriculum which offered a variety of subjects including practicals. They showed a great desire for practical subjects which are not offered at Chitate School. One learner said. “We do not have practical subjects (in our current curriculum) which we used to do back home. These subjects include technical graphics, woodwork, metalwork, fashion and fabrics, food and nutrition and building studies” (Interview, 30 May 2013). Practical subjects are included in the ZIMSEC curriculum. The Zimbabwe Ministry of Education encouraged learners to do at least one practical subject so that a child would have some handy skills upon completion of secondary schooling. This is helpful to children because they may not all be gifted in academic subjects. Practical subjects provide children with skills which they may develop for future careers. A learner said: “The school does not offer technical graphics which I was very good at in Zimbabwe. I do not have any practical subjects which I am doing at the moment except computers” (Interview, 30 May 2013).

6.6.3 Learners’ Conceptual Experiences of the Curricula

Teachers pointed out that the ZIMSEC and Cambridge curriculum have conceptual differences which make it difficult for children to understand. The two curricula treat similar concepts differently, for example, a history teacher said:

The conceptualisation of Stone Age and Iron Age in ZIMSEC and Cambridge curricula are different. Learners used to understand Stone Age and Iron Age from an African point of view which is not the same as a Western perspective in the Cambridge. Similarly, children were acquainted with the topic of empires from the Afrocentric perspective in the ZIMSEC. Afrocentric empires in the ZIMSEC are arranged in a way that the King would be at the top, chiefs would be underneath and sub-chiefs at the bottom. Although the Eurocentric empireship is arranged hierarchically (like African), it has completely different concepts from the Afrocentric. Empireship in Europe is arranged in such a way that an

Emperor would be at the top. Underneath, there would be lords and nights would be at the bottom (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Children find it challenging to understand the Eurocentric approach which is different from the Afrocentric. The switch of curricular has impacted on children's learning. Learners find their experience of curriculum switching confusing. They are confused by some minor differences which exist between ZIMSEC and Cambridge. A form four learner who has been at Chitate School for two terms said:

Some of the Cambridge information is very confusing. It is difficult to remember what principle to apply which is needed by Cambridge. We may end up confusing Cambridge and ZIMSEC. Sometimes I fail tests not because I did not study hard, but I get confused by the ZIMSEC and Cambridge concepts (Interview, 30 May 2013).

Although teachers had different views concerning whether refugee learners from Zimbabwe are at an advantage or disadvantage by joining Chitate School with their ZIMSEC background, the overall impression is that children have to study harder. Learners lost time when they were not in school while they were in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Some lost schooling time as a result of traumatic experiences they were going through in their lives. As a result, learners at Chitate School have a straining studying schedule which confines them to doing their school work most of the time.

6.7 Learners' Straining School Programme

Learners at Chitate Street School have a straining programme. They have a timetable which is very involved and requires them to be working at school all the time. The interaction of learners with the school is a dimension of the microsystem, according to the social ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Learners interact at school extensively in their efforts to negotiate the curriculum. The principal and teachers make refugee children work extra hard in order to achieve good results which the school has been recording since its inception. The principal said:

We indeed have learners who will be struggling. It does not necessarily mean since we had a 97% pass rate last year, it was an easy road, no. That is why we offer weekend classes to our learners so that they may catch up and avoid mixing requirements of ZIMSEC and Cambridge. Its hard work that teachers put in using very limited resources in order for these learners to score high like that (Interview, 27 May 2013).

According to the principal, learners at Chitate School are loaded with a lot of school work throughout their entire weekdays and weekends. Teachers give learners more work claiming that they lost time during the period when they were not going to school in Zimbabwe due to political unrest and economic problems. They also lost time during transmigration and the period when most of the children were on the streets before joining the school. As a result, learners' experiences at Chitate School are marked by working extra hard and having less time to play at home or school. One learner said: "I am busy all the time. I get a lot of homework for all my subjects and I study every single day of the week to compensate for lost time when I was not in school in Zimbabwe" (Interview, 30 May 2013). Another learner who was interviewed on the same date (30 May 2013) said:

This Cambridge curriculum does not give us time to relax and play around. We are always busy. We sometimes interact with other learners in our community during weekends, but it is very rare because we always come to school either for extra lessons or our private studies. Cambridge keeps us busy. It eliminates us from mixing with our peers and as such we will not be involved in bad habits which they do such as drug abuse, drinking alcohol, smoking and practicing sex. We come to school by 7:30am until 4pm. We spend the whole day working and we are tired after school. We go back home, do our homework and sleep. This is unlike our friends from other schools who start classes from 7am and end at 2pm.

Due to the tight school schedule and exclusion that refugee children experience, they hardly play during break and lunch times. Similarly, Bacakova and Closs (2013) asserted that in the Czech Republic, most refugee children felt lonely at school and were not included in the classmate peer group. They usually spent their breaks sitting or working alone in the classroom. Refugee children work most of the time because they are trying to cover long curricular and compensate for lost time. The Cambridge history syllabus is the longest among all subjects. Coupled with that, refugee learners join the school at any time of the year. Some join the school from form two while others form four. So, the problem is learners have to study more and have extra time with teachers in order to finish the Cambridge curriculum which is not easy. A teacher said:

Learners' school experiences are very tight. Their learning programme is very involved. They are at the school from morning until late afternoon everyday including weekends. I feel pity for them, but that is the only way they are able to cope with Cambridge since they joined the school after some years later (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Teachers acknowledged that children are experiencing hard times at the school. One teacher said: “The school places learners under a very long learning timetable compared to other schools. This is done in order to meet the requirements of the syllabus” (Interview, 28 May 2013). The Cambridge syllabus is long and if learners had previous school interruptions or were following a different curriculum, they have to work flat out in order to be prepared for examinations. Despite a tight school programme, refugee learners experienced challenges of placement and language barriers which form the microsystem. The microsystem emerges through interactions which refugee children have at the school with teachers and other peers.

6.8 Placement of Learners

Implementation of the curriculum at Chitate Street School is very challenging because of learners’ previous experience of curricula. All 12 countries represented by learners had their own curricular (offered in their countries) which were different from the Cambridge system which they are doing now. As a result of complications associated with curriculum implementation, some learners end up getting inappropriately placed into lower or higher grades. Refugees at Chitate Street School faced the micro-systemic experience of placement. Some refugee children from Zimbabwe joined the school and were placed in forms lower than they were in their home country.

UNHCR (2011d) argues that placement of refugee learners into different grades has a profound effect on their learning. If children are graded inappropriately, this would result in them failing to meet standards and subsequently some may drop out of school. Sarr and Mosselson (2010) argued in the context of the United States that schools should meticulously assess educational levels of children prior to placing them into grades. At Chitate Street School, placement is done by the principal and teachers after careful assessment of learners in order to place them into correct classes. The principal said:

We assess learners in various ways and come up with the pass rate. It is this pass rate which we use to group them according to their levels of understanding. You may find a learner who was in a higher grade in his/her country moving to a lower level upon joining Chitate Street School (Interview, 27 May 2013).

The way refugee children at Chitate Street children are placed is completely different to grouping of learners that is done in other countries. Sirin and Ryce (2010) argued from the context of the USA that refugee children are often placed into one group and treated as if they have similar problems and had similar educational backgrounds. In the Czech Republic, refugee learners were placed into completely inappropriate grades in relationship to their educational history and cognitive development (Bacakova, 2011). This resulted in children who have been out of school for many years studying in the same class with learners whose education was not interrupted.

Children at Chitate School are advised by both teachers and the principal to join grades lower than they were in, in Zimbabwe. This is done in order to give them ample time to familiarize themselves with the Cambridge system. A teacher said:

We had one student from Zimbabwe who joined the school recently. He wanted to join a form four class, but teachers assessed him and found that he is supposed to be in a lower class. If he had gone straight to do form four, he was likely to fail because he did not grasp some Cambridge secrets which are very important (Interview, 28 May 2013).

6.9 Funding Problems

Chitate Street School of Refugees is currently faced with a shortage of funding. The school's funding problems in turn affect refugee learners. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the exosystem occurs when developing persons are affected indirectly by what happens in their surroundings. Refugee learners are both directly and indirectly affected by the schools' funding problems in the sense that they experience acute shortage of resources and facilities, and inability to pay examination fees. These problems fall under the exosystems because they affect the school and in turn have a negative effect on refugee children.

The principal said: "The school has a problem of funding. It relies heavily on donations to operate and not on learners' school fees. Very little funds come from school fees since the majority of children are unaccompanied and they do not pay fees" (Interview, 12 March 2012). Accompanied children at Chitate Street School come from poor families which include blind communities which rely on begging for a living. As a result, most of their parents/guardians are poor and they find it difficult to pay school fees for their children.

School files which were reviewed showed that some of the accompanied children came from child-headed households with very little or no income. Hence, they find it hard to pay fees. The principal's report indicated that all the learners who came from the blind community, referrals from the Bishop's office and unaccompanied children were not paying school fees. As a result, the school has a shortage of funds. It only relies on well-wishers or donors to continue operating. The school does not have fixed donors. Any person or organisation can donate in cash or kind. The principal said: "anybody can be a donor. We previously had donations from food companies such as Chicken Inn and Nandos" (Interview, 12 March 2012). Donors are not regular and this is negatively impacting on children's learning. Due to limited funding available at the school, there is an acute shortage of resources and facilities for effective teaching and learning to occur.

6.9.1 Shortage of Resources and Facilities

Jansen (2009) argued in the South African context that resources are very important because they influence the quality of teaching and learning, and the degree to which a curriculum plan can be implemented. CoRMSA (2009) contends that there is an acute shortage of crucial teaching and learning facilities in schools which refugee children attend in South Africa. Some schools lack basic teaching and learning resources such as textbooks. Where resources are lacking, teaching and learning are in jeopardy. There is an acute shortage of key teaching and learning resources such as textbooks at Chitate Street School of Refugees. The school does not have all the recommended textbooks and their library is full of obsolete material. The school library is very poorly resourced. It is full of old and outdated textbooks which the school gets from other government schools when they get new batches from the Department of Education.

One learner from a FGD1 said: "We do not have proper Cambridge textbooks to help us prepare for the Cambridge examinations that we sit for" (FGD, 14 March 2012). Hillary said: "We do not have Cambridge textbooks. We are 44 in my class, but there is only one textbook" (Interview, 9 March 2012). Similarly, Memory, who was interviewed on 9 March 2012, echoed the same sentiments about a shortage of textbooks saying: "We do not have adequate textbooks here. Some good mathematics textbooks are missing. We do not have access to internet which is very helpful especially where there is a shortage of books." In the absence of textbooks, learners

could obtain material from the internet. But, the problem with Chitate Street School is that there are only a few computers and they are not connected to the internet.

The school operates on a tight shoe string budget. There is shortage of desks and chairs in classrooms and in the library. There is also a need for more classrooms as the number of learners at the school increases. The principal said:

We are short of two classes. As a way of resolving classroom shortage problem, we introduced hot seating in which learners in Grades 1 and 2 attend from 8am to 12pm. Learners in forms 1 and 2 start school at 11am. They would be using the library from the time they come to school until 12pm and then move into the Grade 1 and 2 learners' classrooms. Grades 1 and 2 learners finish school at 12pm. Learners in Grades 3 to 7 finish at 2pm while learners in forms 1 to 5 knock off at 4pm (Interview, 12 March 2012).

I personally experienced the problem of shortage of classes when I visited the school for interviews and focus group discussions with learners. The school did not have any free space (office or classroom) for me to conduct group discussions, and I was eventually accommodated in the kitchen to do interviews and group discussions with learners. Shortly before the end of a discussion with the first group, we were interrupted by learners who came in and said they wanted to use the kitchen to make breakfast for all unaccompanied children. All unaccompanied learners are fed by the school. Learners take turns to cook. A group of unaccompanied children who were on duty of cooking found the group using the kitchen. Since there was no other room available, group discussions were finished outside. In addition to the shortage of classrooms, the school does not have science laboratories.

All teachers acknowledged that they were failing to teach science subjects well because the school did not have laboratories. A science teacher said: "We do our experiments theoretically because we do not have a laboratory and apparatus needed. We encourage learners to read experiments from notes that we give them" (Interview, 28 May 2013). Another science teacher who was coming from class said:

We do not have apparatus and chemicals. Most of our experiments are done theoretically. For example, I was teaching children about an experiment. I told the children that you take a leaf and dip it into sulphuric acid, and then you will see the reaction. I did it theoretically because we do not have sulphuric acid at the school. The only thing that we have available for the experiment is tree leaves (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Children may understand the theoretical experiment, but if they are asked to identify a chemical, they do not know. One learner said:

If I go to another school and happen to be asked to identify calcium carbonate, I will not be able to do that because I have not seen it before. I only know how it works. This is because we learnt about it theoretically in class. We do not do practical experiments at this school because of lack of resources and facilities (Interview, 30 May 2013).

Theory and practice are integral elements in the children's curriculum, especially when learning science subjects. Pinar (2006) asserts that curriculum can be intellectualized as a phenomenon that merges theory and practice. Whatever teachers teach children, it must have some practical applicability and in some disciplines, learners should be taught in practical ways. This will enable them (learners) to understand better because experiential learning engages children and is effective (Grumet, 2006). Morrison (2004) views curriculum as one that consists of authenticity, discovery, diversity, novelty, multiplicity, fecundity, and creativity. All these components are achievable through a flexible and inclusive curriculum that advocates for experiential learning. If a school lacks resources that enable teachers to do basic science experiments with learners, it becomes very difficult for learning outcomes to be achieved.

Teachers find it very challenging to teach all subjects especially science when there are no textbooks and equipment for experiments. The shortage of funds does not only affect learners' classroom activities, but also sports. The school does not have grounds. Learners expressed unhappiness about the school's inability to provide extracurricular sports activities on a regular basis. One learner said:

We hardly do sporting activities here. I am a very good basketball player. I played for the district team and I have awards for being the best basketball player from my previous school in Zimbabwe. But, I last played a long time ago since I joined this school (Interview, 28 May 2013).

Chitate School hardly provides learners with opportunities to do sports. The principal said:

Due to the schools' location and financial constraints, we are unable to let children do sporting activities regularly. The school is located in the CBD and as such, it does not have sports grounds. When we want children to do sports, we pay money to hire grounds. When we do not have adequate funds like now, we are unable to offer sporting opportunities to our children (Interview, 12 March 2012).

Due to an acute shortage of funds, learners' extracurricular activity of sports is sporadically offered. The principal prioritises payment of examination fees of children when there is funding.

6.9.2 Cambridge Examination Fees

If there are no funds donated to the school, it means unaccompanied children will not have food, teachers will not have salaries and there will be no money to pay for the children's Cambridge examinations fees. Unless a donor pays examination fees for children, they would not write that year. The principal said:

We rely on donor support to run this school. Unaccompanied children do not pay fees and the majority of accompanied children are from poor families. We have accompanied children who come from very poor communities. Some of them are raised by parents who are blind and they go to streets to beg. Such parents pay fees for their children, but the nature of their income generating process is so poor that sometimes they cannot raise the money. In that case, if there are no donors, that will subsequently mean no salaries for teachers, no food and examination fees for unaccompanied children. Some children's parents died of HIV/AIDS and they are raised by their grandparents and uncles who are pensioners. Such children face difficulties paying their school fees. We accept and teach them because we strive to make an impact in the lives of children for the better (Interview, 12 March 2012).

When I first visited the school in the year 2012, there was no money for children to register for the Cambridge examinations. There were 44 learners who were supposed to write Cambridge examinations. Each learner required about R5700 to register with the British Council in order to write the Cambridge Examinations. When I went back to the school in May 2013 the principal reported that the school managed to secure some funding for children (whom I met in 2012) to pay their Cambridge examination fees. However, the money was not enough for 44 learners to sit for all their subjects. The principal said:

Due to shortage of funding to pay for all children's Cambridge examination fees, we decided to let some learners who were supposed to write examinations in November, 2012 drop some subjects so that they would write them next year (2013) depending on the availability of funding (Interview, 27 May 2013).

When the principal and teachers realised that there was insufficient funds to pay for the November 2012 Cambridge examinations, they selected six learners out of 44 to drop subjects in which they (learners) were not performing well. Out of a total of eight subjects, some learners

had to drop three or four. Thirty eight learners whose teachers felt were capable of passing all eight subjects were allowed to write all the examinations. The principal said:

It was a very unfair, but fair situation. If enough funding was available, all 44 learners would have written eight subjects each. But, since the money was not enough, we decided to remove some subjects from learners who were facing difficulties in order to enable those that were gifted to write. We could have dropped one subject from all 44 learners, but that was not very wise because there were some learners whom we knew were not prepared for eight subjects. So, we decided to let them write in June in the subsequent year (Interview, 27 May 2013).

Learners feel very much demoralized to study because of funding problems. First, they studied for the whole year without knowing whether there would be funding for their examination fees. Secondly, when they passed their examinations, they could not proceed to university because of funding problems. One learner said:

All students who passed last year have not gone to the university because there is no funding. That is a demotivation for us learners. I wonder why I should continue with my education when in actual fact I know that even if I pass I will not go to the university or college because of funding problems (Interview, 30 May 2013).

Some learners resolve their financial problems by working part-time in order to supplement their meager resources. Children would be balancing both their education and working part-time.

6.9.3 Learners' Part-time Jobs

All children in both group discussions and interviews commented that they do part-time jobs in order to raise money for their upkeep and to meet educational costs. One learner from FGD1 said:

We rely on donor funds. If there are no donations like they were none in December 2012 it means we will be unable to pay tuition and examination fees. Sometimes donors provide limited funds which may not be enough for all refugee children. If it is not enough, that means few candidates will be writing their examinations. So, in order to make sure that we get money to pay Cambridge Examination Fees, we do part-time jobs (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners do petty jobs such as washing people's cars, selling newspapers and distributing Sangomas' (traditional healer) pamphlets. One learner said: "In order to make sure that we pay for examination fees on time, we do part time jobs in Glenview to raise money." Another learner from the same FGD (1) said:

We do part-time jobs not only to raise fees, but also for our food. Sometimes the community centre does not cook all three meals for us because there are no donors who may have provided food. So, we buy bread, toiletries and uniforms from that part-time job money (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Learners reported that they usually do part-time jobs on weekends. They also do it during school days if money is urgently required. A learner in FGD2 said:

We need money in our pockets that is why you see some of us sometimes spending three days at school and two days working. If you do not have schoolwear like shoes, it means you have to go and work for the whole week to raise money for school shoes otherwise no one will provide it for you. Even if you are a Christian with strong beliefs, you will be forced to work for a Sangoma to get R60 per day in order to be able to buy school shoes (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Instead of concentrating on their studies, refugee children participate in some part-time jobs in order to raise money to feed themselves and to pay for their studies. It is common among refugee children in South Africa to provide for their education and work at the same time. For example, a refugee child who participated in a study done by Nnadozie (2010, p. 96) in South Africa said:

My experience is really hard. I do not have any parents nor anyone to support me. Everyday I come back from school I have to work from 6pm to 9pm to support myself. I have to come back late to do my homework and when I get to school the following day I am very tired and weak. I am not strong like the other learners, but at the same time teachers will expect me to be strong and active like others in class without knowing what I go through.

Refugee children do not get support. They have to work and make things happen. This is because most refugee schools like Chitate Street School do not have regular donations. Children are prompted to work because the church finds it hard to support them. The shortage of funds also affects teachers.

6.9.4 Teachers' Financial Situation

The financial crisis at the school is not only unique to learners, but it also affects teachers. Teachers are affected by the financial situation at the school and that subsequently has a negative impact on children's learning. Chitate School teachers are not paid by the government. They rely on donations which are given to the school. If there are no donors, that would subsequently mean non-payment of teachers' salaries. When teachers do not receive their salaries, this would be an exosystem matter which eventually affects developing children. According to Bronfenbrenner

(1992) exosystem occurs when teachers or parents (who are instrumental in interacting with children) are affected in any way. When teachers are affected by salary issues, this may affect their teaching of children in schools.

When I went to the school for interviews in 2012, teachers had not been paid for three months because there was no donor. This was noted by both learners and teachers as one drawback affecting teaching and learning at Chitate Street School. The principal noted the funding problem as the greatest challenge hampering learners' schooling:

Salaries that we pay our teachers are stipends which are far below half of a salary of a qualified teacher working in a South African government school. This makes it difficult for our teachers to work to the best of their abilities. Teachers were not paid for some months because there were no donations (Interview, 12 March 2012).

Stefan (2010) postulates that teachers who normally teach in refugee schools are paid very little and they normally rely on donations. Absence of donations affects teachers and refugee children. One teacher said:

I find it hard to continue teaching at this school where we get irregular salaries. Sometimes half of the salary is paid into my bank account at the end of the month. Sometimes they do not pay me at all. The reason I am still at this school is because I have not been accepted when I applied to some better paying schools (Interview, 28 May 2012).

Another teacher said; "Our situation is very debilitating. We work like slaves who do not get their wages at the end of the month. We continue working because we strive to make a difference in the lives of children, but we are very unhappy" (Interview, 28 May 2012). Roxas (2010) agrees from the Australian context that teachers who teach in refugee schools are overworked, underpaid and unhappy with conditions of their service. This prompts them to search for employment at better paying schools. Due to very poor salaries that teachers are getting, they do not stay at Chitate School for a very long time. While some teachers decided to leave for jobs at other better paying schools, others remain at the school because they find it extremely difficult to get teaching vacancies in government institutions since they are foreigners without work permits. One learner in FGD2 said:

One of the biggest challenges that we have at this school is teachers are not very well motivated. They earn very little and sometimes they do not get their monthly salaries.

This affects our education because we rely on our teachers since there are no textbooks here (FGD, 14 March 2012).

Teachers' financial situation at Chitate School is affecting children in the sense that they are not motivated to teach children. There are always new teachers arriving at the school. When new teachers come to teach refugee children, it affects learners in the sense that they (teachers) may not understand refugee learners' experiences. Some teachers who may be hired to teach at the school would be coming from Zimbabwe and their teaching experience would be predominantly based on ZIMSEC curriculum. They may find it difficult to implement the Cambridge curriculum fully. This subsequently affects children because they need a lot of teacher guidance in order to prepare for examinations.

The principal said: "A teacher plays a fundamental role in this Cambridge curriculum. If he does not know what to do, learners will fail. We offer some orientation to new teachers so that they get up to speed with the Cambridge curriculum" (Interview, 12 March 2012). Despite a plethora of problems hampering children's education, the Chitate School of Refugees has been the top most performing in the Gauteng province. The school has some astonishing achievements

6.10 Astonishing Achievements at a Refugee School

Lakage (2012) posed a question:

How is it possible that the school that does not receive government funding, most children are not paying school fees and teachers are not getting salaries, achieves an overall pass rate of 94%? That is the story of Chitate Street School of Refugees in Johannesburg.

Despite critical challenges of accessibility, sustainability, acute shortage of textbooks, furniture and funding, the pass rate at Chitate Street School remains high in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Learners are performing extremely well against all odds. Children do not have adequate key teaching and learning resources such as textbooks; they do not get all three meals per day; and unaccompanied children find it hard to study at the community hall where they stay because local youths who are school drop outs disturb them. Despite all these challenges, children continue breaking boundaries by passing. In the year 2011, learners achieved an astonishing 94% overall pass rate in their studies. This is despite the fact that teachers are not getting paid.

Despite many challenges which the school is facing, Chitate Street School records showed the following achievements:

- i) High pass rate in Cambridge international examinations. Table 6.3 below shows the Cambridge examination results of learners at Chitate Street School of Refugees since its inception.

Table 6.3 Cambridge Examination Results

Year of Examination	No. of Ordinary Level Candidates	Pass Rate	No. of Advanced Level Candidates	Pass Rate
2009	6	67%	Nil	Nil
2010	15	73%	15	76%
2011	24	94%	13	100%
2012	36	97%	10	100%

Source: Adapted from Chitate Street School Records

The school recorded 100% pass rate in the advanced level in 2011 and 2012. There has been a remarkable improvement of learners' ordinary level results since inception of the school. Learners began by recording 67% in 2009 and 97% in 2012.

- ii) The school won first prize in the Inner City drama competitions in 2009 and second prize in 2010. The competitions were for good public speaking and acting among high school learners.
- iii) The school won first prizes in debate competitions at Constitution Hill and in the anti-xenophobia campaign competitions in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Children were given awards for making outstanding presentations and sound arguments about the given topics
- iv) The school helped children who did not have proper documentation to get places in government schools. The school has also managed to rehabilitate traumatised learners as well as street children to become reasonable and prospective university students.

All this has been achieved by the school against all odds. Much credit was given to teachers who go beyond their call of duty and earn very little or sometimes do not get salaries at the end of the month. The principal said:

Teachers at Chitate Street School have not been paid part of August 2011 salary and for the whole month of September 2011, they were not paid either. Despite all that, teachers at Chitate School are not complaining. Instead, they are doing all their work. They teach, mark, evaluate and do all that a well-paid teacher does, but they are not getting salaries at the end of the month. Teachers are willing to go the extra mile with their children. That is why the school has outstanding results and astonishing achievements in the province (Interview, 12 March 2012).

Chitate Street School shows that there are people willing to go long distances against all odds and no matter how difficult it is for children to receive education (Lakaje, 2012). Even though the battle for funding continues at Chitate Street School, the principal and his teachers are determined to produce future leaders. Many of Chitate Street School's past students have gone on to pursue their dreams across the country (South Africa) (Lakage, 2012). Chitate School Profile (2011) states that most of the learners who excelled in the 2009 academic year are now enrolled in universities where they are pursuing degrees in law, mechanical engineering and human resources. The principal reported that eight learners who passed their advanced levels in 2011 were enrolled in different universities in South Africa. The children managed to source their own funding. Despite high achievements since 2008, the school is facing the risk of closure.

6.11 Risk of Closure

In addition to a shortage of critical resources, the secondary school sector is facing risk of closure by the Department of Education. Within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, when a school faces risk of closure by the Department of Education or the government, that is a macrosystem matter which will eventually have an impact on a developing child. It is qualified as a macrosystem matter because the Department of Education is a broad sector which makes policies and has the right to determine schools that must be registered and accredited in South Africa. Despite the good results which have been obtained in the Cambridge examinations, the Chitate Secondary School of refugees has not been registered by the Department of Education. Only the primary school is registered. The secondary school has not been registered because the

Department of Education claims that it does not meet the minimum requirements such as having science laboratories, sufficient textbooks and the recommended teacher pupil ratio.

The principal and Bishop's efforts to have the school registered have been fruitless. The principal said:

The government is working against us and all our future plans. They want to close the school. The secondary school has not been registered since 2009 despite countless efforts we made to register it. They want the school to be closed regardless of good results that it is producing (Interview, 12 March 2012).

The Department of Education is reluctant to register the secondary school and this is making learners uncertain about whether they will be able to complete their studies before they are disrupted again. One learner who is form 4 said:

We are not sure whether we will finish our studies at this school because the Department of Education can just come at any time to disrupt classes or move us to a different place. Our future is very uncertain. Only the primary school is accredited by the Department of Education not the secondary (FGD, 14 March 2012).

When refugee children do not get support in their education, it subsequently makes their settlement very difficult. They require support from both the school management team and education authorities. In the Australian context, Taylor and Sidhu (2012) postulated that it is crucial for schools to have positive attitudes towards refugees. This will significantly help refugee children when they settle in a particular context. In order for schools to provide such support to refugee children, there is need for education authorities to inspire educators so that they would be inclusive and welcoming to all children. In the case of Chitate Street School, the education authorities are working against the school which is exacerbating refugee children's settlement woes.

The school is very vulnerable by virtue of it being a facility for refugees. I failed to conduct interviews on the day I made an appointment with learners. The whole school was closed because of the demonstrations by political parties which were happening two kilometers away. Other schools which were located closer to where the demonstrations were happening continued as normal. But, Chitate Street School of Refugees was closed the whole day because the

principal said it was not safe for both children and teachers. This shows how vulnerable the school is and how this affects teaching and learning. One learner (Jacob) said:

Sometimes we get disturbances at school because it is a facility for refugees. Locals can easily disrupt us. For example, on Wednesday, we did not have classes because there was a demonstration taking place. Other schools were not closed, but ours was closed because we are easy targets as refugees (Interview, 10 March 2012).

Refugee learners at Chitate School are easily targeted when they are at school because they are treated badly in the communities in which they live. The experience that refugee learners get in communities determines the way children would be viewed in schools (Hattam & Every, 2010). If community members are hostile to refugees, chances are high that they can carry that hostility to children in school and disrupt their education.

6.12 Interpretation of Refugee Learners' School Experiences

The Zimbabwean refugee learners' situation is characterised by despair and misery. Children are not sure whether they will achieve their goals in life because of uncertainty about finishing schooling. They suffer acute shortage of basic needs in life and experience rejection in their communities. Refugee learners' school experiences can be interpreted using Maslow's Theory of Human Needs where they would be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Refugee learners' experiences factor into the Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the sense that the theory explicitly speaks about humans' needs which are arranged hierarchically from the bottom to the top. Just like any human being, refugee children's needs range from the bottom of the hierarchy to the top. However, the Zimbabwean refugee children's needs are stuck in one level of the hierarchy.

According to Maslow (1970) human needs can be categorised into a hierarchy starting from the bottom with physiological needs. Physiological needs are basic needs such as food and shelter. They are needed by everyone and once they are satisfied, the next higher stage of needs called 'safety' emerges. Security, dependence, freedom and protection are some of the examples of safety needs (Maslow, 1970).

According to Maslow (1970) when an individual satisfies physiological and safety needs, a higher level of 'love and affection', and 'belongingness' needs would occur. A person will strive for affectionate relationships with family and other people around them. He/she will feel sharply the pangs of loneliness, ostracism, rejection and friendlessness when safety needs are not satisfied. When safety needs are satisfied, 'self-esteem' needs emerge. Self-esteem needs entail stability in one's life in order to gain self-respect or self-esteem. Maslow (1970) postulates that satisfaction of the self-esteem needs lead to a person feeling self-confident, worth, useful and necessary in the world. If the needs are not satisfied, a person feels inferior, weak and helpless. The last stage of needs in Maslow's hierarchy is self-actualisation which is reached when a person accomplishes all his goals in life.

Hopkins and Hill (2010) claimed that when a refugee child arrives in a new country, his/her needs are likely to run the full gamut of Maslow's hierarchy: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. When considering the experiences of Zimbabwean refugee learners at Chitate Street School against Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it can be concluded that they all fall in the bottom stage of physiological needs. Their desires are thwarted and they struggle to obtain physiological needs which, according to Maslow, are basic to every human being. Children's failure to satisfy physiological needs exacerbates their feelings of insecurity. Refugee children are striving to get food on their tables. They rely heavily on donor support. Donors are sporadic, sometimes they come and provide food for children and sometimes they do not.

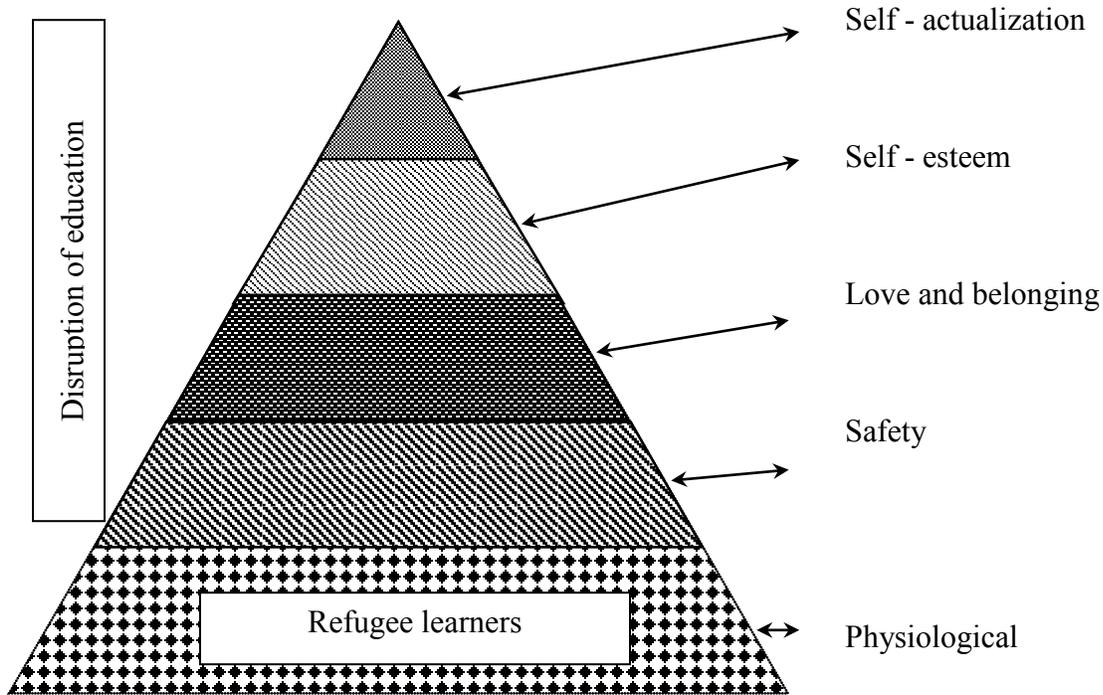
When food is not provided, children have to do some part-time jobs in order to satisfy their physiological needs. Refugee children find it hard to move to the next higher stage of needs because they do not have food. Maslow (1970) states that for a human being who struggles to make ends meet, it is likely that he/she would be focused on achieving physiological needs more than anything else. A starving person would desire food and drink more strongly than needs in a higher level. This is why refugee learners at Chitate Street School do some part-time jobs because they want to provide food for themselves.

There are also safety concerns. Maslow (1970) asserts that safety needs include the following: security, stability, dependence, protection and freedom from fear. Refugee children experience the opposite. They are not secured in their residential homes especially unaccompanied children who stay at a community hall. They do not feel secure at Chitate Street School because it is a refugee facility which is vulnerable to xenophobic attacks. They live in fear of xenophobia and discrimination on a daily basis. They wonder if they would at least accomplish their goal of studying. They are far from satisfying physiological and safety needs which are the lowest stages in Maslow's hierarchy.

Adler (1977) contends that upon arriving in a new country, refugee children would be at the bottom of the Maslow's hierarchy. Their main concerns would be to obtain basic needs such as food and drinks which are in the physiological needs section. Circumstances of refugees such as loss and trauma forces them to be in the physiological stage. Refugee children's failure to obtain the lowest levels of needs mean they cannot attain higher level needs. Maslow (1970) asserts that in order for higher level needs to be met, needs at a lower level have to be satisfied first.

Refugee children are filled with uncertainties concerning obtaining love and belonging needs. They do not feel secure in their community and at school because of their vulnerability. They also feel that they do not belong in South Africa because of everyday experiences that they have with local citizens. Children are uncertain whether they will reach the levels of esteem and self actualization needs. It is hard for them to imagine obtaining respect from people in their communities as well as reaching their goals of becoming who they really want to be in life. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be redefined to suit refugee learners at Chitate Street School as illustrated by figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Refugee Learners' Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Based upon the ideas of Maslow (1970)

Refugee and asylum seeking children have a complex set of needs (Elliott, 2007). They are all situated on the physiological needs level. Like any other human being, refugee children aspire to climb up to self actualisation, but there are uncertainties and vulnerabilities. Their uncertainty is because education that they hope to use to liberate them in future is in jeopardy. Despite good academic progress made by the children, they do not think they will be able to complete their education because of funding problems.

6.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented refugee learners' school experiences at Chitate Street School of Refugees. The data was analysed using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. A comprehensive history of the school was presented together with curricular that it is offering. The school is not exclusively benefiting refugee children in primary and secondary schools, but also adults who attend to do short courses and adult education.

Zimbabwean refugee children who were used to doing the ZIMSEC curriculum were faced with a challenge of experiencing several differences in the Cambridge curriculum. Learners experienced content, conceptual and contextual differences between the two curricular (ZIMSEC and Cambridge). Learners experienced many challenges at Chitate Street School of Refugees. These include funding problems, for example, lack of money to pay for examination fees and shortage of resources and facilities at the school. As a result of acute shortages that refugee children were experiencing at the school, they resorted to doing part-time jobs in order to raise money to supplement their meager resources.

Although there are many problems at the school, it has always been on the rise in terms of academic results since its inception in 2008. The school is currently one of the highest performing in the Gauteng province (Lakage, 2012). Learners performed well against all odds. The next chapter presents concluding insights about refugee learner experiences.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: Against All Odds

7.1 Introduction

This study focused on investigating Zimbabwean refugee learners' experiences in South Africa. There is a dearth of research about refugee children's experiences, especially with regard to education. The purpose of this study was to generate an insight into, and develop an understanding of, refugee learner experiences and access to education opportunities. This final chapter presents emerging insights into refugee learner experiences. The chapter begins by presenting a summary of the key findings. This is followed by a discussion of research processes and theoretical and conceptual reflections. A reflection of research processes focused on a critical assessment of the suitability and effectiveness of the chosen design and methodology in addressing the research questions. It also reflected on challenges associated with data production in a study that involves vulnerable children. A reflection of theoretical and conceptual frameworks focused on the two essential contributions that this study made about refugee children. The chapter also considers implications of the study, directions for further research and a conclusion to the study.

7.2 Summary of the Key Findings

The research was guided by three critical questions: i) who are the Zimbabwean refugee learners? ii) what are Zimbabwean refugee learners' migration experiences? and iii) what were Zimbabwean refugee learners' school experiences?

7.2.1 Learners' Identities

Learners at Chitate Street School of Refugees come from 12 different African countries. The majority of children are from Zimbabwe and they have different identities. It was therefore essential to be acquainted with comprehensive information pertaining to who the Zimbabwean refugee learners were. Children's ages ranged from 16 to 18 years and they all came from the Shona speaking tribe in Zimbabwe.

Children's backgrounds were complex. The majority of the children were orphans who grew up in rural areas where they were raised by aunts, uncles and grandmothers. This corresponds with the view of Foster et al. (1997) who maintained that in the traditional culture of Zimbabwe, orphaned children are cared for by members of their extended family, especially grandparents, aunts and uncles. While a few children lost their parents in political violence in Zimbabwe, the majority lost theirs to natural causes such as accidents and illnesses.

The identities of refugee children from Zimbabwe were formed and reformed because of experiences they had. Children had emergent and fluid identities. They did not have fixed identities. This resonates with the view of Kebede (2010) who states that refugees' identities are not fixed, but rather they are very situational, temporary, unstable and fluid. Refugee children from Zimbabwe had changing identities which were caused by relocating from one place to another in Zimbabwe and when they migrated to South Africa.

Children did not really know who they were any more because they lost important people in their lives and they were still wandering in South Africa. Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) argued that refugee children lose their identities because of the loss of close relatives and the harsh migration experiences they face.

7.2.2 Migration Experiences

Zimbabwean refugee learners had hectic migration experiences. Children's pre-migration experiences were mainly centred on political persecution and economic problems which made it impossible to live in their home country. According to Bloch (2010) and Hammerstad (2012) a combination of economic problems and political instabilities forced Zimbabwean children to seek refuge in South Africa. Political and economic matters of a country are broad issues that are categorised in the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; 1994). Swart and Pettipher (2011) assert that the macrosystem embodies politics, economics and social values of a particular society.

All children reported that economic problems in Zimbabwe affected their education and standards of living. They were forced to leave the country because of inflation, hunger and malnutrition, high mortality rates, and declining education standards (Bloch, 2008; Coltart, 2008;

Ploch, 2008; Sisulu et al., 2007). Regarding the political perspective, there was sharp antagonism that existed between Zimbabwean political parties, ZANU PF and MDC prior to presidential elections in 2008. According to Alexander and Chitofiri (2010) the entire country was immersed in political violence. Ordinary citizens were displaced and women and children were affected by what was believed to be state sponsored violence. Children witnessed traumatic experiences in which their close relatives and people they knew were gruesomely murdered (Chitando & Togarasei, 2010). The situation forced children to travel to South Africa to seek refuge.

Transmigration entails experiences that refugee children face on the journey to the host country. The majority of Zimbabwean refugee learners did not have travel documents such as a passport, and hence they had to cross the Beitbridge border illegally by hiding in buses and trucks. Some children paid bribes to immigration officials at the border in order to pass through without documents. CoRMSA (2009) states that corruption is very high at the Zimbabwe-South Africa border. Similarly, Paoletti (2011) argues that despite tight policies at the border in Libya, foreigners enter the country illegally because of corrupt immigration officers.

Some children crossed the Beitbridge border by swimming through the crocodile infested, Limpopo River where they faced gangsters commonly known as *Guma Gumas*. In the same way Rutter (2003) postulates that refugees from Vietnam had unsafe journeys to America where they crossed rivers in small boats. Some of the boats capsized and killed people. Refugees embark on perilous journeys into the unknown. Zimbabwean refugee children had dangerous transmigration experiences where they were robbed and threatened by smugglers and gangsters who help and ill-treat border jumpers (Rutherford, 2008). The children walked long distances until they reached their destination in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Post-migration is the last stage of refugee experiences. It contains what Zimbabwean refugee children experienced in South Africa. Children faced discrimination from communities in which they lived. They faced discrimination at the Department of Home Affairs and in health care centres where they were denied treatment because they hardly spoke local languages. Muneghina and Papadopoulos (2010) contend that language plays a vital role in assisting refugees to obtain health care in the UK.

Children also faced xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Green (2013) postulates that although many refugees come to South Africa to seek refuge they do not find the country as a safe haven because they sometimes experience trauma worse than they had in their home countries. Zimbabwean children claimed that although xenophobic attacks have been documented and reported to have ended in 2008, they continue to be victims of violence in South Africa. Green (2013) argues that xenophobic attacks are still happening in South Africa. Foreigners are always victimized and blamed by citizens for every bad thing that happens in the country. Zimbabwean refugee learners were blamed for bringing HIV/AIDS to the country and vandalising national property. This concurs with the experience of Congolese refugee children who were blamed for all ills happening in Tanzania by local youths (Mann, 2002). Such treatment makes refugee children's acculturation become a nightmare. The situation adds to a multiple of school experiences that refugee children face.

7.2.3 Learners' Experiences at Chitate School

Zimbabwean refugee learners had unique experiences at Chitate School in South Africa. The children had to abandon the ZIMSEC curriculum and adapt to the Cambridge system which was chosen by parents, teachers and refugee community of Chitate Street School. The change of curriculum from ZIMSEC to Cambridge which children experienced is part of the macrosystem whereas children's school experience (of the curriculum) is the microsystem. Refugee children were faced with a curriculum that had different content, concepts and contexts from the ZIMSEC which they were used to study. Children were used to a curriculum that was focused mainly on the Zimbabwean and Southern African contexts. They were familiar with localized examples, content and discussion of different topics. However, they had to make an abrupt adjustment to the Cambridge curriculum which required them to have a global understanding of issues.

From the microsystem perspective as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) that it contains children's relations with schooling, Zimbabwean learners encountered an academically challenging school programme which required them to study all the time, even on weekends. The school had an acute funding problem which was an ecosystem issue in the sense that it affected children indirectly. The school had a critical shortage of resources and facilities needed for effective teaching and learning to occur. It does not have enough funds to pay for

unaccompanied children's examination fees and teachers' salaries. In addition to that, the school is facing the risk of closure by the Department of Education for failing to meet minimum requirements (such as having enough teaching resources) for an institution to be accredited in South Africa. Despite all the problems which the school is facing, it has been producing high pass rates since its inception in 2008.

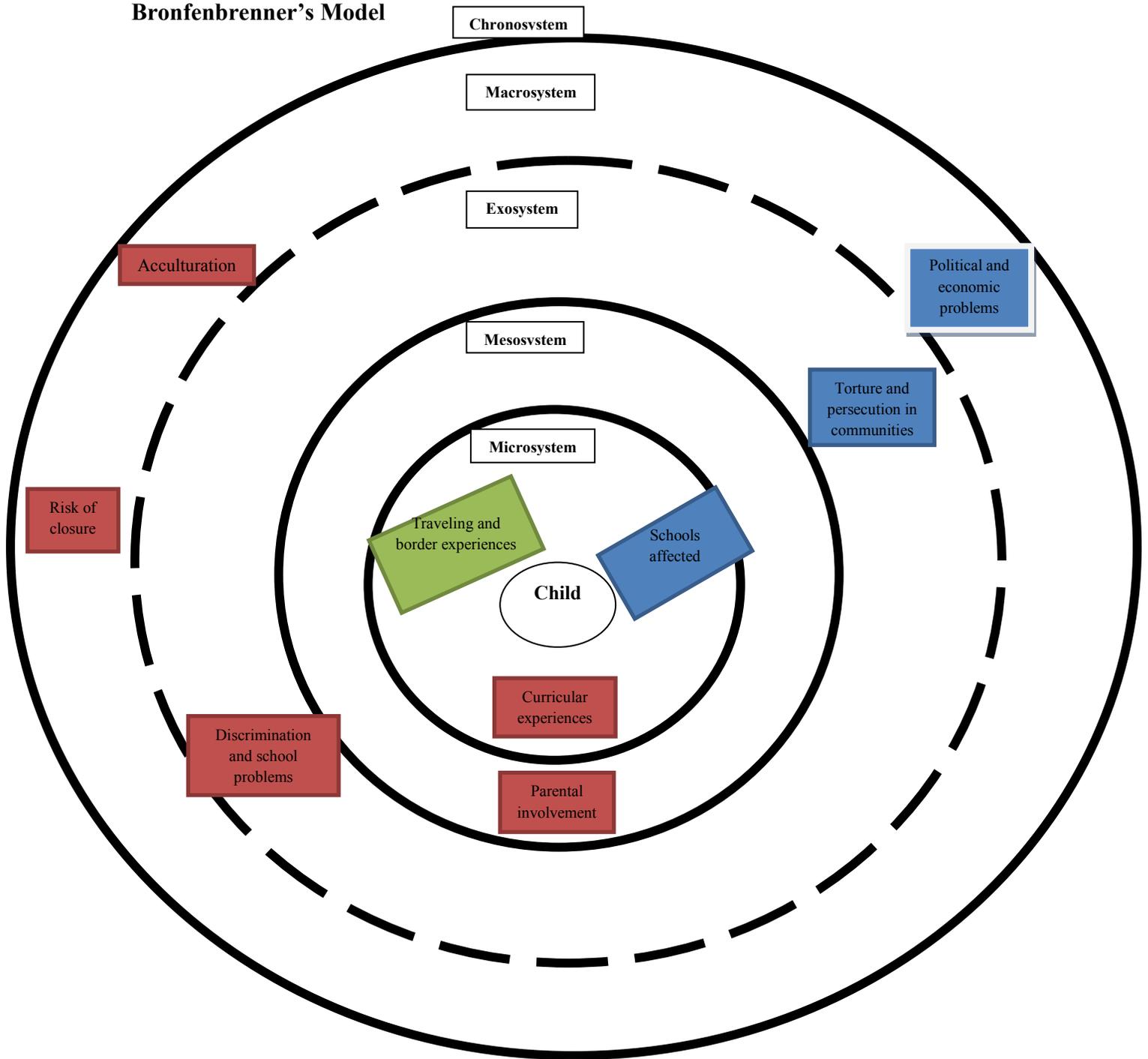
7.3 Research Processes, Theoretical and Conceptual Reflections

A reflection in this study occurred in two ways: i) reflection of research processes; and ii) reflection of theoretical and conceptual moments. In the research processes, the study was conducted using a qualitative research approach and its paradigmatic position was interpretive. It was conducted in the form of a case study of a refugee school situated in Johannesburg. The chosen research approach, paradigm and design enabled the researcher to interact extensively with all participants in order to gain insight into refugee learners' experiences. The methodologies used in this study were suitable since the research was about a sensitive topic and dealing with vulnerable children. According to Liamputtong (2007) qualitative and interpretive methods are especially appropriate to the study of vulnerable people because they allow the researched to express their feelings and experiences in their own words.

It was not easy to collect data at the school because of the vulnerability of the institution in South Africa. Initially, learners did not want to talk about their painful migration experiences. They only wanted to talk about their schooling experiences. However, children were convinced to freely discuss poignant moments about their lives after a conducive environment was created and when they learnt that the researcher was also from Zimbabwe and had had some bad experiences. Researching sensitive topics with vulnerable children has to be done as this brings better understanding of their situation and creates a platform in which durable solutions can be developed (Liamputtong, 2007). Teachers were reluctant to participate in the study during the first visit to the school. This led the researcher to go to the school for the second time in order to have teachers' views about learners' curriculum experiences and also to let children read how their experiences were represented in the study.

There are two essential theoretical moments in this study and these are significant contributions that emerge from the data which deepened the understanding of refugee learner experiences. The first theoretical moment is the framework that emerged from the data using Bronfenbrenner's model. Figure 7.1 represents a reflection of Bronfenbrenner's model in which refugee learner experiences happen. Anderson et al. (2004) and Hamilton and Moore (2004) contend that the use of the Social Ecological Model enables researchers to understand various environments in which refugee children would be in.

Figure 7.1 Conceptual Map Summarizing Refugee Learner Experiences using Bronfenbrenner's Model



Key

	Pre-migration experiences
	Transmigration experiences
	Post-migration experiences

Contrary to Bronfenbrenner (1979) who states that a developing child is not directly affected by the exosystem and macrosystem, this study found that refugee learners are affected literally by every system. The exosystem directly affected Zimbabwean refugee children both in school and general social lives. Children experienced great ostracism in communities that they lived, an exosystem matter which directly impacted on the well-being of the learners. At the macrosystem level, children were directly affected by the Department of Education's stance of not registering the school. The Department of Education in South Africa completely sidelined the refugee facility by not considering the plight of the principal who made several attempts to get the school accredited. That resulted in some children dropping out of the school because they did not see any future in going to a institution that is not recognised in the country.

Thus, this study asserts that the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems undoubtedly directly impact on refugee children as they embark on pre-migration, transmigration and post-migration. Refugee children's pre-, trans- and post-migration experiences do not happen in a linear pattern. Children go through different traumatic experiences in all stages which makes it hard for them to adopt the norms and values of the new environment.

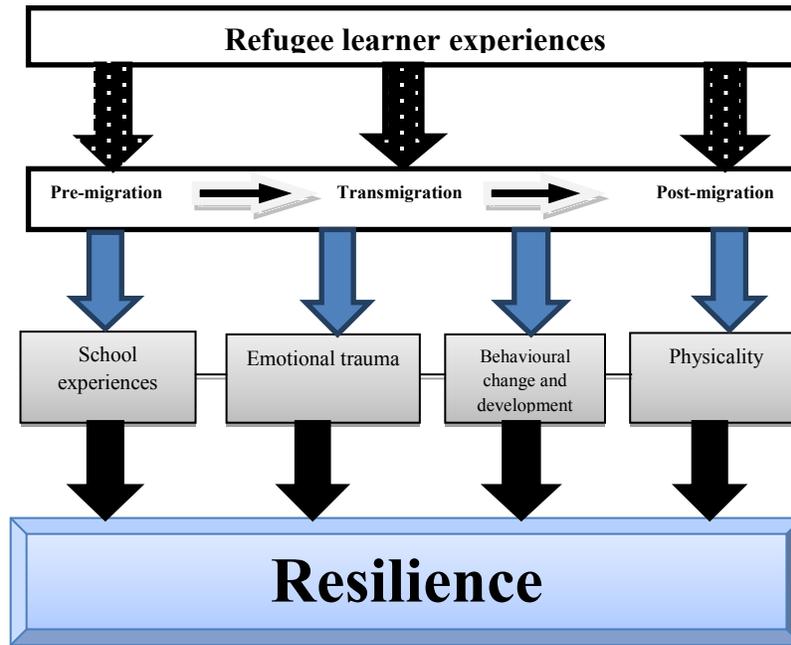
The second theoretical moment that arises from this study is the notion of resilience. According to Masten (1994) there is no universally accepted definition of resilience. Different scholars define it in different ways. According to Masten (2001, p. 228) resilience refers to: "a class of phenomena characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development". For the purpose of this study, resilience is taken to mean the ability of people to recuperate from trauma, cope with high levels of stress and manage despite continuous adversity (Bottrell, 2009; Masten, 1994). Resilience occurs when individuals triumph against all odds.

Based on the data, a resilient identity framework of refugee learners was developed. This framework was expanded from Terte, Becker and Stephens' (2009) model of resilience which comprised of the following parts: cognitions, emotions, behaviours, physical activities and environment. The model was borrowed and expanded to explain the resilient nature of refugee children who go through trauma which gives rise to emergent, divergent and unsolidified identities.

The Zimbabwean refugee children ended up not knowing who they really were because of agony and adversities that they went through in their lives. They were very uncertain about their lives. The only certainty was the state of being uncertain about the future. It is believed that children recover and adapt faster when they have adults to help them overcome their harsh experiences (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990). The same cannot be said with refugee children as the majority in South Africa are unaccompanied. They do not have families to console them in order to overcome their traumatic experiences. Community and society can help a child adapt to a new environment and then overcome previous traumatic encounters (Daud, Klinteberg & Rydelius, 2008). Unfortunately, refugee children's experiences are exacerbated by communities which are very hostile and society that generally dislikes foreign nationals.

Notwithstanding miseries in refugee learners' lives, they are perseverant. They flourish and consistently achieve greater positive outcomes against all odds. They are motivated to study hard and withstand all barriers in life so that they can become better people. Resilience and optimism are key features that sum up refugee learners and their experiences. They are resilient and hopeful in spite of forces that work against them. According to Masten (1994) resilience emerges when a person successfully adapts to the environment despite risk and hardship. Refugee learners prosper under challenging conditions. Figure 7.2 shows the formation of resilience among refugee learners.

Figure 7.2 The Resilient Framework of Refugee Learners



The three stages of refugee experiences (pre-, trans- and post-migration) consist of a set of challenges which give rise to four fundamental components of adversities in the life of a refugee child: school experiences, emotional trauma, behavioural change and development, and physicality. Despite harsh experiences that refugee children encounter, they are also faced with the need to fit into the school setting of the host country. Schools are often regarded as most effective institutions that can heal children of their losses and worries (Pacheco, 2011). However, in the lives of refugee learners, schools often exacerbate the complex situation of displaced children and deteriorate their settlement into a new country.

Sarr and Mosselsson (2010) argued that although schools are capable of offering comfort and solace to refugee children, they can make refugee learners' situation move from bad to worse when there is no support. Children hope to transform their lives for the better using education as the main tool. This is despite acute shortage of teachers and key learning resources such as textbooks in refugee schools. Refugee education is neglected. This is evidenced by absence of funding, rejection of refugee children from joining government institutions and the Department of Education's efforts to shut down a high performing refugee institution. Such school

experiences coupled with migration encounters cause refugee children to develop emotional trauma. According to Rutter (2003) refugee children are prone to develop emotional trauma caused by complex migration and school experiences that they go through. Similarly, Amstadter and Vernon (2008) contend that refugee children develop emotional responses to traumatic incidents that they come across in their lives.

Migration experiences encountered by refugee children made them develop new behaviours informed by norms and values of the new society that they were living in. Refugee children experienced xenophobic attacks and discrimination in communities which forced them to change their behaviours and cultures in order to hide their true identities. Experiences that refugee children faced affected their physicality so much that they felt that life was better in their home countries.

Despite all the adverse events that refugee children faced, they were all resilient. Children performed well in school against all odds. They excelled in all academic and extracurricular activities such as high school drama competitions which they held. This is despite the fact that some children do not go to school every day. They have to go to do some odd part-time jobs such as washing cars and selling newspapers in order to raise funds for their education at a refugee school.

7.4 Implications of the Study and Directions for Further Research

Refugee children go through a lot of suffering in their lives. They left their home countries where their lives were shattered because of political unrest. They intended to improve their lives by using education which is the most powerful tool that can transform and bring hope to the lives of displaced children (Hamilton, 2004; Bacakova & Closs, 2013). Hence, refugee education has to be valued and supported in order to make children look ahead to the future with hope.

However, the Department of Education in South Africa is in violation of refugee rights. It is committed on one hand to provide quality and accessible education to all children in South Africa, but refugee children are completely ignored. Aggravating the situation, the Department of Education is making frantic efforts to shut down a refugee school which is producing good

results. The outcome of that exercise would be to have refugee children not getting any formal education. Principals in various schools across the country do not accept refugee and asylum seeking learners in their institutions. Some principals believe that admitting refugee children into their schools is unacceptable in the 21st century.

Rugunanan and Smit (2011) contend that refugee children from Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo were out-rightly rejected by principals from enrolling into South African schools. Principals thought that it was illegal to admit refugees in their institutions. Similarly, CoRMSA (2011), Baalen (2012) and Buckland (2011) state refugees find it extremely difficult to join South African schools because of their status. This implies that there is a need for educating school management teams about refugee rights to education. Such efforts would increase the chances of achieving the Department of Education's schooling 2025 vision of accelerating enrolment and retention of learners and to offer quality education (Department of Basic Education, n.d). Depriving refugee children access to school violates what is stipulated in both the Refugees Act (1998) and South African Constitution (1996) that every child has a right to quality education.

Refugee children are capable of studying for different professions in universities and provide knowledge and skills needed to expand the host country's economy. As such, inclusive refugee education policies which are documented in national and international frameworks must be put into practice. Refugee children's education can be enhanced by improving teachers' salaries and their working conditions, and to provide basic teaching and learning resources. In the case of Chitate School, the institution can be supported by the Department of Education through providing resources and facilities that are lacking.

Refugee education is a general problem that is currently affecting many children in different African countries (UNHCR, 2011). This research was done using a small qualitative sample. Future research can be done on a large scale using quantitative techniques to investigate the quality of education that is afforded to refugee children. Further research should also look at the experiences of refugees after completing secondary education. Since the inception of the Chitate Street School in 2008, due to its pupils' academic results, it has been topping the list of high

performing institutions in Johannesburg. Although the principal reported that only a few children went to universities after completing their secondary education, very little is known about what happens to many refugees when they complete secondary education. Further research can investigate refugees' livelihoods and how those who go to tertiary institutions sustain their education.

Future research can also delve into acculturation of refugee children. There is a dearth of research in the area of how refugees actually settle down and begin to follow or not follow the culture of the host country (Tienda & Haskins, 2011; Pacheco, 2011). Acculturation is a very essential phase in the lives of refugee children because it is one of the key determinants in which communities accept or reject them (Bhugra et al., 2011; Kelly, 2011). Due to varying migration experiences that refugees go through, they acculturate in different ways.

7.5 Conclusion

The word refugee in itself has some negative connotations in South Africa and in various other African countries. It is associated with pain, suffering, burdening and threatening the peace and prosperity of people residing in their home countries. Fallacies and negative conceptualisations of immigrants in general, and refugee children in particular have negative psychosocial and emotional implications in their well-beings (Mann, 2002; Bhugra & Gupta, 2011). A refugee child's life is marked by suffering which begins from the home country, in transit and in the host nation where it would be difficult to obtain basic human rights such as health care and education. Despite local and global frameworks which articulate education for all and potential benefits that comes out of teaching immigrant children, refugee learners face a plethora of challenges that prevent them from staying in schools.

This study, which is symptomatic of the global refugee experience, suggests the Second Millennium Development Goal will not be realised unless the education of refugee children is taken seriously. The second Millennium Development Goal is to attain universal primary education by 2015 (Easterly, 2009). This forecast is far-fetched taking into cognizance refugee learners' accessibility to education.

Refugee children's lack of access to education is a major obstacle towards the achievement of universal primary education. Children face barriers in enrolling into public schools because of the lack of documents and their refugee status, and when they are in schools they receive little or no support, particularly from government and schools. On the African continent, poverty is exacerbating because of host countries' negligent handling of refugee children who are capable of attaining skills that are needed in the growth and development of economies. Various countries in Africa can benefit from having refugees if only people shift their mind-sets from viewing refugee children as potential threats, to seeing them as prospective skilled economic labourers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Request letter to the Bishop

Dear Bishop

My name is Lawrence Meda. I am a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am required to carry out research to write up a thesis. Your school has been selected to participate in this research project. The title of my research is, **Refugee learners' school experiences: The case of Zimbabwean refugees.**

The importance of this study are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

The study requests the participation of learners, teachers, principal and parents in interviews and focus group discussions (with learners). Participation is purely voluntary and participants will be at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish and no harm will befall them. I will observe maximum respect to your institution and participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study as well as in the reporting of findings. Information will be made available to all participants before publication of the study.

Thank you very much in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

Lawrence Meda.

Appendix B: Request letter to the school Principal

Dear Principal

My name is Lawrence Meda. I am a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am required to do a research to write up a thesis. Your school has been selected to participate in this research project. The title of my research is, **Refugee learners' school experiences: The case of Zimbabwean refugees.**

The importance of this study are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

The study requests the participation of learners, teachers, principal and parents in interviews and focus group discussions (with learners). Participation is purely voluntary and participants will be at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish and no harm will befall them. I will observe maximum respect to your institution and participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study as well as in the reporting of findings. Information will be made available to all participants before publication of the study.

Thank you very much in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

Lawrence Meda

Appendix: C. Letter to parents / guardians to ask for permission to include their children in the study.

Dear Parent / Guardian

My name is Lawrence Meda, a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am engaged in research work concerning refugee learners' school experiences and have selected Chitate School as the study site. The study entails experiences of refugee learners and its importance are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

Learners will be interviewed, participate in group discussions and keep reflective journals. I am seeking your permission to allow your child to be a participant in this study, which will provide insight into ways of providing quality education to refugee children. Participation will be voluntary and you are free to withdraw your child from the study at any time.

I promise:

- That all information regarding your child will be confidential and will not be divulged to teachers, school managers, or learners. The only persons with access to information will be Professor Reshma Sookrajh and Professor Brij Maharaj (Doctoral supervisors) and I.
- That all written reports and accounts of this study will not identify the school or persons involved.
- That the information gathering process will not harm your child.
- That the information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning situation.

Should you require any further clarification about the study, please feel free to contact me at 0785 241 475.

From

Lawrence Meda

Student number: 211552855

Appendix: D. Parent / Guardian's consent form (for the participation of their children)

I _____ (full name of parent / guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of research project, and I consent to the participation of my child: _____ (full names of child) in the project and the use of data for research purposes.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and I am at liberty to withdraw my child from the project at any time should I so desire.

Parent / Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix E. Letter of request of participation of Teachers and Principal.

Dear Teacher / Principal

My name is Lawrence Meda, a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am engaged in research work concerning refugee learners' school experiences and have selected Chitate School as the study site. The study entails experiences of refugee learners and its importance are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

You are requested to participate in the study in which you will be scheduled for an interview which may provide insight into ways of providing quality education to refugee children. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I promise:

- That all information will be confidential and will not be divulged to teachers, school managers, or learners. The only persons with access to information will be Professor Reshma Sookrajh and Professor Brij Maharaj (Doctoral supervisors) and I.
- That all written reports and accounts of this study will not identify the school or persons involved.
- That the information gathering process will not harm you or anybody involved in the study.
- That the information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning situation.

Should you require any further clarification about the study, please feel free to contact me at 0785 241 475.

From

Lawrence Meda

Student number: 211552855

Appendix F: Letter of request of participation of a learner.

Dear learner

My name is Lawrence Meda, a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am engaged in research work concerning refugee learners' school experiences and have selected Chitate School as the study site. The study entails experiences of refugee learners and its importance are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

You are requested to participate in the study, in which you will be scheduled for an interview, participate in focus group discussion and writing of reflective journals. Information obtained may provide insight into ways of providing quality education to refugee children. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I promise:

- That all information will be confidential and will not be divulged to teachers, school managers, or learners. The only persons with access to information will be Professor Reshma Sookrajh and Professor Brij Maharaj (Doctoral supervisors) and I.
- That all written reports and accounts of this study will not identify the school or persons involved.
- That the information gathering process will not harm you or anybody involved in the study.
- That the information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning situation.

Should you require any further clarification about the study, please feel free to contact me at 0785 241 475.

From

Lawrence Meda

Student number: 211552855

Appendix G: Consent from Participants (Teachers, learners, principal)

I _____ (name of participant) have been approached to participate in the research entitled: **Refugee learners' school experiences: The case of Zimbabwean refugees.**

I understand that:

- The research is about Zimbabwean refugee learners' experiences
- My participation in the research is voluntary.
- My participation in the research will not affect my position as a learner / teacher or my relationship with other colleagues/learners at school.
- I can refuse to answer any questions asked to me
- I can withdraw from the research process at any time.
- The researcher will use information from me in a way that will assure my continued respect amongst other learners, colleagues and the wider fraternity.
- The information obtained will be used with the strictest confidentiality.
- My identity will not be disclosed in the thesis.
- Photographs of me will not be used in this thesis or any display related to the research.
- Refugee rights will be respected
- The research interviews will not impact on my working time.

I **agree** to participate in a study that Lawrence Meda is conducting.

Name (of participant): _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Or

I **do not agree** to participate in this research study

Name (of participant): _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix H: Letter of request of the participation of a school counsellor

Dear School Counsellor.

Pending to the discussion that we had over the phone, I wish to formally ask for your presence on the research interviews and group discussions that I will be conducting at your school (Chitate School). The research is for the doctoral study that I am doing at the University of KwaZulu Natal and it's entitled: **Refugee learners' school experiences: The case of Zimbabwean refugees**. Since the study deals with a vulnerably group of people, I am requesting that you may be there as a school counsellor in the event that any participant may require your services.

Thank you very much in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence Meda

Student number: 211552855

Appendix I. Letter of request of participation of Parents/guardians.

Dear Teacher / Principal

My name is Lawrence Meda, a doctoral student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, Registration number: 211552855. I am engaged in research work concerning refugee learners' school experiences and have selected Chitate School as the study site. The study entails experiences of refugee learners and its importance are as follows:

- The study will provide an understanding of how refugee learners cope with school experiences in foreign countries. Such knowledge will help improve the quality of education for refugee learners.
- The UNHCR plans for education among other basics for refugees in different countries. This research will generate knowledge which may be useful to UNHCR in order to improve education for refugees in Africa.
- This study will enable refugees to comment on their experiences. Thus, the research may come up with information which may lead to more durable solutions to refugees' crisis in Africa.

You are requested to participate in the study in which you will be scheduled for an interview which may provide insight into ways of providing quality education to refugee children. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I promise:

- That all information will be confidential and will not be divulged to teachers, school managers, or learners. The only persons with access to information will be Professor Reshma Sookrajh and Professor Brij Maharaj (Doctoral supervisors) and I.
- That all written reports and accounts of this study will not identify the school or persons involved.
- That the information gathering process will not harm you or anybody involved in the study.
- That the information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning situation.

Should you require any further clarification about the study, please feel free to contact me at 0785 241 475.

From

Lawrence Meda

Student number: 211552855

Appendix: J. Parent / Guardian's consent form (for their participations)

I _____ (full name of parent / guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of research project, and I consent to the participation of my child: _____ (full names of child) in the project and the use of data for research purposes.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and I am at liberty to withdraw my child from the project at any time should I so desire.

Parent / Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____

Sample of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Appendix: K

Questions to ask teachers (Mesosystem)

- What subject(s) do you teach?
- How long have you been teaching here?
- Why did you choose to teach at a refugee school?
- How do you find teaching at a refugee school?
- How do learners cope and apply themselves?
- Is there anything unique you can comment about teaching learners at this school which is different from your experience of teaching in other institutions?
- How is the curriculum?
- Which syllabus do you use?
- What are the challenges that you are facing in teaching that syllabus?
- What are the challenges you are facing teaching at this school?
- How do you deal with learners with various experiences eg. Raped, kidnapped Traumatized?
- What are refugee learners' school experiences?
- Describe ways in which the school promote parental involvement.
- How are children affected by social welfare in South Africa?
- How are refugee children affected by norms and values in South Africa?

Appendix: L

Questions to ask the principal

- Describe children experiences.
- Is the secondary school registered by the DoE now? What is the current situation?
- Locations of children: Where do they stay? Who pays for their accommodation and travel? (Exosystem)
- How are unaccompanied learners received in the community that they live? Where exactly do they stay in communities? Is it a house or community hall? How did you find it? (Exosystem)
- What are children's statuses (refugees, asylum seekers)? (Exosystem)
- How did children get their refugee documents? Who helped them? How? Did the school provide supporting documents to motivate children's applications for asylums? (Mesosystem)
- Full history of the school? Please clarify about the Central Methodist Church. How, why and when did the school move from Central Methodist to Chitate Street School? (Exosystem)
- I understand the school also offers courses like Adult education and hotel catering, what time do they begin? How do you do it considering the current shortage of classes? (Exosystem)
- I understand you do hot seating. What time do secondary learners start and finish classes? (Microsystem)
- Do same teachers teach both primary and secondary schools? (Mesosystem)
- Who are the donors? (Exosystem)
- How do you retain teachers? (Mesosystem)
- In what ways are refugee children affected by economic policies and political issues in South Africa (Macrosystem)

The curriculum-Primary follows matric curriculum while secondary uses Cambridge, Please clarify why and how?

Statistical presentations

- a) Total numbers of accompanied/unaccompanied boys and girls by year
- b) List of all subjects done in primary and secondary schools.
- c) Cambridge Examination results from 2008 up to date for Ordinary and Advanced levels
- d) Numbers of children who are asylum seekers / refugees. (Statistics from the school about children's status).

e) Refugee learners' statistics by country. How many children are from each of the 12 countries represented?

f) Achievements of the school

Appendix: M

Questions to ask the Counsellor

- Which learners do you counsel? Do you counsel every refugee child who arrives at the school? (Exosystem)
- How do you know which learner require counseling and which one does not? (Exosystem)
- What are the signs and symptoms that refugee children display in order to be recommended for counseling? (Exosystem)
- Do you do follow up counseling sessions with learners? (Exosystem)
- What are your experiences of counselling learners from Zimbabwe? What do you commonly counsel Zimbabwean learners of (Stress, trauma) etc? (Exosystem)
- What are learners' experiences which cause them trauma (political / economical)?
- What strategies do you employ to help children cope with their studies? (Exosystem)
- How often do you counsel traumatized learners? (Exosystem)

Appendix: N

Questions to ask learners

- What are your experiences at the Albert Street School (How do you find learning here)? (Microsystem).
- You mentioned before that you were selling sweets, biscuits and polony at the Musina refugee camp, where did you get money to buy those products?
- What is your refugee status now? (Microsystem)
- How does the following influence/affect your studies: Peers, parents/guardians and school? (Mesosystem)
- How does the community where you live affect your studies? (Exosystem)
- Are there challenges that you are facing as refugees here in South Africa?
- In what ways do norms and values of the South African culture affect your education? (Macrosystem)
- How does the political issues in South Africa affect you as a refugee learner?
- What are your Pre-migration, Transmigration and Post-migration experiences? (Micro, meso, exo and macrosystems)
-

Appendix: O

Questions to ask parents/guardians

- What do you do in South Africa? Where are you working? (Exosystem)
- How does your work place affect your children's education?(Exosystem)
- In what ways are you involved in your children's learning? Do you sometimes interact with your children's teachers about their studies? In what occasions? (Mesosystem)
- What are the experiences of your child? (Microsystem)
- In what ways were your children affected by xenophobia which occurred in 2008? (Macrosystem)
- How does the South African cultural context impact on your children's learning? (Macrosystem)
- In what ways were your children affected by Zimbabwean political and economic situations? (Macrosystem).
- Describe your migration experiences that you had with your child from Zimbabwe to South Africa?

Appendix: P

Focus Group Discussion with Learners

- What are your migration experiences?
- How do you find schooling in S.A?
- Is it different from schooling in Zimbabwe?
- What are the notable differences?
- Did you have a smooth transition of schooling from Zimbabwe to South Africa?
- How are you managing schooling in S.A?
- What are school experiences that you are having as refugees here in S.A?
- How does your experience as refugees influence your performance in school?
- Why?
- What do you think needs to be done in order to improve education for refugees?