

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FORMAL EDUCATION  
AS MIGRANTS' LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY:  
A CASE STUDY OF CONGOLESE GRADUATES IN DURBAN**

**BY**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Sciences in Community Development**

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**2013**

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Kaunda Dieudonne Kipili, hereby declare that this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work, and is submitted for the degree of Master of Social Sciences in Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Where works of other authors have been used, they have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination to any other University.

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KD. Kipili                      The 02<sup>th</sup> day of September 2013

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge first and foremost and express my gratitude to God, Almighty, for allowing and giving me patience and the strength to complete this dissertation/thesis.

My gratitude is also extended to the following people:

To my supervisor Professor Thokozani Xaba: for understanding, support and guidance. You have been very patient and you have given up your time to help me throughout this dissertation/thesis. I am sincerely grateful.

To my previous supervisors, Dr Oliver Mtapuri and Dr Silvia Kaye: for your advice and guidance which contributed to laying the foundation for this dissertation/thesis. I am so thankful.

To my wife Elodie: you have been a blessing to me. Many thanks for your prayers, love and supports throughout the entire course of my studies. You are truly a wonderful wife.

To my children: thank you for your understanding. I dedicate this work to you guys.

To all my participants: Thank you for accepting to participate in this study, and for sharing your experiences without which this study would not have been possible.

I am also grateful to all those who assisted me and contributed, from the preparation to the completion of this dissertation/thesis. May the Lord God do the same for you.

Thank you

## **ABSTRACT**

The survival of the majority of refugees in their host countries is characterised by poverty resulting from different sets of vulnerabilities. Formal education/training appears to offer the only opportunity for refugees to improve their survival chances. This study examined formal education/training as a livelihood strategy of Congolese refugees who have graduated in different fields of study in South Africa and are currently living in Durban and what have been its outcomes. This study found that, though formal education/training has the potential to improve the livelihood opportunities of Congolese refugees who graduated in South Africa, by increasing their chances of accessing better pay employment and improving their well-being, it still needs to be strengthened through the protection and promotion of refugees' rights, a change in public attitude towards refugees and the careful selection of fields of study.

In order for formal education/training to effect sustainable positive changes in the lives of respondents, there is also a need to formulate and implement supportive policies and legislations with the view to address specific livelihood challenges pointed out in this study.

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to and outlines the structure of the dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation was to examine whether or not formal education<sup>1</sup>/training as a survival strategy adopted by some Congolese refugees<sup>2</sup> in Durban, has the potential to lead to increased incomes, reduced vulnerability, social participation and improved well-being. This study further examines fields and levels of education/training that empower and provide most benefits to Congolese graduates<sup>3</sup> and factors (socio-political and economic), supporting and/or undermining this livelihood strategy.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

Millions of immigrants have entered South Africa since the end of apartheid. According to the Institute of Race Relations, “there are between 3 and 5 million - equivalent to the Country’s entire white population” (BBC News, 2008). This number includes the many refugees that have since become urbanites as South Africa does not use camps for hosting refugees and asylum seekers (Tebogo Segale, 2003). The majority of these refugees have had to face a number of socio-economic challenges not encountered by those living in camps in other countries. They usually share a disadvantaged socio-economic position and are partially excluded from the wider society by factors such as “weak legal status,

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<sup>1</sup> Formal education is “the process of training and developing people in knowledge, skills, mind and character in a structured and certified manner. It is a sure pathway to the liberation of mind and the improvement of socio-economic status of people” (Okeke, 1995). For the sake of this study formal education also includes formal training.

<sup>2</sup> Congolese refugees were specifically studied in this research because of their relatively increased interest in pursuing formal education and training in South Africa compared to refugees from other nationalities that are currently living in Durban.

<sup>3</sup> Congolese graduates include only those Congolese refugees who have undertaken and completed at least one level of higher education/training in any South African educational institution. Higher education is also called tertiary education ; it is the third stage or post-secondary level of education. Tertiary education is taken to include in this study undergraduate and post-graduate education, as well as vocational education and training. Universities, colleges and universities of technology are the main institutions that provide tertiary education in South Africa.

refusal of citizenship, denial of political and social rights, ethnic or racial discrimination, xenophobia and harassment” (Castles and Miller 1998:231). Their survival opportunities are also constrained by local context and realities, and by unequal and distorted access to markets, services and opportunities.

The livelihood experiences of urban refugees reflect the kind of vulnerable conditions of urban poor in South Africa. Jacobsen (2009) suggests that urban refugees face the same socio-economic problems as the urban poor: shortage of jobs, housing, credit and banking services, and higher exposure to crime.

The majority of Congolese refugees in this country experience similar socio-economic challenges as urban poor. Steinberg (2005:4) writing on Congolese refugees’ survival in South Africa, painted a picture of a negative survival experience and a tenuous economic position, and this is being experienced by both skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated Congolese refugees; and he also suggested that, “most are survivalists working in the margins of the informal economy”. Steinberg further stated that, “29% of Congolese refugees in South Africa are unemployed and a further 50% are in work they describe as unskilled”, working as car guards, security personnel and as operators of street-side hair salons. The majority of Congolese refugee in these categories of economic activities have “the mean monthly income of R618 per month; and the median monthly income R500 per month” (2005:4).

To improve the situation of refugees in host countries, there has been a shift of emphasis by many governments and among civil society, and refugee organizations in responding to refugees’ challenges. The focus is being given to aspects that contribute to the protection and promotion of the socio-economic rights of refugees and to the reduction of factors that exacerbate their vulnerabilities. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for instance, has identified and promoted education/training of refugees as a human right, a tool of protection and essential to meeting psychological needs, promoting self-reliance and the socio-economic development of refugees (Sarah Dryden, 2004).

By promoting education/training among refugees, it is expected that, knowledge and skills acquired will allow them to cope and challenge factors that keep them in vulnerable positions. Moreover, it is hoped that education/training will help to improve the socio-economic participation, diversify the survival opportunities, and allow refugees to compete for better pay employments, to create their own employments, increase their earnings, thus allowing them to fully integrating host Countries.

However, despite having educational qualifications obtained in South Africa, and a legal refugees' status allowing them to take up employment in the country, the survival experiences of many Congolese graduates in Durban remain unchanged, and their situations continue to be characterized by unemployment, poverty and vulnerability, just like the majority of ordinary Congolese refugees in South Africa.

Different factors appear to have contributed to the negative survival experiences among Congolese graduates. These include the Country's socio-economic and employment realities, lack of proper identity documentation and the influence of race on individual ability to find employment. According to statistics South Africa, poverty and unemployment in South Africa are critically high and are structural in nature (Naledi, 2009). The labour force survey, conducted in September 2007, found that the unemployment rate stood at 23% in the third quarter of 2007 (Bathandwa, 2008), making it difficult for every graduate to be employed.

Referring to the relationship between unemployment and race, Statistics South Africa (2009) indicates that the unemployment rate for different race groups in South Africa reveals great disparity and the African groups are viewed as groups that suffer<sup>4</sup> catastrophically high unemployment rates. Congolese refugee graduates, being part of the African groups, find themselves in a severely disadvantaged position both as a result of their race category (part of African groups) and identity (as refugees).

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<sup>4</sup> African groups in South Africa are made up of black people from different origins (ethnic groups and nationalities) living within the border of South Africa. These groups continue to suffer many disadvantages due to their race and remain vulnerable despite the end of apartheid. Congolese graduates, being part of the African groups and living as refugees in South Africa, share the same challenges as other African groups, but they are also partially denied access to certain benefits due to their origin and legal status.

Congolese graduate's difficult survival experience may also be linked to lack of proper identity documents and discrimination. The job market for refugees in South Africa is still perceived to be unfriendly and discriminatory. There is still resistance to many qualified refugees among them Congolese graduates (with tertiary or university qualifications) to access the job market as many employers, both from the public and private sectors, purposely request refugees to produce the South African green identity cards to be offered a job, and this poses a serious challenge on their ability to find better and high pay job.

Field of education/training is another factor and appears to be of the outmost importance to this study as it seems to be the single most important element that can determine Congolese refugees' chances of accessing employment in South Africa. According to Johnes (1993:184) "a major determinant of a student's success in the labour market is the subject or discipline which he/she studied". The question of fields of studies is very significant in this study because it is part of individual graduate career decisions; and efforts to secure livelihood and maximize survival chances and opportunities.

### **1.3. Rationale for the study**

The nature of socio-economic challenges and levels of vulnerability facing migrants in South Africa suggest the need to pursue formal education/training to facilitate their social integration, increase their economic opportunities and income levels and reduce their vulnerability. Refugees are among vulnerable people in South Africa. Their circumstances and their fate are not different from the majority of poor people in the country, yet their status as refugees exacerbates their circumstances. Life for many of the refugee population offers very few or no legal rights and extreme economic hardship (Sharmani, 2003). Kibread (1996) cited in Sharmani (2003:8) poignantly describes refugees in urban African countries as "what the eye refuses to see". "Most African countries that are host to large numbers of refugees purposefully isolate them or keep them in highly precarious legal and economic conditions so that they feel vulnerable and adopt feigned invisibility as a survival mechanism" (Sharmani, 2003:8). Given that refugees are at high risk of poverty and exclusion in the host countries, it is important that

strategies that they adopt to maintain their living contribute to the improvement of their well-being and facilitate their integration into the host society.

There has been some research done already on refugees, particularly on Congolese refugees that highlights their livelihood strategies and the kinds of challenges they are faced with in their daily lives whilst obtaining documents, looking for employment, starting up a business, interpreting and applying laws regarding refugees and the consequences of such actions in their daily lives. For instance, Baruti's study on Congolese livelihoods in Durban, discusses the kinds of livelihood strategies that they have adopted and their vulnerabilities (Baruti, 2005). The need to empower and integrate refugees into the wider South African society and into social program which would positively impact on their poverty level, have also been highlighted in Steinberg's research.

Congolese refugees represent the largest group among the refugee community in Durban (Baruti 2005). Many Congolese refugees in Durban have graduated in South Africa from different educational institutions. The dynamics of their relationships with the host society, the need to provide clarity as to how formal education and training impact on their livelihoods as well as factors that influence the successes and failures of this livelihood strategy and the impacts on their daily lives, make them an ever-more visible and significant group of people to be investigated in this research for several reasons:

First, this research attempts not only to understand the livelihood experiences of Congolese graduates in Durban, but also to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this livelihood strategy.

Second, the study's goal is to understand how education/training can impact on Congolese graduates' vulnerability; on their relationships with the host communities, and how it can improve their well-being.

Third, it assesses current policies, practices and legislation on refugees, and how different stakeholders' actions and attitudes hinder, or facilitate refugees' formal education/training to achieve desired outcomes.

Success of this livelihood strategy will be measured by its ability to reduce vulnerability, increase income level, to promote social participation and in the improvement of the well-being of Congolese graduates. Failure of this livelihood strategy will be determined by its inability to achieve the abovementioned outcomes.

#### **1.4. Objectives and research questions to be asked**

The purpose of this study was to examine the livelihood experiences of Congolese refugees' who have graduated in South Africa. The aim was to analyse formal education/training as a survival and coping mechanism. Different policies and processes regarding refugees and stakeholders' actions and attitudes were also investigated. The proposed specific outcome was first to investigate how formal education/training pursued by some Congolese refugees living in Durban can increase their income, reduce their vulnerability, facilitate their social participation and improve their well-being; and secondly to produce supportive policy recommendations.

##### **Specific objectives of the study:**

- To understand the livelihood experiences of Congolese refugees who have graduated from different institutions and fields of studies in South Africa; and
- To understand the constraints and opportunities existing in this livelihood Strategy

##### **The key questions**

1. What do the Congolese refugee graduates do to survive?
2. How do they cope with the different challenges that they face on a daily basis?
3. How do aid agencies and government policies, legislation and institutional practices hinder or help Congolese graduates to increase

their income, reduce their vulnerability, improve their well-being and integrate them into the South African society.

4. What fields and levels of education/training provide the best benefits and opportunities to Congolese graduates?

## **1.5. Research Design**

### **1.5.1. Research approach and Paradigms**

This study employed a qualitative research design utilizing a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach was specifically selected because it focuses on individual experiences (Bless, Higson-Smith, 1995).

### **1.5.2. Method of data collection**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected by the researcher through personal interviews. In-depth interviews were used to collect primary data. The questions for the in-depth interviews were in English and translated into the language that the interviewee understood well, which was French, Swahili or Lingala. The in-depth interviews lasted one hour and a half to two hours and were conducted in one or two visits at the agreed location between the researcher and the interviewee. Secondary data was collected from available documents and literature on livelihoods, refugees, and from the university library and other sources.

### **1.5.3. Sampling Method**

This study used a purposive sampling procedure. This sampling method allowed the researcher to choose a sample appropriate for the study. These were respondents with particular characteristics. Snowball sampling was also useful for this study as the researcher did not know all Congolese refugee graduates in Durban and where they resided. This sampling method allowed the researcher to recruit future subjects by asking the sample to recommend acquaintances that might have the specific information deemed useful for the study. Interviewees were selected from different main neighbourhoods in Durban where the largest number of Congolese graduates reside. That is Point Road and

Saint George's Street, Umbilo, Berea and Morningside areas. The unit of analysis was the individual. A total of 20 graduates was selected from different age groups, sex, legal status, field of study, level of education (qualifications) and economic activities or profession and the kinds of households they live in, that is households with a single family unit, or more than one family.

## **1.6. Structure of the dissertation**

### **Chapter 1**

The first chapter consists of an introduction to the study, the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, rationale of the study and the research design.

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter presents the literature review and the theoretical framework. The literature review focuses on the global refugee situation. It also looks at the phenomenon of Congolese refugees in South Africa in general and their livelihood strategies. Policy framework in the wider context is also analysed. The theoretical part focuses on the livelihood framework.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter introduces the research methodology used in this research and highlights the fact that this study uses the qualitative methodology as it seeks to provide an insight into and an understanding of what has so far been the impact of formal education/training on the livelihood strategy adopted by some Congolese refugees in Durban. The discussion then focuses on the research design and once more highlights why particular tools were chosen.

### **Chapter 4**

The Chapter presents the data collected. It starts by presenting the demographic structure, and then goes to present the socio-economic characteristics of respondents before and after undertaking formal education/training in South Africa.

## **Chapter 5**

This chapter discusses the data in the context of the framework introduced in chapter 2. It discusses respondents' own actions and the social, economic and policy context in which they forge their livelihoods. Existing opportunities and different challenges they face are also examined.

## **Chapter 6**

This chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations based on the analysis from chapter 5. It starts by discussing the livelihood outcomes presented at the beginning of this study and the public attitudes towards refugees. It further presents recommendations on policies, fields of studies and other mechanisms to support graduates informal-employment.

## **CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Studies on refugees' formal education/training in host countries have mainly focused on children and women. For this reason there can be little or no well-developed theoretical expositions or literature on adult refugees' formal education/training in their host countries. Moreover, there is no substantive qualitative and quantitative research that has so far been conducted on Congolese refugees who have undertaken formal education/training either in South Africa or in any other country outside the Democratic Republic of Congo. Likewise there are no studies on the outcomes of refugees' education/training.

This chapter seeks to present a review of literature with particular focus on central themes that form the core of this study. Formal education of refugees, the phenomenon of Congolese refugees in South Africa and the livelihood framework are discussed as forming the cornerstones of this research. This chapter also provides a brief framework for the discussion of the outcomes of the livelihood strategy. The reason for reviewing literature is to build a coherent theoretical framework.

The first part of this chapter discusses formal education of refugees and different policy frameworks supporting the survival and the education of refugees. It also looks at the phenomenon of Congolese refugees in South Africa and their livelihood strategies. The second part deals with the theory underpinning this research.

### **2.2. Formal education of refugees**

Education is defined as a process that provides an individual “appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be able to function optimally in society” (Grace Chiboko offorma, 2009:1). It is a process through which individuals are made productive members of society (Ocho 2005 cited in Offorma 2009:2). Education is received both informally and formally.

Formal education refers to a structured, systematic, and organised model of education; and administered according to a given set of laws and norms (Claudio Zaki Dib 1988:300). It corresponds to the education process normally adopted by schools, Colleges, technical colleges, Universities and Universities of technologies. In general, formal education is geared towards personal and professional growth of individuals.

Formal education is best understood as one of the strategies adopted by individuals or communities to enhance their livelihoods in the long term and promote their social and economic well-being. Okeke (1995:157) observed that “education is a sure pathway to the liberation of mind and the improvement of socio-economic status of people”. Education has been “viewed traditionally as a social leveller”, it is a survival strategy designed to provide individuals with the additional capacity to deal with social and economic barriers that have been created by other structures of society (1995:157), and that have kept them in position of poverty and vulnerability.

Education also plays a vital role in empowering people, including those that are vulnerable or marginalized in society. Studies over time have revealed that education is the most potent instrument for the emancipation of any group of people (Azikiwe, 1992; Ocholi, 1999; Unic, 2000; in Olakulein and Ojo 2006).

Focusing on the education of refugees, the right to Education Project (2009) stated that, “education for refugees... is important as it improves their resilience capacities, their sense of well-being, self-esteem and self-reliance... Education further provides refugees with knowledge of local realities and facilitates integration into the host society”.

An understanding of the role and importance of formal education and training amongst refugees can assist or motivate policy makers and other stakeholders to develop policies, processes or even environment that encourage and facilitate the education of refugees. It can also make them more sensitive to measures or to consequences of measures that restrict or undermine the educations of refugees, or prevent refugees from reaping the subsequent full benefits of education.

### **2.3. Policy framework**

Refugee policies arise from the legal and moral obligations incumbent upon open society by virtue of their membership of the international community (Suhrke and Zolberg in Berstein and Weiner, 1999). The most important refugee policies internationally that require some discussion in the context of this study and the principal legal documents defining refugees in international law, are the 1951 UN convention on the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol, the 1948 universal declaration of human right, and the 1969 convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa (Suhrke and Zolberg in Berstein and Weiner, 1999).

#### **2.3.1. The 1951 convention, the 1967 protocol and the 1969 convention relating to Refugees in Africa**

The 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol remain the principal international instruments benefiting refugees, and the definitions which they offer have been expressly adopted in a variety of regional arrangements (Goodwin-Gill 1983). The 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol define refugees and provide for certain standards of treatment to be accorded to them. According to this convention and protocol, ‘refugee’ is defined as any person who:

“Owing to a 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 to the protection of that country”.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has expanded the definition of refugee to include aspects of external aggressions, occupations and people fleeing conflicts in their country of origin:

According to the 1969 convention governing the specific aspects of the refugee problem in Africa, the term ‘refugee’ shall apply also to every person who, “owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole in his/her country of origin or

nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside of his country of origin or nationality”.

These international instruments aim generally to protect, promote and guarantee the survival opportunities and the rights of those identified by these instruments as refugees. Host countries’ policies however, are crucial in determining the extent to which refugees are able to exercise the rights granted to them through international instruments and their ability to pursue productive livelihoods in a particular manner (Bailey, 2004:15). Unlike many African Countries that forbid the employment of refugees, South Africa remains one of few exceptional cases in Africa “where policies allow refugees to legally take up employment” (2004:38). This may be primarily explained by its commitment to uphold international conventions and protocols and to the respect of human rights.

### **2.3.2. The Right to education of refugees**

The right to education of refugees and displaced people is also enshrined in different international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, the 1966 International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The convention relating to refugees (1951) states that, the contracting states shall accord refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to education. The convention further states, with respect to education other than elementary, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees is necessary.

The international Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) also states that, parties to the present convention recognize the right of every one to education. Furthermore the convention suggests that education shall enable the individual to participate effectively in a free society and shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom (International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966).

### **2.3.3. The South Africa Refugee Act (Act 130 of 1998)**

States which ratified international instruments take on responsibilities regarding status determination, incorporating refugee protection into their legislation, providing them identity documents and ensuring that refugees' human rights are protected and promoted (Parker, 2002). South Africa is a party to the 1948 universal declaration of human rights, the 1951 refugee convention, its 1967 protocol and the 1969 OAU convention regarding specific aspects of refugees in Africa (UNHCR, 2009), and has included refugee concerns in its policies and legislation. The South Africa refugees Act (Act 130 of 1998) remains the single legislation and the principal Act that seeks to promote and protect the rights of refugees in South Africa and stipulates that refugees have equal rights as citizens except the right to vote. This explicitly means that the Act recognizes that refugees should enjoy full legal protection, which includes the rights set out in chapter 2 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Goetz, 2003). Among the rights provided and which refugees shall enjoy in South Africa include among other things, the right to safety, health care, education and employment, shelter and the right to movement.

It is however important to indicate that, with respect to socio-economic inclusion of refugees, national and local government policies are unclear and contradictory. Although refugees have the legal right to stay in South Africa, and to continue to enjoy the benefit of many other rights, they are still denied access to certain government services and socio-economic benefits designed to improve their well-being. These benefits include access to financial services, access to social assistances and social housing, and access to equal employment opportunities.

### **2.4. The phenomenon of the Congolese refugees in South Africa**

The strong presence of foreign nationals in many parts of the Country is being seen as one of the defining features of the new democratic South Africa (Bernstein and Weiner 1999). Congolese refugees are parts of many foreign nationals whose presence in South Africa continues to be strongly felt due to their large number. Congolese refugees' migrations into South Africa have been motivated by different reasons since the early

1990. These reasons ranged from the political instability, the government inability to provide basic services and socio-economic opportunities; and to protect its people against foreign invasion and human rights violations.

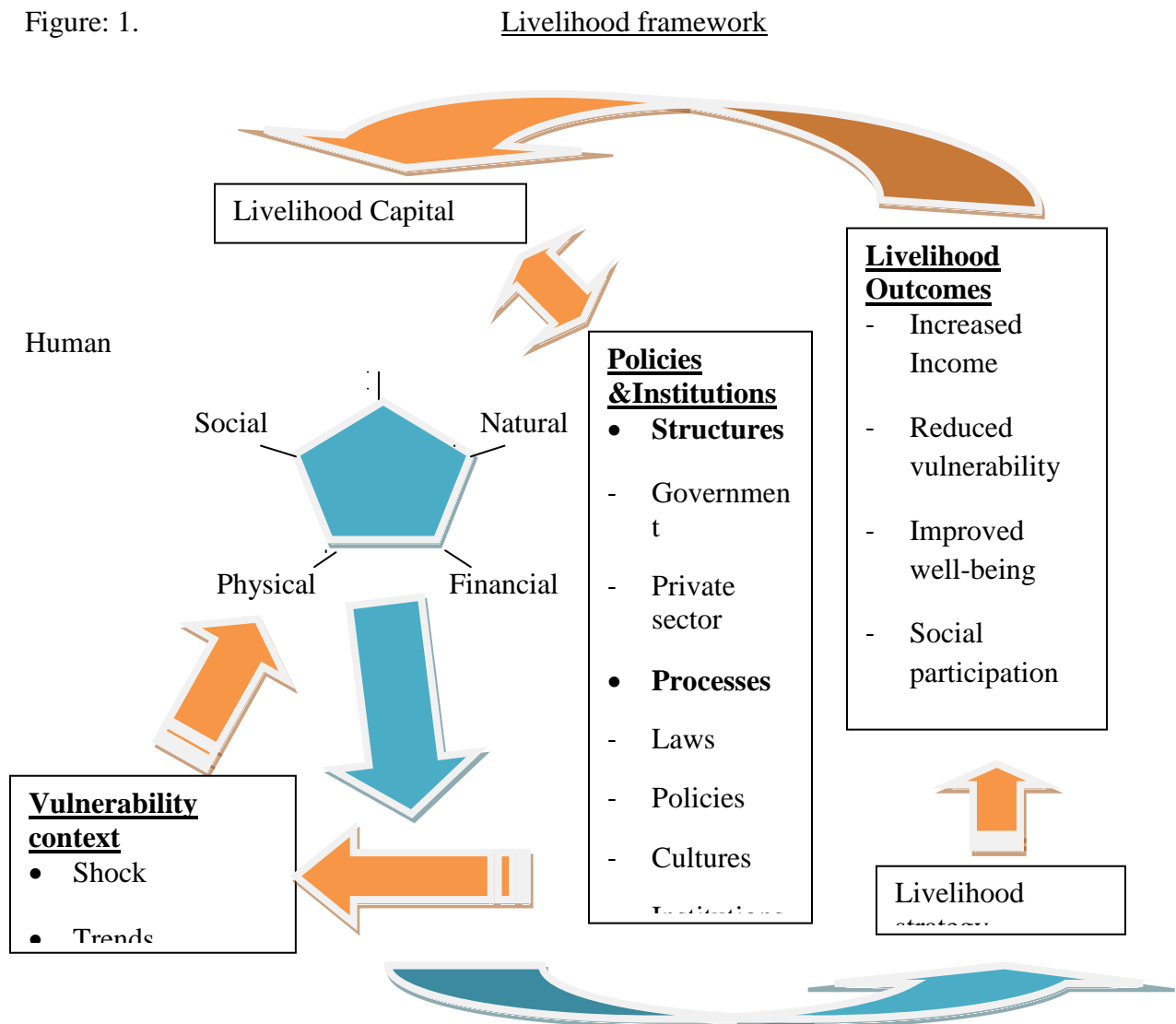
These reasons have explained different waves of Congolese migrations. The early 1990, experienced the first movement of Congolese into South Africa, and this was middle class flight, resulting from economic uncertainty, political instability and violence (Steinberg 2005). During this same period, Congolese migration was also motivated by the need to seek opportunities for employment and to study.

The second wave of Congolese migrants into South Africa began in 1996 and continued up to date. This wave is the result of the invasion by foreign troupes and the government's inability to protect individuals who live within the boundaries of the Democratic Republic of Congo against abuse and human right violations (Baruti 2005). Looking at the demographic profile of Congolese who migrated into South Africa, Steinberg (2005:26) suggests that "Congolese refugees in South Africa represent an influx of a solid block of valuable human capital". He also adds that "Congolese refugees in South Africa are extremely well educated, 47% have tertiary education and a further 33% have matric; 36% were students in the DRC, 20% were skilled professionals, and just 4% were unemployed" (2005:26).

An investigation on the livelihood experience of Congolese refugees in Durban reveals that, "86,9% of male respondents work in the informal economy in areas such as hairdressing, shoes making and repairs, repairing appliances or guarding cars" (Baruti, 2005:7). The investigation further indicates that there is a constant influx of Congolese refugees into the informal economy due to poor and non-marketable skills (2005:7).

## 2.5. The livelihood framework

Figure: 1.



This section focuses on livelihoods and the livelihoods framework and then discusses different capital assets by mainly focusing on assets that Congolese graduates draw upon to make a living in Durban. It also discusses the vulnerability context in which these assets exist, and the livelihood outcomes.

Livelihoods are defined as “the activities, means and entitlements by which individuals make a living” (Lawrence, 1998:65). The term livelihood is recognized to have no single meaning. There is however a consensus that livelihood is about “the ways and means of

making a living” (Chambers and Conway, 1991:5). It is also understood as “what is required in order to support life, and includes tangible assets to offset risks, ease shocks and meet contingency” (1991:5). In addition to this definition, Chambers and Conway suggest that, “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living” (1991:6). In other words, these definitions draw a link between the assets and capabilities at the disposal of an individual, his/her rights and entitlements and means or activities needed to survive.

The livelihood framework also examines the full sets of assets at a disposal of an individual or a community, and the factors that contribute to facilitate the success or the failure of an individual, community members or a particular livelihood strategy. It also contributes to the debates which help to map issues drawing out the relationships between people, assets and policy/institutional context (Serrat, 2009). The livelihood framework takes into account ways in which policies, institutions and processes influence the extent to which people mediate access to assets and the ability to forge their livelihoods (Karim Hussein, 2002:16). This framework implies a careful consideration and examination not only of assets at people’s disposal but also of the locally specific contexts in which they occur (Serrat 2009).

The livelihood framework further emphasizes the fact that the livelihoods of people are not restricted to one particular strategy or means to gain a living, but “describes evidence of the contribution of many others” (Chambers and Conway, 1991:9), such as agriculture, public works programmes, formal education and training, formal and informal economic activities and many more, to livelihoods, in terms of promoting participation, addressing societal inequality, exclusion, vulnerability and improving people’s income and well-being.

For the purpose of this research, the livelihood framework serves the following purposes:

- Providing the basis for analysing and understanding the complexity of Congolese graduates’ livelihoods in Durban; and

- Providing a trade-off between the livelihood strategy adopted (formal education/training), other assets at the disposal of Congolese graduates, the vulnerability context and the livelihood outcomes.

The following section deals with the analysis of different components of livelihoods and how they impact on Congolese graduates' livelihoods.

### **2.5.1. Capital assets analysis and outcomes**

The first objective of the livelihood framework is “to provide the analytic basis for livelihood analysis” (Carney 1998:9). At the core of the livelihood framework lies an analysis of the five different types of assets upon which individuals draw to build their livelihoods. These are capital assets which include natural capital, social capital, human capital, physical capital and financial capital. It is expected that the analysis of these different types of assets will provide a basis of understanding how and under what conditions assets do translate into livelihoods (1998:7).

For the sake of this study, four capital assets are discussed, namely human capital, social capital, financial capital and physical capital. The main reason for excluding natural capital in this analysis; is because, none of the Congolese graduates in Durban draw upon this capital asset to make a living.

#### **2.5.1.1. Human capital**

Human capital refers to “the skills and knowledge acquired to produce economic value. It is the skills and knowledge gained by an individual through education and work experience” (Sullivan, Urthur and Steven M. Sheffrin 2003:5). Smith (2009) suggests that “human capital can be acquired through formal schooling and on the job training”. For the purpose of this study, human capital is gained through formal education and training undertaken while being refugee in South Africa. The intrinsic values and outputs of human capital should be measured in order to determine its potential benefits. Human capital is primarily measured by the duration of education and the education level attained, or qualification one has achieved (Field, Schuller and Baron, 2000). The output of human capital according to Field, Schuller and Baron (2000), “is generally measured

in terms of enhanced income and the ability to enable individuals or workers to become productive member of society”.

This suggests a correlation between human capital which is translated in terms of level of education or training attained, and years of professional experience or lack of it; and the livelihood outcomes analysed in this study in terms of the level of earning, participation in society, vulnerability and individual well-being. This view of the outcomes of the formal education/training is supported by Becker (1993) who perceives human capital as the royal road to social and economic success. The human capital theory suggests a positive link between educational level and the earning of the individual. Johnes (1993:225) argues that “earnings are positively related to education levels attained by individuals”. Becker (1993) also stresses the fact that the earnings levels of more educated people are almost higher always well above average.

The notion of human capital based on simplistic straight forward linear models requires to be re-evaluated and challenged in this study by the recognition that more complex processes are at work, with multiple interactions between different social forces, and with the possibility that not all learning is individually or socially beneficial in a straight forward (Field, Schuller and Baron 2000)

There are researches on human capital that have revealed level of discrimination and exclusion in the labour markets impacting on the earnings of certain categories of people (Ullrich Boehm, 2000). Some of the research have identified graduates’ labour market characterized by sex discrimination and discrimination between various ethnic groups in the same country, and against foreign nationals. In America for instance, Johnes (1993:198) states that: “graduates of ethnic minorities suffer a somewhat higher incidence of unemployment than do white graduates”. This reality also applies to refugees in many of their host countries. Refugees are deliberately excluded from the labour market or denied equal access in the job market compared to national citizens despite their levels of educations and fields of studies.

Generally, the major determinant of a student's success in the labour market Worldwide is the subjects or disciplines which he/she studied. In many real cases, graduates employability is much more dependent on the labour market demand for particular subjects (Johnes, 1993:200), rather than upon their gender or countries of origin.

#### **2.5.1.2. Social capital**

The term social capital has many definitions. It is perceived as “anything that facilitates individual or collective action, generated by networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust, and social norms” (Coleman, 1998:107). Efforts to understand social capital have somehow pointed to ways in which it can facilitate livelihoods. Carney (1998:7), had defined social capital “as the social resources (networks, memberships of groups, relationships of trust, access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihood”. Social capital is also believed to be a valuable means of facilitating individuals' integration and participation in society, improving their livelihood opportunities, and living conditions and addressing many of the social and economic challenges affecting people and communities today, such as crime, xenophobia, social exclusion and unemployment. Social capital also can facilitate access to different socio-economic rights and contribute to individual empowerment. It can be used by individuals or communities to improve their survival chances, to access services, increase their competitiveness, reduce uncertainty and also empower them to deal with vulnerabilities and overcome discrimination (Baruti, 2005).

#### **2.5.1.3. Financial capital**

Financial capital might include savings and access to credit; and/or income earned directly through employment (formal, informal or self-employment), and indirectly through welfare grants, remittances or other forms of monetary aid. It refers “to cash or an equivalent that enables people to optimize the use of other forms of assets in pursuit of livelihood objectives” (DCD, 2004). Financial capital available to people is important as it provides them with different livelihood options. Translated into money, financial capital enables people to meet their daily needs; and improve the condition of their lives.

As a capital asset, money is vital to facilitate individual or family access to life necessities. Financial capital enables people to acquire necessary physical assets to positively affect their lives. For the majority of Congolese graduates who were previously in jobs believed to be menial, financial capital necessary to improve their lives is believed to be earned from employment resulting from formal education/training they have undertaken in South Africa.

#### **2.5.1.4. Physical capital**

Physical capital refers to basic infrastructures, services and equipment that are needed to support livelihoods. It includes basic infrastructure such as transport facilities, shelter, water, energy and communication; and production equipment and means which enable individual or community members to pursue their livelihoods in a certain manner. Access to most of these items of physical capital by Congolese graduates is obtained in exchange for financial capital. The level of financial capital at the disposal of Congolese graduates is the most important element that will determine the extent to which the physical capital necessary to affect their livelihoods will be accessed and its quality.

#### **2.5.2. The external context**

Apart from different capital assets around which livelihood framework is constructed, there is also a need to analyse and understand the context in which Congolese graduates pursue their livelihoods. Carney (1998) emphasises the need to understand the vulnerability context in which assets and different policies, institutions, processes which influence people's livelihood options exist.

##### **2.5.2.1. Vulnerability context**

The livelihoods of people or communities are influenced by the external environment in which they exist. This external environment is also known as the vulnerability context (Serrat, 2009:5). Chambers (cited in Neefjes 2000) sees "vulnerability as one aspect of deprivation, associated with income-poverty, powerlessness, and isolation". Chambers further states that, "vulnerable people are those who are more exposed to risks, shocks and stresses; and with the loss of physical assets and fewer and weaker social supports,

they have fewer means to cope without damaging loss”. The fragility of refugees resulting from lack of or minimal access to or control over the political; social and economic capital necessary to affect decisions impacting on their livelihoods, means that they are least able to cope with the negative impacts of these conditions.

Stresses and shocks are the two main “external aspects of vulnerability context” (IDS, 1998) which have bearing on Congolese graduates livelihoods in Durban. Conway 1987; Conway and Barbier 1990 cited in Chambers and Conway (1991:10) define stresses as “pressures which are typically continuous and cumulative, predictable and distressing”. The example of livelihood stresses among Congolese graduates might include unemployment, social exclusion, discrimination, denial of certain basic services and retrenchment. Shocks on the other side, are “impacts which are typically sudden, unpredictable, and traumatic” (1991:10). In this study, examples of shocks might include wars, persecution and civil violence, xenophobic attacks, illness, accidents, death of a family member and loss of assets through fire, theft, or other disasters; and retrenchment or the loss of job (Chambers and Conway, 1991).

#### **2.5.2.2. Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)**

All individuals and households live within, shape and are shaped by a set of informal or formal practices, norms and rules that constitute the institutional environment. Policies, institutions and processes “form the social and institutional context within which individuals construct and adapt their livelihoods” (DFID, 2000:11), and as a result can have a positive or negative impact on their livelihood. According to the FAO (2003:36), formal and informal policies, institutions and processes may enable or hinder people or community’s livelihood strategies, thereby generating or reducing vulnerability.

1. The term policy has many meanings. Policy is defined as sets of rules and institutional regulations” (Carney, 1998). Policy may also be guidelines and decisions that define or regulate ways in which institutions or organisations function. Policies include among others government’s laws (legislations) and programmes; and private companies and non-profit organisations’ policies.

Examples of policies which affect Congolese graduates livelihoods may include, the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Refugees Act, all other government's legislations and regulations such as, the housing policy, Affirmative Action Act, the Black Economic Empowerment Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the United Nations High commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) policies on refugees in South Africa, private companies policies and any other policy and regulation that have bearing on refugees livelihoods. Policy may have different impacts on people's livelihoods. It may influence people's livelihoods positively or negatively depending on the goal it is intending to achieve.

2. Institution may be a legislative or an executive body, or both. It may be a public or private organisation that sets and implements rules and regulations (Serrat, 2009). Institution performs functions that affect directly or indirectly people's livelihoods. The main functions of an institution may include among others setting up policies and executing those policies. In the present study example of institutions may include government agencies, political organisations, civil society bodies and private organisations or businesses that set policies, and execute them, or those that execute policies or decisions set by others institutions, and provide services that affect refugees' livelihoods.

3. Processes on the other hand are seen as the rules of the game; they are the decision-making processes, social norms, customs and practices which determine the way people and institutions behave and operate (Serrat, 2009). In this study processes describe institutional behaviour and actions towards Congolese graduates that affect their livelihood positively or negatively.

Policies, institutions and processes are recognised as very important factors in determining the success and failure of a particular livelihood strategy, as they influence the extent to which people mediate their access to resources and services and to different opportunities available to them (Karim Hussein, 2002:16).

### **2.5.3. Livelihood outcomes**

The livelihood outcomes are the end result that people aspires. They are achieved as a result of the livelihood strategies people have adopted. Potential livelihood outcomes can include improved land rights, food security, increased income, reduced vulnerability, improved well-being, protected right of access, recovered human dignity, social participation (Serrat, 2009).

The assumed livelihood outcomes in this study include:

1. **Increased incomes:** is the revenue received as a result of labour, services rendered or participation in a lucrative activity. It is the total sum of all the wages, salaries, profits, interest payments, dividend, remittances and other forms of earnings received in a given period of time. Increased income in this study is measured by comparing income earned before and/or while undertaking formal education and training; and the actual income earned after the completion of formal education/training.
2. **Reduced vulnerability:** vulnerability is the susceptibility that one has to physical and emotional injury or attack. This concept is mainly linked to the relation that people have with their social environments and to the institutions and different social or political forces that contest or support them.
3. **Social participation:** refers to people's social involvement and interaction with others (HRSDC, 2011). Social participation could be measured by individual involvement or participation in political and social activities. Activities such as volunteering, making donations, participating in sports, recreational activities, political parties and empowering community members are all forms of social participation. Social participation has many roles among them to improve individual and community well-being (HRSDC, 2011).
4. **Improved well-being:** the term well-being is closely used to describe individual welfare. It usually relates to happiness, success, safety, good and prosperity (Random House Thesaurus, 2000). Well-being is also strongly related to health followed by socio-economic factors. The term has always been associated with the quality of life of people or community. Some scholars believe that quality of

life can be measured by objective parameters. For example, the quality of life of urban people is sometimes measured by parameters such as employment possibilities, income levels, access to healthcare system, levels of education, housing types and condition, saving, access to transport facility, communications, nutrition and diet, and participation in social activities (Andres and Robinson, 1991). For the purpose of this study, both objective and subjective parameters were used to measure the quality of life of Congolese graduates, first with the view to understand whether formal education/training has achieved the desired outcomes, and secondly to test subjective appraisal made by the individual graduates resulting from their own life experiences.

In the context of this study, understanding livelihood outcomes is important because it will help to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of formal education/training in a particular context and a given period of time. It will help to understand the degree of success or failure of formal education/training; and guide whether other Congolese refugees should decide in the future to pursue formal education/training as an alternative and favourable survival and livelihood strategy in South Africa.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

The situation of refugees around the world and of Congolese refugees in South Africa, their survival realities and the different vulnerabilities they face on a daily basis has been widely researched. To promote the survival opportunities and protect refugees' basic human rights; international instruments were developed to guide national policies and institutional behaviour. Literature has also indicated that, the success of refugees' livelihood is rather dependent upon the level of implementation of national policies on refugees rather than on their survival strategy *per se*. Literature on the livelihood framework has provided the basis for the analysis and understanding of the survival experience and outcomes of Congolese graduates' formal education/training in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research and also provides details of the processes that were engaged in when the study was conducted. It begins by discussing the research method, and then it focuses on the research design, the methods of data collection, the sampling techniques and the data analysis. It finally discusses the ethical considerations and the limitations in research methodology and design.

### **3.2. Research Method**

This study used a qualitative method. This method was primarily used because this research attempts to study human actions and their outcomes. According to Mouton (2001:270) a qualitative method is “appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within the natural setting and which describes the actions of the research participants in great detail”. This method was also necessary for this study because of the timing. Mouton also indicated that a qualitative method is best suited to study events as they occur, rather than having to reconstruct them in retrospect (2001:271).

There are many advantages to using a qualitative method in this study, as it allows the researcher more flexibility; it is less restrictive and participants have the opportunity to expand further on their responses. By using the qualitative research method, the researcher was able to collect rich data and developed deeper insights into the area investigated, which is the livelihood experiences of Congolese graduates in Durban.

This research was conducted among Congolese refugees who have graduated in South Africa and are currently living in Durban. The aim of this study was to understand their livelihood experiences and challenges after completing formal education/training. The researcher chose the livelihood framework as the preferred approach for this research. Using this approach, different elements were considered to fully comprehend the outcomes of formal education/training undertaken by some Congolese refugees, and in

order to support or refute the hypothesis presented in this study that the survival of respondents in Durban is characterized by different sets of livelihood stresses and shocks, which include unemployment, low and lack of income, social exclusion, discrimination, denial of certain socio-economic rights, xenophobia and limited access to jobs and job mobility. Qualitative research can therefore encourage the researcher to adopt a holistic view of different factors that impact on the potential of formal education/training to achieve the desired outcomes.

Within this qualitative method, a phenomenological approach was specifically selected in order to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors themselves (Stan Lester, 1999:1). The phenomenological approach was utilized in this study to provide a deep understanding of how respondents themselves perceived their livelihood experiences and what they believed could be the main contributing factors to their situation. This approach was equally important as it has contributed to the understanding of the outcomes of formal education/training from respondents' own perspective.

### **3.3. Research design**

A research design is “a plan which describes how the researcher intends to conduct the research” (Mouton, 2001:74). It refers to the researcher's “overall plan as to how to obtain answers to the research questions and to test the hypothesis” (Polit & Hungler, 1999:225). A qualitative, exploratory and cross-sectional research design was used in this study because it was more flexible and a great deal of information and new insights could be gathered during the course of the research (Polit & Hungler, 1999:195).

#### **3.3.1. Exploratory study**

Exploratory research is conducted to investigate problems where there are few or no earlier studies to refer to. Mouton (2001:79) suggests that “exploratory research is typical when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new”. For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose to conduct an exploratory research because, although studies on refugees' formal education/training in host countries is not relatively new, very little or no research has been conducted on the

examination of the importance of formal education/training as survival and coping mechanisms adopted by Congolese refugees in host countries.

Mouton further indicated that, exploratory studies are conducted to “satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and the desire for better understanding and in particular cases, to develop new hypotheses about existing phenomenon” (2001:80). It is important to indicate here that exploratory studies, does not necessarily give specific satisfactory answers to research questions, though they may give broader insight into the issue investigated.

### **3.3.2. Cross-sectional study**

In cross-sectional research data is collected at one point in time and is analysed carefully (Mouton, 2001:92). This type of research is appropriate for describing the status of the phenomenon at a certain fixed point. In this study, the phenomenon of Congolese refugee graduates livelihood has been studied between the months of November, 2009 to March 2010. During this period different elements were analysed to understand the effectiveness of the livelihood capital at the disposal of Congolese graduates, which included their vulnerability, means of survival and life experiences.

### **3.4. Research population**

The research population is the “entire group of persons or unit of interest in a research study from which the sample is actually drawn” (Balian, 1988:167), which in this research would mean Congolese refugees who have graduated in South Africa’s educational institutions (Universities, Colleges, Universities of technology) and are currently living in Durban. The total number of these graduates remains however unknown.

The individuals who met the criteria in which the researcher was interested in studying were selected in this study. Individuals were selected from four main disciplines of studies which are: humanities and social sciences; economics and management studies; sciences and engineering; and technical studies. Within these major disciplines of studies, graduates were selected from different fields of studies which included

community development, public policy (politics), engineering, peace studies, gender studies, religion and theology, electronics, electricity, management, human resource management, economics and accounting.

The study population for this research was Congolese refugees who have completed at least a college, University or University of technology diploma or degree or a higher education and training qualification authority certificate and are currently living in different areas of Durban, Point road, Saint Georges Street, Berea and Musgrave Roads.

### **3.5. Sampling**

Since it is always difficult to study the whole population, researchers made use of a sample to select research subjects who would represent the whole research population. A sample<sup>5</sup> is therefore a “small, selected group from the population chosen to represent this population” (Balian, 1988:167) in a research study.

To obtain a sample of suitable Congolese refugee graduates for this study, the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling procedures within the non-probability sampling method to select 20 participants for this study. These sampling methods and procedures are discussed below.

#### **3.5.1. Sampling method**

The researcher used non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, “the selection of sampling units is arbitrary as researchers rely heavily on personal judgment” (Struwig & Stead, 2001:111). Within non-probability sampling, purposive sampling procedure was used. In purposive sampling, the researcher samples with a purpose in mind (William, 2006).

The researcher chose the sample based on appropriate subjects for this study. Purposeful sampling allowed for sampling across various disciplines and fields of studies; and

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<sup>5</sup>“The sample usually represents the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. A small number of people with specific characteristics or experiences can be selected to facilitate broad comparison between groups of people that the researcher thinks likely to be important” (Holloway 1997:30).

different areas in Durban. The researcher developed the criterion of selection, and then the sample was selected in accordance with it. The criteria of selection in this study were:

- Refugees currently living in Durban in one of the areas cited above;
- Those that have graduated at one of South Africa's higher education/training institutions;
- Those that have graduated in one of disciplines or fields of studies mentioned earlier; and
- Those willing to take part in the research

Further to this sampling procedure, the researcher also used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling procedure was useful for this study since the researcher did not know all Congolese refugee graduates in Durban and where they reside. According to Mouton (2001:167), snowball sampling is "appropriate when members of a research population are inaccessible or difficult to locate". This procedure was implemented by identifying members of the target population who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The researcher then asked them to recommend or provide information needed to locate other members from that population whom they happen to know and who met the criteria for selection. The samples selected by the researcher through purposive sampling recommended their acquaintances and other suitable members who met the criteria for inclusion in the study.

The advantage of using this sampling method is that it is suitable for an exploratory study such as this one, it is less expensive, and convenient when all the subjects of the study are unknown and widely dispersed. The disadvantage of using purposive sampling method is that it affects representativeness and potentially opens the door to inaccuracy in the researcher's criteria and resulting sample selections (Jacobs, 2010). Another disadvantage is that the researcher may unintentionally omit important features or may be sub-consciously biased in selecting the sample (Gray, 2009). Although the extent of sampling bias could not be estimated, suitable research participants were identified by closely following the selection criteria set above. For the purposes of this study, the sample was believed to be representative of the population from which it was selected because the

aggregate characteristics of the sample were closely approximate the same aggregate characteristics in the population.

The suitable research participants that were initially purposively selected and those referred to, were contacted telephonically by the researcher to participate in the study, and those who could not be reached by telephone were visited personally by the researcher to get their consent to participate in the study, and appointments to conduct the interview were then set up.

However, many setbacks were experienced when it came to setting up appointments with participants. The reasons being, the research participants appeared to be very busy with their daily chores, and the researcher was also very busy as well. At first the researcher was working in Manguzi area, in uMhlabayalingana district municipality, where the researcher could only come to Durban on week-ends. Setting up convenient times for both the researcher and participants became difficult, and this led to delays and postponement of appointments.

Despite the delays, all participants contacted were interested to participate in the study. Convenient times for interviews were finally allocated with each of the participants to suit their busy schedules. Participants were informed that their participation was not compulsory. The researcher also explained to participants their rights and responsibilities if they decided to participate in the study. The participants who agreed to participate in the study were requested to sign the informed consent forms.

### **3.5.2. Sample size**

Determining the sample size was another important factor that was considered. Marshall (1996) noted that, an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that attempt to answer to certain extent the research questions. Depending on the types of studies, for simple questions or very detailed studies, this might be in single figures; and for complex questions, large samples and a variety of sampling techniques might be necessary. Determining adequate sample size in qualitative research appears to ultimately be a matter of judgment in evaluating the quality of the information to be collected against the

use to which it will be put (Sandelowski, 1995). With these elements in mind, a sample size of twenty was agreed upon for this study to explore the importance of formal education/training among Congolese graduates in Durban. This sample size was selected across different disciplines and fields of studies to facilitate the comparison between different disciplines of studies and to develop a basic understanding of the importance of pursuing these fields of study. Gender was also another important element that was considered while selecting the sample though it was not representative.

### **3.6. Data collection method**

Qualitative data emerge from a wide spectrum of sources (Gray, 2009). One of the most commonly used sources utilised is field studies where the researcher enters a particular setting to gather data, often through the use of interviews. Interviews were selected as the primary method of data collection in this research.

#### **3.6.1. Interviews**

The interview is a “fundamental tool in qualitative research” (Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Seidam, 1998; cited in Bloomberg and Volpe, 2009). As a method of data collection, the interview is particularly useful for getting the story behind the participant’s experiences (MacNamara Carter, 1999). The interview was felt to be the most logical data collection method in this study because it has the potential to elicit rich descriptions of Congolese graduates’ livelihood experiences in Durban. Further it gives the researcher the opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). Kvale (1996) cited in Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) describes qualitative interview as an attempt to understand the subjects’ world view and to uncover the meaning of their lives’ experiences.

Cohen and Manion (2000) in Gray (2009) point out that the interview can serve a number distinct purpose. First, it can be used as a means of gathering information about a person’s knowledge, experiences and attitudes. Second, it can be used to test hypothesis. The most important advantages of the interview for this study are that it was a flexible method of data collection, and legitimate way to generate data through capturing the

meaning of participants' experiences in their own words. The interview was also best suited for the particular sample size of this study and for participants who are all university and college graduates. Although interviews have certain strengths, there are various limitations associated with interviewing. First, not all people are equally cooperative, articulate and perceptive (Gray, 2009). Secondly interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering; they are the result of the interaction between the interviewer, the interviewee and the context in which they take place (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Ruben & Rubin, 2005; Schwandt, 1997; cited in Gray (2009). Another disadvantage was that the interview method was time-consuming and costly as the researcher had to travel sometimes long distances from Manguzi in uMhlabayalingana district municipality to Durban, simply to interview a participant. The researcher interviewed participants himself and did not employ the use of other interviewers. The interviews took place in different places as agreed upon between the participant and the researcher. It was vital for the researcher to establish a cordial atmosphere so that participants could feel comfortable and feel free to speak openly. In this regard, the researcher already had a series of informal contacts, either physically or telephonically with the participants during the preparation phase which facilitated the establishment of good relationship and ensured that the interview was conversational. The research instrument used to collect data is discussed below.

### **3.6.2. Research instrument**

A semi-structured interview was used in this study. This approach to interviewing was appropriate because the researcher wanted to elicit specific information which could be compared and contrasted with information gained from other interviewees (Dawson, 2002). To do this the same questions were asked to each interviewee. However, the researcher also wanted the interview to remain flexible to enable the emergence of other important data (2002). The semi-structured interview allows for probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand on their answers (Gray, 2009). In this study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews constituted a rich and interesting source on information. As such, flexibility in the interview schedule suggested that the researcher was able to re-phrase questions where necessary and to probe further in order

to obtain more information. A semi-structured interview was designed in such a way that responses to key issues relating to the purpose of the research could easily be obtained. The researcher ensured that the interviews took place for approximately one hour and a half to two hours and where the interview could not be completed during that time, a new day for interview was set up. Interviews were conducted using a pre-planned and compiled interview schedule.

### **3.6.3. Interview schedule**

The researcher compiled interview schedules for semi-structured interviews. An interview schedule may be a list of specific questionnaires or a list of topics to be discussed during the interview (Dawson, 2002). An interview schedule was compiled to collect data required to achieve the objectives of the research. In this study, the researcher made use of a pre-planned and compiled interview schedule, which included open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions enabled the respondents to expand on their answers and to provide rich and valuable data for the study. The closed-ended question was designed to obtain from the respondents approximate information on income levels and year of arrival in South Africa.

To enable the researcher to collect data directly related to the research objectives, the researcher designed the interview schedule to include the following common categories of questions: participant's social background, field, level and name of educational institutions attended, different assets at the disposal of the respondent, reasons behind the decision to undertake formal education/training, previous and current means of survival, previous and current level of income, respondent's perception of the government policies on refugees and impacts on individual life, access to institutions, level of social participation, coping mechanisms and the impacts of education on one's life. The interview schedule was taken to each interview to ensure continuity. The interview schedule is included in appendix (1).

### **3.7. Analysis of data**

Data analysis is a continuous process linked to the various decisions made by the researcher during the research period (Marthinsen, 2007). It is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data collected (Nathoo, 1999), and it involves the development of themes, patterns and categories (Marlow, 1993). Interview responses were categorised by the researcher in terms of phases. Congolese graduates livelihood experiences in South Africa were divided into two phases, namely: pre-education phase, and the post-education phase, though the main focus in this research was on the second phase. The main and important content themes that emerged from data were first identified. Coding schemes were developed and then codes assigned to each category that described the data patterns. Interview responses which were related to the specific themes were then grouped together for analysis. The researcher constructed categories used to analyse data.

### **3.8. Ethical considerations**

In any social research, participants should be ensured of confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary participation. A social science researcher is responsible for both informing and protecting respondents (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). Although it was anticipated that no serious ethical threats were posed to any of the participants or their well-being, this study employed different means to protect and safeguard the rights of respondents. Care was therefore taken to ensure that the rights of all respondents were maintained. First, a voluntary consent form was explained and given to each participant. The purpose and objectives of the study were further explained to the participants. Secondly, participants were ensured that their names would be kept confidential and therefore would not be revealed in the research reports. Thirdly, precautionary measures were taken to ensure that research-related records and data, were properly secured and no one other than the researcher will have access to this data.

### **3.9. Limitations of the study**

This research contains certain limitations; some of which are related to the study's research design and to the qualitative research methodology that was used. The purposive

and snowball sampling techniques that were used and the size of sampling (twenty participants) made it difficult to determine how representative the sampling was, and therefore the capacity to generalise the results of the study has to be called in question. It must be noted however that, qualitative research is more concerned with the richness of data collected rather than the number of participants. These limitations were addressed by more probing and by obtaining rich descriptions as well as detailed information that was provided by participants.

The other limitation of the study was the issue of the researcher's subjectivity and potential bias resulting from the researcher's closeness to the study; first as a Congolese refugee in South Africa, and second as a graduate living in Durban. A related limitation was that interviewees may have the difficulty of adjusting to the researcher taking on the role of interviewer (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). Because some respondents knew the researcher, their responses may have been influenced or affected. Some respondents may have tried to cooperate with the researcher by offering him the responses they perceived he was seeking or which they perceived might be helpful to his study. These limitations were reduced by creating an environment that was conducive to honest and open dialogue, and not to include participants' names to avoid any association to any responses or data with any particular individual.

### **3.10. Summary**

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed description of this study's research methodology. A qualitative study methodology was employed to analyse the importance of different factors impacting positively and negatively on the effectiveness of formal education/training among Congolese refugees in South Africa.

The criteria which were applied to determine the research population and the sample were outlined. The method of obtaining the sample and the number of participants who took part in the research was discussed. The data collection was done by conducting interviews with Congolese refugees who have graduated in South Africa and who are currently living in Durban.

The chapter also discussed the limitations of the research design, methodology as well as the relationship of the researcher to the study.

Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the interview schedules and other data collected.

## **CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

One of the primary aims of this study was to understand the importance of formal education/training undertaken by some Congolese refugees in South Africa and what have been the outcomes.

The first chapter of this study presented the introduction to the study, and the structure of the study. The second chapter provided a review of literature with particular focus on central themes that form the core of this study. It also provided a brief theoretical framework. The third chapter described the methodology that was used in the research and provided the processes that were engaged in when the study was conducted.

Education/training has become a major component supporting the livelihood of many refugees in their host countries. It does not only provide them with knowledge and skills, but can also facilitate their socio-economic integration and increase their capacity to deal with their vulnerabilities and challenges that they face on a daily basis.

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It starts by presenting the demographic structure, and then presents the socio-economic characteristics of respondents before and after undertaking formal education/training in South Africa.

### **4.2. Demographic profile of respondents**

The demographic profile of respondents was categorised into gender, age, year of arrival in South Africa, marital status, family sizes, previous and present education/training and area of residence in Durban. Due to the nature of the research, the total sample consisted of 20 respondents, from different age groups, fields and levels of education/training, and areas of residence in Durban.

#### **4.2.1. Gender of respondents**

The gender ratio is very disproportionate amongst respondents. 18 out of the 20 respondents were male and only 2 were female. The sample of this study is not

representative of the Congolese graduates. An attempt was made to ensure female graduates participate in the study. Results from the study reflect the difference in choices of livelihood strategies between male and female Congolese refugees in South Africa. This result further indicates the difference in the socio-economic role they play and the place they occupy in the Congolese refugee's community in Durban. Baruti's (2005) study on Congolese refugees' livelihood in Durban, suggests that many Congolese women do unpaid housework and look after children, while the majority of the male population are involved in some form of economic activities.

Three possible reasons can explain this significant unequal gender representation among respondents and these can also be seen as factors that mitigate against female participating in this research. First, there is inequality in the number between male and female Congolese refugees in Durban. According to Sabet-Sharghi (2000) in Baruti (2005), there were more male than female Congolese refugees in Durban. The second explanation could be related to the expectation of the role of man as bread-winner that prevails in Congolese communities, leading males to further their education/training to be able to provide for their families, while women do housework. The third possible explanation relates to constraints imposed on potential candidates who take the risks of registering in higher education/training without any available and secured sources of funding or means of support while studying.

#### **4.2.2. Age groups of respondents**

The majority of respondents were between 26 and 45 years old. This showed that the majority of respondents are in their prime working age and are still economically productive. This could explain their motives to further their education/training.

#### 4.2.3. Year of arrival and starting formal education/training in South Africa

Table 1: Year of arrival and commencing education/training in South Africa

|  | <b>Between 1995-2000</b> | <b>Between 2001-2005</b> | <b>Total by year of starting education/training in South Africa</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Between 0-2 years                        | 5                        | 5                        | 10  |
| Between 3-5 years                        | 3                        | 3                        | 6   |
| Over 5 years                             | 4                        |                          | 4   |
| Total by year of arrival in South Africa | <b>12</b>                | <b>8</b>                 | <b>20</b>   |

Table 1 shows the number of respondents that arrived in South Africa between 1995 and 2000 and those who arrived between 2001 and 2005. This table further shows the number of years that respondents spent in South Africa before starting formal education.

Comparing the year of arrival in the country to the period of commencing formal education/training, this study revealed that among respondents who arrived in South Africa between 1995 and 2000, the majority (7 out of 12) started formal education/training after three years of stay in the country, compared to (5 out of 12) who started formal education/training between zero to two years of staying in South Africa. Among those who arrived in the country between 2001 and 2005, the majority (5 out of 8) spent between one to two years before commencing education/training in the country; and only (3 out of 8) started education/training after 3 years of stay in the country.

This study therefore reveals that respondents who arrived in the country until the year 2000 had a longer stay, on average over four years before starting formal education/training; compared to those who arrived after the year 2000, who spent an average of one year and five months in the country before they started formal education/training. The short period of stay for respondents who arrived in South Africa after the year 2000 could be explained by the fact that, since the adoption of the refugees Act 130 of 1998 which gave refugees the rights to different benefits, which include the right to education and access to education financial assistance, many refugees have benefited from financial aid allowing them to further their education.

#### **4.2.4. Marital status and family size**

As far as the marital status of respondents is concerned, the majority were married. This study indicates that more than half of respondents were married and were all living with their spouses; while some have never been married, and a few were divorced. Among the respondents who are married, 8 are married to Congolese women, and 3 to women from other nationalities, which included South Africans and Rwandan women.

The family sizes of respondents ranged between 1 and 7 members. This study shows that the majority of respondents (11 out of 20) have a family size of more than one member. 4 respondents had a family size of 2 members; 6 had family sizes of between 3 and 5 members; and only 1 respondent had the family of 7 members. Unmarried and divorced respondents, 9 out of 20 respondents, had family sizes of one member. The majority of unmarried respondents live either alone or share a room or flat with friends.

#### **4.2.5. Area of residence in Durban**

All the respondents in this study live in different areas in and around the Durban central business district (Durban CBD). The majority of respondents (11 out of 20) live in Durban central, which means 3 in Saint George Street area, 5 around the workshop area and 3 in the Point road area. The remaining (9 out of 20); live outside the central business district respectively in Berea 3 respondents, 3 in Umbilo, 2 in Musgrave and 1 in the halls of residence at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The respondents lived in central Durban upon their arrival in Durban. Their move out of central Durban could be attributed to the need to live in better accommodation and in a safer environment.

#### **4.2.6. Previous education, means of survival and income**

This section focuses on the level of education that respondents had upon their arrival in South Africa, the survival strategies they adopted as well as their income levels before commencing formal education/training. According to Baruti (2005), previous education matters in income generating activities and strongly impacts on household monthly income. All the respondents in this study had completed at least high school in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Out of 20 respondents, 13 had matric level equivalent qualifications upon their arrival in South Africa, 5 had in addition to that, the equivalent

of the bachelor degree, and 2 had honours degrees. Most of the respondents in the study had different means of survival before commencing formal education/training. Respondents' means of survival were categorised between formal, informal means, and they were also those who were unemployed. The majority 12 out of 20 were formally employed. Among them, 8 respondents were working as security guards, 1 as a shop assistant, 1 as a translator, 1 as an electrician, and 1 as a public relations officer. 7 respondents were in the informal sector, 3 as car guards; 2 barbers; 1 electronic repairer; and 1 street hawker. There was also one unemployed respondent who depended on family financial supports to survive. This study confirms previous studies on Congolese refugees in South Africa which suggested that the majority depends on menial jobs to survive (Steinberg, 2005).

The correlation between means of survival and income was also important in this study. This study indicated that the majority of respondents (13 out of 20) had an income of less than R2000 per month before undertaking formal education/training in South Africa. 4 out of 20 respondents had an income of less than R1000 per month, and 9 had an income of between R1000 and R2000. 6 out of 20 respondents had an income ranging between R2001 and R2500; and only 1 respondent had an income of between R3500 and R5000 per month and that was the highest income category. This study further confirms previous studies on Congolese refugees' livelihoods and incomes in South Africa which suggested that the majority make less than R2000 per month.

#### **4.2.7. Formal education/training in South Africa**

Motivations behind respondents' decisions to further their studies in South Africa; fields of education pursued and levels attained are discussed in this section.

## **Why did you decide to undertake formal education/training in this country?**

### **4.2.7.1. Socio-economic reasons<sup>6</sup>**

In response to this question, it was clear that respondents had different reasons/motives behind their decision to further their education/training in South Africa. Their responses included increasing their chances of becoming employed in South Africa by obtaining education qualifications that will be recognised, to improving their educational levels and employment status; and increasing their income levels.

#### **§ Obtain education qualification that will be recognised**

The concern of not recognising certain education qualifications obtained outside South Africa was raised by respondents as one of the causes that motivated them to further their education/training in South Africa.

*“I wanted to have a new qualification since the one I obtained in the DRC was not recognised here, as a result I had to work as car guard first, and then as a security guard..” (Respondent 9)*

*“I decided to study here because I thought it will change my life and improve my status, since with the qualification I obtained back home, it was very difficult to get the job here because it was downplayed by economic actors, acquiring the qualification here was like getting a passport to get the job in this country”.* (Respondent 6)

Previous research on the livelihoods of refugees in South Africa have documented the fact that some foreign qualifications are not recognised by employers, posing a challenge to those who graduated in their homelands to find graduate employment, and this affected their livelihood and chances to be economically and socially integrated into South African society. Jacobsen and Bailey (in Landau 2003) suggest that skilled professionals are often unable to work in the formal sector because they cannot acquire the necessary certification to work in South Africa or employers simply do not recognise their foreign qualifications. Failure to recognise foreign qualifications was also seen in this study as one of the factors that led many refugees to do menial jobs.

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<sup>6</sup> Socio-economic reasons provide motivations to further education/training in South Africa with the view to improve one's socio-economic participation/conditions.

## **§ Employability**

*“I decided to further my studies because I needed to obtain a qualification that would allow me to become employable, because I knew the more educated I can become, higher will be the chances that I can be employed. I also thought it would be a way of opening doors of opportunities for me like getting a job and earning an honest and decent income”.* (Respondent No.15)

The respondents in this study associated obtaining further education qualifications with increasing their chances of becoming employed. Literature documents the link between higher education qualifications and increased chances of becoming employed. However the issue of higher education and employability of graduates continues to raise many questions in South Africa, not only when it comes to refugees.

Yorke (2006) related employability to a graduate’s achievement and his/her potential to obtain a graduate job. This view corroborates the findings by Castel, Phiri and Stampini (2010), who found that the higher the educational qualification one has, the greater the probability of holding a regular wage-earning job. The correlation between attaining a higher qualification and increased possibility to become employable should not necessarily be confused with the actual getting of employment, which could be subject to many different factors, including the state of the economy, the field of study undertaken, the level of work experience and the country’s or employment policy.

## **§ Increased income**

Education/training was identified by some respondents as a strategy that would allow them to access the types of employment that would improve their earning capacity. Some respondents defended their decision in these terms:

*“My main reason was to get an education qualification that I can use to get a better paying job because I felt that the security job was not paying me well”.* (Respondent 4)

*“The money that I was making was too little so I knew I could increase my earning if I could go and study further”* (Respondent 2)

From these responses, it was clear that formal education/training was pursued in order to increase the income levels through obtaining higher education qualifications and better paying jobs. The correlation between improved education and increased income has been

widely researched. Lazear (1997) suggests that education is productive and impacts positively on individual's earning capacity. This link is further explained in human capital theory, which states that earnings are positively related to educational attainment. This means the more educated the person becomes; the higher the income he/she will earn.

### **§ A secure and long-lasting form of investment**

Education/training was further viewed by respondents as a secure form of investment compared to the types of economic activities they were previously involved in that could not provide them with any sustainable, meaningful and secure returns:

*"I tried different jobs in the past but they were not secured, they were finishing any time then I had to stay for sometimes without income and I could not get any meaningful return in those jobs, so I decided to invest in education which I believed would be a lifetime investment and the return would last and guarantee me a bright future".(Respondent No. 20)*

It is important to state in this study that investing in education/training provides different benefits with the prospect of guaranteeing an individual's future, increasing one's ability to overcome obstacles and to participate in society. Among these benefits, as mentioned earlier, was enhancing individual's income and increasing the likelihood of becoming and staying employed. Other benefits include increasing the possibility of graduates reporting their health as being good or excellent. Indeed benefits of investing in education/training are not only enjoyed by graduates themselves; the society also receives a share from those benefits. It is important to say that, graduates are more likely to participate voluntarily in community-building efforts and are less likely to receive government social assistance, which is given to needy people or contribute to social upliftment.

### **§ Easiness to attend tertiary education**

The passing of the Refugee Act (Act 130 of 1998) brought many different benefits to refugees. The Act guarantees refugees amongst others, the right to access education and other forms of education assistance. This has permitted many refugees to take advantage of some of these benefits which they could not get in their home countries and use productively.

*"I was very eager to pursue tertiary education here since it was not easy in the DRC due to the situation that was prevailing there. I found things manageable here and education is also accessible to everyone including refugees. Apart from that, I realised there was a possibility of accessing education financial assistance. (Respondent No. 11)*

### **§ To have additional educational qualification upon return home**

*"I am certain that one day I will go back home, so I needed an educational qualification that would allow me to continue to be productive back home and use my skill in the reconstruction of my country". (Respondent 10)*

It is interesting to note that education/training is not only undertaken to facilitate survival and integration in South Africa but rather, it is also pursued to prepare for any eventual return back home to the DRC where they hoped to continue to be productive. It is well documented that education can provide refugees with necessary skills needed for sustainable return and to make the move back home a more viable option. Morlang 2007 cited in Morlang and Stolte (2007 ) suggests that refugees who have received university education have both the skills and the entrepreneurial willingness to return back home early, and to contribute to the reconstruction of their countries. Referring to Afghan refugees, Morlang and Stolte (2007) stated that refugees with tertiary qualifications can directly contribute towards the reconstruction in a country that still struggles with protracted conflicts.

#### **4.2.7.2. Programme, fields and levels of education**

The respondents who graduated in different fields of study and programmes were broadly classified (categorised) into four major disciplines: 7 in humanities and social sciences which comprised programmes such as: theology and social transformation, community development, public policy, and gender studies. Another 7 graduated in economics and management that involved programmes such as: management studies, accounting, economics and human resources management, while 3 graduated in sciences and engineering and were divided between chemical engineering, electronics, and microbiology.3 other respondents had graduated in technical studies in electricity.

It is also interesting to note that the majority of respondents (15 out of 20) completed their studies at universities in disciplines such as humanities and social sciences (7 respondents); economics and management (7 respondents) and engineering (1 respondent). The remaining (5 out of 20 respondents), have graduated respectively at universities of technology and technical colleges (2 and 3 respondents).

It is important to highlight the fact that respondents have acquired different educational qualification levels in South Africa. 3 respondents are holders of master's degrees, 3 are PhD candidates, 4 have honours degrees, 2 have post graduates diplomas. 3 respondents hold bachelor's degrees; 1 has a bachelor of technology degree, another 1 completed the National diploma level and 3 others completed their national technical certificate level at technical colleges.

### **4.3. Socio-economic characteristics**

#### **4.3.1. Legal status**

All the respondents in the study have legal residence in South Africa. 18 out of 20 respondents have refugee status, and the other 2 have recently become permanent residents. For those legally recognised refugees with the refugee status, the Refugee Act (Act 130 of 1998), gives them legal entitlement and a right to all benefits accorded to citizens, which include the right to freedom, safety, education, employment, and freedom of choice of employment, yet in reality some of these rights continue to be denied to refugees.

The Immigration Act (Act no.13 of 2002) which regulates the rights and obligations of individuals who have been accorded permanent residence in South Africa stipulates in its section 25 that, the holder of a permanent residence permit has all the rights, privileges, duties and obligation of a citizen, save for those rights, privileges, duties and obligations which a law or the constitution explicitly ascribes to citizenship. From this Act, it is worth mentioning that respondents who have become holders of permanent residence have received additional benefits and are considered to have the same rights as citizens or anyone who has acquired citizenship in South Africa.

### **4.3.2. Employment status and types**

This section shows the employment status of respondents and is divided between formal employment (12); informal employment (2); and unemployment (6 respondents).

#### **4.3.2.1. Formal employment types**

More than half of the respondents are formally employed in Durban and engaged in different economic activities. 2 respondents are currently working as lecturers (respectively at a university and at a university of technology) and another respondent works as an electricity instructor at a technical college. 1 respondent works as a receptionist and another 1 is a tutor; 1 respondent works as water treatment and development chemistry officer, another respondent continues to work as a security guard. 1 respondent works as an assistant accountant; 1 is a researcher; other 2 are electricians; and another is a microbiologist.

This study further indicates that, out of 12 respondents who are currently in formal employments, 10 are doing jobs that are related to their fields of study. The other 2 are not. These respondents include one security officer and one hotel receptionist. It is also important to indicate that, the majority of formally employed respondents work in the private sector of the economy, except for those who are university lecturers.

#### **4.3.2.2. Informal employment**

This study further indicates that only 2 respondents are currently in the informal sector of the economy selling goods and cutting hair.

#### **4.3.2.3. Unemployment**

There is a relatively high rate of unemployment among respondents. 6 respondents reported to be unemployed despite having South African educational qualifications.

### 4.3.3. Relationship between education and employment

Table 2: Employment status by fields of education

|                                   | <b>Formally employed</b> | <b>Informally employed</b> | <b>Unemployed</b> | <b>Total by fields of education</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Humanities and social sciences    | 4                        | 1                          | 2                 | <b>7</b>                            |
| Economics and management          | 2                        | 1                          | 4                 | <b>7</b>                            |
| Engineering and sciences          | 3                        | -                          | -                 | <b>3</b>                            |
| Technical studies                 | 3                        | -                          | -                 | <b>3</b>                            |
| <b>Total by employment status</b> | <b>12</b>                | <b>2</b>                   | <b>6</b>          | <b>20</b>                           |

It is also crucial to understand the causal link between the formal education/training and employment status of respondents. Looking at the composition of respondents' employment status by fields of studies, the table above shows that 7 respondents graduated in humanities and social sciences; among them four are formally employed, 1 is in the informal economic activity and other 2 respondents are still unemployed. For respondents who graduated in economics and management, out of 7 respondents; 4 are unemployed; 2 work in the formal sector and only one is in informal sector. It is however interesting to note that, respondents who graduated in sciences and engineering and those who graduated in technical studies, are all employed (6 out of 6 respectively).

These findings suggest that respondents who graduated in humanities and social sciences; and in economics and management were less successful in finding employment in South Africa compared to those who graduated in engineering, sciences and technical studies where every respondent is formally employed.

### 4.3.4. Income level

The in-depth interviews revealed that 6 of the respondents have no income deriving from any economic activity and their survival depends on financial support or remittances they receive from family members, friends and networks they developed in Durban. 1 had an income of between 1000 and 2000; 2 respondents had an income of between 2001 and 2500 per month, 2 of the respondents had an income of between 2501 and 3500; and other 2 between 3501 and 5000. One respondent had an income of between 5001 and 7500 and another one between 7501 and 10000 and 5 had incomes of 10001 and above.

#### **4.3.5. Individual and household diverse income sources and social support**

It is worth mentioning that the survival of many respondents' households (14 out of 20), is mainly dependent on incomes generated from diverse activities and social support capabilities. The findings of this study have indicated that the majority of respondents' households have constructed their survival on diverse sources of incomes, which included additional incomes from informal economic activities, financial assistances received, remittances and incomes generated by their spouses' economic activities. There is a wide range of evidence to suggest that the more diverse the income portfolio the better off the individual household (Frank Ellis, 1999).

##### **4.3.5.1. Secondary economic activities**

The secondary economic activities provide supplementary incomes to respondents and their households thus permitting them to meet additional needs. This study shows that only 4 respondents have additional economic activities which provide them with supplementary income. Among these respondents one owns a hair salon/barber shop; another one does piece jobs at the weekends; the third respondent is a transnational car dealer. The mean incomes of these three respondents range between R1000 and R3000 per month. The fourth respondent conducts a private consulting business in his spare time, which provides him with an additional income. The monthly income was however not provided since it varied depending on business opportunities found in a particular month.

##### **4.3.5.2. Financial assistance**

Only one respondent admitted to receiving financial assistance from the Muslim Brotherhood, and this allows him to provide for some of his basic needs since he is unemployed. The other 2 respondents receive assistance from friends and relatives living in South Africa.

#### **4.3.5.3. Remittances**

3 out of 20 respondents receive remittances from their direct relatives living outside South Africa. All these respondents complained about the irregular nature of remittances they receive which makes it difficult to rely on this source to survive; instead they tend to view it as an additional source of income to supplement income generated from their main economic activities.

*“I receive it (remittance) irregularly, sometimes they (brothers) send it and other times they don’t send, so I cannot really depend on it to survive in this country, but it helps me when it comes because I have another small income from my work, adding with remittance at least it helps...it (remittance) used to be regular when I first started studying but now no”. (Respondent No. 11)*

#### **4.3.5.4. Spouse’s income**

The majority of married respondents (6 out of 11) have spouses who are economically active and are involved in some form of economic activity. These spouses provide additional and regular income to the household. Amongst the 6 spouses, 4 are formally employed and among them 3 have incomes ranging between R3000 and R7000 per month; and only one has an income of about R1500. The other 2 respondents’ spouses are self-employed and have incomes ranging between R1500 and R2000 per month.

#### **4.3.5.5. Social network**

This study reveals that the majority of respondents have developed some form of social network in Durban while a few reported not to have any. Respondents mainly network socially with other Congolese refugees.

*“As you know the Congolese community functions in terms of tribal and regional social networks, and as a member of the community, we usually assist each other in sickness, and when one has a housing problem you get sheltered by someone”. (Respondent 8)*

Education/training has widened respondents’ social network outside the Congolese community. Some respondents currently network with colleagues from school or work, and have also managed to develop friendships with people from other nationalities and races outside the Congolese community.

*“I have a wide social network; I have friends from school and colleagues from work (professionals) of all nationalities, cultures and races”. (Respondent 9)*

*"I have so many friends and connections from school and church and everywhere and from different nationalities including South Africans".*

*(Respondent 15)*

The majority of respondents admitted to have developed networks with their fellow church members or people who share the same religion or beliefs with them.

*"We also have a Muslim brotherhood that we use to network. I rely on them (fellow Muslim brothers) and they provide help in difficult times, I also receive some financial assistance from them when needed".*

*(Respondent 8)*

It is however important to note that the majority of respondents believe that the nature of networks they have developed inside and outside the Congolese community do not contribute in a very meaningful way to their livelihoods in Durban. Some respondents have even referred to these networks as unproductive by saying that:

*"Yes but they are not productive, I relate to many people, those at my work place, even with my fellow church members, I can call these networks, but they are not productive at all..."*

*(Respondent no. 14)*

#### **4.3.6. Housing and housing types**

This study shows that all respondents (100%) live in rented accommodation around Durban. 17 out of 20 respondents live in flats and among the rest, one lives in the university halls of residence, the other two rent houses. Respondents' accommodation ranges from single-roomed flats to 3 bed-roomed houses. The number of occupants is between 1 and 9 people in a single accommodation. Some respondents have developed creative housing arrangements in order to house themselves and their family members. Out of 11 married respondents, the majority of them (8) live in households with one family unit and the remaining (3 out of 11 married) live in households with more than one family unit. Single respondents (9 out of 20), either share accommodation or live alone. The majority of single respondents (6), share accommodations with their relatives or friends who are mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and only 3 live alone in single room apartments or occupy a room in an apartment shared with other people.

#### **4.3.7. Health care: needs and strategies**

No specific or common health needs or concerns have been raised by respondents. Though the majority (18 out of 20) have indicated that they have received health care services once or more times since they arrived in South Africa. Only 2 respondents stated that they have never fallen sick since their arrival. Among respondents who have received medical attention, the majority indicated that they used public health care services. This may be explained by the fact that, public health care services are easily accessible to everyone including refugees and they are affordable and sometimes free of charge. Some respondents also indicated that they use both public and private health care services depending on the type of sickness they have, and the quality of services they need to receive in that particular time.

*“I use both private and public health services; this is depending on the services that I need that time. When there is no emergency I prefer going to a public hospital or clinic because it is cheaper, but when there is an emergency or I need a specialist’s attention, I go to private because it is quick”. (Respondent 9)*

The duration of sickness is another element influencing the decision to use either private or public health care services, not only because of the quality of services needed but also the cost involved:

*“I use private health care services, but in cases of persistent ailment I go to public hospital because I cannot afford the cost at private hospital for a long time”. (Respondent 12)*

The cost involved in serious and persistent sickness sometimes leads to using cheaper or affordable public health care services, especially if one has no medical aid services.

The remaining 2 respondents indicated that; since they were employed, they use private health care services, because they have medical aid services which cover the costs of any types of health care services they might need.

#### **4.3.8. Access to transport: Needs and resources**

Access to transport is one of the most important needs every one requires to survive in an urban area. The findings of the study reveal that all the respondents have access to transport services to facilitate their movements. This study further shows that most of the

respondents use public transport which is accessible to everyone and also affordable compared to a few who own private vehicles. The ability to own a private vehicle is mainly dependent on an individual's income. Respondents owning private vehicles are among those who earn an income of above 10001.

#### **4.3.9. Access to institutions and services**

All the respondents in this study reported that they have access to both private and public institutions. The majority of respondents (16) indicated that they have never been denied access to any institution. Only 4 indicated that they have both positive and negative experiences when it comes to accessing services in some institutions.

The respondents were of the view that different factors play different roles in influencing their access to institutions and to the quality of services they receive. Access to and quality of services received varied from one institution to another and on factors such as meeting institutional policies and culture; and individuals' attitudes play greater roles too:

*"My experience with regards to accessing services in this country is both positive and negative. It is positive because I have had many cases where I went to seek services and I was assisted correctly to my satisfaction; but it was also negative because in some institutions I was denied access to services simply because I am not a South African and in others because I could not produce the required identity documentation". (Respondent 10)*

It is important to note that, the respondents attend institutions that provide services believed to be essential (for their survival, safety, health, integration) and/or facilitating their survival in this country. These are institutions such as the police service, banks, religious institutions (churches), education institutions, healthcare facilities, Department of home affairs, and privates companies that mainly offer employment. The majority of the respondents further indicated that they have easy access and have often received services to their satisfactions at institutions such as the Department of Home Affairs, police stations, clinics or hospitals and at some banks.

#### **4.3.10. Family income contributions and distribution**

The family income<sup>7</sup> contribution was deduced by calculating the relative contribution to family income that was made by various incomes-generating activities and sources of income of a family. The family income was calculated by adding up the declared mean monthly cash contribution of family members in a month. The monthly cash contribution included income generated from different economic activities undertaken by family members (such as income from formal and informal economic activities). It also included financial assistance received and remittances from outside South Africa.

The resource distribution in this study was calculated by dividing the mean family monthly income by the number of family members. The family size was crucial in this study since it strongly influenced the family income distribution and resource sharing.

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<sup>7</sup> Amongst respondents, family incomes are shared by all family members. These incomes are mainly used to provide for basic life necessities such as food, accommodation, clothing and transport to facilitate livelihood.

## CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION OF DATA COLLECTED

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from the interviews that enquired into the livelihoods of the respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted with Congolese refugees who have graduated from South African education/training institutions and who are currently living in Durban. This chapter further seeks to discuss respondents' own actions and the social, economic and policy context in which they forge their livelihoods. Existing opportunities and different challenges they face are also examined.

This study is not representative of all Congolese who graduated in South Africa and who are presently living in Durban. Therefore the findings and the present discussion, though they may in some measure reflect the livelihood experiences of Congolese graduates in Durban, they cannot be generalised.

This study argues that education/training remains a vital element in ensuring individual advancement and growth, and that this plays an important role in reducing vulnerabilities and inequalities in society. Education/training is perceived to be important in combating social exclusion and in facilitating socio-economic participation. However, a country's socio-economic realities, and the political and the policy contexts can hinder the educated and trained refugees from achieving their desired goals.

This study attempts to question whether or not formal education/training is the appropriate response to Congolese refugees' livelihood challenges in Durban, looking at it multiple challenges and weaknesses; or whether there are other more appropriate responses, given the context under which refugees pursue their livelihood.

This chapter comprises two sections. The first focuses on the dynamic relationship between the formal education/training and diverse strategies that respondents use to earn a living. The second section looks at different vulnerabilities affecting respondents and how they manage to cope.

## **5.2. Formal education/training and livelihoods options**

Is there clear evidence to suggest that there is a correlation between formal education/training that respondents have pursued in South Africa, and their present survival experiences in Durban?

Formal education/training is described as a cornerstone for socio-economic integration and development. Looking at the aggregate benefits of education, some respondents have reported to have secured better employment opportunities by becoming part of the active and regularly employed labour force in the country. Others have also improved their earning capacity and are presently living in better and safer areas compared to where they previously resided. However, the socio-economic and policy context of South Africa has limited the ability of many to pursue productive livelihoods. For instance, while the labour market demand for graduates has positively benefited respondents from certain fields of study, giving them access to decent employment and high paid jobs, it has at the same time negatively affected those who graduated in fields of study considered irrelevant or less in demand in the context of the present economic imperatives, and the majority of respondents from these fields of study remain either unemployed, are working in the informal economy; or continue to do menial jobs.

### **5.2.1. Fields of education/training and employment opportunities**

The context of employment in South Africa has been identified in this study as the most important variable in the evaluation of the relationship between formal education/training and respondents' employment opportunities. This sub-section demonstrates how fields of study play important roles in determining respondents' employment chances and in influencing their livelihood experiences.

#### **5.2.1.1. Labour market relevant fields of study and improved quality of life**

The labour market situation of South Africa may be partly the result of structural shifts in the economy away from primary and secondary sectors towards services or tertiary sectors (Karen MacGregor, 2007). The shift in the direction of the economy continues to play an important role in dictating the need for skills and it remains the major factor in

determining the success of certain fields of study and the possibilities of graduates to find or not employment soon after graduating. The country's new economic direction has put more emphasis on a demand for graduates from engineering, technical studies, natural and human sciences than on graduates from humanities and social sciences; and the most successful graduates in finding employment remain those who pursued fields of study that are most relevant to the present economic imperatives. The Human Sciences Research Council (2000) study on graduates' employment in South Africa has indicated that the most successful graduates in finding employment had studied medical sciences (91% success rate) and engineering (77%). These findings corroborate the results of the present study which indicate that respondents who graduated in sciences, engineering and technical studies have all managed to be integrated into the labour market soon after graduating and are currently formally employed, and are also doing work that relates to their studies.

This graduate employment situation appears to be a worldwide reality. In many countries of the World, students who are doing "professional courses such as medical studies, engineering, physiotherapy, radiography or nursing find it easy to get employment sooner after graduating than the graduates of academic disciplines"(Jayaratne Pinikahana, 2001).

Many factors may contribute to explain respondents' employment realities in Durban. Fields of study and the availability of skill are the two major and prime factors. As indicated earlier in the section, respondents who pursued fields of study that are compatible to the current direction of the economy find it easier to get employed. The availability of skill is another factor that influences the chances of graduates to get employment soon after graduating. Respondents who graduated in sciences, engineering and technical studies were better equipped with practical skills upon or soon after graduating, and this explains the reason why they were easily absorbed into the workforce.

The institutional arrangements between the education/training institutions (universities, university of technology and technical colleges) and employers play a critical part in ensuring that graduates are better equipped with practical skills upon or soon after

graduating. Respondents from engineering and technical studies indicated that there were formal structures within their institutions that linked students to prospective employers where they acquire practical skills. They reported that as a result of such structures; companies selected capable students for in-service training while they were still studying. These programmes put them in an advantageous position to gain access to employment soon after graduation.

Pursuing fields of study that are relevant to the country's economic needs have direct and additional impacts on graduates' quality of life. In addition to providing easy and quicker access to employment, it also has an effect on individual income and the quality of life. Most of the respondents who graduated in sciences, engineering and technical studies have reported securing a relatively stable life and income that they earn allows them to meet most of their basic needs, such as housing, transportation, food, clothing, healthcare services and to make some savings.

#### **5.2.1.2. Difficult labour market situation and unemployment**

The shift in the economic direction has also resulted to an on-going, almost intractable, mismatch between the types of workers demanded and those supplied to the labour market (Development Policy Research Unit, 2006). This has reinforced the view that unemployment in South Africa is largely the result of the labour market participants lacking the required skills and educational qualifications to fill vacancies (See Terreblanche, 2002:372; Fourie, 2001:378; Makgetla 2003; Ensor 2002, cited in Rosa Dias 2005:2). Despite jobs being created, this shift disproportionately benefits graduates and the gap in job market continues to widen. The reality of the South Africa labour market is such that, many of those who graduated in social sciences and management “are left in duress and in need of help in establishing their careers” (Pauw, K. Oosthuizen and Van De Westerhuizen, M. 2006). Ullrich Boehm (2000) confirmed that studies on graduates' employability in South Africa have shown that graduates from humanities and social sciences and economics and management have reduced chances of finding jobs. This correlates positively with the findings of the present study which indicate that respondents who graduated in these fields of study are less in demand in the labour

market and face serious challenges in finding employment. As a result the majority remains either unemployed or are currently working in the informal sector of the economy selling goods or doing menial jobs.

Different reasons may explain respondents' lack of required or appropriate education/training qualifications and skills to easily integrate the labour market. These reasons may include among others, not meeting the minimum requirements for enrolling in fields of study that are relevant to the present needs of the economy, lack of labour market information while enrolling in tertiary institution, registering in fields of study that do not encourage or promote in-service training for students, and also selecting the fields of study that were believed would make the respondents productive upon returning back to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Studies have proven that Education/training alone is not sufficient to provide full employment rights. Poor human capital formation is mainly the cause of unemployment given the fact that employment in South Africa is closely related to the issue of labour market demand for certain types of skills. According to Borat and Leibbrandt (2001:123), a high and growing unemployment rate among graduates can be reconciled with the notion that unemployment in South Africa is attributed to poor human capital formation. A survey by the Development policy research unit of 20 of South Africa's top companies revealed that they were not always able to use graduates to meet their skills requirements because the wrong types of graduates are being produced and there are too few technical graduates (Macgregor, 2007). This survey also indicated that the majority of graduates being produced have the qualifications but not always the practical skills and experience needed (2007). Despite their relatively high education/training levels, the majority of respondents did not have required educational qualifications and sufficient work experience and practical skills at hand to perform the job and to compete for better employments.

The difficult labour market situation is also caused by lack of labour market information. Most of the respondents had an unrealistic view that education/training alone can provide employment. Lack of labour market information resulted in most of the respondents

registering for fields of study that were convenient to them, without prior knowledge of the socio-economic context and labour market needs for graduates in specific fields. This was the consequence of inadequate pre-university preparation and lack of appropriate career advice.

Employment challenges facing many respondents are also the result of different sets of complex factors. For instance, the country's demographic situation and the economic growth pattern play a role in graduates' employment status. There is a seemingly distinct lack of correlation between the rate of jobs created in a particular sector of the economy and the number of new entrants into the labour market in South Africa (Bhorat, 2004:955). According to Pauw, Oosthuizen and Van De Westerhuizen (2006), "the economy has not been able to absorb the rapidly growing labour force into employment at a rate where there is enough job creation", particularly within the Arts and Humanities.

The racial nature of employment opportunities in South Africa is another factor that contributes to the difficult labour market situation. According to Boehm (2000:1), "unemployment remains racially differentiated and unequally distributed and in all equations Africans have the highest unemployment rate followed by coloured and Indians" (Rulof Burger and Rachel Jafta, 2010:13). Bearing this reality in mind, respondents face a double jeopardy, first for being Africans (Blacks) and secondly for being refugees, leaving them at a serious employment disadvantage.

Lack of social capital is another factor contributing to the situation. Mlatsheni (2007) draws attention to the Mitchell's Plain/Khayelitsha and the Cape Town Area Panel Study (CAPS) surveys that indicate that 55% of respondents found their current job through friends and relatives. This corroborates the findings of the present study which suggest that most of the respondents experience a lack of contacts that can facilitate their access to employment.

The employment situation of respondents is also hampered by the labour market that is segmented by gender and discriminatory policies (Adelzadeh, A., Alvillar, C., Mather, C., 1998:239). With respect to the gender differential in the labour market, women have higher probability of being unemployed than men (Burger and Jafta, 2010:13). This is

attributed to the perception that women are unable to do jobs perceived to be reserved for men, and to less intensive job searches undertaken by unemployed females (Dias, 2005:9). This has been the case of female respondents where all of them remain unemployed. Labour discrimination is also masked by the assumption that certain categories of people are not part of or do not have required documentation permitting them to take such employment. For example refugees are not part of the previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa and do not have appropriate identity documentation allowing them to work.

To cope with the difficult labour market situation, some respondents out of desperation have resorted to returning to jobs they were previously involved in before pursuing further education/training, such as a security guard or cutting hair in the streets and others have resorted once again to further their education to an even higher level to increase their employment chances.

The livelihood experience of some of the respondents who graduated in humanities and social sciences and economics and management remains uncertain with little chances of finding decent or graduate employments and their daily survival continues to be characterised by poverty and vulnerability. Some of these respondents continue to struggle to survive and live in very precarious conditions without or with low income and often with little basic amenities and they depend on the generosity of friends, relatives and religious organisations to survive.

Unemployment has some serious negative effects that are not always recognised. Its effects go beyond simply losing an income and affecting an individual's livelihood. Apart from the emotional trauma attached to being unemployed and the effect on individual well-being, unemployment affects negatively the capacity of graduates' to acquire or to improve skills. A direct consequence of long-term unemployment is loss of skills. The majority of the unemployed respondents already had over six months of unemployment after graduating. As time passes by, they run the risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market due to loss of skills.

### **5.2.2. Level of education/training**

Level of education/training is another important variable impacting on graduates' efforts to pursue productive livelihoods. It is widely accepted that an improved level of education increases the chances of finding employment. This is because "employers prefer higher over lower-educated workers" (Maarten H. J. Wolbers, 2000:1). The correlation between the two remains complex in this study. Although data indicated improved labour market participation among respondents, moving from unskilled and menial jobs to semi-skilled and skilled employment, it has failed to provide sufficient evidence to indicate the comparative increase in absorption capacity in the labour market as the number of respondents formally employed has decreased and the unemployment level has in turn increased among respondents.

The claim that a higher level of education/training increases the chances of being employed requires careful consideration in the light of the unevenness of employment opportunities across different fields of study and skills categories in South Africa. In the context of this study the positive association between the level of education/training and participation in the formal economy did not hold true. What is evident is that, as suggested earlier in the previous section, chances of being employed remain more on the fields of study than on the level of education/training. This is evidenced by the fact that, despite their levels of study, respondents from sciences are all employed compared to those from the humanities where there is a high unemployment rate among the highest qualified. What is also clear is that, all respondents from technical colleges holding simply vocational training certificates, were all employed while there is a considerable number of respondents with master's, honours and bachelor degrees from humanities and social sciences and economics and management who have failed to secure employment.

Increased levels of education/training can cause unemployment. It is well understood that the higher the level of education/training attained, the higher becomes the aspirations of the type of work one would want to take up. The higher the individual wage expectations become and self-esteem. Failing to find the right job and salary that meets one's expectations, may lead some individuals to refuse to settle for a lower ranking job and

pay, or to take up employment that may affect their self-esteem. This explains the reaction of some unemployed respondents who claimed that they are reluctant to go back into menial jobs after spending years at university and also added that they feel there is no compatibility between their present level of studies and some demining types of jobs they come across. Levels of education/training also impacted positively on respondents' sense of confidence as some respondents expressed their availability and confidence in engaging local authorities and institutions in the search for solutions to problems that affect their survival in Durban.

### **5.2.3. Increased income**

This section is understood against the backdrop of human capital theory which suggests that the higher the level of education the higher the earnings potential of the individual (Becker, 1993). Increase in some of the respondents' earning capacity is directly linked to their improved level of education/training and their new types of skills which resulted in new employment categories.

Increased and secure income has positive effects on people's lives. Increased income may affect individuals' quality of life and lifestyle choices. This study indicates that increased income has changed the lifestyle choices and the consumption capacity of some respondents leading to the purchase of expensive household items such as TV sets, refrigerators, computers, and moving from unsafe to comparatively safer living areas, to owning motor vehicles, accessing private healthcare services (clinics and hospitals) and living in reasonably decent accommodation. The new lifestyle adopted by some respondents has a direct bearing on their well-being.

Income level is also closely associated with individual capacity to save. Studies have shown that an improvement in income-particularly stable income is frequently accompanied by an increase in saving (Lister, 2006). Almost every formally employed respondent reported to have some form of financial savings in the bank. Saving can strengthen resilience and ability to cope in a difficult vulnerable context and it creates a greater sense of confidence and enhances the individuals feeling of being in control over their lives (Lister, 2006).

Despite a relative increase in income level of respondents, there remains a generalised feeling of dissatisfaction. Some of the formally employed respondents complained about their present salaries as being comparatively low and raised the fact that they are still unable to meet most of their essential needs such as buying a car or owning a house.

#### **5.2.4. Informal Self-employment**

The low absorption capacity of the formal economy has forced people to adopt diverse income-generating strategies (Adelzadeh, A., Alvillar, C., Mather, C. 1998:231). The dual labour market theory argues that the informal sector is composed of people who are unable to access in the formal sector of the economy (Jan L. Losby, John F. Else, Marcia E. Kingslow, Elaine L. Edgcomb, Erika T. Malm, Vivian Kao 2002:3). This has been the case with some respondents who have been forced to find alternative means of survival by engaging in informal self-employment as a form of income-generating activity as a result of failing to find employment in the formal economy.

The correlation between formal education/training and informal self-employment appears more complicated and the likelihood of graduates becoming self-employed is non-linear. It is evident that a graduate with a university degree is less likely to run an informal economic activity. This may be explained by the fact that formal education/training does not prepare graduates for informal self-employment.

In most cases, informal self-employment generates low income compared to formal employment. Usually the level of income generated from informal self-employment falls below the level of attaining and maintaining a decent standard of living though it provides minimal income to cope with poverty. This reason may prevent graduates from undertaking informal self-employment despite unemployment and poverty.

Informal self-employment is also seen as a survivalist activity pursued by people who are desperate for a mean to survive. Respondents engaged in informal self-employment are survivalist informal traders engaged in the least profitable economic activities, such as hair cutting and selling goods in the street, with an income ranging between R1000 and below 2500 per month. Poverty and attempts to survive are the main characteristics of

this category of enterprise in South Africa (*White paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa* 1995).

In Urban settings, the possibility of graduates participating in informal self-employment tends to emerge as people tend to develop new arrangements and operate their own business, either as a private source of income or as a way to supplement their income from their primary employment, as is the case with some of the respondents.

A lower level occupation affects not only graduates' human capital, their material well-being but also their self-esteem and in turn may lead to health risks. Respondents exposed for long periods to performing menial jobs seen as reserved for the lower-classes in South Africa and seen as being socially degrading, are potentially at risk of developing psychological problems resulting from declining self-esteem and social status. These respondents are also at risk of losing their hard-earned skills gained from years of tertiary education.

More often, this new arrangement provides a safety net for those excluded from the formal economy, and also provides supplementary employment and income for those in the formal economy (Jan L. Losby, John F. Else, Marcia E. Kingslow, Elaine L. Edgcomb, Erika T. Malm, Vivian Kao 2002:14).

Lack of access to credit creates a barrier to the expansion of crucial informal self-employment activities. Inability to access credit prevents self-employed respondents from expanding their small businesses and improving their living conditions. It also prevents the unemployed respondents from entering the informal sector and adopting self-employment as a means of survival. Lack of access to credit appears to be the consequence of exclusion facing refugees in South Africa. Exclusion in this context is described in terms of distortion, discrimination and unenforced rights. Though the constitution of the Republic of South Africa accords refugee equal rights as citizens, the application of their constitutional rights, which would enforce the right to credit and loans by the banking institutions to start or expand their businesses still remains problematic.

### **5.2.5. Irregular remittances and lack of assistance**

There is some evidence to suggest that remittances tend to play a key role for many households. Family members can provide significant support for economic prospects (Claude Sumata, 2002:3). In the case of respondents, remittances received from relatives abroad are an important part of individual survival strategy and can help to maintain or increase the level of consumption capacity to impact on their well-being. One can consider remittances as a form of portfolio diversification which can help households or individuals to cope with risks (2002:3). In this context remittances can help respondents to cope with the risks of unemployment or low income.

It is important to note that remittances are mainly received by households or individuals having relatives or friends either abroad or outside the country. Such remittances may not be part of any contractual agreement between the recipients and the sender who may be their relatives but rather such remittances could be the result of purely altruistic motives. In this particular case, remittance may not necessary be obligatory and regular. This may explain the fact that a small number of respondents with relatives abroad received remittances but not on regular basis. The irregular nature of remittances received may also be explained by the fact that refugees living in South Africa are perceived to be better off by their relatives and friends living abroad.

Survival of refugees can also be supported by different refugee programmes. These programmes are being hampered by the increased number of refugees worldwide and low funding. As a result, in some countries, policies of many organisations providing assistances to refugees tend to focus on particular programmes and exclude those who have obtained refugees status and sometimes even those who have stayed over three to six months in the country. For instance, the UNHCR assistance to refugees focuses on supplementing food, housing and educational needs primarily for newly arrived asylum seekers in South Africa, individuals already possessing refugee status generally do not meet the criteria for assistance (Sarah Bailey 2004).

### **5.2.6. Unproductive social relations and networks**

Formal education/training can contribute to the formation of formal and informal networks and social relations. Castel, Phiri and Stampini (2010) argue that education serves as a socialising agent. It facilitates the development of social relations and integrates the individual into the broader social system. In the context of this study social relations might include and be measured in terms of the contacts and networks respondents have developed with different categories of people and structures within and outside of the Congolese community in Durban. These include the social and professional relations that respondents have developed with their fellow countrymen and women, their colleagues from school, work, and brothers and sisters from churches or religious organisations from all nationalities and races including South Africans. They also include networks with members of different institutions around Durban, which include religious institutions and institutions which provide services that directly affect their lives, such as the Department of Home Affairs, the police services, and their former or present education institutions. Coleman (1988), stresses that social networks are a public good although individuals have to integrate themselves into such networks. He adds that solidarity, cooperation and trust are elements present in social relationships which refugees depend on in order to access different resources.

Looking at the economic and social benefits of social relations, it can be postulated that respondents in this study are at a serious disadvantage. Although it is widely accepted that social relations or networks as a form of social capital, can enable individuals to meet their day-to-day needs through easy access to additional resources (Griffiths, 2000:283-293), and can empower refugees to cope with changes and overcome discrimination (Baruti, 2005), some of the respondents are unfortunately of the view that the social relations they have developed are unproductive. This is due to the fact that many continue to experience a deficit in a range of contacts to include the more influential people in Durban who can connect them to highly paying jobs or business opportunities as well as protect them against discrimination and exclusion or even make their plight known in the appropriate quarters. Thus many continue to feel vulnerable, excluded and disempowered

with weak and little local support as well as frail relationships to depend on when the need arises.

### **5.2.7. Spouse and household income supplementation**

The majority of urban refugees depend on diverse sources of income to sustain their livelihoods. Being part of the urban refugee population, some of the married respondents use different strategies including their spouses' economic activities to increase their households' incomes in order to maintain a stable life.

Spouse's income is an important part of the portfolio of the livelihood response and a strategy to cope with low income levels and life uncertainties. Although it is difficult to isolate the final destination of a spouse's income to the total household income, some of the respondents indicated that they use their spouses' incomes to supplement their main income, to provide the safety net against precarious employment, to meet some of the household expenditures, to allow them to cope against irregular income and also for saving.

### **5.2.8. Voluntarism and church involvement**

Education provides individuals with a level of awareness of their social roles and obligations and prepares them for effective and intelligent participation in society. Education is meant to increase the usefulness of individuals not only in the work place but also in the community (Castel, Phiri and Stampini 2010). Some of the respondents indicated that they play some roles in their respective communities, both among Congolese refugees and with South Africans alike. This includes voluntarily assisting with free lessons in mathematics, economics and accounting at the week-ends to high school refugees and South Africans children who have challenges with those subjects. Volunteerism is viewed as one aspect of community involvement. It is seen as a way of giving back to the community in which one is living. Putnam (2000) believes that volunteerism is a great way to become involved in the community by becoming part of the solution to community problems, and by demonstrating commitment to the cause of the community.

Education is also meant to increase the need for involvement in institutional activities designed to assist members of the community. Taking part in church activities designed to support and help vulnerable and needy people and youth was described by some respondents as another way to participate and contribute to addressing community issues. Some respondents who are Christians suggested that they financially contribute and are involved in charitable works designed to assist the needy, visit community members and orphans through their respective churches and others suggested that they provide training to youth from their churches in counseling and leadership roles in their communities.

### **5.2.9. Rental housing and xenophobia**

It is widely accepted that many people all over the World live in rented accommodation because they lack sufficient income to buy a house. Gilbert (1983) suggests that renting is often a residual tenure occupied by those households who fail to achieve ownership. Income poverty is the main reason preventing respondents to achieve housing ownership. Most of the respondents reported that low income is the major factor that prevents them from owning houses and leading them to live in relatively expensive rental accommodation around Durban.

Despite the relative increase in respondents' incomes, their earning capacity remain below the capacity to allow them to afford owning decent houses or flats in safe areas<sup>8</sup>, leading all of them to continue living in rented accommodation in areas believed to be safer and where they feel welcomed and protected.

The context of xenophobia in South Africa has also contributed to preventing most of the refugees housing ownerships by denying them the freedom to live in areas where the cost of housing could be relatively cheaper or affordable to many. Past xenophobic attacks on refugees which mainly took place in different townships<sup>9</sup> of South Africa, did not only reinforce existing fear among refugees to live outside city centre, but it has also brought

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<sup>8</sup> Safe areas according to this study, are areas where the risks of physical attacks is minimal for respondents

<sup>9</sup> Relatively cheaper or affordable houses to buy are mainly found in townships compared to urban areas of Durban and city centre where the cost of housing is quite expensive and unaffordable to most of the respondents. Present income of the majority of respondents would allow them to own housing in townships yet unable to do so because of fear for their physical safety.

to light the fact that refugees remain vulnerable and are not welcome to live in townships, and that their physical safety would be compromised if ever they attempted to live there, forcing respondents to be confined in expensive rented accommodations in and around the city centre.

Housing determines the level of refugees' integration and consolidates their status in the host city. Continuing to live in rental housing reflects the limited degree to which respondents have integrated in Durban. The move from areas where the majority previously resided to new areas indicates the change in respondents' lifestyle and reflects the extent to which they have been able to socially and economically integrate. Most of the respondents currently live in areas such as Berea, Umbilo, Musgrave, Durban city centre; areas occupied by middle class people of different races, and nationalities. However the cost of living in these areas is relatively high.

The changes to individuals' economic status and the decision to make the city their home, may affect respondents' decision to move from renting to owning. Sunil Kumar (2001) noted that the majority of individuals and households progress from renting to owning houses as their economic status changes. This move may therefore be dependent on improved income levels of the respondents and the decision either to invest in property or to make Durban their home. Kumar (2001) further argues that rental accommodation is crucial for those who do not intend to make the city their home. Thus, it would remain important to determine whether there are respondents who would be owners if they had the opportunity to obtain land or housing cheaply or after their present incomes have increased.

### **5.3. Congolese graduates vulnerabilities in Durban**

The survival of respondents in Durban is characterized by different sets of livelihood stresses and shocks which include unemployment, low and lack of income, social exclusion, discrimination; denial of certain socio-economic rights, xenophobia and limited access to jobs and job mobility. The fragility of respondents is the result of socio-economic realities, inadequate interpersonal relations and networks, and their apparent disadvantaged social status. The interaction between different capital assets at the

disposal of respondents and the context in which their livelihood is pursued also contributes to the life challenges they face on a daily basis. Though the socio-economic and the policy context of South Africa cannot provide the full explanation for the vulnerability of respondents in Durban, at least part of the problem arises from a combination of factors including poor choices of fields of study, the socio-economic context and discrimination.

### **5.3.1. Apartheid redress policies and refugee discrimination**

The new constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996) made provision for policies and legislation to be formulated to redress past inequalities and discrimination (Constitution of SA, 1996). The policy and legislation is broadly designed to eliminate unfair discrimination (Employment Equity Act, 1998), to transform the previously disadvantaged groups and bring about lasting social transformation by means of enforcing certain measures on designated employers, to attract, develop and retain individuals from these groups, and empower more black people to own and manage enterprises, and to take positive measures to attract, develop and retain individuals from previously disadvantaged groups (Burger and Jafta, 2010:4). The group that is designated in the Act as “Blacks” includes among others Africans, coloured, Indians, women and people with disabilities (2010:5).

Research on employees’ attitudes and experiences of employment Equity indicate that, for the non-previously disadvantaged employees, the primary concerns were reverse discrimination, racism and victimisation (SAJIP, 2010). This has been the case with some of the respondents who complained about being unfairly discriminated against in the labour market and indicated that their employment applications were being rejected simply because they are not South Africans.

These corrective policies and legislation appear to form an exception to the South African constitution’s otherwise staunch commitment to equality (Burger and Jafta, 2010:4), as they tend to violate the principle of equality of opportunity by discriminating against those designated in the Act as non-Blacks. Hence policies designed to correct the

apartheid legacy of injustices has in practice disadvantaged and excluded respondents leaving some unemployed and vulnerable.

### **5.3.2. Public versus Private sector within the economy**

Sectors of the economy are also new elements that play an important role in understanding respondents' employment vulnerabilities. Respondents' access to the labour market seems to be limited to the private sector of the economy. This is primarily evidenced by the fact that the majority of the formally employed respondents are found in this sector. This can partly be explained by the fact that, unlike public entities and government institutions that tend to abide strictly by policies and principles of political organisations to enforce political agendas, many private companies and organisations, on the other hand, appear to be flexible in terms of recruitment and are many times committed to employing suitable and qualified individuals legally living in the country. This is despite their commitment to policies such as employment equity and efforts to redress the demographic imbalance of their workforce.

### **5.3.3. Nationalistic policies and attitudes and lack of required documentation**

The Article 6 (1) of the international convention on Economic, social and cultural Rights states that parties to the present convention recognise the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to gain his/her living by work which he/she freely chooses or accepts (International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,1966).For refugees in host countries, in order to exercise the right to work, an individual usually requires a legal identity document which is tied to the ability to exercise other rights (Bailey, 2004:11). There are however several reasons why, despite living legally in the country, refugee's rights to employment are not protected.

Policies designed to promote and protect citizens' employment rights may limit the rights to employment of refugees. According to Bailey (2004:18), limiting refugee's right to employment is common among countries in the global South. Most African Countries have policies that are vigorously nationalistic (Kibread, 2003:63). Some of these policies are not only developed and applied by government or public institutions but also by

private institutions. As a result of such policies some of the respondents have deliberately been excluded from much-needed work simply because they are not South African citizens.

Individuals' negative attitudes can also contribute to excluding foreign nationals from employment. At best institutional policies and processes continue to play a negative role by purposefully excluding refugees from employment believed to be reserved for South African citizens. One respondent raised concern over the trade unions members' opposition to employing foreign nationals as they indicated that priority must be given to employing only South African citizens and not foreign nationals. This form of exclusion is being practiced despite South Africa's policies on refugees considered to be comprehensive in terms of its commitment to protecting refugee's rights and promoting equality.

Barriers to employment of refugees in South Africa also sometimes occur as a result of lack green identity document or permanent residence permits. Some of the respondents complained that despite living legally in the country and having legal identity documents and refugee status allowing them to take up employment, they are still denied access to jobs simply because they cannot produce green identity documents, or have no permanent residence permits, and added that some employers advised them to wait until they become permanent residents so that they may return to the offered jobs; a suggestion that sounds theoretically and practically impossible.

While the host country's policies are important to protect and determine the extent to which refugees are able to exercise their rights and pursue productive livelihoods (Bailey 2004), the absence of mechanisms to enforce the application of those rights can contribute to discrimination. Despite its commitment to international law and conventions and to the protection of refugees' human rights, the South African government has failed to put into place policies and regulations to effect, protect and promote the rights of refugees, exposing them to exclusion and discrimination.

#### **5.3.4. Limited job mobility and livelihood constraints**

Respondents' livelihoods chances continue to be somehow constrained by institutional cultures and policies which determine the criteria and degree to which an individual is able to change employment status or position to a higher hierarchy (upward mobility), and employment context which determines the possibility to move from one job to another (external mobility).

Limited upward job mobility appears to be a common feature affecting the livelihood of the majority of formally employed respondents. The in-depth interviews highlighted the fact that some of the respondents are dissatisfied and frustrated about their present employment because of limited and unequal chances available to them when it comes to promotion. This has affected their efforts and desire to increase their salaries. This particular limitation poses a risk not only to individual opportunities for life and job advancement but also to the employment satisfaction and maintenance of one's physical needs and well-being.

Other than the chances of internal mobility, respondents further maintained that they have very limited chances of easily finding new employment outside their present jobs, even though they are dissatisfied with their present jobs or willing to move to new jobs. The respondents' outside mobility seems to be restrained by limited job opportunities available to refugees and particularly those who graduated in fields such as social sciences and economics and management. Limited external job mobility has also created a sense of livelihood insecurity even though one is still employed one tends to develop fear of not being able easily to find a new job if the current job is lost.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

One of the questions asked at the beginning of this chapter was, whether formal education/training is an appropriate response to Congolese refugees' livelihood challenges in Durban. To this question it appears that Congolese refugees continue to face a myriad of livelihood challenges in Durban, from their attempt to secure identity documentation, while looking for employment, to opening bank accounts, even to finding

accommodation. Their attempt to secure livelihoods continues to be characterised by different sets of vulnerabilities deriving from exclusion, discrimination, poor human capital formation and insufficient means to offset risks.

This seems to be true for the majority of Congolese refugees who have graduated in South Africa. Although education/training has increased the respondents' capacity to secure productive livelihoods, unemployment among respondents has comparatively increased and there has been a differentiated level of inclusion in the economy and society between respondents from different fields of study. Respondents from engineering, sciences and technical studies have integrated easily into the labour market by comparison with those from humanities, social sciences and economics and management. There has also been a move from menial jobs to skilled and semi-skilled jobs with a subsequent increase in income and improvement in the general well-being among the majority of the respondents.

Employment and livelihood challenges that some of the respondents continue to face is primarily due to the country's economic imperatives and the choice of fields of study that are not in high demand in the labour market, and employers' prime emphasis of hiring staff with readily available work experience. It is also because of institutional policies and practices that exclude refugees and non-residents which denies them, equal rights and access to services and opportunities. Improving the socio-economic inclusion of respondents will require transforming institutional policies and practices that discriminate against non-citizens and people without permanent residence in the country and changing individual attitudes towards refugees or foreign nationals in general.

## CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Introduction

This study attempted to demonstrate through data and discussions that, while formal education/training can improve respondents' well-being and reduce their vulnerability, it still needs to be strengthened through the protection and promotion of refugee rights, change in public attitudes towards refugees and the careful selections of the fields of study. This study also highlighted the fact that respondents' education/training needs to be supported by the formulation and implementation of supportive policies and legislation to affect the survival of respondents positively.

Currently many respondents have seen tangible positive benefits as a result of pursuing formal education/training while being refugees. These positive benefits have been reflected in changes in employment status amongst respondents moving from unskilled and menial jobs to semi-skilled and skilled employment. The income levels of many have tripled or quadrupled and their general well-being improved. At the same time, there are also many who continue to face serious livelihood challenges ranging from unemployment, under-employment, lack of income and poor housing conditions. This is partly due to poor choices of fields of study that are not in high demand in the labour market, and also to lack of skills and work experience. Respondents' survival challenges are also influenced by discriminatory policies and practices in the labour market, the inability to freely live in cheaper areas where they wish to and their limited access to banking credit to start up or support existing small business ventures.

The respondents' exclusion from formal employment and banking credit, above any other reason, has greatly hindered their ability to pursue productive livelihoods, as stated in chapter 2. This also undermines their right to participate effectively in a free society. This research hypothesis that if formal education/training is strengthened by supportive policies and if, in future, refugees select fields of study that are in demand in the labour market, their participation level and survival chances could be greatly improved. Based on data and discussions, this chapter seeks firstly to discuss what have been respondents'

livelihood outcomes in Durban and secondly to make relevant practical recommendations to ensure the success of refugees' formal education/training in South Africa.

## **6.2. The outcomes of formal education/training**

The livelihood framework is based on the understanding that livelihood strategy adopted by people has to lead to livelihood outcomes. This section discusses what have been the outcomes of respondents' livelihood strategies.

- **Increased income**

Field, Schuller and Baron (2000) have suggested that, the output of human capital is generally measured in terms of enhanced income. The discussion in chapter 5 has indicated that the contribution of formal education/training to the improvement of labour market opportunities has been proven in this research as many respondents moved from menial jobs to skilled or semi-skilled employment resulting in increased incomes. Data indicated that respondents mainly from the engineering, sciences and technical studies and those from other fields of studies who secured formal employments have seen their income levels tripled or quadrupled. The increase in income was measured by comparing the respondents' incomes before formal education/training and their actual incomes now. Respondents' increase in income is mainly the result of formal employment they have managed to secure. The incomes of respondents in the informal economy remain unchanged and low; and the unemployed respondents have no income deriving from economic activities and their survival continues to depend on the generosity of friends, relatives and religious organisations.

- **Reduced vulnerability**

Vulnerability as seen by Chambers is one aspect of deprivation. It can be reduced by addressing associated conditions which have contributed to it, such as exclusion and/or uncertain or low income. The discussion in chapter 5 suggested that the majority of respondents' susceptibility to unemployment has reduced as a result of improved education/training level and skills. The majority of the respondents' vulnerability to poverty, physical attacks and illness has also been reduced due to the increased income

levels, savings, relocating to relatively safer areas and living in comparatively decent accommodation with less occupants and access to better quality of healthcare services.

Despite these positive outcomes, respondents' continue to face discrimination and remain without adequate protection. The respondents are still denied equal employment opportunities and work promotion and they have little room for recourse.

The persisting societal negative attitudes towards refugees in general and the deficit in the range of contact and influence of more people to protect them against discrimination and exclusion contribute to the respondents' continued vulnerability. Understanding the fact that these vulnerabilities are the result of human actions, they can be reduced by the development of supportive policies designed to improve refugees' livelihoods.

- **Social participation**

The discussion in chapter 5 demonstrated that, despite the knowledge gained and the economic benefits that the majority of respondents enjoy only a small number of respondents participate in some way in their respective communities. This is primarily through voluntarism. The in-depth interviews revealed that the role played by these respondents include providing free lessons at week-ends to high school children who have challenges in subjects like mathematics, economics and accounting. Others have indicated that they participate in their communities through their involvement in church activities designed to address community issues. These activities include charitable works and financial contributions to assist vulnerable community members such as youth and orphans.

- **Improved well-being**

To understand the effects of formal education/training on the respondents' well-being in this study, subjective parameters such as employment possibility, income level, housing conditions and access to healthcare services were identified and used to measure respondents' own appraisal of the quality of their lives. The discussion in chapter 5 indicated that, employment possibilities have been identified as the main factor determining respondents' well-being.

Access to employment has determined respondents' income levels and the quality of their lives. As suggested earlier in the discussion, the majority of respondents managed to secure formal employment resulting in their income levels tripling or quadrupling; and the quality of their lives subsequently improving. The majority of respondents' housing conditions have also improved as a result. Data indicated that the majority of respondents have moved to safer environments and decent accommodation. Only a limited number of respondents, and among them, those who failed to secure better employment, have seen their well-being unchanged and continue to live in areas seen as unsafe and in shared accommodation. Data further revealed that despite the increase in income level of the majority of respondents, their earning capacity still does not allow them to own houses or flats, leaving all of them to continue living in rented accommodation.

Access to an improved quality of healthcare service is another important benefit of formal education/training and has direct effect on the respondents' quality of life. Though healthcare service was reported to be available to every respondent, it was limited to public healthcare. The in-depth interview has indicated that formally employed respondents reported to be able to afford both private and public healthcare services depending on the type and duration of sickness they have.

### **6.3. Supportive policies**

Without supportive policies, the subsequent recommendations would not be possible. The first set of recommendations, are important and involve policies that would facilitate acceptance and socio-economic inclusion of respondents, and positively affect their livelihood and that of other refugees who have or would like to pursue formal education/training as their survival strategy in South Africa.

International instruments cited in chapter 2 of the present study play important roles in strengthening the ability of refugees to pursue productive livelihoods by protecting their basic rights and guaranteeing the most favourable treatment possible regarding among others, their right to participate in wage earning activities and self-employment and accessing private and public services. An individual country's government is the only

body that protects those rights by producing their own domestic legislations to guarantee refugees' human rights. The South African government is understood to be the protector of refugees and has the constitutional mandate to protect their rights. As mentioned in chapter 2, the refugee Act (Act 130 of 1998) provides refugees equal rights as citizens but in practice it has failed to protect refugees against discrimination and against factors that mitigate against the application of laws that guarantee them equal access to opportunities. It has also failed to provide room for recourse in cases of violation. There is an apparent gap between the Act and its implementation.

The discrimination of respondents from employment opportunities and banking credit, and the denial of their freedom to live wherever they wish is a worrying and common occurrence by institutions (private and mainly public) and by members of the public in different provinces of South Africa. This indicates a clear violation of the international instruments, of the South African constitution, and of the South Africa's refugees Act. Lack of intervention to protect refugees from these forms of exclusion has proven dangerous to respondents' livelihood as the discussion in chapter 5 showed.

Overcoming this policy gap is indeed a complex issue and thus this research recommends that steps should be taken and policies be formulated and implemented at all levels of government (from national, provincial, and local) to pave the way to the:

- Building of bridges across communities: government should develop means to bring refugees and local people together in circumstances in which they develop shared interests, common understanding and positive relations. The government at national, regional and local level should lead the debate to explain to the public the reasons why there are refugees in South Africa, the contributions they make then listen to public concerns to address any real conflict of interest that may arise.
- Mobilising other stakeholders to share responsibility: apart from the state, refugees and members of the public; there are also employers, trades unions, voluntary non-profit, community-based and faith organisations that should be involved to promote understanding, acceptance and social and economic inclusion of refugees.

- Protecting and promoting the socio-economic rights of refugees. Refugees Act (Act 130 of 1998) provided refugees equal access to opportunities and protection from discrimination. Nevertheless policies and legislation should be developed to promote and protect socio-economic opportunities of refugees and ensure that refugees are not treated less favourably when seeking employment, education, banking credit, housing and applying for promotion. The government should also take an active step to create bodies to oversee the implementation of policies and legislation which affect the livelihoods of refugees.

Policies must also recognise the capabilities of different categories of people constituting the refugee community, their particular needs, challenges, and they must develop mechanisms of support to strengthen their survival and coping strategies. In recognising the shortfalls in the refugee Act (Act 130 of 1998), policy planners must focus on policy recommendations that:

- Give refugees who have graduated in South Africa equal access to employment opportunities and address different forms of discrimination they face particularly from institutions.
- Improve graduates employability chances, by ensuring that education/training institutions ensure that upon leaving their institutions, graduates are sufficiently equipped with practical skills and experience to effectively compete in the job market. The researcher recommends that higher education/training institutions develop mechanisms to connect employers with graduates for in-service training before or soon after graduating.
- Take into account the fact that self-employment and unemployment are a reality of graduates who fail to secure formal employment. The policy must look at issues such as the provision of access to credit or start-up capital and business training by different institutions and refugee organisations.

The participation of different stakeholders in policy formulation is paramount for a successful implementation. In chapter 5 of this study the researcher indicated that respondents have acquired knowledge and skills to become capable stakeholders, and to some extent contribute to debates and to the formulation of policies affecting their lives.

The researcher recommends that different stakeholders and refugee graduates in South Africa should be included in the formulation of policies that directly affect their livelihoods.

#### **6.4. Changing attitudes towards refugees**

The discussion in chapter 5 highlighted the fact that negative public attitudes towards refugees was amongst causes that have a detrimental effect on the affected respondents' livelihoods. Negative public attitudes such as the concerns, fears and hostilities of some in the majority population towards refugees can breed discrimination and can also lead to a break-down in trust, to tension, even disorder (Spencer, 2004). These attitudes threaten the socio-economic inclusion of respondents in Durban. Despite integration in the labour market, respondents continue to be excluded leaving them on the margins of society with little contact with the established mainstream communities.

Negative attitudes towards refugees are commonly expressed by members of the public through xenophobic attitudes and attacks. The discussion in chapter 5 has shown that these are reflected by continued verbal abuse, threats of assault and physical violence against refugees denying them the freedom to live or own properties wherever they wish in the country, and particularly in townships where they can access cheaper and affordable houses.

These negative attitudes are also expressed passively by institutions through discriminatory policies. Data indicated that respondents' are passively excluded from employment by the implementation of unfair and discriminatory policies which deny them equal access to opportunities and services such as banking credit, employment and job promotion for reasons such as not having a South African green identity card, not being a permanent resident in the country or not being part of the previously disadvantaged groups.

As suggested in previous sections, the socio-economic inclusion of refugees is mainly dependent on the degree of their acceptance in the host country. The researcher therefore recommends initiatives that would change individual and institutional attitudes towards

refugees to make respondents accepted. These initiatives (as suggested earlier in this chapter) should include strategies that would tackle and challenge the deep-seated attitudes and prejudices (Department For International Development policy, 2005). The implementation of these initiatives should not solely be the government's responsibility but it has to include different stakeholders such as community members, employers and civil society organisations such as the trade unions, non-governmental organisations, faith organisations and the media. The media in particular, while it has the potential to reinforce prejudices, can also play an important role in changing attitudes and behaviour (DFID, 2005:14). Madhu cited in DFID (2005:15) stated that "society needs to find a different way of looking at us. And the media can play a very different role in passing on useful information and so be instrumental in changing people's attitudes".

### **6.5. Supporting graduates' informal-employment**

The discussion in chapter 5 revealed that respondents who failed to secure formal employment have resorted to informal economic activities as alternative strategies to earn livelihoods. The vulnerability in this instance results from the fact that, respondents do not have access to capital required either to start or expand their existing informal business ventures. The researcher therefore recommends that financial institutions (banks) and refugees' organisations should consider giving deserving and willing respondents conditional start up credit or financial assistance to start or expand their private businesses.

However, the support that respondents need is not only limited to financial assistance, though the latter is very important for the success of any business activity. As mentioned in chapter 5, higher education/training does not prepare graduates to be self-employed, thus they need to be capacitated in order to be successful in business. There are institutions around Durban such as the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Amalusi, which provide information and entrepreneurial and business training to people wishing to start or who are already in business to become successful, they also provide a database for available business opportunities to registered companies and businesses. The researcher recommends that graduates' capabilities to start, run and manage informal

businesses should be increased through business and entrepreneurial training. The researcher also recommends that respondents should formally register their informal business activities in order to have access to government and different business databases in the country so as to expand their current businesses.

#### **6.6. Careful selection of the fields of study**

The finding of this study revealed that there was a considerable increase in unemployment level among respondents. This is primarily due to poor human capital formation. Increased unemployment is explained by the fact that the majority of respondents graduated in fields of studies that are not in high demand in the labour market and did not have readily available skills and professional experience soon after graduating.

The idea that education should be geared more closely to job requirements seems to be popular among education policy makers and employers (Boehm, 2000). I would therefore recommend that, in future Congolese refugees who want to undertake formal education/training as their livelihood strategy in South Africa should first investigate fields of studies that are in high demand in the labour market and also education institutions that prepare students to meet the requirements of employers upon graduating.

#### **6.7. Final conclusions**

Through interactions with participants and the analysis of data collected, it is clear that, formal education/training is an effective livelihood strategy for respondents in Durban. The results of this study have shown that, as a result of formal education/training, the majority of respondents have improved their employment levels, increased their income and the overall quality of their lives has also improved. The study also showed that there are still many respondents who continue to face serious livelihood challenges as a result of poor human capital formation and discrimination and their level of participation in the broader community life remains poor.

The study concludes that a careful selection of fields of study that are in high demand in the labour market is necessary for effective inclusion of respondents in the labour market and to improve their livelihood opportunities. It further concludes by arguing that the survival challenges of respondents can be reduced by developing supportive policies and mechanisms that can facilitate the acceptance and the promotion of socio-economic inclusion of respondents. These include policies and structures designed to change attitudes towards refugees, build bridges across communities, promote and protect respondents' access to employment and support their informal economic activities.

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## **Acronyms**

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CAPS: Cape Town area Panel Study

CBD: Central Business District

DCD: Development Co-operation Directorate

DFID: Department For International Development

DPRU: Development Policy Research Unit

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

HRSDC: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council

IDS: Institute of Development Studies

NALEDI: National Labour and Economic Development Institute

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

OAU: Organisation of African Unity

PIPs: Policies, Institutions and Processes

PhD: Philosophiae Doctorate

SAJIP: South Africa Journal of Industrial Psychology

Stats SA: Statistics South Africa

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissions for Refugees

## **LIST OF TABLES**

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TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY FIELDS OF EDUCATION

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview questionnaires

1. Tell me about yourself (social background, age, history, gender, marital status)
2. Tell me about your field, level of education and tertiary institution (s) you attended in South Africa.
3. What other form of assets do you have? For instances previous educational Qualifications, professional experiences, savings, remittances, networks, access to Institutions, transport, shelter (owning or renting).
4. Before starting your education/training, what were you doing to survive? Did you have an income and what were your earning monthly?
5. What were the reasons behind your decision to pursue education while being refugee in this country?
6. So, after completing your education, what do you do to earn a living?
  - a) If not employed, how do you survive?
  - b) If self-employed:
    - Why?
    - What kind of activity are you involved in and is it registered?
    - How do you secure funding?
    - What are the challenges faced and how do you cope?
  - c) If employed:
    - Where?
    - What kind of work? Is it related to your field of education or not?
    - Why did you choose to do this kind of work? How did you manage to get it? Did you go through formal employment processes?
7. Income range
  1. R0-500; 2. R501-1000; 3. R1001-1500; 4. R1501-2000; 5. R2001-2500
  6. R2501-3500; 7. R3501-5000; 8. R5001-7500; 9. R7500-10000; 10. R10001 and above...
8. Do you have any other form of income-generating activity?

9. Do you receive any form of assistances from the government or aid agencies? If yes, from where and what kind of assistance?
10. How do you think the government policies and legislation on refugees have impacted on the effectiveness of your education?
11. Where do you live (area) and why did you choose to stay in this area?
12. Type of accommodation:
  - Size?
  - Living alone with the family or sharing with other people?
  - Number of people?
13. How do you travel to work? By public transport or own transport?
14. Do you have access to health service? Is it private or public?
15. Do you participate in any community building effort? If yes, where, what kind?
16. Do you make any individual or collective effort to address different challenges that you face in your daily life?
17. How do you manage to cope with situations such as illness, unemployment, social exclusion, low income, xenophobia, lack of proper documentation or access to banking credit?
18. How do you think your education has impacted on your life in general? Explain in terms of income, participation in society, empowering you, impacting on your vulnerability as refugee and impacting on your well-being.

**Appendix 2: Figure 1- Livelihood framework**