

**Real People, Real Needs:  
Deaf Education in Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
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**Abstract**

This thesis is a study into the lived educational experiences of selected individuals; administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members, who are a large part of the Deaf education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya. Currently, little is known about the experiences of Deaf refugees in a refugee camp.

The objective of this thesis is to understand of the role(s) Deaf Units play in terms of opportunities and obstacles for those involved in the Deaf education community in the Dadaab refugee camp. This study focuses on qualitative data, collected through videotaped interviews with 65 participants to bring forth their experiences and perspectives. This study also links the school improvement change theoretical framework to help us better understand the opportunities and obstacles encountered by the involved stakeholders. Key factors affecting the opportunities and obstacles of the Deaf education program in a refugee camp are presented.

## Acknowledgements

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to shed light on this iceberg; this thesis is for the Deaf refugees floating across the deserts of Africa.

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## **List of Acronyms**

GTZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH

HI: Handicap International

IOM: International Organization for Migration

MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council

OAU: Organization of African Unity, currently known as African Union

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WFD: World Federation of the Deaf

WFP: World Food Programme

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

*'Real People, Real Needs'*

The theme of UNHCR's World Refugee Day 2009

#### **Purpose and Significance**

The theme of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' World Refugee Day 2009; 'Real People, Real Needs', reflects the foremost objectives of this thesis which are to collect and bring forth the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders who are a large part of the Deaf schooling culture in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya and to answer the research question which is to understand what role the Deaf Units in refugee camps plays in Deaf refugee's lives.

Research in the refugee field is relatively a new field, and this study will be one of the first attempts to explore existing educational opportunities for Deaf refugees in a refugee camp. There are large gaps in our understanding of the lived experiences of Deaf refugees in a refugee camp. The experiences of the Deaf are often subsidiary to the mainstream education research perhaps in part because of particular challenges that scholarly inquiry within this community presents to conventional research methods. Smith (2008), a former US ambassador to Ireland and a board member sitting on the Women's Commission of Refugee Women and Children wrote in an article urging people to remember that those who may be 'displaced and disabled' are "often so demoralized that they fail to speak out on their needs for specialized services in refugee camps such as food, toilets, healthcare and shelter." Deaf refugees, who belong to a distinct marginalized linguistic and cultural group in the refugee camp, are often further marginalized from the discourses and researches in the refugee field because of

insurmountable gaps in communication access. Many are unable to participate fully because of lack of sign language interpreters in the camps. As a result of these factors, many misconceptions have been held about Deaf refugees living in Dadaab Refugee Camp.

Furthermore, Crossley and Watson (2003) and others emphasize the “need to do much more to heed the voices emerging from the South itself” (p.90 and Teasdale & Teasdale, 1999; Holmes, 2001) particularly to better understand the realities and the roles that educational institutions situated in rural parts of the country with basic infrastructure play in Deaf refugees’ lives. Efforts are being undertaken by NGOs to meet the needs of Deaf refugees; however, more often than not, problematic approaches are usually taken up by NGOs with limited understanding and knowledge of the lived experiences of Deaf refugees. Additionally, Crossley and Watson (2003) call for “strengthened cross-disciplinary studies to bridge and provide holistic understanding of the education’s role and function” (p.124). By examining and bridging the experiences and perspectives of the Deaf students, teachers, school officials, NGOs and local stakeholders whilst revealing the complexities of the realities for the involved stakeholders of the Deaf education in Dadaab Refugee Camp, this thesis will bring forth their hands and voices to address the real needs of real people, namely the Deaf refugees, by means of listening to their experiences and perspectives with and of the Deaf units. It will also address the research question, what role does the Deaf Unit play in Deaf refugees’ lives. This thesis has the potential to contribute to the future successes of initiating, implementing and institutionalizing Deaf education programs in a refugee camp.

“Education is the foundation of all societies and globally competitive economies. [In such cases as in a refugee camp, Education is also the basis for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health, enabling the use of new technologies, and creating and spreading knowledge.] In an increasingly

complex, knowledge-dependent world, primary education, as the gateway to higher levels of education, must be the first priority” (World Bank, 2004). This statement postulates the simplistic ideology of removing barriers in providing access to free primary education for all by providing adequate educational space (trained teachers, classrooms, no tuition fees, accessibility and so forth) for children to congregate and learn. However, in increasingly complex and globally competitive societies, those from minority linguistic and/or cultural groups often are forgotten or left behind. This situation in turn reinforces a new form of post colonialism in education. In this study, Deaf refugees are given an ‘equal opportunity’ to education, but the problem with this concept is ‘what is said and what is practiced’. Therefore this thesis provides additional significant findings by deconstructing the images presented by others to allow the hands and voices of the very Deaf individuals and involved individuals to sign and speak for themselves about their experiences and perspectives with/of the existing educational opportunities in the camps. It will also provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Deaf education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya.

### **Situating Myself as a Researcher**

As a Deaf researcher who has lived and taught in Kenya for two and half years and worked several years in developing nations; Costa Rica, Philippines, Kenya, Cambodia, West and Central Africa, I bring a wealth of empathy, understanding and experience as a Deaf individual to this research process. My personal experience for the thesis brings in “an important relationship [link] between the person doing the research and the research itself” (Cooper & White, 2009, p. 168). As a result, I am able to bridge cultural understanding of the Deaf culture, the Deaf experience, and especially sensitivity

towards Deaf issues. However my position as a Deaf, female, Caucasian (*mzungu*<sup>1</sup>), middle-class and educated person presented imbalance in my positions as an outsider researcher and the participants.

Furthermore, I am very aware that the historical, social, environmental and educational baggage carried by the majority of the participants who live in a ‘subjugated’ environment has the potential of influencing the number of willing participants in this study as the majority of the participants have demonstrated issues of subjectivity of their participation in the study. This will be further elaborated in chapter 4. On the contrary, I have been struggling internally with coming to the terms as a researcher from a linguistic and cultural minority group, who very much understands the challenges and obstacles of subjugated groups attempting to bring forth their hands and voices by utilizing my ‘white backpack’<sup>2</sup> (privilege) to bring attention to the very hands and voices of the Deaf refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp. However, through this study, I recognise the greater capacity of giving attention to my ‘white backpack’ as a tool to provide an avenue for this hidden and marginalized population to bring forth their hands and voices. I hope that including the hands and voices of the hidden population will provide a positive platform and benchmark for future research in the field of Deaf education and Deaf refugees in refugee camps. I also hope to shed light on the institutionalization of Deaf education in a structural sense and to challenge presumptions that the mere provisions of education services to Deaf students sufficiently ensures that the needs of their needs are being adequately served.

## **Overview/Organization of the Thesis**

Chapter Two aims to explore and describe the unique and highly contextualized environment where this very little understood phenomenon is positioned. It first lays out the historical and

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<sup>1</sup> Kiswahili term for a white person often used in Kenya

<sup>2</sup> For elaborated definition, refer to ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack’ by Peggy MacIntosh (1989)

background framework about the Deaf community and further elaborates about the current trends of Deaf education both on international and local level. This section also provides the historical, societal, environmental and educational context of the refugee experience in Dadaab Refugee Camp. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework of this study and how it interplays with the research question. Chapter Four describes the distinctive research methodology used in this study which encompasses multiple languages and literacies. Chapter Five presents the historical and background findings about the Deaf education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp. In Chapter Six, I present findings from the multi-faceted perspectives of various stakeholder groups involved in the provision of Deaf education in the Dadaab Refugee Camp. In Chapter Seven, I discuss and analyze the data in terms of opportunities and obstacles faced by involved stakeholders the Deaf education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp and link it to the theoretical perspective outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter where I summarize and discuss my findings and present recommendations on the possibilities of utilizing sign language as a tool for accessibility to education for the Deaf.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Setting the Dadaab Context

This thesis is an exploratory case study documenting contemporary educational initiatives for Deaf students in a refugee camp by listening to the lived educational experiences of involved stakeholders who are an active part of the Deaf schooling culture in Dadaab Refugee Camp. The Dadaab Refugee Camp is one of very few known refugee camps with a Deaf education program amongst 118 UNHCR refugee camps with education initiatives throughout the world. This is a study which is located in an unique environment, Dadaab Refugee Camp, and it requires an understanding of the overarching intersection where multiple contexts meet. This chapter will first begin at this intersection.

This section will start with identifying and categorizing the classic centuries-old dichotomy about the Deaf population and methods for educating Deaf students, especially in Kenya. The aim is to associate the dominant discourses with the local research site to help readers understand the significance of the Deaf unit and its position within the school and the occasional discourses about the integrated programs under CARE's Special Education program.

From there I will link the universal understanding of the Deaf population and methods for educating Deaf students to the current situation in Dadaab Refugee Camp by touching briefly on contemporary understanding of the meaning of refugee status and especially the protracted refugee situation. Furthermore, to facilitate an understanding of the unique existing context where the Deaf Education program is situated, I will bridge the current perception of the protracted refugee status with the significance of providing education in emergencies as a tool. The last few sections of this chapter

will broadly contextualize the refugee context, the protracted refugee situation, and the growing trend of addressing education in emergencies including a brief summary of Somalia's civil wars leading up to the formation of the Dadaab Refugee Camp. Finally, I will attempt to set the Dadaab context by broadly describing the massive refugee operations in Dadaab. This thesis will be set within the overarching issues of the refugee experience, protracted refugee situation, education in emergencies, the Dadaab refugee operations and the Deaf education contexts but those will not be its central focus.. As Horst (2006) eloquently puts the leading aim of this study as an attempt "to move away from compartmentalised studies" (p. 201) on refugee studies to an integrated and transnational approach which analyzes the correlations of the refugee experiences of those in Dadaab to those outside of the refugee camps.

### **Defining the Deaf Population and Deaf Education**

To delve into the intricacies of the Deaf education field will require a fundamental understanding of the two major philosophies, the pathological (medical-centric) and the cultural-linguistic, which hold contradictory views and attitudes towards Deafness. The contradiction stems from several centuries old dichotomy entrenched in the "inherent unequal power dynamics" (Anderson and Barrera, 1995) which form the exoskeleton of the Deaf educational institutions and systems. The pathological view often is slated under the functionalist theory, and the cultural-linguistic view can be loosely coupled with the post-structuralist theory, in a sociological sense.

The first is the pathological (medical-centric) view, the deeply held belief of many powerful players including doctors, speech-therapists, audiologists, educational experts (social workers, early infant intervention specialists, itinerant teachers and many more) and most importantly, the government policy makers. Its link with functionalist theory is the emphasis on the importance of medical centric

programs and treatments that will make the deaf 'functional' as in hearing and in harmony with the society. The pathological view's self-imposed perception of the deaf and especially their concerns and fear of Deaf children not "fitting in the society" becomes tangible and palpable, ultimately prompting the convergence towards the development of medical-centric educational reforms. Some examples are mainstreaming a Deaf child into a regular school, audio-visual therapy, speech and pathology studies (oral pedagogy), cochlear implants, stigmatization of sign languages and inclusive education for the deaf (mainstreaming approach where a Deaf student is integrated into public institutions without sign language interpreters or appropriate support such as notetakers). It is believed by critics that the medical-centric approach is flawed by imposing unfeasible conditions on deaf children as a crude means of harmonizing Deaf people with the society. Nonetheless, the medical-centric view has dominated the empirical studies of the Deaf education for many years (Bagga-Gupta, 2007; Gibson, Small & Mason, 1997; Jankowski, 1997; Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996; Winefield, 1987).

As a counter-reaction to this approach, "in a larger sense, [as] the oralist movement failed, sign language continued to be used, and vigorously defended, by the deaf community" (Baynton, 1993, p.94). The movement that developed and gained ground in the last thirty years could be studied with reference to the influential works of Paulo Freire, and Antonio Gramsci that encouraged the development of the local community as an active agent in understanding, creating conflicts, criticizing, resisting and transforming the societal hegemony (Demarrais and LeCompte, 1999). The cultural-linguistic view can be traced back to 1700's when the emergence of educated Deaf people resulted in the construction of the cultural-linguistic benchmark that has been determined on the basis of successful empirical evidence. In other words, in the wake of these studies and the emergence of critical theory which "point to a way out by placing a strong emphasis on the power of individuals to structure their own destiny and to ameliorate

the oppressive nature of the institutions in which they live” (Bennett and LeCompte, 1990, p. 28) prompted the Deaf community to step up and initiate action and demand ownership of the Deaf educational arena after centuries of “minimal recognition [being] given to the role and status that visually oriented human beings have played and received in societies where deafness is understood as part of regular human variation” (Bagga-Gupta, 2007, p.13).

The accumulating educational research and statistical information from the last two decades recognizing the cultural and linguistic values of the Deaf people and community indicates that the education system has the capacity to measure the educational quality of the Deaf students in different context. The different context is using sign language, understanding and instilling pride in Deaf culture, and heritage of the Deaf community which can be taught through American Sign Language (ASL) bilingual and bicultural education, positive self-image, and/or education with full access to sign language and emphasizing on schools as sites of cultural and lingual production where people interact to construct meaning (Demarrais and LeCompte, 1999). Using the same indicators, research studies by educational experts (linguists, professors of various fields such as pedagogy, sociology, and many more) have shown that pedagogy in native language (including culture) is an essential tool in achieving quality education of the Deaf students (Cummins, 1990).

In the midst of the intersection, the reality of a Deaf experience for individuals often dominates the outcomes of their educational path. Approximately 90% of Deaf infants in the world are born to hearing parents who often have no notion about Deafness as a human experience. Many Deaf infants are often not diagnosed until they are of either talking age or school age, a delay which normally resulted in the parents’ construction of pathological view. With the pathological view, many parents customarily

desire to have their Deaf child integrated within their home, school and social environment. Consistently, a number which remains persistently high is of Deaf individuals who often never have the opportunity to meet or interact with other Deaf individuals (Meadow-Orlans, 1990). In contrast, those who are fortunate to have the opportunity to meet and/or interact with other Deaf individuals and/or attend Deaf schools usually gravitate towards the Deaf community and recognize themselves as members of a minority cultural-linguistic group. The Deaf experience is an interactive on-going dynamic and multi-faceted phenomenon which will continue to affect the educational opportunities and avenues of a Deaf child.

While the analytical perspectives I just described have been applied widely, I feel that it is imperative to note the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which entered into force on 3 May 2008 (UNEnable, 2010, front page). The Article 24 on Education in the convention emphasizes that appropriate measures must be taken to facilitate "... the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the Deaf community" and to ensure that learning takes place in "environments which maximize academic and social development" (Haualand and Allen, 2009, p. 28). The responsibility of the state in ensuring that learning takes place is common in most systems around the world but the interpretation of this may vary depending on the perceptions of the states: Deaf as a minority cultural-linguistic group or Deaf as a pathological condition. Moreover, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), a representative body of the Deaf population around the world with a consultative status to the United Nations, elaborated on the definition of the learning environment as promoted by the convention which is widely known as the Bilingual and Bicultural education approach. "Bilingual and Bicultural education of Deaf students recognizes both the native sign language of the Deaf community and the majority language of the country in which the students reside. It also

fosters Deaf culture and an appreciation of the many cultures comprising the broader society” (Gibson, Small and Mason, 1997, p. 231). Sign language is considered to be the natural language of the Deaf population that will be acquired as a first language. Spoken language, which is not acquired naturally by Deaf children, will be learned as a second language as the child becomes cognitively/developmentally ready. Both languages are used throughout the child’s entire education. This approach clearly demonstrates that the United Nations now recognizes and emphasizes the importance of ensuring an appropriate learning environment as a basic right of the Deaf population. However, the majority of the states and education systems are unable to elaborate much on the quality of the existing educational opportunities for the Deaf in their systems. The World Federation of the Deaf conducted a worldwide survey in 2007/8, disseminated through the National Associations of the Deaf exploring the existing and current statuses of Deaf people and human rights in their countries. The researchers of the worldwide survey, Haualand and Allen (2009), assert that there is a “massive ignorance in the education system about the importance of sign language in Deaf education” (p. 31). This is another important aspect of understanding the dynamic phenomenon which has a strong influence on the educational opportunities and avenues of a Deaf child in the modern day, in all societies, including the refugee camps in Dadaab.

As the centuries-old dichotomy continues into the modern day and has a tremendous influence on this study and especially the involved participants, the perceptions of the participants are reflected accordingly in their experiences and perspectives of the Deaf Education program in Dadaab. In this next section, I will discuss about the reality of the majority of the Deaf population in Kenya.

### **The reality of Deaf Education in Kenya**

As the worldwide survey conducted by the World Federation of the Deaf discovered, only 20% of Deaf children in the world received any education at all and only 1% of Deaf children were enrolled

in primary education. However, Kenya is considered progressive in terms of bringing Deaf education to the Deaf population in contrast to the majority of African countries. The first Deaf school was established in 1962 in western Kenya, Nyang'oma School for the Deaf, and many more Deaf schools were established in the country for the next 50 years. Today, Kenya has approximately 75 educational institutions for the Deaf, approximately 35 Deaf schools and 30 Deaf units, 3 vocational training schools and 3 secondary schools. "However, thousands of deaf children still do not attend school for lack of funds to attend school, the need to care for the home, and the parental belief that deaf children cannot be educated" (KFDT, 2010, p.1).

The goals of Education for All endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promote free primary education for all children regardless of their background. With the compulsory free primary education for all and countless more Deaf children who are not in school, more and more primary schools have opted to form special units within the school to provide access to education to Deaf children. Many more are formed in hopes of receiving additional financial grant from the Kenya Ministry of Education and international NGOs. The Kenya Ministry of Education have recognized and promoted the Deaf Education program in the country by providing teachers via Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and basic funding for the schools and units. Additionally, multiple international NGOs have been able to sustain many of the basic needs of the schools and units in the country by providing much needed funding and resources to maintain a higher quality of education.

The rapid proliferation of Deaf units especially in the rural parts of the country has resulted in inadequate provisions for the Deaf children, as a result of untrained teachers, teachers with no prior

knowledge about Deaf as a minority cultural-linguistic community group and sign language, wide range of students in same classroom, non-existent/limited educational resources, and lower expectations of Deaf students. Despite the fact that there is one formal training program, Kenyan Institute for Special Education (KISE) for the teachers of the Deaf in the capital city, Nairobi, many teachers of the Deaf are not trained because of the limited mobility of Kenyans in the country as a result of economic hardships. But in the last ten years, more and more teachers have been able to receive training from Kenyan Institute for Special Education (KISE) via their long distance program which enables teachers to study from their villages, towns or cities. However, many of the hearing teachers currently in Deaf education are not proficient in Kenyan Sign Language or knowledgeable about Kenyan Deaf culture as many of them have not had the opportunity to learn Kenyan Sign Language or interact with local Deaf community members in a natural environment.

Nonetheless, with 50 years of Deaf Education in Kenya and with the aid of an international NGO, Global Deaf Connection, Machakos Teacher College was able to include numerous Deaf students into their teachers' training program with sign language interpreters. Kenya now has between 60 to 70 Deaf teachers in the country. Deaf teachers of Kenya have established Kenya Federation of Deaf Teachers (KFDT) a union of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing teachers who provides support to Deaf Kenyan teachers. KFDT also addresses fundamental problems faced by the Deaf community in their pursuit of education. "The number of Deaf teachers is slowly increasing, despite the rise in the professional rank, Deaf teachers still face obstacles in the teaching profession" (KFDT, 2010). Some of the problematic ways that the Kenya Federation of Deaf Teachers have identified mainly stems from "the prevailing negative attitude toward the Deaf in Kenyan society and the Deaf have a lot of

difficulties in addressing their problems i.e. health and social needs due to communication barrier and neglect by the society” (KFDT, 2010, p.1).

By looking at the Deaf Education in Kenya as an overarching feature, one would anticipate that the quality of education is acceptable. However, this is not the case as the majority of the schools and units have encountered another challenge, the differing interpretation of method of instruction/language of instruction to be used in the classrooms. With respect to the differing views towards educating Deaf students, the majority of the Deaf schools employ total communication as a method of instruction which heavily emphasize on a borrowed system which is a fusion of a spoken language with a sign language mixing and matching the structures, syntax, morphology and grammar rules of both languages. Furthermore, the majority of the Deaf units either employ an oral and/or manual sign system. The oral approach is also known as auditory-oral and aural/oral education which heavily emphasizes using speech. The spoken language is assumed to be the basis for standard social and academic communication where children learn about and from spoken language. Differences in methods of instructing Deaf students further devalue the natural language of the Deaf population: Kenya Sign Language. There is much more work needed to promote Bilingual and Bicultural education as a practical and effective method to maximize academic and social development of Deaf students in Kenya.

To briefly sum up the educational opportunities in Kenya, one could say that they are excelling in the quantity aspect of bringing education to Deaf students in Kenya and are slowly improving in the quality aspect. However, the quality of Deaf education in Kenya is quite low despite the availability and accessibility of Deaf education programs in the country.

On the other hand, the Deaf units in the Dadaab Refugee Camp are not directly under the jurisdiction of the Kenya Ministry of Education. The UNHCR, CARE and Kenya Ministry of Education have worked together to formalize the education in the camps. Currently, CARE is the implementing organization for providing Basic Education in the camps and the schools in Dadaab. The students follow the Kenyan 8-4-4 curriculum and participate in both the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exit examinations. During the early days of the formation of the Dadaab Refugee Camp, many of the teachers were Kenyan and they provided the much needed technical assistance especially in the special education and secondary school levels. The Kenya Ministry of Education also cooperates with the CARE Basic Education sector in providing much-needed access to Kenyan schools for those with special circumstances. This brings me to the next section which will elaborate on the details of being a refugee in a refugee camp.

### **The Refugee Status**

According to the UNHCR's Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees document derived from the 1951 and 1967 United Nations treaties on the status of refugees, a refugee is defined as any person who has "well found fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR, 2007, p. 16). The refugee situation and population in Africa have grown exponentially in the last fifty years. Attempts to understand and define the refugee phenomenon in Africa have prompted the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to redefine the definition of a refugee in respect to "Africa's own historical experiences" (Westin, 1999, p. 26).

Africanists in general agree that one root cause of the severe conflicts haunting the continent dates back to the arbitrarily drawn boundaries settled by the European imperial powers at the Berlin Conference in 1878. Those boundaries were inherited by the independent successor states that formed in the wake of colonialism from the end of the 1950's to the mid-1970's. The transition of power itself a destabilizing factor. Practically

all sub-Saharan state boundaries are artificial in the sense that they do not coincide with ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious nor national groupings that have developed out of Africa's own historical experience. (Westin, 1999, p. 26)

The Organization of African Unity refers to refugee as any person “who has fled from his or her state of nationality because of political, racial, religious, ethnic or other kinds of persecutions or to avoid warfare or other violence” (Bariagaber, 2006, p.11; OAU, 1969).

To summarize the definition of the refugee status, the refugee experience “denote[s] the human consequence – personal, social, economic, cultural and political of forced migration” (Ager, 1999, p. 2). Forced migration and displacement stem from both human-made and natural disasters such as civil wars, famine, globalization, large nomadic communities, destroyed infrastructures, harsh material condition and widespread poverty, absence of central government, disruption of the nation's security, economic dislocation, epidemics, demographics imbalance, political oppression, ecological disruption and rural to urban migration (UNHCR, 2008; Westin, 1999; Hampton, 1998; and Bariagaber, 1995). As Horst (2006) eloquently notes about the differences in definitions of refugee, “the worst problem with processes of refugee labelling is that they lead to policies that do not enable refugees to regain control over their lives” (p. 24). This criticism is related to the ever-growing protracted refugee situation of the Dadaab Refugee Camp.

### **Protracted Refugee Situations**

The UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as:

One in which refugee find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is

often unable to break free from the enforced reliance on external assistance (UNHCR, 2007, p.5).

Summerfield (1999) estimates around five percent of all refugees in the world manage to migrate to Western countries. The remainder ninety-five percent of the refugee population are either internally displaced in their own countries, living in refugee camps, or living in poor countries surrounding their home country.

In simpler terms... they cannot go back to their homeland, in most cases because it is not safe for them to do so; they are unable to settle permanently in their country of first asylum, because the host state does not want them to remain indefinitely on its territory; and they do not have the option of moving on, as no third country has agreed to admit them and provide permanent residency rights (Crisp, 2005, p.17).

Therefore many refugees camps such as Dadaab refugee camp have become 'permanent' settlements for the ever-growing refugee population trapped in a persistent 'state of limbo'. International organizations have responded to this growing trend by enacting 'humanitarian management organizations' to meet refugees' basic needs and human rights. As Hyndman (1996) observes from her fieldwork in Dadaab camp, the

Kenyan police guard the camps... while the 'humanitarian international' literally organizes the field: building camps in grid style; generating systems to meet refugees' basic needs in an orderly way; and checking refugee cards to ensure a match between family size and their given rations (1996, p.23, Harrell-Bond, 1999, p.138)

There are emerging overarching issues stemming from protracted refugee situations; for example, the dependency syndrome, economic hardship, social disruption, physical violence, political oppression, separation, psychosocial wellbeing, reception, settlement, accessibility to basic human rights, culture/linguistic/ethnic/intergenerational conflict, camp capacity, diminishing donor aid and many more (Ager, 1999; Harrell-Bond, 1999; Hyndman, 1996). Multiple, interactive and dynamic

external macro factors have had a substantial influence on the micro level of the camp management and notably the refugees' experiences in the camps.

Again Horst (2006) captured the very essence of the classic refugee experience in Dadaab as she extracts a very powerful statement from a headmaster of a school in Hagadera, Dadaab:

“By now, personally I have adapted to the life here, to being a refugee, to being spoon-fed. But the problem is that we have stayed in refugee camps for ten years, with no hope of getting citizenship or at least equal human rights. We are not allowed to earn the same amount of money as Kenyan citizens, our movements are restricted and we cannot settle anywhere in Kenya. After disintegrating and collapsing due to clan conflicts, my country of origin which belong to Third World, has demoted me to the Fourth World of being a refugee. This ‘Fourth World’... is a world in which a large number of institutions play a role. Because refugees are (temporarily) outside the national order of things and cannot simply claim their citizenship rights, various forms of security are provided by the ‘refugee regime’”. (p. 77)

“Life in Dadaab is shaped by the fact that the refugees inhabit an institutionalized world of NGOs, intergovernmental agencies and governments” (Horst, 2006, p.106) which in turn opens a whole new discussion about the politics and problematic ways of addressing a protracted refugee situation although this research will not go into details about this aspect. But one must note how some aspects of this discussion do have an effect on the discourses and the quality of Deaf Education in Dadaab. Within the ‘refugee regime’, education is one of the tools that the NGOs utilize to promote stability and hope in the camps.

### **Education in Emergencies**

Access to education is a human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and numerous other international laws and treaties. Studies have cited basic education as a tool to protect children and youth and to promote peace, stability and sustainable development (Mendenhall, 2008; Bethke, 2004; Sinclair, 2002).

Education is also cited as the “basis for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health, enabling the use of new technologies, and creating and spreading knowledge” (EFA, 2008, p. 1). Providing quality education in emergencies is considered to be among the best ways to reduce the impact of conflict on children, and it helps lay a solid foundation for peace and development. Without the skills that a basic education can provide, societies lack an educated workforce to tackle poverty and pursue sustainable development. (Women’s Commission, 2006, p. iv)

An international worker with Save the Children organization asserts that approximately 70% of the population in the camps are children. Yet, an administrator with CARE Basic Education sector states that only 50% of the children in Dadaab have access to education at the moment. As of June 2009, nearly 50,000 refugee children are enrolled in approximately 25 schools in the Dadaab camps. CARE Basic Education program’s current foremost concern is to ensure that all children in Dadaab have access to education. It is estimated that another 48,000 refugee children in Dadaab still do not have access to education.

Providing education in emergencies not only ensures that children realize their guaranteed right to education; it provides them with a sense of hope and normalcy when their lives have been disrupted, promotes their psychological and social well-being and cognitive development, and lessens the risk that they will be recruited into or exposed to dangerous activities. (Women’s Commission, 2006, p. iv). As refugees, children face a broad range of challenges to their development and survival: for example, malnutrition, diseases, disability, separation and loss, disruption of socialization, traumatic experience, coping capacity, accessibility to services, recruitment into military, psychosocial well-being, and many more (Ahearn, Loughry and Ager, 1999, 216). More often than not, education programs in emergency

and crisis situations overlook the special needs of vulnerable groups such as girls, orphans, children infected with HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities and children from ethnic or linguistic minority groups (Tomasveki, 2004). Inequalities in access to basic education become another obstacle for Deaf refugees; inequalities in accessibility stem from difference between languages used in the schools (Nover, 1994/1995; Lucas, 1995; Coryell & Holcomb, 1997; Johnson, Liddell & Erting, 1989; Lane, 1996; Small & Mason, 2008). Access to basic education for Deaf refugees is not only a tool to protect and promote peace, stability and sustainable development but it is an avenue to information and especially is a site of language, cultural and social acquisition. According to the majority of the interviewees in this study, there are neither Deaf schools nor educational programs for Deaf students in Somalia. The majority are very pleased to be given the opportunity to receive education in Dadaab. This brings me to the next section which will briefly touch on Somalia and its connections to Dadaab.

## **Somalia**

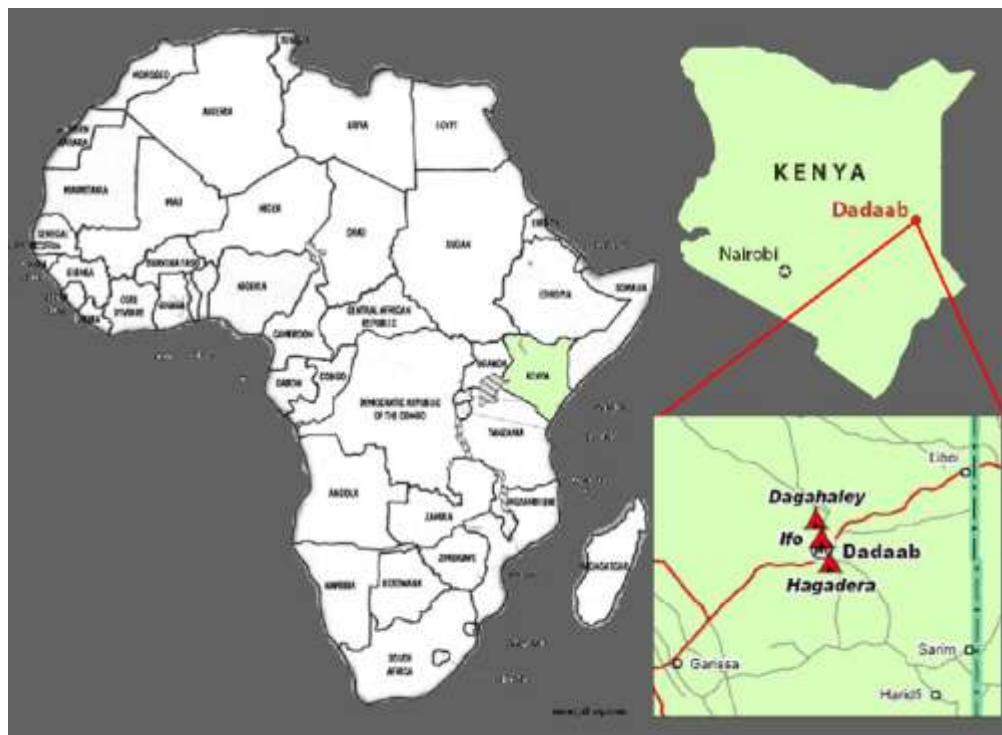
This thesis will not elaborate or discuss the political ramifications of/in Somalia. However, it will give a brief summary of Somalia's long and tumultuous history filled with civil wars which in turn created a large diaspora community. The independence from the Italians and British during the 1960's opened the door to an increasingly totalitarian Somaliland government and eventually numerous resistance movements sprang up across the country (World Factbook, 2008). This ultimately led into the Somali Civil War which erupted in early 1990's. Combined northern and southern clan forces overthrew the Somaliland President Saidi Barre in 1991. There is now a situation of non-existent state governance of the country; political control within the boundaries of Somalia is conflictually enacted by numerous clan forces. (World Factbook, 2008). Hassig and Latif (2007) wrote a comprehensive book about Somalia and its long history. They captured the essence of the Somali civil war which:

“... disrupted agriculture and food distribution in southern Somalia. The basis of most of the conflicts was clan allegiances and competition for resources between the warring

clans. James Bishop, the United States last ambassador to Somalia, explained that there is "competition for water, pasturage, and... cattle. It is a competition that used to be fought out with arrows and sabers... Now it is fought out with AK-47s. (Hassig and Latif, 2007, p.22).

External attempts have been made to intervene in the Somali Civil War by the United Nations, the American government and collective groups. However no progress has been made to date with the formation of a working government because of internal conflicts among the numerous clan forces dispersed throughout the country. As a neighbouring country, Kenya has faced proliferation of long-term refugees and protracted refugee situations in the country with the continuous influx of refugees from Somalia on a daily basis. The majority of the refugee population are Somalis who currently live in one of the two refugee camps in Kenya, Kakuma and Dadaab (CARE, 2010). The UNHCR estimates that 97% of the refugees living in Dadaab are Somalis.

**Map 1: Dadaab Refugee Camp**



(ReliefWeb, 2009)

## **Dadaab Refugee Camp**

As a neighbouring town closest to the Somalia border and with the twenty plus years of civil war in Somalia, Dadaab Refugee Camp is one of the world's oldest refugee camps and home to 275,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2009). As the violence continues in Somalia, Dadaab continues to receive daily influx of new refugees; approximately 6,500 new arrivals flood to the camps each month (UNHCR, 2010) overstressing the camps' resources. The camp facilities are designed to meet the capacity of 90,000 refugees and thus the camp's manpower and basic infrastructure are already stretched to its limits (UNHCR Kenya, Chuma, 2009). The majority of the new arrivals are forced to stay with friends and family. There are no official statistics on the Deaf refugee population in the camps. Using the Canadian Association of the Deaf (2009), who use the traditional 'one in ten' method to calculate the Deaf population in the country, has led me to estimate the population of Deaf refugees in the camp at 30,000. On the contrary, I believe that with the dynamic factors of forced migration, the Deaf refugee population may be much higher than one would find in a relatively peaceful and safe country.

Dadaab is a town in north eastern Kenya approximately 100 kilometres away from the Somali-Kenya border. Prior to 1991, Dadaab was a small town in the region and the majority of Dadaab's local population was made up of nomadic camel and goat herders. After the camps were built in 1991<sup>3</sup> and 1992<sup>4</sup>, much of the rest of the town's economy is now based on services for refugees (Sipus, 2008). The major feature in Dadaab is the massive UNHCR base that serves 3 refugee camps around Dadaab: Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera. The camps cover a total area of 50 square km and are within an 18 km radius of the Dadaab town. Horst (2006) powerfully captures the Dadaab landscape in the following passage:

“there are signs of urban planning, especially in the two camps that were set up later, after the initial emergency phase. Ifo, the first camp in the region, consists of seventy-one

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<sup>3</sup> Ifo camp was first built in 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Dagahaley and Hagadera camps were respectively built in 1992.

blocks, which are divided over three main sections, whereas Dagahaley is neatly cut into eight lines and three cross-cutting avenues. Hagadera consists of two big compact groups. The first is divided into eight sections and the three cross-cutting avenues and the second divided into three sections and one cross-cutting avenue. All sections and blocks have section and blockleaders, who are elected to function as brokers between the refugees and the agencies” (p. 79).

There are markets in all camps complete with stores selling a wide range of goods from clothing to food, small cafes and internet cafes. The majority of the storeowners either had relatives abroad who regularly sent money to support the refugees or had good networks with the wider community in both Kenya and Somalia utilizing radio sets and mobile phones as a tool to collect and send money and goods. The camps expanded in grid style rows from the centre of the ‘market’, the early refugees from early 1990’s often live in the ‘A’ block the closest to the centre and it is divided into sections i.e. A1, A2, so forth. As Dadaab continued to receive new influx of refugees, the camps expanded its blocks/sectors adding new letters and numbers. By July 2009, there were ‘N’ blocks. Those who have lived in the camps the longest are more likely to have a sturdy home complete with best possible materials found in the area, meaning those in ‘A’ blocks,. unlike with the many new comers in the ‘N’ blocks which often consist of a small and simple hut built with blanket and sticks which is often temporary as they search for any possible materials to improve their homes. The majority of homes are constructed hut-style with tin cans from vegetable oil containers distributed by aid agencies, burlap sacks distributed by aid agencies, local fauna, sticks, clay and building materials such as tin roof, tarp and wood planks provided by the aid agencies as shelter materials.

The schools are also often constructed with tin cans and tin roof with insufficient wobbling desks and gaping holes on the blackboard. Most of the schools provide for students from approximately 2 to 8 surrounding blocks. Sometimes students will miss school to help parents collect their monthly food

rations, to visit the IOM, to be interviewed by the UNHCR, to apply for asylum with one of the host countries (many use the Deaf member of the family as an avenue to rack up sympathy points from the host countries in their asylum application process), to collect water - sometimes a well would dry up so the student has to stay home and help his/her family fetch water from another well farther away from their home -- and many more unforeseeable challenges that come with living in a refugee camp.

Every refugee family is assigned a ration card with specific number of members on a card, and every fifteen days they go and pick up their food rations from the food distribution centre. They receive the amount of food according to the number of family members living with the 'head' of the family. Many of the refugees sell their food rations at the local outdoor market right next to the food distribution centre because many of them receive exactly the same food every fifteen days such as maize or flour but no sugar. Thus they often sell it to Kenyans or other refugee families so that they may purchase their preferred food. Moreover, there are refugees who have their own livestock such as camels, goats and cows. There are incentives for those who raise livestock as the agencies and NGOs provide a very small incentive fee on a monthly basis so that they may develop 'self generated income' by selling meat from the livestock or selling the livestock. There are numerous incentives for the thousands of refugees who are employed by the agencies and NGOs; however, there is a huge need to "bridge the gap in order to approach humanitarian assistance from a developmental perspective... [as many 'work projects' and incentives] have only provided short-term and inadequate answers to the real need for investment, infrastructure, education and training and long-term income-generating opportunities for the area" (Horst, 2006, p. 81).

The Dadaab Refugee camp is administrated by the UNHCR and the Kenyan government along with an implementing partner organization, CARE. From 1991 to 2004, CARE and UNHCR were the main implementing partners providing all services and programs in the camp. A Kenyan worker who worked at Dadaab for more than ten years mentioned that in 2004 there was a huge infrastructure change which saw the UNHCR inviting new competing agencies and NGOs for better quality and cheaper programs/services to meet the needs of refugees at Dadaab.

Today, there are approximately 10 new implementing partner agencies and NGOs specializing in specific sectors. CARE continues to be a major implementing partner in Dadaab and is the implementing partner in education which provides and manages basic education programs for all children of Dadaab between the ages of 5 and 18 years old. CARE also provides and manages several different sectors, community services which include sports and recreation, counselling, and support for vulnerable groups including women, economic development and water and sanitation. Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) in partnership with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) continues to provide health and medical care. World Food Programme (WFP) in partnership with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Action Against Hunger provides and manages food distribution program in the camps including several smaller food programs such as lunch programs at some of the schools. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provides and manages shelter and camp management including providing vocational training for youth. International Organisation of Migration (IOM) manages and regulates the migration movement in, to, from and within the camps Handicap International (HI), a very new NGO at Dadaab arriving in late 2008, manages and provides rehabilitative support with the goal of integrating disabled people into the communities. SAVE the Children (SAVE) manages and provides child protection services via series of programs concerning child's welfare. FilmAid International organization is committed to bridging

information from the camps to the outside world. The Lutheran World Federation is responsible for the camp planning and management including promoting community self-management.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Short Overview of the Analytic Conceptual Framework

This thesis attempts to analyze the role Deaf Units play in terms of Matthew Miles' 'Triple I' model of successful school program implementation (*Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalization*). Efforts are undertaken to triangulate the experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders who are part of the schooling culture in Dadaab Refugee Camp by utilizing the 'Triple I' framework as a tool to interpret, 'classify' and identify the supports and obstacles to the provision of the Deaf education program in the camps

As this study is situated in a unique and highly contextualized setting with its own unique historical, economic, societal and environmental issues, efforts are made to link the experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders to the change process in terms of making sense of societal and contextual issues they face on a daily basis. To delve into the implicit inherent dynamics of power, processes, systems and structures, one must inquire into how involved stakeholders respond to constraints and pressures imposed by the structures of the society in which they live in (Bascom, 1998). With further investigation, the analysis of the entrenched push and pull factors within the existing system facilitates an understanding of various societal issues and the existing context that the change process is situated in. The implementation of the 'Triple I' framework is intended to prevent the investigation into the dynamics of processes and power from becoming overly refugee-centric. More often than not, research becomes refugee centric, enhancing the representation of refugees as "displaced migrants as independent beings with little regard for the [social and] economic environments that they are moving out, settling into and returning home to" (Bascom, 1998, pp. xiv).

But again, this study does not just focus on the ‘refugee community’ and their relationship with the existing education system but focuses on a distinct marginalized population within the ‘refugee community.’ The dominant paradigms for research in the ‘Deaf’ field habitually diverge into two very different ideologies/perspectives: 1) Deaf people as a minority linguistic and cultural group and 2) Deafness as a pathological deficiency. Furthermore, for many years, research within the Deaf education has often converged towards a few main themes: the rehabilitation of Deaf children by focusing on ‘fixing the auditory problems’ (Nielsen and Luetke-Stahlman, 2002; Webster, 2000; Perrier, Charlier, Hage and Alegria, 1987, Campbell, 1992), how to integrate Deaf children into mainstream education programs (Reilly and Khanh 2004; Seal, 1999; Stinson and Anita, 1999; Foster and Emerton, 1991) and more recently, on language/literacy acquisition of Deaf children especially with bilingual and bicultural education (Mayberry, 2007, 1998; Small and Mason, 2007; Simms, Andrews and Smith, 2006; Bavelier, Newport and Supalla, 2003; Mason, 1997). More often than not, the problem with the above-mentioned image is the lack of hands and voices from the very Deaf individuals and stakeholders involved in the education system. Therefore in a study that is rooted in a unique societal and economic environment including specific views/attitudes/issues requires sensitivity toward the relationships between the Deaf refugees and the ‘hosts’ (Bascom, 1998).

Therefore, we return to the ‘Triple I’ framework which allows multiple dimensions within the change process to emerge and the inclusion of ‘framing analysis’ which incorporates multiple perspective from involved stakeholders to guide us into understanding the effectiveness of this program by identifying and examining its role and position on the continuum of its implementation as a program for Deaf refugees.

## Short Introduction to Triple 'I' Framework

The foremost rationale for implementation of a new idea should be the improvement in student learning and development. Education change theorists such as Fullan (2001) and Hall and Hord (2006) emphasize the importance of recognizing that change is a process not an event. Fullan, drawing upon his own work and that of Matthew Miles (Video Journal of Education, 1993) points out three specific stages in the change process; initiation, implementation and institutionalization. The three stages are multi-dimensional and include a wide range of factors that often influence the potential for positive outcomes of the implementation of the change process in an education institution.

**Table 1: The Triple I Model proposed by Miles (Video Journal of Education, 1993)**

### **Initiation Factors**

- Linked to High Profile Need
- Clear Model
- Strong Advocate
- Active Initiation

### **Implementation Factors**

- Orchestration
- Shared Control
- Pressure and Support
- Technical Assistance
- Rewards

### **Institutionalization Factors**

- Embedding
- Links to Instruction
- Widespread Use
- Removal of Competing Priorities
- Continuing Assistance

### *The Initiation Factors*

In the Initiation stage, there are four specific factors that heighten the possibility for a successful initiation of an educational improvement initiative: 1) Linked to a High Profile Need; 2) Clear Model; 3) Strong Advocate; and 4) Active Initiation. Foremost, the educational improvement initiative must have a very clear model both for the program or service to be delivered and for the process that will be enacted to put it into place. In addition the initiative must be linked to a widely perceived ‘need’, especially a high profile one whether a political, academic or social need. It is very important to have the ‘change process’ initiated and spearheaded by strong and active advocates and participants. For a successful initiation, it is crucial to have ‘the link’ to bring in the necessary attention and support for the initiation of a change. A strong advocate for the change is instrumental in the initiation and formation of the change process by bringing attention to the need for change.

### *The Implementation Factors*

The Implementation stage encompasses the processes of initially putting a new policy, program or service into practice. As proposed in the Triple I model, successful implementation requires effective action by those responsible for leading and facilitating the implementation process in five key areas: 1) Orchestration; 2) Shared Control; 3) Pressure and Support; 4) Technical Assistance; and 5) Rewards. It should be noted that the implementation stage involves considerable effort to ensure that the educational improvement initiative includes multiple individuals in the orchestration to ensure that the much-needed pressure and support are in place to achieve the foremost goal of the change process. Furthermore, this stage is significant in the ‘change process’ as one cannot overcome unforeseen obstacles and barriers with ideology alone. One also must incorporate technical assistance and rewards to facilitate and promote the positive qualities of the change process itself.

### *The Institutionalization Factors*

Within the Institutionalization stage are such factors as 1) Embedding; 2) Links to Instruction; 3) Widespread Use; 4) Removal of Competing Priorities; and 5) Continuing Assistance. The successful embedding of the new educational improvement initiative into the education/schooling system requires the continuation of assistance in all possible areas, ongoing facilitation/promotion of the new initiative into different areas/environments, and incorporation of the delivery of the new program or service into the ongoing operational policies, procedures, and budget of the sponsoring agencies. Additionally, the removal of competing priorities would assist in maintaining and cultivating support for the new initiative which should continuously be linked to instructional needs.

According to Fullan (2001), the implementation process involves changes in behaviours and beliefs on the part of individuals involved in the education climate attempting to put in an innovation into practice. Fullan (ibid) further elaborates on the multi-dimensionality in terms of the change process which includes materials, teaching methods and different beliefs. Out of the three foremost dimensions, this study will primarily focus on the 'different beliefs' arising from the varied experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of Deaf education services in Daadab refugee camp.

### **Triple 'I' Framework, Framing Analysis and Dadaab**

In the analysis for this study, the multi-faceted perspectives of the role the Deaf Unit plays in Deaf refugees' lives are organized into three stages of Miles' Triple I Model; Initiation, Implementation and Institutionalization. The dynamics of incorporating multiple perspectives will allow us to take into account the full range of views of those involved in Deaf education in the refugee camp in order to identify where the opportunities and obstacles lie within the change process. This framework also allows me to break down potential opportunities and obstacles within an educational change into three sections

with specific factors to further examine what ‘works or not’ for the involved stakeholders, and to develop insight into the evolution and current status of Deaf education provisions within the refugee camp context.

Furthermore, in this highly contextualized study, I felt that it is important to modify the ‘Triple I’ framework to accommodate the unique context and its opportunities and limitations. Crossley and Watson (2003) warn about “the dangers of the uncritical transfer of dominant research paradigms, theories and agendas...” (p. 131). This caution draws attention “to the importance of the two core concepts of context and culture” (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p.132) in a study.

Therefore, I elected to incorporate few elements from Snow and Benford’s (1988) Frame Analysis framework which encourages the inclusion of multiple perspectives into understanding the roles the Deaf Units play in Deaf refugees’ lives. According to Benford and Snow (2000), frame analysis is a technique allowing one to approach a movement, element, or idea by deconstructing diverse lenses, frames or components. One of the key issues of utilizing frame analysis is to sort out underlying logics of the change process associated with social issues.

Frame analysis is a way of depicting and engaging the array of arguments and counter arguments that surround complex social issues (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Schan & Rein, 1994) (pp.35), in regards to the nature of the issue (diagnostic framing), proposed solutions (prognostic framing), and ideas for how to go about generating support for different positions (motivational framing) Analyzing the roles various actors play from different areas utilizing this framework allows us to identify the interplay of perspectives among all actors and their role in the education process.

To combine the frames collectively, for example, social movement actors which consist in this study of students, local stakeholders, NGOs, teachers, and school officials indicate a need for further examination of the distinctive societal issues and high context setting. Efforts to understand, elaborate and relate to the overlapping linkages among various frames requires further examination of the central force, in this case, processes and dynamics of the schools. The supplementary considerations of the societal issues and contextualized settings will be likely to affect the dynamics of the frames itself. Creed et al. (2002) suggest that the contextualized setting has the capacity to either advance or impede the cultural dynamic and social movement.

I have heavily emphasized the significance of recognizing the unique context of this study as societal, economic, historical and environmental issues are often imported into organizations and systems including education institutions (Creed et al., 2002). Additionally Bariagaber (2006) reminds us that “at the policy level the lack of understanding and appreciation of the problem created problems in the modalities of allocation of resources to manage the refugee problem in the region” (pp.1). Thus, I elected to link, amalgamate and utilize both frameworks to allow me to dismantle collective hands and voices elaborating rich descriptions of their experiences and perspectives with the existing systems, structures and practices into specific theoretical streams to dissect the logics of the Deaf Units’ role and actions.

The rationale for the fusion of two frameworks, Miles’ ‘Triple I’ framework and Snow & Benford’s ‘Framing Analysis’ framework is based on the fact that the study aims to identify and examine specific factors that are “reshaping the priorities and practices of schools toward a closer

understanding” (Crowson & Boyd, 1996, pp. 6) of their role in Deaf refugees’ lives. Additionally, with the change process that occurs over a period of time and is highly influenced by the dynamics of the school community and especially the surrounding societal, historical, economic and environmental issues, it is imperative to establish a guide that allows us to examine and understand the dimensions of the forces and logics of actions including regulatory strategies in a contextualized approach. This process enables us to understand the institutional change processes and in this case, the evolution of the school’s role in Deaf refugees’ lives. Lastly, this framework aims to enhance our understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery systems that serve them, including pinpointing a more direct engaged method to address ongoing concerns and priorities.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Methodology

#### Rationale

The primary intention of this case study is to introduce new insights by conducting illuminative evaluation methodology (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) with involved stakeholders of Dadaab Deaf education program such as students, teachers, administrators (special education teacher, special education inspector and headmasters) and community members (parents). Horst (2006) reminds us that “another important aspect of understanding human agency is related to the ways in which people interpret their experiences. Individuals use certain narratives, or discursive means, to reach decisions and justify them” (p.25). This approach enables the study to encompass a wider spectrum of experiences and perspectives from different individuals who are associated with the Deaf education program in Dadaab to deconstruct their interpretation into the synergy, significance and the definition of the Deaf Units’ role in Deaf refugees’ lives and address the research question.

To conduct a study in a highly uniquely context environment where the primary concern is of description and interpretation, illuminative evaluation methodology allows me to make a useful distinction between the static ‘instructional system<sup>5</sup>’ and dynamic ‘learning milieu<sup>6</sup>’ by addressing:

- a) How it operates;

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Parlett and Hamilton (1976) p. 11 for their definition of ‘Instructional System’ – catalogued descriptions, a shared idea/model, but always different in each situation, and in practice, objectives are commonly re-ordered, re-defined, abandoned or forgotten.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to Parlett and Hamilton (1976) p. 12 for their definition of ‘Learning Milieu’ - The socio-psychological and material environment where students and teachers work together, the configuration depends on the interplay of numerous factors such as assumptions, constraints, Acknowledge the diversity and complexity of learning milieu is an essential pre-requisite for the serious study of educational programs.

- b) How it is influenced by the various school situations in which it is applied;
- c) What those directly concerned regarding as its advantages and disadvantages; and
- d) How students' intellectual tasks and academic experiences are most affected.

(Parlett and Hamilton, 1976, p.9)

“It aims to discover and document what it is like to be participating in the scheme; whether as teacher or pupil and to discern and discuss the innovation's most significant features, returning concernants and critical processes” (Parlett and Hamilton, p.9)

Crossley and Watson (2003) lay emphasis on the fact that “too many international initiatives lack an adequate local contextual perspective, precisely because they do not sufficiently appreciate the underlying assumptions upon which that society is based” (p.36). Thus this study incorporates illuminative evaluation methodology to bring light to the experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders and allow the highly contextualized data to speak for themselves. Additionally, this study's primary aim is to address the “need to do much more to heed the voices emerging from the South itself” (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. 90 - Teasdale & Teasdale 1999; Holmes 2001). The idea of utilizing qualitative case study methodology in this study is to “recognize the other and to explain difference by understanding its ‘otherness’” (Marginson and Mollis, 2001; p.603) by taking account of their hands and voices and involve them in the social science research arena.

### **Research Question**

This study addresses and analyzes the following main research question:

What role does the Deaf education in refugee camps play in Deaf refugees' lives?

I will analyze the roles of the Deaf units in Daadab refugee camp utilizing the Triple I framework by Matthew Miles (2002) to include and illustrate the multi-faceted dimensions of program development

and implementation from the perspectives of involved stakeholders who are a large part of the Deaf schooling culture. Multi-faceted perspectives of the school's roles will be examined by delving into the experiences of Deaf students, teachers, administrators and community members as they associate with the Deaf education program on different levels. To collectively examine and understand the central question, about what role the Deaf units play in the Deaf refugees' lives, I will deconstruct the role the Deaf unit plays into three components to illustrate the explicit and implicit mechanisms that shape their role. The three components are embedded within the three key sub-questions:

- 1) What are the stakeholders' experiences and perspectives of the opportunities associated with Deaf education?
- 2) What are the stakeholders' experiences and perspectives of the obstacles associated with the Deaf education?
- 3) What strategies are stakeholders associated with the Deaf education units employing or advocating to address the continuing challenges and needs for Deaf refugee's education?

### **Method of Data Collection**

Given the qualitative nature of this study, the foremost aims of the data collection methodology are to interview, observe, describe, triangulate and interpret the overarching trends of the experiences amongst the stakeholders of the Deaf education community in the camp. Data were collected manually through on site observations which were noted into field notes and videotaped semi-structured interviews in several stages spanning six weeks with the overall aim of collecting as many lenses/frames from relevant individuals and stakeholders to provide rich descriptions and perspectives of the Deaf education's role in their lives, taking into account the evolution of Deaf education provisions in the camp from its inception to the present.

### *Shift in the Data Collection Process*

With the extraordinary complexity and scale of this study, there was a shift in the data collection process upon the arrival in the field. Initially, from pre-fieldwork communications and contacts with a few individuals working in Dadaab Refugee camp, it was clear that there are a total of three Deaf units distributed throughout the camp, one for each compound within the Dadaab Camp. Upon my arrival in Dadaab, I discovered that there is a proliferation of numerous new Deaf units distributed throughout the three camps. Therefore, with the study's foremost intention to introduce overarching view of the educational opportunities in the camp (rather than separate case studies of each unit), I proceeded to visit all known Deaf units under CARE's basic education program in Dadaab. The data collection encompasses three camp compounds; Hagadera, Ifo and Dagahaley, within the Dadaab Refugee Camp. The three compounds consist a total of seven Deaf units; Central, Horseed, Halane, Midnimo, Western, Unity and Jubba Units, and numerous teachers of the Deaf and Deaf students.

### *Timeline*

The fieldwork/data collection took place in June 2009 for six weeks to avoid the final exams session normally held during the last two weeks of July and the official school holidays during the month of August.

Prior to conducting the study in the camp, I paid a visit to the National Council for Science and Technology under Republic of Kenya to obtain a research permit to conduct educational research at the Dadaab Refugee Camp which falls under the Garissa Education District. I had to spend a week at Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, to complete the necessary procedure to obtain a research permit. Thus, I had to make some changes in my departure date for Dadaab to ensure that I had both the research permit and permission to enter the refugee camp. Additionally, with limited availability of transportation

to the Dadaab Refugee camp with the CARE organization, I had to delay my departure for the refugee camp by one and half weeks, bringing the total amount of time for my stay at Dadaab to four and half weeks.

During the first week, I participated in a cultural ‘introductory phase’ where I met all officials and potential participants to introduce myself and my study, and to obtain permission to conduct my study at their compounds and schools. My eventual status was as an intern to ensure flexibility in my mobilization throughout the three camps without impeding the CARE organization. The ‘introductory phase’ was an excellent opportunity for me to discuss the logistics of my visit to each unit in each compound with key individuals. Logistics included revising my schedule for my visits to each unit and interviews with potential participants keeping in mind with the availability of the sign language interpreter and translator, and especially in respect to the camp-wide convey transportation schedule and their foremost and prior commitments of all individuals working for the CARE organization. During the ‘introductory phase,’ I also began to observe some classrooms and collect historical and background information about the units and the Deaf community of each compound from various individuals that I met along the way.

The remaining three weeks was spent on collecting data from participants via a series of semi-structured interviews that were videotaped and on-going documenting in my field notes of the everyday experiences of the Deaf refugees living in the compounds. As Stromquist (1999) reminds us that “the tools of qualitative research have been instrumental in documenting the everyday experience of students in educational institutions, noting the sometimes mild but cumulative nature of many events that gradually yet inexorably shape individuals’ perception of self and their roles in society” (p.182). With

three weeks, I spent one full week at each compound and a minimum of one full day at each of the seven units. A typical day collecting data in the field consists of various activities as mentioned:

*Table 2: Fieldwork Schedule*

<b>8:00</b>	Departure of the first group of conveyes heading out to the said compound (Hagadera, Ifo and then onto Dagahaley)
<b>8:30</b>	Arrival at the one of the compounds and morning greetings with the staff at the compound
<b>9:00</b>	Departure for one of the Deaf unit in the compound (either by foot or with a compound vehicle)
<b>9:30</b>	Arrival at the Deaf Unit
<b>9:30 – 12:00</b>	Interviews with approximately 4 to 6 individuals (i.e. students, teachers and parents according to the prearranged interview schedule) and on site observations at the Deaf Unit
<b>12:00</b>	Deaf units end for the day (the school remains open until 15:00 <sup>7</sup> and lunch break
<b>13:00 – 16:00</b>	Interviews with approximately 2 to 3 individuals (i.e. special education teachers, special education school inspectors, CARE and Deaf adults) at the compound CARE Education office
<b>16:00</b>	Departure of the last group of conveyes back to the Dadaab Main Office (DMO)
<b>18:00</b>	Dinner break and the informal collection of historical and background information about the managing system of the Dadaab camps from fellow employees from different agencies and organizations
<b>19:00 to 21:00</b>	Reviewing the day's field notes and videotaped interviews

On each Saturday, I provided Deaf Awareness and Deaf Education workshops for parents and teachers of the Deaf at each compound in one of the Deaf units. The workshops are approximately two hours in length and address their questions and concerns regarding their Deaf child and/or student within

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<sup>7</sup> The upper primary level remains in the school for the full day. The lower primary level is split into two sections, morning section and afternoon sections. Thus they take turns occupying the same classroom in the mornings and afternoons. In the case of Deaf programs, all programs end at 12 noon for both upper and lower primary levels.

the education system. I made sure that I completed all of the interviews and in classroom observations for that very compound before proceeding with the workshops in order not to disrupt the integrity of the collected data.

### **Frames and Participants and the Informed Consent Process**

I asked interview questions focussed on the central theme, the roles of the Deaf school in the refugee camp. The questions are open-ended and of both a direct and non-direct nature concentrating on bringing to light the participant's experience with the unit itself. Initially, I used the Frames Analysis Framework to guide my interview questions through the three stages; Diagnostic, Prognostic and Motivational Framing. With the new developments upon my arrival at the research site, I had to shift from the Frames Analysis Framework to 'Triple I' Framework as a guide to capture an overview of the existing contextual background and timeline to better describe and interpret the data which are both culturally and contextually laden. With the 'marriage' and shift in the guiding framework of this research, this allows me to converge data from numerous participants and sites towards overarching central themes and trends which will be discussed in the data analysis section.

To conduct this study, I decided to interview relevant stakeholders who are a large part of the Deaf education community in the camps. These include: administrators both at the school level and the NGO level, teachers of the Deaf, Deaf students and community members consisting of parents of Deaf students and Deaf adults. The possible relevant participants are divided into two groups, A and B in respect to their position within the Deaf education community in Dadaab. The first group – Group A are the current students who are attending the Deaf units in the Dadaab camps. The second group – Group B consists of relevant stakeholders such as administrators, teachers and local community members.

### *Group A*

Group A being the current students who are attending the Deaf units, I initially anticipated conducting interviews with a minimum of five students from each unit. Nonetheless, upon my arrival at each site, the majority of the students found the interview process a transformative experience. As Harrell-Bond (1999) points out that refugees often “become nameless numbers” (p.141). These marginalized people often do not have the opportunity to tell their stories especially in their own native language (sign language). By valuing the hands and voices of this marginalized population, I abandoned my initial resolve to remain with the original proposed numbers of student participants in order to provide an alternative outlet for more students to participate in the semi-structured interviews and share their voices which are often unheard. In addition, Glesne (1999) points out that “by listening to students carefully and seriously, you give them a sense of importance and specialness. By providing the opportunity to reflect on and voice answers to your questions, you assist them to understand some aspect of themselves better” (p. 127). Moreover during the pre-fieldwork, I established criteria list to ensure that diversity of the students were represented and proportioned accordingly to the Deaf unit population. But upon my arrival at the research sites, I discovered that the majority of Deaf units do not have many upper primary students in their program. Thus, I ended up interviewing all Deaf upper primary students who have basic literacy<sup>8</sup> skills.

For this group, I first met up with the students and explained about my visit to Dadaab and especially about the study itself. To obtain informed consent from Group A participants for both interviews and on-site observations, I met up with interested parent/guardian of Group A participants who met the criteria (see appendix 5) in a group meeting during the ‘introductory phase’ at the Deaf

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<sup>8</sup> Again, this refers to all types of literacies; written, signed and spoken. In this case, the majority of the students had basic sign language literacy proficiency. Several students did not have any written literacy proficiency but were able to express themselves fluently in sign language including abstract ideas, thoughts and feelings.

units to explain and discuss about my study and answer any questions they may have (see the script for group meetings - appendix 12). With the majority of parent/guardian being illiterate, I decided to summarize the consent letter/form (see appendix 2) with both the sign language interpreter and translator to ensure that no misunderstandings would arise from my conducting research with their child. The parents/guardians had the option of either giving their consent at the group meeting or at a later date when they were ready by dropping off the consent form with the teacher of the Deaf at the units. After obtaining consent from the students for the interviews, I took each student aside and made sure that they understood and were comfortable with sharing their experiences and perspectives with me. With this being said, I would gradually ease into the interview by chatting with the student(s) about how his/her schoolwork was coming along and slowly asking questions about his/her experiences and perspectives once I felt that the student(s) was now comfortable talking to me. In some units, the students preferred to participate in the interview as a group, as many of them were brought up in a collective community and did not feel comfortable participating in an interview alone. To respect their cultural preferences, I proceed and gave the interviewees the option of participating in the interview as an individual or in a group. I found the group interviews much more stimulating as the process allowed fellow students the opportunity to listen to others and to be able to take their time and reflect fully on their experiences and perspectives regarding the Deaf units. However, some students who were much more confident often took up the floor most of the time. Nevertheless, they did assist me in understanding some of the other students' comments regarding a specific situation or event.

Additionally, the Group B participants, especially the parents and Deaf adults, felt the same as the Group A participants about participating in interviews individually, so I remained consistent and

provided the reminder of the interviewees with the option of participating in the interview as an individual or in a group. This brings me to the next section which discusses about Group B participants.

### *Group B*

The second group, B, included relevant participants who are a large part of the Deaf education process in the camps such as administrators which consist of six headmasters of the primary schools that is home to the Deaf units, three CARE special education teachers from each camp, three CARE special education school inspector from each camp, and one CARE basic education program director. Additionally, 16 Teachers and 21 local community stakeholders such as local Deaf adults and parents are also included in this group.

In the case of Group B participants, I personally met up with the majority of the potential Group B participants during the ‘introductory phase’ (my first week at the camp). I elaborated about my visit and study in Dadaab (see the script – appendix 14) with several different small groups consisting of potential Group B participants such as teachers and headmasters in each compound. After securing consent from the Group B participants (see appendix 1), I scheduled interview time slots with all interested participants distributed over a span of three and half weeks to accommodate their schedule.

Initially, I hoped to field a minimum of four interviews with teachers from one Deaf unit in each camp as I was told that there is one Deaf unit in each camp bringing the total to three Deaf units. Upon my arrival in Dadaab, I discovered that there indeed are a total of seven Deaf units scattered throughout the three camps. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers of the Deaf, who are often marginalized from the mainstream educational discourses, were very pleased to be presented with such an unique opportunity to discuss and reflect on their experiences and perspectives about the Deaf units. Thus, I

elected to remain consistent and provide all teachers from six Deaf units with opportunities just like with the students to share their hands and voices. I was not able to include the seventh Deaf unit located in Ifo camp as I learned about the seventh Deaf unit during the last week of my fieldwork and there was insufficient remaining time to include the seventh Deaf unit into this research.

Moreover, throughout the interview process with the stakeholders of the Dadaab Deaf education community, I learned that the majority of the school officials such as the school headmaster<sup>9</sup> have a very limited understanding, familiarity and knowledge about the Deaf education programs as this falls under the CARE camp special education teacher's domain. Therefore, I elected to expand my interview scope from the headmasters to interviewing the three CARE camp special education teachers and three CARE special education school inspectors from each compound. A camp special education teacher oversees and manages all special education programs in the compound. The teacher is a Kenyan certified special education teacher and is also responsible for providing the much-needed support, resources and training for the teachers and students of special education programs. This position is very new to the camps, and the coordinator of Special Education program fought to establish this position at each camp to provide much needed technical assistance to the special units. This position was established in 2006. A special education school inspector acts as a liaison between the special education programs, the community and CARE. The inspector visits and inspects all special education programs in the compound to ensure that they meet the basic expectations of providing basic education to students of special education programs. The inspector often would spend his time out in the community working closely with the parents and community leaders to promote the importance of sending their child to school.

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<sup>9</sup> A headmaster is often referred as a principal of the public primary school where the Deaf unit is located

Prior to fieldwork, I had hoped to field a minimum of two interviews with individuals working for NGOs that has a direct influence on the Deaf units (i.e. CARE's program director/coordinator, UNHCR's education coordinator, Handicap International's education director/coordinator). Again, with the unpredictability of conducting a fieldwork at a transitive location such as a refugee camp, I was not able to secure interviews with specific individuals who have a direct influence/authority over the Deaf education programs in the camps. Upon reaching a UNHCR representative in the camp, I was referred to CARE as they are the implementing organization for the education programs in the camps. UNHCR essentially provides the budget and has little influence over the daily activities of the education programs in the camps. I also managed to secure a brief meeting with a Handicap International representative who again recommended me to contact CARE as they are the implementing organization for education programs in the camp. Handicap International is a very new organization to Dadaab, joining in 2008, and their main focus at this moment is to identify refugees with disabilities in the camp and collect information on how they may best provide for the disability community in Dadaab. To date they have completed a lot of rehabilitative support, i.e. to construct and provide walkers, canes, prosthesis and so forth. Thus I decided to focus on CARE only as they are the implementing organization of the Education program in the camps, and this included interviewing the CARE director of Basic Education Program. With the logistics of securing a time for interview with very important individuals who have a very busy work schedule, I was unable to secure interviews with certain individuals with direct influence/authority over the Deaf units.

The community members are also under the group B, I managed to secure group interviews with a wide range of local community stakeholders totalling 21 who have direct contact/link with the units (i.e. parents/guardians of a Deaf student enrolled in the Deaf unit, graduating/local Deaf adults and

significant community members such as elders, leaders, etc...). The majority of the interviews with community members were conducted in group settings. The interview questions focused on their perceptions of their child as they associate with the units.

In the case of Group B participants (administrators and teachers), although actual names were not used, they may be identifiable by their position in this thesis. Because of the location of the site and the small size of the Deaf units, it was impossible to completely conceal the identities of many of the adult participants. For example, there is only one headmaster of a school, and one special education teacher. In these cases I took an extra effort to ensure that the Group B participants are aware that they may be recognized by this study. Furthermore, I made sure that the Group B participants are aware of the fact that the questions asked will be of a general nature and not designed to reveal personal opinions or beliefs that may be damaging to their reputations or that of the program. They also were allowed to stop the interview anytime they wish.

This brings the total of interviewees to 65 participants: 13 Administrators, 16 teachers, 18 students and 21 community members.

### **Multiple Languages and Literacies**

This study incorporates multiple languages which were used in the data collection process, Crossley and Watson (2008) remind us that “language can generate major dilemmas for comparative and international researchers... in which the terms being used might appear at face value to be the same, words can have very different meanings in different contexts” (p. 41). As a Deaf researcher and educator, I am very familiar with the possible linguistic barriers that the participants may face during the interviews. Furthermore, I am committed to conducting thorough, rigorous and ethically sound research.

With this being said, to ensure that the interviews with the participants will not be misinterpreted, I had to employ several different interview methods with each group of participants in respect to local cultural and language values. Moreover, Crossley and Watson (2003) eloquently raised a valid point about working with ‘different literacies’ as they quoted “Street (1999) [which] states global agendas related to literacy have distorted people’s thinking because they have overlooked the fact that within any culture there are many different ‘literacies,’ each with its own code and validity” (p.87). This applies to this study as the majority of languages especially sign languages used in this study are often overlooked and devalued (Petitto, 1994; 2000; Kovelman, Baker and Petitto, 2008). The languages used in the data collection consisted of Somali, English, Kiswahili, Somali Sign Language<sup>10</sup>, Kenyan Sign Language<sup>11</sup> and home signs<sup>12</sup>. In respect to ‘different literacies with its own code and validity’ I adopted several different interview methods to fully capture the essence of the language used during the interview.

The translator and sign language interpreter who were appointed upon the request of the interviewees both had prior work commitments. Therefore I had to revise my interview schedule around both the interviewee’s schedule and the translator/sign language interpreter’s schedule. Both the translator and sign language interpreter followed a standard work ethics which ensure complete confidentiality of their customers. Both the translator and interpreter that participated in the interview process signed a form (see appendix 8) that stipulates that they will not intentionally disclose any information gathered during the interviews.

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<sup>10</sup> The majority of the participants involved in this study often refers to Somali Sign Language as a ‘village/rural’ sign language which further devalues the significance of this language. There is no official research on and about Somali Sign Language; however, I sincerely believe that it is a language with its own vocabulary, structure, rules and grammar. There is a need for further study on Somali Sign Language.

<sup>11</sup> This is an official language used for instruction in Dadaab. There are several researches and publications on Kenyan Sign Language. The majority of the Deaf participants often communicate in a fusion of Somali Sign Language and Kenyan Sign Language.

<sup>12</sup> This is often used at homes between family members with a Deaf family member – the majority of the signs used are often fused with basic gestures and pointing to convey a very simple message. This is not similar to Somali Sign Language which has a standardized form of communicating their ideas.

The sign language interpreter is often employed for interviews with hearing teachers with very limited proficiency in sign language and administrators. Every participant was made aware of their language options as they were more than free to request for a sign language interpreter and/or translator for the interview session. For all parents' interviews, both sign language interpreter and translator were utilized as the majority of them speak in Somali or their own tribal language. For the Deaf students, Deaf teachers, Deaf adults and some hearing teachers with basic proficiency in sign language who preferred to express themselves in sign language, I conducted direct interview with them using Kenyan Sign Language and in some cases a fusion of Somali Sign Language and Kenyan Sign Language.

### **Recording of the Data**

As indicated in the multiple languages and literacies section, this study also included utilizing different formats to record data from the interviews. All participants had the option of having their interview videotaped or written. All participants were told that the interview session would be videotaped and transcribed at a later date. They were asked to sign the form confirming that they accepted being videotaped. The majority of the interviews were videotaped. However in some cases, some participants preferred not to be videotaped and I wrote down notes which made the process a very lengthy one. Some preferred to type their responses into my laptop.

In the cases of videotaped interviews, I operated the video camera and would ask questions on either side of the video camera. I am not visible in any of the interviews. When a sign language interpreter is requested for an interview, I placed the sign language interpreter right next to the interview participant so that the video camera also would be able to capture both the sign language interpreter and the interview participants' facial and body language as we progressed with the interview. For those

interviews where both sign language interpreter and translator are requested, the interview participant would sit on the left side with a translator in the middle and the sign language interpreter on the right side. In the majority of the interviews, the interview participants who have had experiences of communicating with the Deaf population would refer to a specific sign or location with his/her hands which cannot be either translated or interpreted by the translator and sign language interpreter. Thus this set-up captures all individuals in the interview process: the interviewee, the translator and the sign language interpreter.

### **Data Analysis**

Initially, I aimed to conduct document analysis of relevant documents to assist me in piecing together historical and background information about the Deaf units. With this being a highly transient work environment, there have been multiple key players who advocated and were involved in the initiation and implementation of the Deaf education program in Dadaab who no longer work in the camps. Thus there are not many documents consisting of relevant historical and background information about the Deaf education program. Therefore, I was only able to gain access to very limited information about the Deaf units as the majority of the information was amalgamated with both the Special Education program and the Basic Education program. I was able to locate few documents with statistics on numbers of students, teachers, schools and resources for each camp along with reports of past trainings from Ifo camp. This lack of empirical documentation justifies the significance of conducting interview methodology to collect viable data about the Deaf education program in Dadaab. The data collected from the interviews assisted me in piecing together a draft historical timeline of the initiation and implementation of the Deaf education program in Dadaab.

Throughout the fieldwork at the research site, I spent the evenings reviewing the day's interviews and field notes to identify emergent themes which were recorded in my field notes. I was able to collect a good amount of data to be analyzed after the fieldwork was completed. Upon my arrival in Canada post fieldwork in Kenya, I had to put the data analysis phase on hold for approximately one year as I returned to Africa for work. I began the data analysis phase in May 2010.

Initially, I had to transcribe over 100 hours of interview data myself as this study involves multiple languages and literacies and I was not able to locate an individual who is able to understand all languages and literacies used in this study in order to assist me in transcribing the interview data. I began processing the interview data in three stages; (1) watch the entire video clip and make notes covering important data mentioned in the interview, (2) re analyse the video clips with the framework in hand to ensure that all important and critical information are recorded in my notes. I also had to review the accuracy of my translation, then (3) review all video clips to ensure that there are no inaccuracy in my translation and notes. This transcribing method was a very lengthy process. It was determined that it was not the most effective nor effective approach for multiple languages and literacies involved in the transcribing process so I elected to step back and consider all of the possible options of extracting viable information from the videotaped interviews.

Fortunately, I was able to identify a Deaf individual who was willing to assist me in the transcribing process. Again, all of the interviews were conducted in either Kenyan Sign Language and/or Somali Sign Language which are not used in Canada. The Deaf population in Canada use American Sign Language and/or langue des signes québécoise. Furthermore, when we reviewed the interview video clips, we recognized that there was lack of consistency in sign languages used in the interview

methodology which made it difficult. Throughout the data collection process, I elected to ensure that all participants felt comfortable participating in the interview process by providing the option of several different languages and cultural preferences of conducting the interview. The accommodation of the participants made the coding/transcribing process a lengthy and difficult process.

This compelled us to devise a new transcribing process in order to be able to fully code all of the data in each interview. This process consisted of myself watching all of the interview video clips and translating from Kenyan Sign Language and/or Somali Sign Language into American Sign Language, and the Deaf individual translated from American Sign Language into English by typing the data into the computer. Throughout the ‘translating/transcribing process’, I found this a transformative experience as I was able to thoroughly analyze the data as I translated the interviews. The complexity of the issues faced in Dadaab became clear as I was able to identify and categorize evidences of overlapping and recurring factors mentioned by the interviewees into three main themes. With the formation of the three main themes, this thesis began to take shape.

### **Limitations of the Research**

As I reflect on the research process, I become conscious of the limitations of this research. I appreciate the challenges and opportunities that have developed during the research process. The majority of the challenges are related to the issues of timing, the high transiency environment, verifying the authenticity of the interviews and my role as researcher and role model in the camps.

The timing was one of my biggest challenges throughout the research process, I often faced time constraints. During the early stages of my research, I on several occasions attempted to contact different individuals in Kenya to obtain necessary background information about the Deaf Education program in

Dadaab to assist me in designing the data collection process. Thitherto, with difficulties of maintaining a long distance communication, I was not able to enquire as much information to sufficiently ensure that the data collection process included ample timeframe in respect to the camps' culture, environment and mobility. However, in the end, I had to modify the data collection process on several occasion in light of new information found at the research site, i.e. 7 Deaf units instead of 3 Deaf units, the departure of several key players from the camps and CARE as the only implementing organization of the education program in Dadaab. New information discovered on-site further tightened the limited amount of time I had in the camps especially with each unit and interviewee. Additionally, from Canada, I attempted to obtain necessary permits to conduct research at Dadaab from the Department of Refugees under the Ministry of Immigration and Migration and the National Council for Science and Technology under Republic of Kenya but I was unable to get hold of anyone from the two departments. Upon my arrival in Nairobi, Kenya, individuals from Department of Refugees and National Council for Science and Technology were very kind to assist me in completing the procedure in approximately one and half weeks.

Valuing and respecting the local culture is one of my priorities while conducting the research; however, I often found myself at odds. When I attempted to value and respect the local 'time' pace, various factors stemming from western values of 'time' pace including firm transportation schedule between the camps, limited amount of time allocated outside of work for the sign language interpreter and my short time frame in the camps, impeded my effectiveness as a researcher to fully and thoroughly conduct the interviews. In the end, I also struggled with the lengthy translating and transcribing process which consumed the majority of my time in writing this thesis.

This research is situated in a highly transient environment which made the data collection process a very challenging one. For instance, it is customary for the staff of CARE to work for eight weeks then take two weeks leave to return to their home villages. This schedule created new obstacles in securing interviews with some of the key players who had very tight work schedule. Additionally, the majority of key players who were instrumental during the initiation and implementation stages of the Deaf education program in Dadaab now no longer work in the camps. There are many new employees taking the place of the key players with limited understanding and knowledge of the mechanisms that set this in motion. There is high turnover among the employees because the camps are very demanding and stressful workplaces. During one of the dinner conversation with one of CARE employees, she quoted, “Now, who has snapped him up?” while inquiring about the whereabouts of an individual who used to work for CARE. This is daily reality for the majority of the refugees, agencies and NGOs who live, work and operate in Dadaab Refugee Camp. I also faced the same reality during the data collection process, the constant race to catch individuals before they moved out and the referrals to the ‘alternative point person’.

Another aspect of limitations this research has faced is the number of ambiguous responses. Upon assembling interviews and data together, I encountered a similar situation as Horst (2006) did where “all the obvious problems in the camps were spelled out and enlarged in order to secure donor fundings” (p. 149) by the interviewees. For instance, in one case, the teachers highlighted their limitations in sign language as they are unable to carry a basic conversation with me in sign language. Many of them state that they have yet to obtain any training in sign language from the employer, CARE, hence their inability to converse with me in sign language. Whilst the program teachers stated that they have provided several sign language training sessions for the teachers in the past. I often wonder if this

is a statement intended to highlight their needs in hopes of securing more training, resources and attention towards the teachers of the Deaf from the CARE. Or is this a statement intended to defer their inability to carry a basic conversation in sign language with me to CARE's failure to provide sign language training for the teachers? I often faced contradictory comments from different groups of interviewees without any tools to verify the authenticity of their comments. Furthermore, with approximately 10 months in between the data collection process and the data analysis phase, I realize that new limitations arose. When I reviewed the collected data from the interviews, I came across new questions, the need to verify a response and the need to re-examine an issue, but I had no way of communicating with the participants in Dadaab from Canada and moreover, some of the key players now have moved onto new agencies and NGOs.

At times, I as a researcher often found myself trying to refrain from imposing western and academic values on the data collection process. For instance, I often wrestled with myself on how to conduct an ethically sound research study with respect for the local culture and values. The majority of the participants found the consent process complicated. One participant said, "Isn't my 'yes' enough? Do you not trust my word?" (Parent 3, 2009). Many found the texts unfriendly, lengthy and disrespectful as the majority of the participants are illiterate and prefer to conduct their business in sign language or verbally, i.e. yes or no consent. This is the intersection where the 'questionable assumptions, perhaps most often influence... perceptions about the less developed world, especially relating to Africa... as they are shaped by experience'" (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. 36). The idea of conducting ethically sound research is critical in the academic world; however, it fails to acknowledge and respect the equivalences of the local culture, language, literacy and community. This omission in turn often generates and influences misconceptions about the researched community. Furthermore, throughout the

data collection process, I have encountered several more intersections where the western values clash with the local values; for example, participants being more comfortable in group interviews than individual interviews, the formality of the interview process, the time constraints, the definition of literacy and illiteracy in wake of multiple languages and literacies and especially the participants' need to interconnect many different aspects of their lives to the scope of this research. I will expand on this last point here.

The schooling experience is interrelated with all other aspects of life in the refugee camp. Thus the majority of the interviewees often would change directions into an area that the interviewee feels was important to share with me. On those occasions, I at times felt uncomfortable about attempting to steer the direction back to the relative scope of the investigation without 'putting down' their wish/preference to discuss about different aspects of their lives in the camp. Furthermore, many of the refugees who have lived in the camps for almost two decades are used to having white people attached to agencies and NGOs coming in and out to conduct interviews and assess current situations in the camps. Several of the refugees who I have interviewed mentioned that they have not seen the final product of those interviews and assessments and some of them questioned my integrity as a researcher. I explained to the interviewees that I do not have anything to offer but the thesis as my final product of the interviews. I hope this thesis will be used as a tool to shed light on the Deaf education program in Dadaab.

I strongly believe that my presence in the camps had an effect on the data collection process and especially the interviews itself. Initially, I arrived the camps as a researcher and left as a role model for many: Deaf students, teachers, parents and administrators. As Cook (1998) notes, "observing any society

as an outsider has inherent limitations” (p.98). Throughout the interviews, the participants would incorporate bits of information about how they would like to see their students succeed just like me and they would inquire about how I could help them. It became apparent that issues of subjectivity emerged through the interviews as a tool to emphasize one’s contributions and accomplishments for the Deaf education program. Lal (1996) notes how “our subjects are often not just responding to our agendas and to our questions, but they are also always engaged in actively shaping their presentation to suit their own agendas of how they wish to be represented” (p.204). As mentioned earlier in chapter one, one must recognize the historical, social, environmental and educational baggage carried by the majority of the participants who live in a ‘subjugated’ environment as part of their daily experience as they associate with the daily reality in the camps. My status as an outsider further facilitated their inherent need to incorporate subjectivity into their commentaries to evoke ‘promising opportunities’ that have the potential to elevate their current status as a refugee. This predisposed behaviour is often an innate reaction for humans when presented with an opportunity to have an ‘one on one’ dialogue with an outsider. Again, my inherent inability to remove the whiteness and the outsidersness from myself may or may not have facilitated the introduction of new possibilities with new ideas, thoughts and feelings that emerged by their encounters with me in the camps and through the interviews.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary of Deaf Education in Dadaab

Because of the high rate of turnover and transiency among the research participants, it is very difficult to obtain sufficient accurate data on the historical background of the Deaf Education program in Dadaab. Furthermore, the majority of the statistics regarding the numbers of students enrolled in the Deaf Education program are insufficient as most data are more than one or two years old, vary among different administrators and teachers within the camps and do not impart sufficient information regarding the students and their whereabouts. This is my attempt to put together pieces of information to present a comprehensive picture of the Deaf Education program in Dadaab.

#### Historical Timeline

The birth of Deaf Education program in Dadaab Refugee Camp occurred in 1992, roughly a year after the first influx of refugees arrived in the Dadaab region in 1991. The first Deaf unit was established at Jack Asiyo School in Ifo which was later renamed Halane Primary School. During the early days, schools in Ifo were named after senior CARE managers who had played a role in the setting up of Ifo Camp (Gachuhi, 2010). The first batch of Deaf students consisted of approximately 12 students, and two are currently teachers in Ifo camp.

A Deaf teacher who was part of the first group to be educated in Dadaab recalls how he was the first to arrive in Ifo during the planning phase:

“Coming from a small rural village and I didn’t understand anything. They gave us new identification and ration cards. They gave us food and told us to stay at home... I did not know the area at all, I was afraid to get lost so my mother told me to stay. If I got lost, then I would remain lost because how do I hear my mother call my name? Then someone

who was white, I didn't know who, he came and talked with my father. He was surprised that I was Deaf. They tried to figure out what to do with me and touched me. I did not even understand at all as I did not even sign back then, I only knew Somali Sign Language<sup>13</sup>. I didn't know Kenyan Sign Language at all...

Time went by, I waited and waited, then in 1992, I finally started my first school. Yes, I was one of the first Deaf to go to school... Teachers didn't know anything about Deaf, this was the first time and there was no signing. The teacher came from Kenya. He first taught us ABC's and we learned fast. I was around 10 years old when I started school ... I would play a lot and I would learn. I had shorts<sup>14</sup>. I kept on playing and playing, then in 1994, we went up to next level. In 1994, Stephen came! Stephen came and was surprised to see Deaf people here, there was not many [Deaf people] back then, not like today, there was only few. Stephen asked us if it would be fine if he videotaped us, he did and videotaped of us showing signs, everything about our camp life, camels, home, school, everything. Stephen was satisfied, he gave us few things then he left. Stephen would come and go ... he was not a teacher, he was responsible for several camps.”

(Teacher 13)

However, they were unable to elaborate much on who were instrumental in the initiation of the Deaf unit in 1992. Throughout my stay in Dadaab, several people have mentioned three names; Mr. Ibrahim Mboya, Mr. Marangu Njogu and Mr. Ahmed Sheik. I decided to contact Mr. Stephen Gachuhi, a Deaf Kenyan who spent 14 years from 1994 to 2008 at Dadaab working with the Deaf community and the larger refugee community with CARE. He noted that “those three honourable gentlemen named here were not even CARE employees when the Deaf Units were started in 1992/93. They arrived much, much later, but probably had the longest and greatest impact, so it's understandable that their names are more etched and immediate” (Gachuhi, 2010).

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<sup>13</sup> In this context, he refers to Somali Sign Language as 'home signs'

<sup>14</sup> He refers shorts to describe his age; in this region, children often would wear shorts and adults would never wear shorts preferring to use trousers to respect their culture.

Ms. Apondi Nyang'aya was a strong advocate during the implementation phase of the Deaf units throughout the camps. She was the Social Welfare Officer at Kenyan National Association of the Deaf (KNAD) in the early 1990's. She learned about UNHCR and CARE's plans to set up refugee camps in Dadaab from her husband Justus Nyang'aya who worked for the Windle Charitable Trust which handled the urban refugee sub-contract on behalf of UNHCR. After several 'failed' attempts to link the Kenyan National Association of the Deaf with CARE to provide expertise and consultancy on disability issues in the camps, Ms. Apondi Nyang'aya went on to become the Social Services Coordinator for CARE in the camps. She hired Mr. Stephen Gachuhi who formerly was the Information Officer at the Kenyan National Association of the Deaf to handle the Disability sub-sector of the Social Services program. "In January 1994, the Education sector was hived off from Social Services to separate welfare from the serious business of academic training. However, none of the Education personnel at the time had any knowledge or expertise in Special Education. Apondi used her contacts within the Kenyan disability movement to keep the Units going" (Gachuhi, 2010).

Between 1992 to 1994; several Deaf units were established in all camps, starting with Dagahaley during early 1993, then Hagadera in mid to late 1993. "Liboi, a holding and transit camp, also had Special Education Units... By the time I arrived in March 1994, all the Special Education Units were already set-up" (Gachuhi, 2010). Mr. Stephen Gachuhi first started as a Disability Program Facilitator to link the personnel and special education units with external expertise such as that of the Kenya Institute for Special Education (KISE), the Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD), and the Kenya Society of the Blind and so forth. Mr. Gachuhi was instrumental strong advocate in bringing and addressing the Deaf refugee population's needs throughout in the refugee camp within his several capacities in the camps.

The Deaf units “became more pronounced in 2004 when Mr. Randiki took over as the Special Education Supervisor” (Administrator 2, 2009) for CARE. In 2004, several Deaf students who completed their primary education in the Deaf units in the camps were sponsored and sent to Kenya to attend Deaf secondary schools. The first student attended Rev. Muhoro Secondary School in Central Kenya, and several others attended Kuja Special Secondary School in Western Kenya. In this first batch of students who attended secondary schools in Kenya, two are now teachers in Deaf units in Dadaab. Several more students followed and attended several different secondary schools and secondary vocational schools in Kenya. To date, only two girls were able to complete primary school and are now in St. Angela Mumias Secondary Vocational School for the Deaf in Western Kenya as they have not been able to pass compulsory secondary school level. Mr. Randiki continued to promote the Deaf Education program in Dadaab, as one administrator recalls how he “fought and brought me and two other colleagues in [Hagadera], Ifo and Dagahaely on board in 2006. This is when we began in-house trainings for teachers, sign language training for learners and awareness campaigns on special education which has impacted positively within the community” (Administrator 2, 2009).

It is imperative to point out another pronounced milestone mentioned by the majority of male interviewees. In 2006, the first inter-camp Deaf football tournament was hosted in Ifo. It brought three Deaf football teams from each camp as Mr. Stephen Gachuhi who later became the Sports and Youth Leader for CARE noticed that “the Deaf were always left out of selection for ‘regular’ teams, so we started to organise Deaf-only inter-camps sports tournaments for Deaf youth” (Gachuhi, 2010). A Deaf adult mentioned that he would not bother joining the hearing team because they would “abuse me all the time, so I decide to leave them alone and be friends with Deaf only” (Deaf adult 3, 2009). This in a way was a very successful ‘informal learning environment’ which enabled Deaf males to “strengthen their

signing skills, and Kenya Sign Language (their guest tongue) started gaining uniformity and popularity, as opposed to their rudimentary home and ‘Somali’ signs” (Gachuhi, 2010). The inter-camp football tournaments enabled Deaf boys and men with opportunities to meet up with fellow Deaf from other camps facilitating both social and language learning. Many would pick up new signs from those who have attended secondary school in Kenya, many would receive news and information from others who have learned new things in their camps and also many were pleased to be given an opportunity to have an ‘authentic’ tournament where they got to win the cup along with receiving new uniforms, cleats and footballs. With the positive progress in several different arenas of Deaf refugees’ lives; quality of accessibility to education, accessibility in participating in sports and community-wide socialization, which presented more opportunities for Deaf refugees to access to equal basic human rights and needs. Unfortunately, the progress in meeting and addressing the needs of the Deaf refugee population in the camps slowly declined with the departure of Mr. Gachuhi in late 2007 from the camps, he was an expert in mobilizing both human and material resources into meeting the needs of the Deaf refugees.

### **CARE and the Deaf Education Program**

Currently there are seven Deaf Units; Central Unit in Hagadera, Halane Unit, Midnimo Unit, Horseed Unit and Western Unit in Ifo, Unity Unit and Jubba Unit in Dagahaley. According to the most current statistics, there are 581 Deaf students attending school in Dadaab Refugee Camp (field notes, 2009). The majority of the Deaf students are in lower primary level from pre unit to standard 5. On the other hand, administrator 1 reminds us that “only 50% of children in our refugee camps are in school” (Administrator 1, 2009). Administrator 2, 3, 5 and 6 agree and state that they often spend the majority of their time out in the community talking to parents of Deaf children who often believe that their child is ‘Deaf and dumb’ and will never be able to learn. They promote the importance of receiving education and removing the community stigma towards the Deaf population through open dialogue with

community members and families. They estimate that another 500 to 1,000 Deaf children are isolated throughout the three camps without any contact with other Deaf adults or children (Administrator 2, 2009).

Out of 581 Deaf students enrolled in primary schools throughout the three camps, only an estimate of 115 Deaf students are enrolled in the Deaf units whilst the remaining 466 Deaf students are integrated into public schools without any appropriate language support. Some of the students are hard of hearing<sup>15</sup> and are able to function in integrated classrooms. An administrator who often administers audiology tests for all children with hearing loss in Dadaab stated that, “around 30% to 40% [of the refugees with hearing loss] are hard of hearing” (Administrator 4, 2009).

The Deaf units are normally located either in or adjacent to public primary schools. The Deaf units often have self-contained classrooms separate from the public primary classrooms. There are between one to four teachers of the Deaf assigned to the Deaf units, and the majority of the teachers are not trained in either Deaf Education or Special Education. Additionally, some of the teachers of the Deaf also teach a few classes for the public primary school as well. Most Deaf units have to use one classroom with one blackboard for two or three different levels. All teachers of the Deaf report to the headmaster of the public primary school. The teachers of the Deaf receive technical assistance and support from the Special Education Teacher of the camp. For those who are integrated into public primary schools, Deaf students are placed into a classroom with approximately 75 students without any support such as note takers, sign language interpreters or remedial classes. The majority of the Deaf

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<sup>15</sup> This is a term describing an individual with moderate hearing loss and has some residual hearing left. This may mean that the individual is able to hear a bit, but the degree of hearing function (including the ability to carry a conversation by listening and speaking) depends on each individual.

students struggle in integrated classrooms due to stigma, abuse and no access to communication. As one Deaf teacher recollect his experience in an integrated class, “they use their mouths and I can’t hear at all, I try but teacher beat me so I try, try, try, try and try but I can’t hear or talk” (Teacher 6, 2009). All Deaf students who completed class 5 level are forced to join the integrated classes for class 6 to 8 levels.

The majority of the interviewees indicated that there are no Deaf schools in Somalia. They mentioned that the ‘disabled people’ are not desired or favoured in Somalia so they are often left behind. An administrator recollect how he “knew nothing about people with disabilities, you never hear anything about them in Somalia, when [he] came to the camps, [he] was first exposed to the fact that disabled people can learn whether Deaf, Blind or mentally disabled” (Administrator 5, 2009). Virtually all Deaf individuals in the camps have never gone to school in Somalia with the exception of a few Deaf students who managed to slip into Islamic schools. Teacher 6 recalls how he was kicked out of the school when the teacher discovered that he was Deaf. “[The] teacher told my dad that I am Deaf and he cannot teach me at all, so we left the school” (Teacher 6, 2009). After an extensive research online, it appears to me that the first Deaf school in Somalia was established between 2000 to 2006 and attracted Deaf students from the region and beyond. Borama Deaf School is located by the border of Djibouti and Ethiopia. However, I was not able to locate further information about this school. Without any Deaf schools in Somalia prior to 2000, all Deaf refugees have not had the opportunity to attend school. Many Deaf refugees are very happy to be able to access to education in the Dadaab Refugee Camp.

Since CARE is the implementing partner for Basic Education program in the camps, this organization manages and implements education programs for all refugees; preschool education,

primary education, secondary education, special education, community secondary school<sup>16</sup>, and adult literacy education serving approximately 50,000 learners in three camps. Teacher 6 and 15 stress that CARE is the sole organization that does the majority of work with the Deaf community in the three camps: provides funding, school supplies, teachers, and advice and promoting access to basic education for the Deaf. There are specialized CARE education coordinators for each sector; Mr. Randiki is the CARE Special Education Coordinator overseeing the special education programs in three camps. In each camp, there is one CARE Special Education Teacher who reports to Mr. Randiki. Each special education teacher is responsible for all special education programs in the camp which consists of providing technical training to special education teachers, conducting community wide awareness activities, implementing mini projects, coordinating with other agencies and organizations in providing for the disability community in the camp, advocating for special education students to receive additional education in Kenya and mobilization of special education activities in the units and schools. The CARE Special Education Teacher often works with the CARE Special Education School Inspector who acts as a liaison between the special education programs, the community and CARE. The inspector visits and inspects all special education programs in the compound to ensure that they meet the basic expectations of providing basic education to students of special education programs. The inspector often would spend his time out in the community working closely with the parents and community leaders to promote the importance of sending their child to school.

CARE manages the Basic Education program with a limited budget since 75% of the budget is allocated to cover teachers' salaries. The remaining 25% is allocated for school activities which includes the special education program. Financially, the Education sector has to prioritize and strive to ensure that

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<sup>16</sup> These are often referred as vocational training centres.

all of the basic human needs and rights are being met educationally. Administrator 1 stressed that CARE “has not reached [its] goal of sustainability through education” (Administrator 1, 2009) as the Education sector is now focused on providing accessibility to education. It is estimated that 50% of refugee children do not have access to education and the CARE Education sector is in excess of its maximum number of enrolment and has not been able to achieve quality education yet (Administrator 1, 2009).

After inquiring other agencies and NGOs who currently are working in the camps to locate any projects or programs that are aimed for the Deaf population in Dadaab. The majority of agencies and NGOs referred me to CARE and Handicap International (HI) as working with the Deaf population is more of their expertise. A representative from Handicap International who again recommended me to contact CARE as they are the implementing organization for education programs in the camp. The Handicap International is a very new organization to Dadaab, joining in 2008, and their main focus at this moment is to identify refugees with disabilities in the camp and collect information on how they may best provide for the disability community in Dadaab. To date they have completed a lot of rehabilitative support, i.e. to construct and provide walkers, canes, prosthesis and so forth. A Handicap International representative mentioned that they have distributed 6 hearing aids to Deaf refugees. They also conduct sensitivity training and awareness for the community members.

### **The Three Camps in Dadaab**

#### *Hagadera*

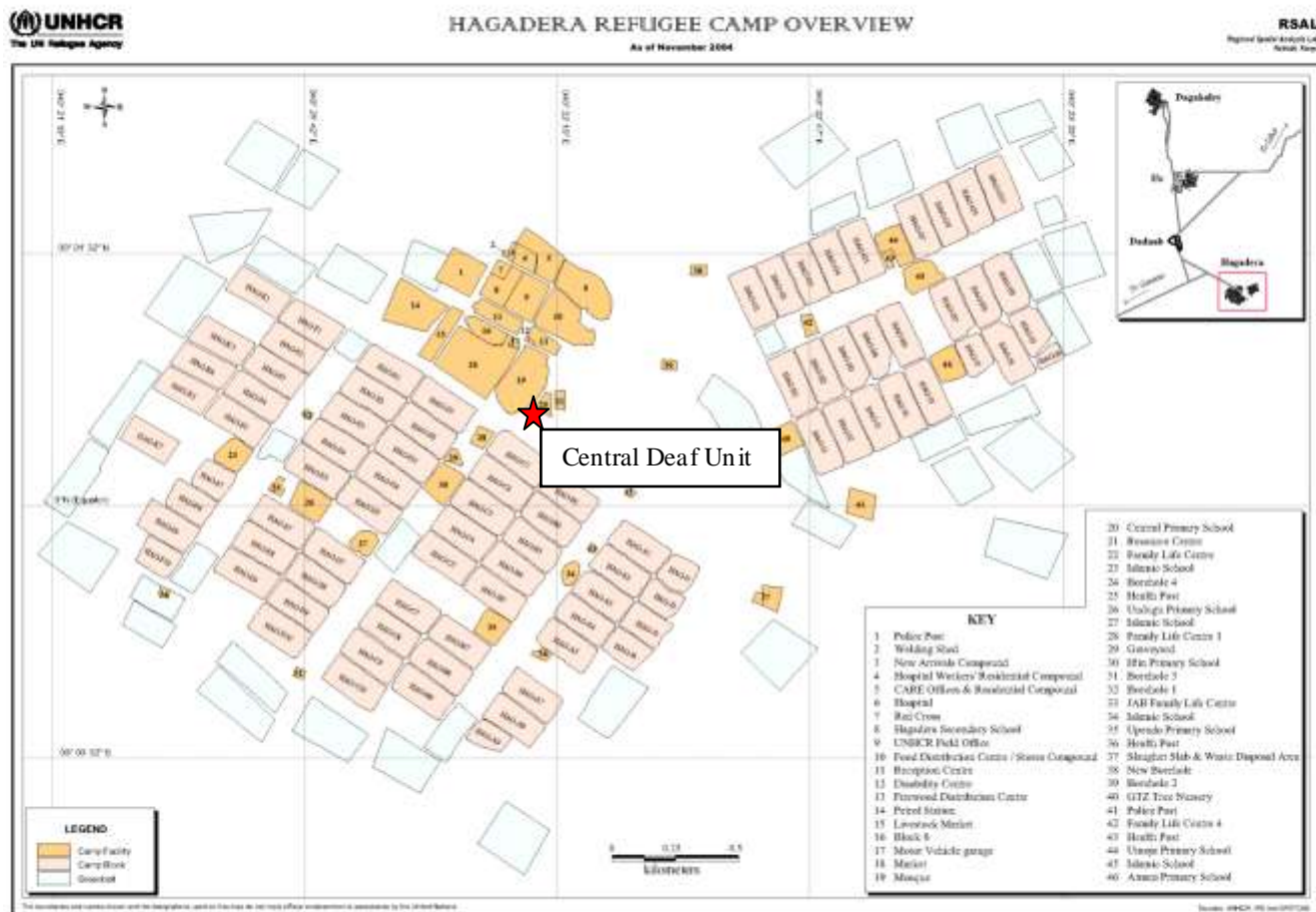
There are 6 primary schools in Hagadera camp; only one school has a Deaf unit. The Deaf unit is located at Central Academy. Upon reviewing statistical information about the numbers of Deaf students enrolled in the special education program in Hagadera, it became apparent that there are three different numbers of student enrolment from several different official reports. This discrepancy is attributable to

the highly transient environment. In an education report on special education statistics, it stated that there are 273 Deaf students in Hagadera camp. In the CARE's education sector monthly report of school enrolment for May to June 2009, it stated that there are 256 Deaf students in Hagadera camp. Finally, in an interview with an administrator, she stated that there are 179 Deaf students in the Hagadera camp as of 2008. Based on the wide discrepancy between the three numbers, it is estimated that there are approximately 225 Deaf students enrolled in the special education program in Hagadera camp. Out of estimated 225 Deaf students, only 34 students are in the Deaf unit at Central. In addition to the 34 students in the Deaf unit, there are also three Deaf students integrated in class 8 classes without any support from the Deaf unit.

Additionally, there are three teachers of the Deaf in the Deaf unit. There are no Deaf teacher in Hagadera. An administrator has mentioned that a Deaf adult who graduated from vocational secondary school was offered a teaching position at the Deaf unit; however, he refused because of low salary. In total, there are four teachers at Central Academy who has been trained at Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) although only two of the KISE trained teachers teach at the Deaf unit. One of the teachers of the Deaf only has completed primary level education. The remaining two teachers have completed secondary level education and one of them has received 29 days training for special education in the camps in 1997. The majority of the teachers at Hagadera have very basic sign language proficiency and heavily rely on the Kenya Sign Language dictionary to assist them in conveying new concepts to Deaf students. The Special Education Teacher for Hagadera camp joined in 2006 when the position was first implemented in the camps. The Special Education School Inspector for Hagadera also was appointed in 2006 and has completed KISE training.

There are three classrooms for five different levels, pre-unit, class 1, 2, 3 and 5. There are very limited teaching materials and resources for the teachers of the Deaf in the units. They have one Kenya Sign Language dictionary and few textbooks. Each student receives pencils and notebooks annually from the school. Out of all students who were enrolled at the Deaf unit, three have successfully passed the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and are currently studying in secondary schools in Kenya. One student is at Mumias Secondary School and two students are at Rev. Muhoro Secondary School.

Map 2: Hagadera Camp



(UNHCR, 2004)

*Ifo*

There are four Deaf units in Ifo camp. The oldest and largest Deaf unit is located at Halane Primary School, the second Deaf unit with large number of girls students is located at Horseed Primary School and the third Deaf unit with upper primary level is located at Midnimo Primary School. This study was not able to include the fourth Deaf unit as I learned about this unit during at the end of my fieldwork at Dadaab. This is a new Deaf unit located at Western Primary School. There are 158 Deaf students enrolled in the special education program in Ifo camp.

Out of 158 Deaf students, only 63 students are distributed among 4 Deaf units in Ifo. There are 28 students at Halane Deaf Unit, 25 students at Horseed Deaf Unit, 7 students at Midnimo Deaf Unit and 3 students at Western Deaf Unit. Within the 25 students at Horseed Deaf unit, 14 of them are girls making this the largest girls students in a Deaf unit. A female teacher teaching at Horseed Deaf Unit was one of the major driving forces behind the high rate of girls students. She mentioned how she as a, “female teacher myself, I would go and visit homes... encourage [the parents] to bring their girls to school. As learning is good, being Deaf is good and it is good for girls too” (Teacher 9, 2009). In addition to the initial 4 students in Midnimo Deaf unit, there are also 3 Deaf students in upper primary level who are integrated in class 8 classes who are receiving much needed tutorials at the Deaf unit. Several students have transferred from one Deaf unit to another to be with similar peers in same level.

Moreover, there are a total<sup>17</sup> of 10 teachers of the Deaf in Ifo camp. There are four teachers of the Deaf in Halane Deaf Unit. There are three teachers of the Deaf in Horseed Deaf Unit and one is a female teacher. There are also three teachers of the Deaf in Midnimo Deaf Unit. Each unit has one Deaf teacher who started as a volunteer teacher at the Deaf Units for approximately 6 to 12 months before

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<sup>17</sup> Not including Western Deaf Unit

they were appointed as teachers. All three Deaf teachers completed and passed primary level education in the camps and have gone on to complete secondary level education at Kenya secondary schools. Five of the teachers of the Deaf only completed primary level education. One of the teachers of the Deaf completed secondary level education and P1<sup>18</sup> teacher training course. One teacher completed secondary level education and both teacher training and special education training in his country. It appears to me that not one teacher has received training by Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) The majority of the teachers at Ifo have sufficient sign language proficiency to carry basic communication with Deaf students. Most of the teachers gained knowledge of Kenya Sign Language from Deaf colleagues. The Special Education Teacher for Ifo camp joined in 2007 and brought his expertise in Educational Assessment with the District Education Office to the camp. The Special Education School Inspector for Ifo spent approximately 10 years teaching special education to the Blind in the camp then was appointed as an inspector.

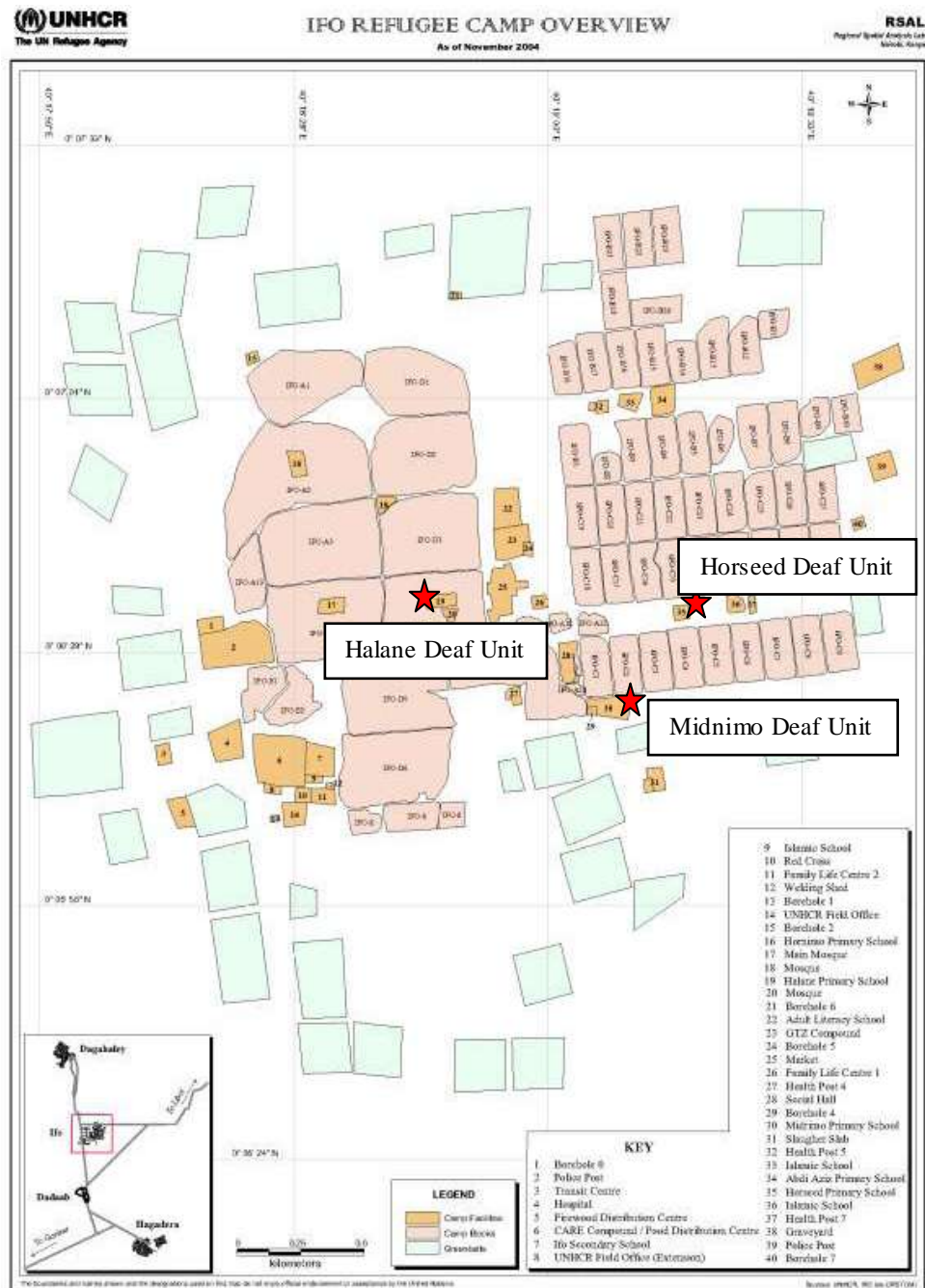
There are three classrooms for six different levels, pre-unit, class 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 at Halane Deaf Unit. Some teachers share the same classroom with two different levels, whilst some teachers will teach two different levels at once. There is one classroom at both Horseed and Midnimo Deaf Units. In Horseed Deaf Unit, three teachers teaching three different levels share the same classroom and blackboard split in three ways. Teachers found this to be a problematic teaching and learning environment as younger students would often lose concentration and watch older students learning on the side. Meanwhile, Midnimo Deaf Unit's classroom is slightly larger than Horseed Deaf Unit with much smaller number of students, and they found it satisfactory environment for learning. There are very limited teaching materials and resources for the teachers of the Deaf in the units. Most of the

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<sup>18</sup> P1 is a Teacher Certification which includes some post secondary level education/training and qualifies one to teach primary education level. S1 is a Teacher Diploma, the highest level of teacher qualification including university level education and P3 is the lowest level of teacher certification which includes some primary level education.

blackboards in the Deaf units are damaged and filled with holes making it challenging to write notes in orderly fashion on the blackboards. They also have few textbooks. Each student receives pencils and notebooks annually from the school.

Map 3: Ifo Camp



(UNHCR, 2004)

### *Dagahaley*

There are two Deaf units in Dagahaley camp. The first Deaf unit is located at Unity Primary School and the second Deaf unit is located at Jubba Primary School. 167 Deaf students enrolled in the special education program in Dagahaley camp. Out of 167 Deaf students, only 18 students are distributed among two Deaf units in Dagahaley. There are nine students at Unity Deaf Unit, three has additional challenges. The teacher at Unity Deaf Unit mentioned that they used to have approximately 26 Deaf students but many left school for several different reasons: additional responsibilities at home, lack of incentives to continue learning, refusal to continue learning with young students and frustration with the quality of education. There are also nine students at Jubba Deaf Unit, all of the Deaf students in Jubba are under ten years old. The teacher also mentioned that the Jubba Deaf Unit used to have one more student but she became sick and was unable to continue her studies. All students in Dagahaley Deaf Units are in class 1 and 2.

Additionally, there are a total of three teachers of the Deaf in Dagahaley camp. There are two teachers of the Deaf in Unity Deaf Unit. One is Deaf and has completed his primary level education in the camps and his secondary level education in Kenya. He has been teaching since 2007. The second teacher is a new teacher who joined late in 2009 after completing secondary level education in the camps. He is currently learning Kenya Sign Language from a Deaf colleague. There is one Deaf teacher in Jubba Deaf Unit. He completed primary level education in the camps and received some training in Kenya. He is one of the first Deaf teacher in the camps and started teaching Deaf students in Dagahaley in 2002. Meanwhile, the Special Education Teacher for Dagahaley camp joined in mid 2009<sup>19</sup>. The Special Education School Inspector for Dagahaley spent approximately 7 years teaching special

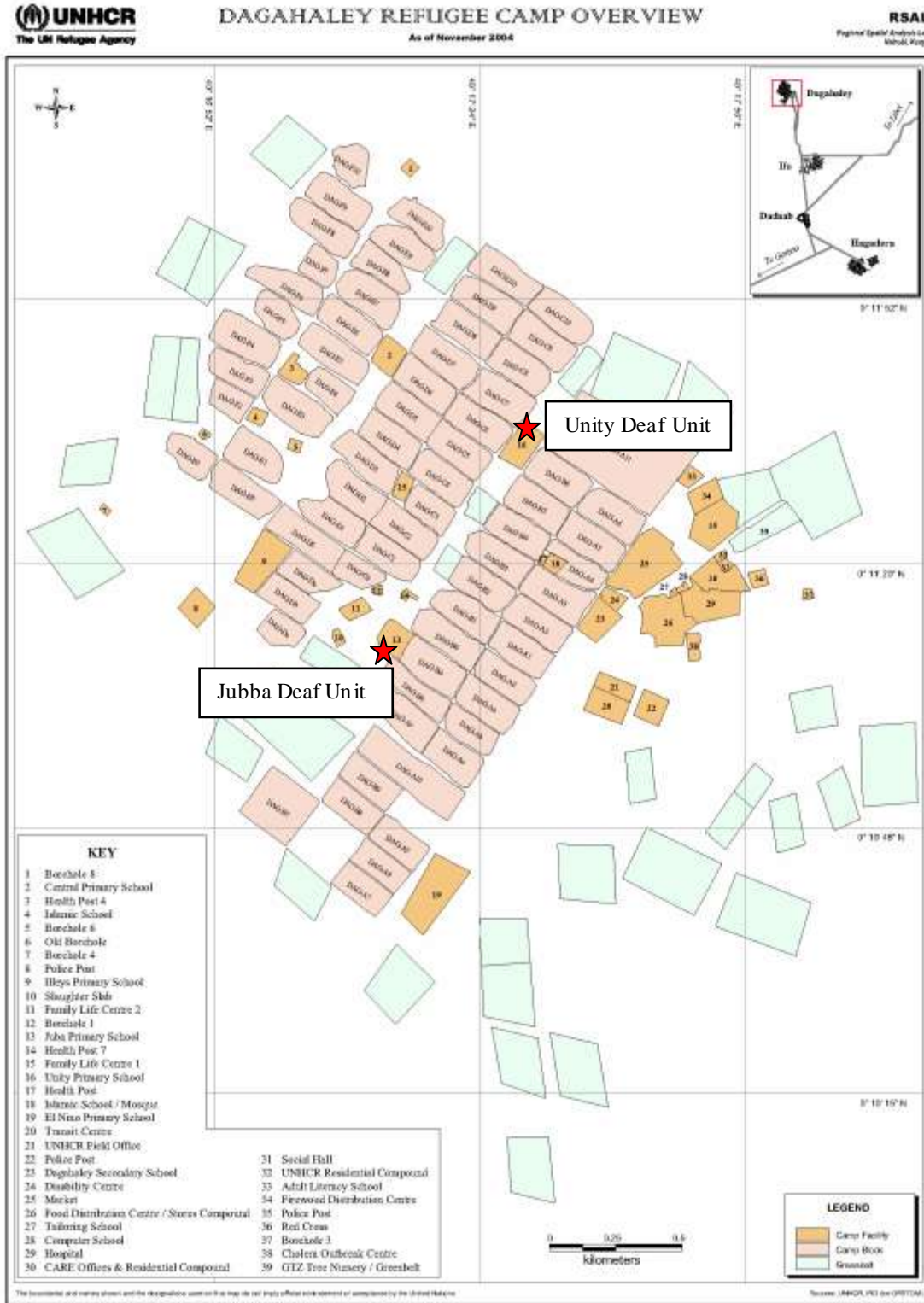
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<sup>19</sup> At the time of the fieldwork, she has been in the office only for one month.

education to mentally disabled students in the camp then was promoted as deputy headmaster and headmaster before being appointed as an inspector in 2005.

Each Unit has one classroom for two different levels, class 1 and 2. Jubba Deaf Unit shares a classroom with the Blind Unit which consists of two teachers of the Blind and one of the teachers is Blind and successfully educated in the camps. They have two mentally disabled students and nine blind students. The classroom is split in the middle where the Deaf students have access to the blackboard; the students are seated facing the blackboard and their back to the Blind Unit. The Blind Unit occupies the back section of the classroom with round tables. There are very limited teaching materials and resources for the teachers of the Deaf in the units. They also have few textbooks. Each student receives pencils and notebooks annually from the school.

Map 4: Dagahaley Camp



(UNHCR, 2004)

This table reflects the overarching image of the Deaf Education Program in the three camps of Dadaab.

**Table 2: Statistical Information on Deaf Units in Dadaab**

	Hagadera		Ifo		Dagahaley	
Deaf Units	Central Unit	Halane Unit	Midnimo Unit	Horseed Unit	Unity Unit	Jubba Unit
Total Enrolment of Deaf Students in this Camp	225 Deaf students* #	158 Deaf students*			167 Deaf students*	
Total Enrolment of Deaf Students in the Unit	37 Deaf Students (3 are integrated in Std. 8)	28 students (std. 1 to 5) (6 are integrated)	7 students (3 are integrated & 4 are in the unit)	25 students (std. 1 to 4)	9 students (6 are Deaf, 2 has mental disabilities & 1 has low vision and additional challenges) in std. 1 & 2	9 Deaf students (3 girls & 6 boys) 2 are in std. 2 and the rest are in std. 1
# of classrooms	2 classrooms	3 classrooms	1 classrooms	1 classroom and 1 blackboard for 3 teachers	1 classroom and 1 blackboard for 2 teachers	Shares the classroom with the Blind Unitc
Total # of Teachers of the Deaf	3 Teachers of the Deaf (One hearing female, 2 are KISE trained)	4 Teachers of the Deaf	3 Teachers of the Deaf	3 Teachers of the Deaf (One hearing female)	2 Teachers of the Deaf	1 Teacher of the Deaf
# of Deaf Teachers	No Deaf teachers	1 Deaf Teacher	1 Deaf Teacher	1 Deaf Teacher	1 Deaf Teacher	1 Deaf Teacher

\* This is the enrolment number for the special education program; the majority of the students are integrated.  
 # Numbers were collected from several different education offices in the camps. The numbers for specific category varied in each document that was submitted to the CARE Basic Education Program. As a consequence, this is an estimated number.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Findings: Listening to their Experiences and Perspectives about Opportunities and Obstacles

#### The Stakeholders

My aim for this section is to present an inclusive insight into each group’s experiences and perspectives concerning Deaf education in the refugee camp. I decided to cluster the participants into four groups; Administrators, Teachers, Deaf Students and Community Members based on their role with the Deaf units instead of structuring the analysis in terms of their location within the camps. I believe that it is important to recognize the patterns and trends among each group to better understand the dynamics of their roles within the Deaf unit. Furthermore, Crossley and Watson (2008) remind us that “education, in short, cannot be decontextualized from its local culture” (p. 39) and its local environment. Thus the next four sections will explicitly elaborate with excerpts from the interviewees about the opportunities and obstacles that each group faces as they associate with the Deaf units. The findings reported present knowledge, experiences, and opinions expressed by members of each stakeholder group. In presenting these data I have chosen stylistically not to preface every statement with “The administrators said X or Y”, though I do highlight quotes from individual interviewees to illustrate key points. Further on I will comment on similarities and differences in findings across the stakeholder groups.

**Table 3: Data Table of Involved Stakeholders**

Hagadera	Ifo	Dagahaley
7 students	9 students	2 students
3 teachers	10 teachers	3 teachers
2 community members	5 community members	14 community members
2 SNE <sup>20</sup> teacher/inspector	2 SNE teacher/inspector	2 SNE teacher/inspector
1 headmaster	3 headmasters	2 headmasters
1 CARE Basic Education Director		

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<sup>20</sup> Special Needs Education

In total, there are 65 participants; 13 Administrators, 16 teachers, 18 students and 18 community members.

### **Administrators**

To demonstrate the causal relationship between the manners in which administrators work with the Deaf Education program in the Dadaab camps, this section deconstructs the administrators' experiences and perspectives into two broad areas: (1) opportunities and (2) obstacles of the Deaf Education program. The data for the administrators group consists of one-on-one interviews with 13 administrators; one CARE Basic Education Director, three Special Education Teachers from each camp, three Special Education School Inspectors from each camp and six headmasters from each primary school that is home to the Deaf Units.

The individuals involved in the administrator group came from different backgrounds, the CARE Basic Education Director and the three Special Education Teachers are Kenyans who have relocated to work in the camps. Meanwhile, the three Special Education School Inspectors and all headmasters are refugees who have worked for the Education sector in the camps for numerous years and have been promoted through the ranks.

### **Opportunities**

All administrators agree that education is an excellent acting agent and tool used to combat community stigma towards the Deaf population, to promote literacy among the Deaf students and to open doors to new opportunities for Deaf refugees. "It makes me very happy knowing that the child with disability is now at school learning... [instead of] hiding at home" (Administrator 5, 2009). Another administrator adds another crucial element of the Deaf Education program's existence in the camps,

“Education has played a very important role in demystifying myths and stereotypes about Deaf people in this community” (Administrator 2, 2009).

### *Building Community Awareness and Outreach*

According to the administrators, the biggest challenge that administrators and teachers face in the camp is eradicating community wide stigma towards the disability community. The entrenched stigma found amongst the Somali community can be traced to lack of exposure to the disability community in Somalia. The majority of Deaf in Somalia are often hidden away in homes and perceived as a ‘sub-citizens’. “I was shocked to learn that... [Deaf] girls stay at home most of the time, cooking, cleaning etc... waiting at home for a man to come and marry them” (Administrator 3, 2009). This administrator further elaborates that he often sees physical disabled children in schools, “but not Deaf and Blind” (Administrator 3, 2009). Furthermore, on daily basis, many Deaf experience abuse, both verbally and physically out in the community whether fetching water, buying some vegetables from the market or merely walking down the road. Some would throw stones at Deaf students; some would shout ‘Deaf’ and some would refuse to sell goods. At school, students also experience “abuse from other students” (Administrator 1, 2009).

The administrators and teachers of the Deaf work together to spread awareness about sending their Deaf children to school by providing community-wide awareness workshops throughout the blocks with the block leaders in the camps. The Special Education Teacher and Inspector in each camp would often go into the blocks to talk with the families of Deaf children by encouraging them to “change [their] mentality... instead of us begging them to please send their children to school” (Administrator 6, 2009). The administrators and teachers struggle on daily basis to overcome myths about the Deaf units; for

example, “parents refuse to send their kids to school because they think CARE is benefitting from them” (Administrator 6, 2009). In some cases, some parents would be suspicious of the schools and “some parents will go to school with their child, so that they make sure that whatever their child gets, they will collect them” (Administrator 6, 2009). In the camps, many families with a disabled family member would often use the disabled family member as “way to get money or to benefit something” (Administrator 6, 2009) from the camp system.

With time, the Deaf Units prevailed, and as the numbers of Deaf students enrolled in the Deaf Units grew, several Deaf students managed to complete primary level and continue onto secondary level, more Deaf teachers are hired in the Deaf units, and Deaf became more visible in the community through community activities promoted by CARE. More and more community members became aware about the Deaf population and began to “accept and have positive attitude towards Deaf children. That is the most important [thing] to develop positive attitude and acceptance” (Administrator 4, 2009). The Deaf Units played a huge role in reducing community wide stigma towards the Deaf by “help[ing] parents of Deaf learners in accepting the condition of their children after they come to the unit or meet during parents’ meeting. They discover that their children can be taught through Kenya Sign Language and total communication<sup>21</sup>. After seeing many Deaf learners in the unit, other parents accept to bring/enrol their children to the school to learn thus increasing accessibility” (Administrator 2, 2009).

An administrator who has spent several years in the camps working with the education section remarked on the transformation of the community’s attitude. “When I first came here, parents would not bring their children to school. I would have to go to parents. But now, they are aware, so when they have

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<sup>21</sup> A method of instruction which heavily emphasizes a borrowed system which is a fusion of a spoken language with a sign language mixing and matching the structures, syntax, morphology and grammar rules of both languages

a child with special needs, they will bring their child and ask for information about how to care for their children. I think that is very important, I am very happy. We achieved one of our goals. For example, today, in Halane, today, parents brought their child and asked for information. So, that is really bringing a big change and also, there will be an increase in children joining the special needs unit” (Administrator 4, 2009). He further elaborates on how positive changes have occurred on many different levels, “last week, we had meeting with parents and parents told me that they are ready to support their child and they also have appointed some teachers to help their children at home. So by that, I mean, parents know benefits of education... They are aware of the importance [of] knowing [and] understanding their children” (Administrator 4, 2009). The awareness and acceptance of the community members especially the parents depends in part on the stability of Deaf education program over time, and in part on the ‘visibility’ of successful outcomes for some participants such as those Deaf students that have graduated and returned to work in the Deaf units and the camps. This is to be elaborated in the following section.

#### *Deaf Units and Deaf Teachers as Role Models*

The Deaf Units and especially Deaf teachers are the living testimony of successes associated with access to education for Deaf children. Once more, it is crucial to stress that the majority of Deaf children are isolated at homes devoid of communication that facilitates learning. Many are further isolated as they sense that they are ‘different’ from others. One may analogize this experience to a fish in a fishbowl, in a sense, Deaf are ‘physically present’ but yet inaccessible because of communication barriers. In most homes, there are rudimentary home signs between the Deaf member and the family members; however, this form of communication is inadequate as one is only able to express basic necessities i.e. eat, sleep, go, come, bathroom, clean and so forth, but it falls short from being able to

express one's thoughts, feelings and ideas. This in turn deprives the Deaf individual of meeting basic human needs of self-expression.

The Deaf Units and Deaf teachers give Deaf students hope and meet their basic needs in such ways. "This [Deaf] unit is very important in that it helps Deaf learners to socialize and therefore accept their own condition. When a child gets to school and finds 20 other Deaf in the school make him and content that he is not alone but many thus through interaction they accept the disability faster" (Administrator 2, 2009). The Deaf units provide a bridge for Deaf students to a community complete with its own people, identity, language and culture. "Learners identify themselves with the unit as their own because that is the only place they are understood by members as opposed to the real homes and the mainstream where communication is a problem and many at times causes rejection from parents, teachers and hearing learners" (Administrator 2, 2009).

"Apart from the identity purpose, it increases the retention rate since Deaf learners find conducive environment where they are accepted, understood and listened to. Deaf learners however cultivate a spirit of working hard and remaining in school because they discover older learners that have passed through it and now in secondary school while others in college hence serves as role model" (Administrator 2, 2009). Furthermore, the Deaf units enable both the families and the Deaf student with links to others who have substantive understanding and knowledge of the Deaf experience. Several administrators concur that the majority of the Deaf are inclined to go to the administrators for all types of assistance and support such as interpreting, completing paperwork, advocacy and information. "Generally, I noticed that Deaf people are always very direct, so they really want to be given hope for any activity in which happens in the camp. They want to be included" (Administrator 1, 2009).

“Learners know that I understand them better than their own parents, they confide in me and in most cases they bring all of their problems including domestic to me. Being close to them, they believe I give the best. Sometimes when parents have disagreed with the Deaf learners they come to report in school because they believe I can solve the problem better since I understand the language of the child” (Administrator 2, 2009).

The Deaf Unit is not just a learning institution, and the Deaf teachers are not just teachers teaching new things to students. They also act as a site for language acquisition and language role models. “The major role the unit plays is to train these young Deaf learners in total communication i.e. KSL [Kenya Sign Language], fingerspelling, lip reading, signed English and signed exact English” (Administrator 2, 2009). The Deaf Units and Deaf teachers facilitate the majority of Deaf children who would arrive at school without a ‘formal’ language the opportunity to acquire a ‘formal’ language in a natural environment with native signers. Acquiring a language is like being given a key to a locked door which is a gateway to the world. By providing access to education, language, a community complete with its own identity and culture, the Deaf Units have empowered Deaf students with opportunities for self-determination.

This paradigm shift facilitated by the Deaf Units in the camps transforming the community’s attitude and perception towards the Deaf community. This enabled the Deaf community members to fight for their own educational and social self-determination, influencing the greater social sphere.

### **Obstacles**

Subsequently, the administrators concurred that the Deaf Unit plays a very important role as an acting agent and tool in eradicating community wide stigma and promoting self-determination among

Deaf students. In addition, the administrators as well recognize the need to ensure that every child in the camps has access to education. On the contrary, with the Deaf Units located in a protracted refugee situation, the administrators are perpetually subject to arbitrary macro factors. This situation creates new obstacles which impedes the strengthening and progress of the Deaf Units. The biggest obstacle the administrators face on a daily basis is to address competing priorities which create new series of obstacles in the area of technical assistance.

### *Competing Priorities*

Ultimately, the CARE special education sector oversees all special education programs including all special education units, integrated students in all levels, primary and secondary, training for special education teachers, resources provisions for special education and building community awareness about special education programs for students with disabilities. As one administrator puts it, “in CARE, we have special education teachers who are in charge for all disabled people in Dadaab camp, all of disabilities, not just Deaf” (Administrator 6, 2009).

Overstretching the sole source of technical assistance, the special education teachers found it difficult to meet all of the special education programs’ needs as special education teacher are “the only one in the camp who is professional, so that if, they need help, [special education teacher] cannot just help two classes, [special education teacher] have to help all of the camp” (Administrator 6, 2009). The administrators’ foremost priority is to link the existing policies, services and funding to ensure that students with disabilities in the camps are given access to education.

“Also, other thing, [special education teacher] try to make sure that every person that has disabilities needs to go to school and [special education teacher] try to demand their needs if it is

expensive, then it is important to put them to schools... That is a challenge” (Administrator 6, 2009). Another administrator explains one situation which occurred whereas the existing facilities are inadequate for the sizeable Deaf population found in the camps. “For example, today, one hard of hearing came wanting to be sent to a special unit but the problem is the distance. Some cannot walk far to school. So now, maybe [special education teacher] have to recommend a special unit in the far areas. For example, in one section N, [one would] have to come to Halane or Horseed but many fail to come. So, [the special education teachers] want to try to set up a special unit in N [which is] very far, so that children in that area can go to that school. That means many Deaf children will not get any education because what happens [is that when] we go to normal classrooms, they don’t get anything. Also it is likely that people would not focus on them at all. Many will leave school” (Administrator 4, 2009). In another camp, another administrator faces similar issue of inaccessibility of special education programs for students with disabilities and she suggests, “if we can get all students with disabilities to a central place for example, Jubba Primary school... then we can maybe get driver that will move around the blocks to pick up learners then drop off at special unit which is possible. But right now, it is not possible. But if we have funding, it could happen” (Administrator 6, 2009).

The constant struggle to provide access to education for Deaf students emanates from an overstretched CARE education budget and lack of funding. The majority of CARE’s education budget goes to the teachers’ salaries, approximately 75% of the overall budget. The remaining 25% of the budget is often spent on education-related activities including the special education sector. The budget includes both primary and secondary schools. The special education programs are under the primary school budget. Thus CARE is obligated to focus on donors to collect supplementary funding for education-related activities that are not covered in the initial budget (Administrator 1, 2009). “The

general knowledge is that we need more money but not only for special education, we do need funding” (Administrator 1, 2009).

Again, as mentioned earlier, only 50% of refugee children in the camps have access to education in the camps; thus innovative improvements and incentives for the special education has to compete against the overall priorities of the CARE education program. One administrator indicates an example of the difficulty of coming to an agreement on how to best provide access to education for all children in the camps: “Maybe if there is money and if one Deaf person consumes all that money that can be used for ten children. That is not special” (Administrator 6, 2009). Furthermore, the special education program also needs budget and funding for several different areas such as teaching materials/equipments, resources, training and salaries for additional teachers. The limitations faced from competing priorities of the CARE programs and especially the education programs has had an impact on the accessibility and the quality of education for the Deaf students as the majority of obstacles encountered within the Deaf education program in the camps originated from lack of technical assistance in many different areas. The following section will elaborate on the obstacles encountered by the administrators in light of lack of technical assistance in the field.

#### *Lack of Human Resources and Technical Assistance*

All administrators highlight the need for sign language training for all teachers as the most critical area of Deaf education in the camps. “Yes. [special education teachers and program director] know they do face challenges. We do not have teachers who are fluent in sign language. This is our biggest challenge that our students face every day” (Administrator 1, 2009). One administrator who

spent more than fifteen years in different capacities within the special education program observed how “the quality of education for the Deaf went down when teachers do not have sign language skills” (Administrator 5, 2009).

“We used to have trainings, two or three weeks long here in the camps up to 1997 by professionals from Nairobi and other parts of Kenya. Then CARE changed its policy and decided to sponsor teachers to receive training in Kenya. To date, there have been few workshops, short ones perhaps one or two days only, in the camps – as you can see that many of teachers of the Deaf are not good in sign language – most of those who have been trained have already left for America, Canada or Australia” (Administrator 5, 2009). Another administrator further highlights the extent of lack of trained teachers in the camps in the following statement, “I can tell you that high percentage of teachers is not trained. For example, this year, we only have enough funds to support six teachers in special education for their training” (Administrator 1, 2009). On the contrary, sending teachers to Kenya for training in special education has its own obstacles as well, one administrator recalls how “even with this ambitious plan, the most disappointing fact is that the teachers being enrolled for training lack the basic formal education to make them understand and move at the same pace with Kenyan students in the colleges” (Field notes from Administrator 14, 2009).

In light of this, several administrators compensate for the lack of training among special education teachers in the camps by providing training in the camps. “One thing during our teachers training, we have one program every Saturday, I make sure that teachers teaching there also include pedagogy of teaching Deaf” (Administrator 4, 2009). For those lacking proficiency in sign language, one administrator suggests that “the best place to learn is in special units. That is what I say; where else can

you practice sign language often? We encourage them to learn from sign language books. But they have to practice and practice” (Administrator 4, 2009). However, a new perspective towards the hiring process was facilitated with my arrival in the camps as two administrators now seriously reconsidering their past hiring procedure, one of the administrator recalls, “from our first visit to a Deaf Unit, I was so surprised to learn that the many Deaf teachers are unable to understand simple message from you, I did not know that because I do not know sign language myself” (Administrator 5, 2009). Another administrator adds, “I now wonder if we do assess or inquire about the potential special education teacher’s sign language skills during the hiring procedure” (fieldnotes, 2009).

This evokes another dynamic obstacle which the administrators face very often with training of the teachers. Again, with the special education program located in a highly transient environment, many Deaf Units lost trained and qualified teachers to a different individualistic competing priority, career promotions and resettlement opportunities for Deaf education teachers. “Lack of qualified staff-teachers that have been trained normally who resign to look for greener pastures/well paying jobs or go for resettlement thus leaving vacancies and once we fill the chances and train them they resign and leave. It is a challenge even to the learners since they keep on getting new teachers” (Administrator 2, 2009). Another administrator concurred and states, “that [this] is also a challenge because some are promoted to become maybe a deputy headmaster. So, for example, in Midnimo, now headmaster himself already went to KISE for special needs education training. So by the time they complete their training, they are promoted, they are not working at units anymore. Now they are managers” (Administrator 4, 2009). Another administrator agrees to the challenges of high turnover among trained teachers as he himself stated that he “took advantage of the promotion [that was offered to him] because of the certificate in special education” (Administrator 11, 2009). However he justifies his position as a headmaster with

training in special education provides an advantage as he “have studied in that area, so [he] know how to best advise [his] teachers” (Administrator 11, 2009). This illustrates a broader issue that administrators encounter apart from the organizational competing priorities for professional responsibilities for the special education program and/or competing priorities for funding. This issue is situated in the intersection of addressing the lack of technical assistance and individual competing priority among special education teachers.

Continuing on the similar thread, another administrator elaborates on the ramifications that are caused by the domino effect of the high turnover from individual competing priority among teachers on the overall quality of special education. “Personally, I have encountered the challenge of understaffing in the unit. Due to budget allocation the numbers of teachers assigned is fewer than the recommended teacher learner ratio of 1:15. This leaves the teacher more exhausted. The teachers who have high work load are not motivated in terms of remunerations. They are paid similar figures like the regular teachers, yet they do more work which in turn demoralizes them. This has led to a very high staff turnover. Due to few teachers willing to handle the unit, we have only one unit serving the whole camp. This has led to absenteeism of many learners and some drop out of school due to distance fro to school” (Administrator 2, 2009) At the moment, the special education program continues to have challenges “but one of our biggest challenges is that we don’t have enough teachers that are trained” (Administrator 1, 2009).

The administrators are now advocating to appoint Deaf teachers as an alternative solution to the limitations faced with training provisions for the majority of special education teachers. One administrator from Ifo camp who managed to appoint three Deaf teachers into three Deaf Units in 2009 recalls his experience with the Deaf teachers who initially had to volunteer for a year in the Deaf Units.

“We advocate for them [Deaf teachers] to be appointed... we advocated, now we have three Deaf teachers appointed. I had to work hard to get them appointed. Some of people in charge were not ready to hire Deaf as teachers because they think Deaf cannot teach. But they came up with courage. Our children, who finish school, should get appointed” (Administrator 4, 2009). Another administrator adds about the importance of advocating and promoting Deaf teachers to teach in the Deaf Units, she further elaborates on the importance, “it is so important to advocate and demand that they go to school for free and also, when children go to school, we must follow up and make sure they are alright. Also, out of school, we try to get them appointed, so that their parents can see the importance and why these children need to go to school” (Administrator 6, 2009). By appointing Deaf teachers, they bring the circle of education full circle as those teachers become a living testimony of the importance of education for Deaf students.

### **Summary of Administrators’ Opportunities and Obstacles**

From the societal perspective, the Deaf education program may be perceived as an extraordinary opportunity designated to combat and eradicate community wide stigma and provide a natural space where Deaf students may ‘discover’ themselves linguistically and culturally. On the contrary, tangible obstacles are tightly interlinked to the extent where one innovative improvement or incentive has the ability to remove one obstacle only to face another. As the administrators have identified CARE’s biggest challenge which is teachers; they do not have sufficient trained teachers. Logically, one would consider training teachers as one of the biggest challenge as well, however, to remove this obstacle; there is a need for funding to cover the training costs. The obstacles does not stop there; once they secure sufficient funding to provide training to a limited pool of teachers, another obstacle appears, the

teachers who have received training are more likely to receive promotion or resettlement and leave the Deaf units.

Administrators have identified two major opportunities associated with the Deaf Units, the reduction of community stigma and an increase in community awareness and attitude towards the Deaf population in the camps. On the contrary, the administrators also identified two main obstacles encountered by the involved stakeholders of the Deaf Units, the relentless competing priorities, both on organizational and individual levels, and the lack of human resources and technical assistance. Consequently, several administrators have proposed to establish a separate school for special education to address all of the needs. “What we do in the unit. We keep them in the units, we tried to integrate them but there were many problems with communication because of normal teachers. I have seen that there is no benefit in that... So we have one special education teacher go to [class 8] class. I see benefits there. We still have many integrated too; we have many problems because we don’t have teachers” (Administrator 4, 2009). One administrator notes how “we need to be separated; the problem is that we don’t have enough classrooms and the second thing, we don’t have enough teachers” (Administrator 6, 2009). The ‘cycle’ repeats itself; as one comes up with a possible solution to address an obstacle, another obstacle takes its place.

## **Teachers**

All teachers of the Deaf from six Deaf Units participated in the interview. This consisted of a total of sixteen teachers of the Deaf and five teachers are Deaf themselves. Among the eleven hearing teachers, six of the teachers have completed primary education only, four have obtained secondary

education, one completed teacher training program in his home country (Ethiopia). Among the five Deaf teachers, all five completed their primary education at the Deaf units in the camp. Out of five Deaf teachers, four of them went on to complete their secondary education in Kenyan Deaf schools up-country. One Deaf teacher completed vocational training in the camp.

Many of the teachers of the Deaf interviewed for this study arrived in the camps during the early 1990's. Six of the teachers were hired during the year of 2009 and have been with the Deaf units for only few months. Four of the teachers were appointed to the Deaf Units within the last five years. Five teachers have had more than five years of teaching experience with the Deaf Units with exception of one teacher who spent fifteen years with the Deaf Units. All of the Deaf teachers started as volunteer teachers at the Deaf Units unlike with hearing teachers who are directly appointed to the Deaf Units. Among the hearing teachers, the majority of the teachers only have very basic proficiency in Kenya Sign Language skills and have the capacity to carry a very basic conversation in sign language.

The majority of Deaf Units has between three to four teachers of the Deaf with the exception of Dagahaley which only had one and two teachers in two different units. I found this information to be noteworthy, the majority of my interviews with teachers of the Deaf range from fifteen to twenty-five minutes whilst my interviews with Deaf teachers range from twenty-five minutes to one hour. The Deaf teachers felt that it was important to include all of their experiences especially as a student in the Deaf Units and as a Deaf adult living in the refugee camp within the scope of their relationship with the Deaf Units.

The teachers of the Deaf are the front line of the Deaf Education program delivery. They work with all groups, the administrators, the Deaf students and the community members on a daily basis. Acting as a bridge between all groups, the teachers have identified a principal opportunity of the Deaf Units. The Deaf Units elevates the quality of life for Deaf students by acting as a role model for the Deaf students and community members. On the contrary, they often encounter obstacles on daily basis; the majority of the obstacles are beyond their scope making it a persistent state of inadequacy. The obstacles include insufficient access to sign language learning, lack of technical assistance linked to instruction and limited amount of community support.

## **Opportunities**

### *Deaf Units and Deaf Teachers as Role Models*

All teachers agree that the Deaf Unit has such a profound impact on the shaping of the Deaf students' lives. One Deaf teacher, formerly a student at the Deaf Unit, illustrates the Deaf Unit as "a very special thing because you learn everything, to know things, how to communicate, to become a better person. If there is no school, many will become thieves, rape girls and use drugs. Education will help you in the future so that Deaf can be equal with the world" (Teacher 6, 2009). This teacher hopes to go to a university in the near future so that when Somalia becomes a peaceful country again, he plans to return to Somalia to establish a Deaf school. Another teacher adds that the Deaf students "need education. That is because if [we] do not teach well, they will be a 'thing', not knowing about many things that they want" (Teacher 5, 2009).

Teachers from all Deaf units agree that the Deaf Units also enable Deaf students to come out of isolation and acquire fundamental skills to survive in the society. One teacher describes a situation

where she facilitated a Deaf student to come out of her home to school. “We have a new Deaf child who has been staying at home. When the parents came and visited the school and they saw Deaf students learning here at the school. They become happy and accept to bring their Deaf child to school. That’s why we have many Deaf girls there.” (Teacher 9, 2009). Teacher 5 states that there is a big problem with community stigma toward Deaf population as he recalls where he discovered a Deaf child in one area of the camp; he did not know his own name or even sign language. Now after enrolling him in the school, he now knows how to write his name, some sign language and is continuing learning at school. He finishes his comment with, “It is very important! I know because I can see the students now being able to communicate with teachers and others also you can ask the Deaf and they themselves also know how important school is” (Teacher 5, 2009). Another teacher adds that “the positive thing is that when they come to school, they integrate with other children, hearing children and can play together, can talk together, they can do anything but when they are outside of school, a big challenge is there” (Teacher 1, 2009).

Furthermore, in some areas of the camps, Deaf Unit also plays crucial role in advocating for Deaf girls’ education. Several of the teachers have been actively participating in the initiation and implementation of a new Deaf Unit to ensure that Deaf girls in the area would be able to access to education. As one teacher recalls locating many Deaf children in the area of block B and C, after attempting to encourage the parents of Deaf children in the area to attend school, he learned that the majority of the Deaf children who are girls are not in school because of the distance between the blocks and the Deaf Unit. “Especially girls, many special girls are not in school... because many fear going to school in that area due to the possibility of getting raped or other things” (Teacher 11, 2009). This indeed facilitated the implementation of Horseed Deaf Unit which now has the largest Deaf girls

enrolled in a Deaf Unit throughout the camps. Most Deaf girls would remain at home until they get married; many do not have any opportunity to interact with other Deaf girls, to learn Kenya Sign Language and to learn and understand cultural customs. In this Deaf Unit, there is one female teacher who is also instrumental in bringing many Deaf girls to school; she also incorporates cultural learning into her teaching so that the Deaf girls will understand more about their own culture and be able to participate in cultural activities. She elaborates one instance where they would, “dance in Somali way and it is important to teach because all use it for marriage [she refers to a Somali sign which consists of her tongue rolled up and sticking out to demonstrate ‘marriage’ in Somali culture], to look for their suitors, then when they come here we discuss about them. And we here practice on how to dance. Because it is personal for them as a Somali Deaf girl” (Teacher 9, 2009).

Moreover, according to the teachers, the Deaf Unit and teachers are also influential in reducing community stigma and increasing awareness about Deaf Education program in the camps. Both teachers and students mentioned that they have experienced some form of discrimination from their community members in the camps. This has had such impact on the dynamics of the Deaf education programs at the schools. Deaf are considered ‘subclass citizen’ among the refugees. Even teachers who teach Deaf students are attached to the stigma. Community members would verbally abuse and throw stones at Deaf students including teachers. Moreover, some store /market owners would not sell food to the teachers in fear of becoming Deaf themselves. One teacher explicitly describes his experience working with the Deaf Unit for the last ten years and how community stigma generates negative images about the Deaf population. “Up until now, I notice that most people stare at us, that’s their attitude, staring at us. Especially when they see Deaf boys and Deaf girls walking around. They would stare and stare until they become frustrated, then start throwing stones. Then again, not only at them, but to me too, they

would yell “you Deaf teacher! Deaf teacher!” They think I am Deaf too because I teach Deaf then they start to abuse me too. They think that if they see Deaf, [it] means that problems will be brought. Really, the community is not very well educated for special children. They do not respect me as teacher, even in school, they don’t respect me. Even if I am teacher, just because I teach the Deaf” (Teacher 11, 2009). Teachers did not only encounter challenges with the community members but with the parents of Deaf children as well. Often parents would tell teachers that “Deaf children cannot learn things and there is no need, it is a waste of time putting them in schools Yes, now it changed, the attitude, it changed now because [teachers] met with some of the parents.” (Teacher 1, 2009).

Teachers would rationalize with both the community members and the parents to reduce community stigma towards the Deaf population. One teacher recounts how she would stress that, “we are just the same. They would come and point at the Deaf here. And that Deaf are being taught there. [I keep on telling them that there is] no need to be ashamed. It is simple to [learn and] know sign language. Deaf like to learn. If it is hearing [always communicated via speaking] then they don’t like it. They like it when they sign” (Teacher 9, 2009). In addition, several teachers would exhibit living proof of the Deaf education’s successes. With continuous new influxes of new refugees, one teacher would bring new families to the Deaf Unit to present evidences of successful Deaf adults and children. He recalls how “some families who still believe that Deaf cannot learn. So Deaf continue to stay home and do nothing. They do not go to school. Many new refugees coming from Somalia still believe that. They are surprised to see a Deaf teacher and asked how that is possible. I told them that my brother is learning in Kenya, they ask me how?” (Teacher 16, 2009).

With the Deaf teachers' presence in the Deaf Units, they act as motivators for both the families and the teachers alike. A teacher states that "the Deaf teachers are the best teachers here because they know sign language and have good English and education. That is the biggest motivator which we have as a teacher to see a Deaf teacher because that proves that Deaf actually can learn and understand" (Teacher 7, 2009). Another teacher adds that "[a Deaf teacher] is a perfect example; he went to school and came back. [The] same [goes for] another [Deaf teacher] who teaches at Horseed. Both of them are now professionals" (Teacher 11, 2009). The teachers themselves state that they are, in essence, the sole community wide support and information centre for Deaf children and their families. They act as social workers as well navigating between the NGOs, schools and community groups.

## **Obstacles**

Apart from encountering and eradicating entrenched community stigma towards the Deaf population, the teachers of the Deaf teaching in the Deaf Units also face insurmountable obstacles on daily basis in absence of adequate opportunities to access to sign language learning. Sign language is the foundation of the Deaf Education program in the camps, sign language enables teachers to teach new materials and Deaf students to understand and fully participate in the learning process. The majority of the teachers' obstacles are interrelated and deeply rooted in the failure to recognize and incorporate sign language learning as an essential tool for teaching Deaf in the Deaf Units. There are several different interlinked sub-themes of obstacles encountered by the teachers, lack of technical assistance linked to instruction, inadequate human resources and inadequate linkage with the administrators which derives from the main theme of the teachers' obstacles, communication barriers on several levels.

### *Lack of Technical Assistance Linked to Instruction*

Access to Sign Language is paramount to the critical and positive influence and impact that Deaf Units have on shaping the lives of Deaf students. The majority of the teachers justified their acknowledgement of their shortcomings in becoming proficient in Kenya Sign Language as the biggest obstacle in playing a major role in the Deaf Units. Teacher 5 notes the importance of “having teachers who know how to teach them, as we need to help them to develop as teachers are responsible for this.” He further elaborates the importance of teaching Deaf students in the following comment, "Deaf needs education too, it is very important for them to know about the world and many things so that they can communicate with others themselves. When other people see something, they can communicate with other people. But for the Deaf, if you talk with them, you will notice that they do not know many things. So, it is best to teach to be aware so that they can know the world themselves” (Teacher 5, 2009). This teacher found it very difficult to teach Deaf students as he is unable to discuss notes since he has no sign language skills at all. He now only teaches math because it is easier to teach using rudimentary sign language for math.

Several teachers describe their experiences being placed in the Deaf Units without any knowledge of Sign Language and how they compensated for the lack of proficiency in Sign Language in the classrooms. Several teachers recognize the ineffectiveness of their teaching because of language barriers. “We force ourselves to teach. We only have dictionary to help us but no training or discussions about sign language. I only look at KSL books [dictionary] and see how I do it, use it with Deaf children. That is our challenge” (Teacher 2, 2009). Teacher 16 who just joined the Deaf Unit few months ago clearly emphasized the difference between Deaf and hearing learners and how it affects the importance of knowing Sign Language. “Deaf learn visually but hearing do not. And signing is really hard. I need more training in signing” (Teacher 16, 2009). One teacher expresses his frustration with

teaching Deaf students, “for me, as a teacher, I need training, training in sign language. If you do not know sign language, it is hard to teach. I really need sign language training, I need that guidebook for sign language, I always ask the special education teacher for that book but nothing to date” (Teacher 12, 2009). One teacher describe a typical day in the Deaf Unit, “if teachers come to class and start teaching, they would start writing on the blackboard then they tend to sign everything on the blackboard once. The Deaf students may not understand, teachers would just leave and leave students alone to copy everything from the blackboard. Often Deaf would read and try to understand what is said. Sometimes they will understand half and not understand another half... Deaf would continue to wonder and think about how to learn... Many Deaf are not good at English, [it creates problems] when they meet hearing out in the community and [attempt] to write on the sand to communicate but Deaf struggle to read and do not understand. Many Deaf feel embarrassed because they went to school for many years up to class 8 and still cannot read very well. Because of that, many Deaf back out from school” (Teacher 6, 2009).

Teacher 1 illustrates the urgent need for sign language trainings. “We need more training in education because some of the teachers cannot talk with the Deaf. No knowledge of sign language. Only writing on the black board because there is no teacher training there. CARE appointed them and brought them here. They write on the black board, that’s it” (Teacher 1, 2009)”. Additionally, Teacher 7 recalls how he had “no training, never had training as a special education teacher. I learn as I teach. I remember first day before I went to my class, I taught class 1, I used to go to class 5 to learn some new signs before going to class 1 to help my brothers and sisters there. But over time, I finally got some training as a special teacher but nothing in sign language. That is where I suffer the most. This is the most difficult to teach children in classroom, I have many barriers [which] I faced because of sign language but I continue to teach. I try but I am in a hard situation with them” (Teacher 7, 2009). Another teacher adds

that he did receive some training but the workshops and trainings often are generalized to the special education sector and does not address the needs of the teachers of the Deaf. “Since 2004 [when] I was appointed as special education teacher, I only went to one training once and it was on Braille but no training in sign language” (Teacher 12, 2009). Another teacher adds that, “the P1<sup>22</sup> training does not include sign language training. I did not receive any training from CARE. I believe that I cannot do anything about it but to do my job as I am appointed by CARE” (Teacher 5, 2009).

With lack of technical assistance in language learning for the teachers, this became a widespread issue where teachers in the camps began to recognize the obstacles faced by the teachers of the Deaf. One teacher puts it in straightforwardly about the impact that the lack of technical assistance and support has on teachers’ appointments to schools throughout the camps. “I have a lot of problems while teaching Deaf [in fact] when teachers are appointed as teachers, most teachers don’t want to teach Deaf because they are most difficult to teach. It is easier to teach other children.” (Teacher 2, 2009). Another teacher stresses how the cycle of appointing teachers without any knowledge of Sign Language and lack of training will continue, “I can’t wait for CARE. [It is] impossible to wait for CARE to solve this because this is a [refugee] camp and we have been here for almost 18 years now. This is still [a refugee] camp; nothing has been done about those problems. They will keep on picking those who finished secondary school, and appoint them as teachers in class without training and I can tell you that here, you can encourage CARE to provide professional training for teachers in the camp, including providing sign language training” (Teacher 7, 2009). Another teacher stresses the importance of bringing motivated teachers into the Deaf Units as she shared her experience as a teacher in the Deaf Unit without any training on Sign Language. “For example, I learn from students, they learn how to sign language. I think

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<sup>22</sup> P1 is a Kenyan teaching certificate qualifying one to teach primary education level

those who do not know how to use sign language should not be forced to come to this unit. And also, if students have teachers who don't know sign language, they will stay at home and do nothing. So, I have to force myself to learn sign language and teach them" (Teacher 2, 2009). Several teachers have subtly mentioned that they needed additional incentives to supplement to their motivation of teaching Deaf students in light of all obstacles, "We should be treated the same, because the hearing teachers who teach lower primary only teach in the mornings. For us, the teachers of the Deaf, we teach in the morning too and in the afternoons for those [Deaf students] who are in class 6 and 8 [enrolled in] the integrated classes but we get paid the same as lower primary teachers. They do not pay us like upper primary teachers" (Teacher 12, 2009).

In essence prior to the arrival of Deaf teachers, the majority of teachers of the Deaf rely on the Kenya Sign Language dictionary and Deaf students to assist them in learning Sign Language. "I learn mostly from children and through KSL dictionary" (Teacher 11, 2009). "I only finished primary school. I finished school in 2003 and started teaching in 2004. And until today, I haven't received any training in sign language or special education. So, anything I do now is self-taught." (Teacher 2, 2009). "In 2004, a Somali coordinator gave us a KSL dictionary. We used the dictionary a lot to sign but it is now lost" (Teacher 12, 2009). Many teachers characterize home signs as Somali Sign Language and the Somali way of communicating as sign language used for instruction in the classrooms. One teacher describes the languages used in the classrooms and how he himself picks up Kenya Sign Language along with the Deaf students. "OK, there is Somali Sign Language that is commonly used at home and with small children. I understand only Somali Sign Language and together with a Deaf teacher who help me teach Deaf children. He, the Deaf teacher, helps me with sign language in the classroom. I also learn from the Deaf teacher and children" (Teacher 8, 2009).

On the contrary, the majority of the students arrive at school with only rudimentary home signs as one Deaf teacher recalls when he first arrived at the Deaf Unit, “I started volunteering at the school but I was so surprised that most Deaf children’s hands<sup>23</sup> are not good. They did not even know the ABC’s. I was so shocked, some Deaf are even in class 5 but they still do not know how to sign, not even ABC’s. Not even 1+1, 2+2, no nothing” (Teacher 6, 2009). Another teacher adds, “when I finally started teaching as a volunteer, many children had poor signing skills, they all only used home signs often called Somali Sign Language. I was so surprised that they had poor sign language skills so I decided to ask teachers why they couldn’t sign. They said that teachers do not know how to sign and had no training. So I had to get all teachers of the Deaf together and teach them basic signs such as how to say, “My name is...”. From there I noticed some improvement” (Teacher 10, 2009). The Deaf teachers immediately recognized that the Deaf students are continuing to utilize rudimentary home signs often called Somali Sign Language so they took up the role of teaching them a formal sign language, Kenya Sign Language. Another Deaf teacher adds, “Deaf in classroom had poor signing skills, they understood nothing... I am Deaf and they are Deaf so I have heart for them as we are the same so I worked hard and taught them a lot... Now children can sign very well, especially the small ones” (Teacher 13, 2009). The same Deaf teacher further stresses on the importance of having Deaf students learning sign language, “Signing is very important, for example, if you go to a hospital because there is a pain in your stomach, and of course if you do not know sign language then they are more likely to give you a medicine for headache. Not only us, many of them finish school at class 8 or did not finish primary education, but then they do not know how to read and write in English. So many of us do not even have secondary education but yet they all have jobs. Even some teachers here only have class 8 education and they were still hired thus their poor signing skills” (Teacher13, 2009).

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<sup>23</sup> A phrase often used by Deaf community members to describe one’s proficiency in Sign Language

Furthermore, with the recent influx of Deaf teachers into the Deaf Units, the majority of the teachers now relied on the Deaf teachers to assist them in learning Sign Language. The Deaf teachers are now besieged with several new challenges on top of their teaching duties. As a Deaf teacher, he expresses his frustrations at the lack of sign language skills among his colleagues, “I am frustrated that some teachers here do not know how to sign. If they need special education teacher, CARE would just hire anybody, they do not even have any sign language and CARE will tell them to go and start teaching. That teacher is more likely to use his/her mouth, and even ask students on how to sign this and that” (Teacher 6, 2009). As a consequence, Deaf teachers encounter a new obstacle, inadequate human resources, originating from lack of technical assistance linked to instruction in the area of sign language training, which brings us to the following section.

### *Inadequate Human Resources*

The problem of lack of access to sign language training for teachers of the Deaf is exacerbated by the heavy workload and overcrowding assigned to teachers in the Deaf education program regardless of their linguistic capacity. A Deaf teacher further elaborates the linkage of lack of technical assistance linked to instruction which is sign language training for teachers to a new obstacle in their workload as he struggles to balance his additional responsibilities with teaching, “teachers approach me and wants me to teach sign language. They are OK with that. But as it is only me there to teach sign language. I have a busy schedule and so many things to do with my own class so it is hard to teach my students and to teach other teachers sign language. But if they want to ask me how to sign a certain word, that is fine” (Teacher 6, 2009). Deaf teachers now feel obligated to solve all ‘problems’ in the classrooms for both the teachers and the students by taking on additional roles in the Deaf Units to compensate for the lack

of sign language. Additional roles include where Deaf teachers would teach hearing teachers sign language during the class time, during their spare time, taking over their class, assisting them by facilitating communication between the teacher and student. Many Deaf teachers often feel isolated as they are only one in the entire Deaf Unit who is proficient in sign language. Another Deaf teacher mentioned that the majority of Deaf students would prefer to go to the Deaf teachers as they can understand them the best. “Many students come to me and told me that their teacher left and asked me to teach but there are so many of them, if I am teaching class 1 then who will teach class 8?” (Teacher 13, 2009). Another teacher adds that he faces the same problem, “my biggest challenge is that I have too many subjects, too many students and I always miss subjects then the following day I would try to reverse the schedule so that missing group will get to learn something that day, but then it repeats once again” (Teacher 10, 2009). “There are so many of them asking me to help. I am the only one. I am frustrated. I do try to help but there are so many students” (Teacher 13, 2009).

Moreover, the majority of teachers also mentioned that they need more teachers to ensure that each level has its own teacher and alleviate the current heavy teaching load. Many teachers often would find themselves teaching two or three different levels and subjects at once in addition to their struggles with their insufficient skills in sign language. One teacher describes her experience as a teacher of the Deaf along with two other teachers in single classroom with a single blackboard for five different levels and subjects. “Just three of us for 20 [students] in one classroom. One classroom with one blackboard. That is a problem! We would split the blackboard into three ways. We would tell students to look at that particular section, and then for another group – another section of the blackboard. How is that? Sometimes children forget and copy notes from higher level such as class four’s blackboard section. But they are in class one, I would ask them why are they doing that. Then they would say that they want to

copy from class 4's blackboard section. I would have to tell them no and that there are different sections of blackboard and that particular section is for them. But no, that is not always easy as they want to sit next to their friends and talk and/or copy their friends. How, how would you deal with this? I mean, to split them up into three sections in same classroom – they want to sit next to their friends. That is problem there. I mean they want to chat with their friends and learn more from them than to copy the notes. By sitting next to their friends, they observe how they do things and then copy them. That is how they learn too. I feel like I always have to tell them to look at that section of the blackboard and for others to look at another section of the blackboard all of the times. They do not just sit down simply but we have to tell them. It is hard with young children” (Teacher 9, 2009).

Another teacher further elaborates on the ramifications that the students face because of inadequate number of teachers and lack of access to a systematic training of teachers of the Deaf in sign language. “Deaf children do have a lot of challenges here from pre unit to class 5, they are separated but in class 6, they are integrated. So they themselves read books until class 8. In integrated classes, they have some teachers who teach different subjects. Know a little bit signs, in math or something. But if they have problems, they can come and see us at the unit. But can't have separate class. From pre unit to class 8? Impossible. That's why they have to be integrated. Why? Not enough teachers. Special education teachers? Only 4 of us. And we already have pre unit to class 5. If all the way to 8, it would be impossible. So because of class 6, 7, 8, some of them would be able to read by themselves. Then they can teach themselves. We can't help them, they do it on their own. But in class 8, some teachers know some signs. That's why we integrate them.” (Teacher 2, 2009). However another teacher notes that the fact “we do not have enough teachers. At this moment, we have 4 teachers with we have 5 classes. Children themselves do not want to be integrated in class 6. They have grudges with other children, they

do not want to interact with other children and as you know, other hearing children often abuse them and would say ‘Ugh! You’re Deaf! Ugh! Go!’”(Teacher 1, 2009). “By this, I mean, they are oppressed in the society. People feel that if Deaf integrated with the community, they get abused, they say that they are stupid. So they feel it is better to separate them from class 1 to 5. By time they arrive in class 6, they are integrated but then they would come back to class, they would say that normal children yell, abuse us, that they are Deaf, can’t learn, can’t be in their classroom and to go back to their unit. Deaf who are integrated have a lot of problems, they have hard time integrating, they need books and not only that, in home, there are problems too. Some students say that their parents beat them. They say that parents order them to do a lot of chores such as getting food from market, getting water... While their normal hearing children would be fine” (Teacher 2, 2009).

When asked about how they as teachers may address their struggles in teaching using sign languages, several teachers mentioned that they need teaching materials to assist them with teaching Deaf students. One teacher explains how he learned from the teacher to teacher training that it is important to include and implement visual aids in the classroom. “For example classroom needs visual aids on the walls. Students should be able to see... It can be posters with picture and words and even with signs too. We can lock it in the teachers’ room and then we can bring it back to the classroom in the mornings. That would be a good teaching tool” (Teacher 16, 2009). When teachers were asked about teaching materials, several teachers mentioned that the inaccessibility to teaching materials is another obstacle stemming from inadequate communication link with the administrators. This brings us to the following obstacle.

### *Inadequate Linkage with the Administrators*

Teachers describe their experiences with the administrators as a waiting game until one gives in and comply to the requests or one concede and abandon the request. One teacher clearly describes his experience with the waiting game, “the office does not help, the office always says tomorrow, tomorrow, maybe next week. We are always waiting. Time is wasted. Deaf need to see things, they need materials. They give us no materials for teaching” (Teacher 16, 2009). Another teacher expresses his frustrations in his attempts to enquire about teaching materials, “Many organizations like to say ‘wait’. So many hearing people, so many talking. How do I combat that? It is hard, often I come and try to write then they would tell me to get out and go wait under the tree. Do they think that I am like a goat? They think I will wait like a goat? No, I leave. I am tired of fighting and fighting” (Teacher10, 2009). Another teacher recalls how she attempted to inquire about allocating more teachers to the Deaf Units, “They complain that there are only few Deaf students so they refuse to give us more teachers and say that we have to teach. That’s it. They say that it’s not a problem. No, no, for us, there are too many Deaf children” (Teacher 9, 2009).

This is another instance of teachers’ dissatisfaction with the administrators and organizations, One teacher integrated a lot of cultural learning into her teaching in hopes of bridging Deaf girls with cultural and community activities. She learned about the World Refugee Day and she approached her headmaster about having her Deaf girls students participate in the World Refugee Day festivals so that they could show the community that “Deaf are just the same as them” (Teacher 9, 2009). After a weeklong confusion between the Handicap International and CARE organization, they eventually participated in the festivals but there were no sign language interpreters. Afterwards, some of the Deaf teachers complained about some disability groups receiving blankets and mats from the World Refugee Day’s activities and especially the fact that “Deaf were [once again] excluded even among the disability

groups” (Teacher 10, 2009). As a consequence, I decided to investigate this. I discovered that Handicap International “currently received 80 blankets from UNHCR and [their] agreement was to assist with old age people whether disabled or not” (field notes, 2009). This was an unambiguous indicator that there is a need for better line of communication between the involved stakeholders of the Deaf community and the organizations.

The organizations have dropped clues to me that the Deaf community has the tendency to complain about everything and demand to get everything. In essence, the Deaf population often found themselves sitting next to several groups who are receiving goods from the organization without any information or communication. Even though it occurred right in front of them, they still have no idea what has been said and what it is for. The majority of the time, there has been insufficient communication between the Deaf individuals and the larger community in the camps. Naturally the majority of Deaf population would feel excluded and suspect several different scenarios. The organization has offered to improve in this aspect and will include them in further meetings. However they failed to mention that they will make the necessary accommodations such as hiring an interpreter or ensuring that someone at the meeting will sign for the Deaf community. Ironically, the theme for the World Refugee Day 2009 is ‘real people, real needs’ but the Deaf population’s needs are not being met.

Furthermore, Deaf teachers evidently have additional obstacles in solidifying their links with the administrators on the subject of Deaf Units. Several Deaf teachers further illustrate their frustrations how lack of access to sign language on many levels has affected them working as a colleague in the Deaf Units, “they all always talk, so they talk about me, I do feel bad about this but if I complain or ask something, who will interpret for me and do they sign well? No” (Teacher 10, 2009). “Hearing speak all

of the time. But no hearing will speak then sign because they forget us” (Teacher 13, 2009). Another teacher adds, “Sometimes I go to the headmaster, but we cannot really communicate, he does not know sign language we communicate only by paper and pen, everything is short and short<sup>24</sup>” (Teacher13, 2009). Majority of the time, Deaf teachers are excluded from official discussions regarding the Deaf Units, and one teacher describes how he would often quietly withdraw from confronting other teachers to receive information. “Hearing is in the higher level and I am in low level, but that is OK as I only focus on Deaf. If I ask hearing questions, they will yell and ask me why do I even bother asking, so I do not ask them, I just stay quiet. Often I will just pass them and not say anything. I notice most of them prefer talking to hearing teachers only and do not want to be with Deaf. I prefer to be with Deaf only and follow our way. It is easier to just leave it alone” (Teacher14, 2009). In short, both Deaf teachers and teachers of the Deaf face seemingly insurmountable obstacles stemming from inadequate opportunities to access to sign language learning.

Teachers burdened with numerous obstacles that under the present circumstances seem insurmountable with teaching Deaf students in the Deaf Units often become more discouraged and dejected as they receive insufficient support from the administrators and the organizations. However, several teachers mentioned about Mr. Stephen Gachuhi<sup>25</sup> who was a very strong advocate for the teachers of the Deaf, as one teacher recalls how: “So, in the camp, before there was no Deaf, there was one Deaf man named Mr. Stephen Gachuhi who worked for CARE as an officer. That man came here often, used to come here a lot and talk with teachers, he knows a lot of things and he is fluent in sign language. Sometimes, he even will come to my classroom and if I don’t know how to do something, he

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<sup>24</sup> Kenya Sign Language expression for summarized and condensed information. This often refers to the information received that is not explained fully.

<sup>25</sup> Please refer to the historical timeline section in chapter 5 for further information about Mr. Gachuhi’s contribution to the Deaf Education program in the Dadaab camps.

will teach me how to do it. After one year, he will come and talk with us, will provide a lot of training. Sometimes he will do some interpreting. From him, that's how I know how to sign. Now, nobody but we do have supervisor ... who knows little sign language. We do not have one person who know a lot about Deaf or sign language, only Mr. Stephen Gachuhi does" (Teacher 2, 2009). Few more teachers expressed their appreciation for Mr. Stephen Gachuhi as an advocate for the Deaf community in the camps and their concerns about his departure from the camps. "Before Mr. Stephen Gachuhi was responsible for the Deaf, if any problems arise, you could see him and he will help you" (Teacher 10, 2009). "Mr. Stephen Gachuhi is a good man, he helped Ifo a lot and then move onto Hagadera and helped them a lot. But he left and we are now stuck" (Teacher13, 2009). "Mr. Stephen Gachuhi is very good for Deaf, but he left, now who will help Deaf? Now Deaf are more oppressed and who will replace him? No one! No one can replace him! It is impossible to replace him" (Teacher 15, 2009).

### **Summary of Teachers' Opportunities and Obstacles**

The teachers have identified three distinct sub-themes; lack of technical assistance linked to instruction, inadequate human resources and inadequate linkage to administrators under the umbrella of the main theme of obstacles associated with communication barriers. The current situation which most teachers are in appear futile in light of the persistent and daunting obstacles, inadequate access to sign language training, heavy workload, inadequate teachers / human resources, lack of teaching materials, constant lack of linkage with the administrators, communication barriers between colleagues - the teachers of the Deaf and Deaf teachers and the departure of strong advocate, that all teachers of the Deaf face on a daily basis navigating through the worlds of organizations, administrators, parents, community and Deaf students striving to meet the needs of all groups.

This clearly falls under two distinct categories of needs; assistance with communication (teachers, Deaf students, colleagues, supervisors and administrators) and assistance with resources (technical training, human resources and material resources). This is a clear indicator of the importance of a presence and departure of a strong advocate at the administrative level to address all of these issues. A strong advocate has the tools and linkages to improve the prospects of outcomes for the teachers who often believe that there is not much that can be done from their end with exception of continuing and trying their best. The majority of the teachers despite the odds thrive with each small accomplishment that they see in their Deaf students who have blossomed from the first day they arrive at the Deaf Units and especially those who now are Deaf teachers. Not only is there a change in the Deaf students, but in the community's attitude and perception towards the Deaf community at large. This prompted the majority of teachers to continue 'fighting' to make a difference in their lives.

### **Deaf Students**

As mentioned earlier, there are multiple languages and literacies used in this study; the majority of Deaf students arrive at the Deaf Units with rudimentary home signs unique to their own family members. It is not possible to convey abstract thoughts, feelings and ideas with rudimentary home signs. Thus this study only includes Deaf students from upper primary level<sup>26</sup> with basic literacy skills in either language, Kenya Sign Language and/or Somali Sign Language. Again, literacy skills depends on the age of the student upon arrival in the camps, language acquired at what age, the amount of communication at home and the willingness to interact with other Deaf individuals. Eighteen Deaf students were interviewed; six from Hagadera, nine from Ifo and two from Dagahaley. This group also included three secondary level students who were in the camps during the interview period; one is

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<sup>26</sup> class 5 to 8

integrated into a local secondary school in the camps and two are on temporary leave from a Deaf vocational secondary school in Kenya. The majority of students' ages range from 15 to 25 years old.

### **Opportunities**

For the administrators and teachers, the Deaf Units are an unique opportunity for Deaf students to access to educational opportunities and have had a positive impact on Deaf students in terms of raising awareness among the communities. However, it should be noted that there are very little evidence of the recurring themes; opportunity and accessibility to participate in education, reduction of community stigma, increase in community awareness and Deaf Units as a role model, being mentioned among the opportunities by the Deaf students. Perhaps the absence of positive opportunities associated within participation in the formal education context of the Deaf Units in the Deaf students' comments could be attributed to the fact that the majority of the Deaf students themselves continue to experience obstacles in different forms hence they were unable to identify or link any reduction in the obstacles to the Deaf Units. However it is, more often than not among the Deaf students, to mention about 'potential' opportunities only to some extent which is often veiled with obstacles. The boys students mentioned about the Deaf Units as an excellent source of social interaction opportunities however the same could not be said for the girls students.

### *Social Interaction*

Several students have attributed positive experiences with the Deaf Units to positive opportunities for social interaction which enhance their learning and experiences in many different areas, language, identity, culture and self-determination. However it became visible that the majority of the students who mentioned about their social interaction experiences are boys. Most boys students have several different opportunities to participate in positive social interaction environment that is not given

to girls students. Many girls students remain at home assisting with household chores, are married off at early age and/or not encouraged to receive education. While this thesis will not explore the disparity among the genders however it should be noted that the gender issues do influence the Deaf girls students' experiences as they associate with the Deaf Units in Dadaab.

A student who is in the Deaf Unit describes the difference in his self-esteem between his experience in Somalia and in the Deaf Unit, "how I am here, in class 6, it is different. It is not same. Yes, I like it here. English is good. Yes, I am happy here. There [in Somalia], I was always angry, they always rob me, they want my money. Here, I am happy. They teach me well here" (Student 8, 2009). Another student adds, "School is good, yes. I learn a lot. Teacher write and I copy. I write, finish and that's it. I want to study, when I get bigger, it becomes harder and harder. Only two of us in same class. We do chat a lot. (Student 3, 2009).

An opportunity to participate in the Deaf inter-camp football tournament provided another avenue for social and language learning outside the formal classroom setting. Several Deaf boys shared their experiences participating in the football activity and how it has affected them. One student recalls when he "before in Somalia, I was stupid and passive, now I go to school and learn, socialize with other Deaf. Mama still scolds at me and makes sure I study and not always play soccer too much" (Student 2, 2009). Another student adds details about the daily football activities in the camp, "Yes, I play football, I play position 9 [centre]. I am really good at football, I am good. I am good at getting goals. In Somalia, I was good. I won championships. But I have to leave everything there and come here. I practised here a lot, a lot of exercise here. A lot of running around the field. They gave me uniform" (Student 8, 2009).

Two more students further elaborate how they enjoyed participating in the football tournaments because it enables them the privilege of gaining access to cultural enculturation, language acquisition and world knowledge about the Deaf communities in the camps and in Kenya. “I love playing football where all camps come together, Ifo, Hagadera [and] Dagahaley, I get to meet many Deaf” (Student 9, 2009). “I love to meet older Deaf at the football because we talk and talk. My hands are sweet<sup>27</sup> because of them. They went to secondary school in Kenya and told me stories” (Student 7, 2009).

### **Obstacles**

As a Deaf student in a refugee camp, they do not only have to worry about their schoolwork but as well as navigating through many different obstacles associated with their being Deaf within the education system in the camps. The obstacles presented by the Deaf students include; community stigma, lack of link to instruction, being forced to integrate with hearing students. They also experience communication/cultural conflicts arising from transition to Deaf Secondary Schools in Kenya.

### *Community Stigma*

One student recalls how the community stigma towards the Deaf population was so severe that he, as a Deaf individual, believed that it was not possible for him to go to school. “I remember when I arrived in 2006. I never went to school in Somalia, and before I did not know that Deaf could go to school but my brother and sister encouraged me to go to school. They told me in Somalia that there are school for Deaf here in camps. So I came to the camp because I now realize I am getting older and want education so I can work” (Student 7, 2009). He is one of very few Deaf students who left Somalia for Dadaab Refugee Camp to be able to access to education. Again, this is another indicator of an opportunity veiled with obstacles, despite the entrenched community stigma as mentioned by the Deaf

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<sup>27</sup> This is an expression in Kenya Sign Language describing the fluency of one’s skills in Kenya Sign Language

student; there are more and more community advocates who are now mobilizing information about educational opportunities for Deaf students both in the camps and in Somalia.

Several older students have arrived in the Deaf Units and faces different challenges as an older student. An older student further elaborates her challenges in a classroom with young students. “Yes I came when I was 15 years old. But with a lot of work and angry people I kept on studying and studying despite others who ‘mock/yell’ and are angry at me... I try to ignore them but they do make me confused. No matter how much I tell them to respect and leave me alone as I want to continue learning. I don’t like it when others yell at me so I usually ignore them and do my own thing. My mother would tell me to go and continue studying so I would run and hide from others so that they would not mock/yell at me. I just try and keep myself quiet and neutral. Even when others get pregnant which is bad – I do not want to get pregnant” (Student 10, 2009). As an older female student, she also has to face societal pressure of marrying and becoming pregnant at an early age as well. One student originated from Sudan and has been placed in 4 different refugee camps both in Ethiopia and Kenya yet faces another challenge as a double minority in the camps. “As one of the very few Sudanese here in the camps – it’s hard because Somalis abuse me because I am a Sudanese and I am the only one in the entire school. I ignore the abuses. Both big and small Somalis... they are many of them, they also abuse me because I am Deaf too” (Student 9, 2009).

### *Lack of Link to Instruction*

However despite enjoying attending school, several students shared their dissatisfaction with teachers whose proficiency in sign language is very limited and would teach for a very short time. One student recalls, “I came here in class 2. The teacher is lazy, doesn’t teach and does nothing. Doesn’t

teach at all. I can't do nothing, I can't complain. He's the boss" (Student 1, 2009). Another student clarifies the shortcomings in the classroom of Deaf Units, "OK, but I want to explain about myself. I moved a lot. Yeah, I live far but anyway, I still come to school and I try to help younger kids too. Sometimes teacher come only for short time, write few things on board and I was disappointed. Sometimes it was hard because teacher leave early, I become frustrated so I leave too. In class 4, teacher came only for short time but in class 5, teacher did not come at all and only gave me book to learn from. Sometimes I don't read at all, and go see class 8's books. Many days, I will just stay at school and do nothing all day" (Student 5, 2009). Another student was able to provide his insight of the teachers' frustrations in teaching Deaf students, "When the board is full with writing, the teacher would read until it becomes hard to sign, harder to sign then he will just point at the word or he would just stop and leave the classroom. But now we have one Deaf teacher with sweet hands<sup>28</sup> – he is complete! I get full information. Deaf teacher teaches me English and GHC but the rest of subjects – there is big problem there for me. I love English very much because it means the world, everything is in it" (Student 7, 2009).

A few more students further elaborate on their preference of having a Deaf teacher teach them in the Deaf Units. One student contrasts the difference between hearing and Deaf teachers in the Deaf Unit, "they do not teach us at all, they are hearing. I prefer to have a Deaf teacher. In the afternoon I will go home and do nothing. I hope I can go to secondary school, especially Kuja Secondary School. I want to go there because of good education. Yes, I would love to wear that white shirt. I hope I have Deaf teacher there teaching me" (Student 2, 2009). Another student who was fortunate to have a Deaf teacher teaching him, "in 2008 a Deaf teacher came, we all were very happy. Many teachers have poor hands<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is an expression in Kenya Sign Language meaning one who is very fluent in Kenya Sign Language

<sup>29</sup> This is an expression in Kenya Sign Language meaning one who is *not* fluent in Kenya Sign Language

and the Deaf are the best because of hands. I want to go to secondary school and maybe become a teacher or boss in an office serving and working for Deaf” (Student 7, 2009).

Several upper primary students also mentioned about their irritation of being denied equal access to education in the upper primary levels. Several students are in the upper primary levels in the Deaf Unit and they learn in the mornings (half session) whilst hearing students in the same class level learn full day, both in the mornings and afternoons (full session). Students contrast the difference in length of instruction time for both Deaf and hearing students in same class level. One student exclaimed, “I learn until lunchtime but hearing that are in the same class 6 learn all day. Why are we different not the same? But during the exams – we get the same exams. How is that possible? Are we different or same?” (Student 9, 2009). Another student adds, “In the morning they [hearing teachers] teach and then in the afternoons they [hearing teachers] teach too, but what about me [in the Deaf Units]? Yes I have morning only, I wonder how and how can I miss half of the day and keep up with hearing students. But I have no power so I have to be patient. No problem” (Student 7, 2009). One student expresses his attempts to learn independently from the books; however, he faces new obstacles, lack of learning materials. “I have no books to study from... how do I learn more? But they said to wait... but how is that possible? What can I do? I just copy and copy from the teachers then I go home and study from the notes” (Student 9, 2009).

### *Integration*

The majority of upper primary students especially those in class 6, 7 and 8 are often integrated throughout the camps with exception of few Deaf Units in Ifo. Several upper primary students share their experiences in integrated classes. “I am in class 8, mixed with hearing. Hearing teacher teaches

while Deaf do nothing. Yes, I find it very hard to learn. But the math teacher is good, I can understand. Other classes like Swahili or others, teachers always use voice. I say nothing. Math and science teachers can sign a little bit. GHC, can sign a little bit. I like to learn math, I pass and pass. They really do nothing, I am alone. Very bad. Teacher comes in and show math homework, that's it. Very fair (OK OK). Sometimes, I try to do it and give it to teacher but he marks it wrong. No, never explain why I am wrong, always stand front of hearing students and explain and I don't want to stand and have students look at me, so I stay quiet. I sit at back of the class, in the end. Teacher sometimes tell me to get up but I won't and stay down, other hearing student will stand up. Often in the afternoon, me and others will go to older Deaf and he will help us understand better. Right now, no one signs at school. Only speak, that's it. Right now? No. Nothing. From class 3 to 6, there was some signing so I could understand some but since class 6, nothing. I moved to hearing class, I try and try; I passed and now am in class 8" (Student 4, 2009). One student simply stated as matter of fact, "I failed KCPE because the teachers always speak and speak" (Student 18, 2009).

Another student adds his experience in the integrated class, "it is hard now because I am in integrated class now and teacher will speak and tell students to raise their hands and discuss but I can't do that. I always don't say anything in class and I copy notes, that's it. I don't want to fail, I don't like to fail. It feels like hearing go up a level faster while Deaf stay. Who help me? No one, no nothing. One teacher who teaches math is good" (Student 2, 2009). One more student recalls and compares his experience in the Deaf Units and in the integrated class, "before things were better when I was learning with Deaf students but then they decided to put Deaf with the hearing and put me with the hearing students. So I kept quiet and did not understand what was going on... with time, I learned to make some

hearing friends but still does not like it over there with hearing students because I get no help *hakuna*<sup>30</sup>, but do often get help from a Deaf teacher from the Deaf unit for maths only. Hearing teachers help me *hakuna* [no nothing] always over there with hearing students (Student 15, 2009). One student gave up and left school, “I left class 8 because I didn’t like being integrated; hearing abuse me, no sign language in class they always are speaking” (Student 17, 2009). All of the students who have been and are being integrated often complain about the lack of access to communication in the integrated classroom as they all are often placed in a class without any appropriate language support such as sign language interpreters and/or note takers.

#### *Difficult Transition to Deaf Secondary School in Kenya*

Several students have had the opportunity to attend Deaf secondary school in Kenya; however, the majority of students faced a lot of new obstacles as they experienced culture shock and exposure to different elements. “I went to secondary school in Kenya but it was hard. Very hard. Food is very hard to eat, most food are different and with maize. Very hard for me to eat. And it was very cold there. I put on maybe two or three dress on. I tried to be friends with others but they said Muslims are bad and I am bad so they all avoid me. Many of them are Christian, it does not matter to me but they say I am bad. I remember one night when I was sleeping, I woke up with wet face and clothes because they threw water on me” (Student 18, 2009). Some got in a fight with other students in light of differences in their backgrounds, “I finished form 1 and 2 at Nyang’ombe Secondary School but they wrote me off the school because I fought with another boy who stole my hearing aid from my private box. I wanted to explain but they said no, I am written off. I know they do not like me because I am Muslim and they always pick and pick on me, me and me making me clean the floor so many times and others Kenyans

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<sup>30</sup> Kiswahili word meaning nothing and/or no.

only few times, So now I want to go to Kuja because I heard that it is better over there” (Student 15, 2009). Several students lost opportunities to continue their secondary level education in Kenya because of cultural and communication conflicts arising from lack of transition planning from the refugee camp to a boarding school upcountry in Kenya.

Another student shares her experience as a secondary student and her frustrations with the CARE organization due to many miscommunications between her as a student, the secondary school and the Special Education Officer at CARE. She elaborates her situation, “we [two Deaf girls students] ran away from the Mumias Girls Vocational Secondary School in Kenya because the school closed for holidays. We waited and waited and waited but no one from the camps came to pick us up and everybody was gone, school was so empty. We got scared but there is one guard there. I asked the headmaster to please call the camps and tell them to come and get us. We packed and brought our bags to the office. Headmaster called then told us to wait 2 weeks. Then it was 2 weeks already but nothing, no one came, so we asked headmaster to call again. He called and told us to wait maybe two or three more days. But I was so hungry and scared. I wanted to go home. School was so empty. We saw one fence and decided to climb over the fence and run to the bus for home with our bags. But the guard saw me running; I was slow in running because I was hungry and crying a lot for home. Then headmaster was mad at us. Then one Kenyan went with us back to the camps. I was so happy to be home again. Then when school opened again, I packed my bags again. I was ready to go. But the CARE officer said we were written off the school because we were bad. I was surprised because they did not ask me to come for a meeting and ask me why. They did not tell me why they did not come. They said they will come every holiday. But they forgot me. I am not wrong, I was hungry, crying and school was so empty. I want to go back to school. I love learning and learned so many things there, English, tailoring, computering, maths and

more. I have many friends there. Now I worry every night and my head hurts because what can I do for future? I want to continue until form 4 then finish my studies so I can get a job as a teacher” (Student 17, 2009).

### **Summary of Deaf Students’ Opportunities and Obstacles**

The majority of students did not provide evidences of positive opportunities associated with formal education context of the Deaf Units as they often experience opportunities veiled with obstacles. For instance, boys students shared their appreciation for opportunities to participate in social interaction however the same could not be said for the girls students due to gender disparity. Furthermore, many students appreciate being given the opportunities to access to education, both primary and secondary level but they feel that they are not receiving the support that they need in order to achieve and complete their education. Students shared their experiences with obstacles that comes with learning; community stigma, lack of link to instruction, integration and difficult transition to secondary schools. Many worry about their future in light of obstacles to effective learning which is beyond their control whether in the Deaf Unit, integrated class or secondary school in Kenya.

### **Community Members: Parents**

This section focuses on the relationship in which community members associate with the Deaf Units in the Dadaab camps. The community members data consist of both one on one and group interviews with 20 community members. The parents involved in the community members group included eleven mothers and nine fathers who mainly use rudimentary home signs to communicate with their Deaf child. Some of the parents are not the actual parent of the child; they are the guardians or close family relative of the Deaf child. Some of the parents’ children are still learning at the Deaf Units

and some have an adult Deaf child who used to attend the Deaf Units. The majority of the parents have no formal education with the exception of two fathers who also are teachers teaching at primary school where the Deaf Unit is located. It appears that there is slightly different response from the mothers and the fathers. Many of the mothers are more aware of their child's emotional well being as they associate with the Deaf Units. Meanwhile, most of the fathers are more aware about their child's progress in the Deaf Units.

### **Opportunities**

The majority of the parents were very pleased with the availability of educational opportunities for their Deaf child(ren) in the camps in contrast to Somalia. In the following sections, parents of Deaf child(ren) shared their experiences of discovering the Deaf Units and observing positive changes in their Deaf child as positive opportunities.

#### *Discovering the Deaf Units*

The majority of parents had no idea that there were educational opportunities for their Deaf child(ren), let alone the existence of Deaf Units throughout the three camps, prior to arriving at the camps. The parents of Deaf child(ren) illustrate how they 'discovered' the Deaf Units. "Before I came here as a refugee, I have never believed that Deaf children can learn in school until I came here and was surprised to find out that Deaf children can learn normally like other children. I know from here. I am happy for this when I see these children can learn. (Parent 2, 2009). Another parent adds, "This was not possible in Somalia, there are no special schools in Somalia but at the time when we came here, we met with CARE about education, so we know they give education to these children. So, we brought them

here. [The] community were not aware and knew nothing of sign language. I knew nothing” (Parent 8, 2009).

In this group, most of the parents were approached by a teacher of the Deaf, block leader, older Deaf student/adult and community member who encouraged them to bring their Deaf child(ren) to the Deaf Units. “The block leader and group told us that there was a Deaf school here and asked if I was interested in bringing our children. And I was interested so I brought my children here” (Parent 6, 2009). Another parent shares her experience, “[a] teacher [of the Deaf] came to my home and told me that children [should] go to the school also they have a Deaf unit in school and [to] bring them to school. That’s it. That’s how we learned about it” (Parent 10, 2009). Another parent stated that she learned from an older Deaf community member, “We’ve had a Deaf child who lives near our house and he came and inform us about learning. We were not informed I can’t read nothing, but and now we have learned, that Deaf boy helped bring us to Deaf unit and register” (Parent 4, 2009). Another parent adds, “Someone from the community service [hosted a] meeting and explained that it is important to send children to that school and one day, the woman came to my house and met the children and brought them to the school and my children was registered” (Parent 10a, 2009)

Several of the parents also actively sought for educational opportunities for their Deaf child(ren), one father said that it is, “common sense, he always knew that all children must go to school so he went out and found out about Deaf unit” (Parent 5, 2009). “I looked for school and where the Deaf children learn in school. I got information and also block leader informed me about this school, the Deaf unit” (Parent 7, 2009). Another parent described how he “has seen other Deaf children learning in school,

that's why [I] bring her there. Also [I have] seen some that can read well and that's great" (Parent 3, 2009).

### *Positive Changes in their Deaf Child*

Parents share their experiences of seeing their child blossom after joining the Deaf Units. One Mother of four Deaf children describes the experience in such a manner, "before I brought my children in school, it is like walking in the darkness but now with education it is like light, they have light from the teachers" (Parent 1, 2009).

Many of the parents were very proud to share positive changes that they have noticed in their child upon enrolling in the Deaf Units. The following passages are excerpts from parents describing their experiences with their Deaf child(ren) who has shown such enthusiasm for school. "Deaf children always love going to school. First thing in the morning when [he] wakes up; my boy wants to go to school. We also encourage him to go to school. [I] already noticed a lot of changes in my boy" (Parent 10, 2009). "Now [he] can write. Sometimes [I] see my children look for books, can see change in attitude about school. Even sometimes children will skip breakfast to go to school, and she had to bring them back. They really like to go to school. We keep encouraging them to go to school, and same time, we encourage them to stay home but they always cry and want to go to school. Sometimes they will open door and go to school themselves" (Parent 10a, 2009).

Several more parents chip in, "He loves school. He loves to learn. The boy is very clever and has learned a lot in school. That is the change I have seen in school because before, he would learn nothing and stay at home and do nothing but now he have learned some things" (Parent 7, 2009). "Yes, they

have changed since they went to school; they have learned things and have the interest in learning things, which is what I've seen. Also they are more happy to go to the blocks and play and help as well. From the time they came to school – they have improved and are now well” (Parent 6, 2009). A parent noticed a difference in the changes among his Deaf son and Deaf daughter who were enrolled in the same Deaf Unit, “the boy would meet other Deaf boys playing you know? Also, when Mr. Stephen Gachuhi was there, so the boy used to go to the camp to talk with Mr. Stephen Gachuhi many times. But the girl stays at home. Yes, because the boy goes to the market and interact with other Deaf children but the girl stayed at home. When Stephen was here, it was so good and it worked really well because you see the boy now is in secondary school, He learned so well because of Mr. Stephen Gachuhi and other Deaf boys” (Parent 8, 2009). These interviews indicated the importance that interacting with Deaf community members has on the academic and social development of a child. One child was able to explain his personal growth to his father, “the child said [at that] time in Somalia, he was ignored and many know nothing about [him as a] person but when [they] came to Kenya, [he] became a wonderful person that is what my son said” (Parent 2, 2009).

Parents elaborates on how their child(ren) picked up sign language and integrated it into their daily communications with the family. “Also, they sign through their hands, learning how to sign. Also, school teachers, told them that they are good. And they are good teachers” (Parent 9, 2009). Another parent further elaborates the naming of family members by the Deaf child, “so the girl helps the family, also has her own name and given us our own names The girl’s sister is called [describes her namesign on the forehead] signs on forehead, and for another person, we do this [describes his namesign on the elbow] and there’s another one where we say [describes the namesign with forefinger on the chin]. So all this is how we talk in the family by give them names which are ‘false/pretend’” (Parent 3, 2009).

“Yes, we have one of neighbours who are Deaf and have taken school in Mombasa. That boy normally uses to help when we were new to this area. So now, needs to show how to read and write, help fingerspell also. He has helped us a lot” (Parent 2, 2009). “It is all happy, those children, and ones who helps at home, and tells us what we can do and where he wants to go here, i.e. now I am going to school here or go to work, we use very little bit of natural sign language. [I] can see it helps him, their mother is home, he shows us how to read and write ABC’s” (Parent 2, 2009).

The parents also recognize the efforts undertaken by the teachers in instilling identity, pride, language and literacy. “The only changes that I have noticed to date – is that she now can read and write. I knows the importance of quality education but I believes in the institution and the teachers so I trust that they are doing their job – teaching children” (Parent 5, 2009). Another parent mentioned about the significance that the teachers has on their child(ren), “our teacher will never be taken away, impossible to take away, never can our teachers be moved from the school. Teachers there will stay, thank our teachers” (Parent 9, 2009).

## **Obstacles**

Despite seeing positive changes in their Deaf child(ren) with the educational opportunities presented in the camps, the majority of the parents also witnessed their Deaf child(ren) face obstacles on daily basis. Some of the obstacles mentioned by the parents are community stigma and its impact on their child(ren)’s emotional well being and the impact of integration education on access to communication. Several parents have come up with an alternative solution to address the obstacles experienced by their child(ren). They raised the idea of establishing a separate Deaf school for Deaf

students however along with this idea, new set of obstacles associated with challenges of a quality learning institution are introduced as well.

### *Community Stigma and the Emotional Well Being*

The majority of parents elaborated about their experiences of witnessing firsthand the extent that the community stigma has on their Deaf child's emotional well being. The following passages are excerpts from many parents who have seen their child get abused by community members. "They did beat and threw stones to our children and abusing children, calling them 'Deaf'. When it is time for them to be on way to school, we worry about that. Anytime we miss them, we come to school to look for them. There is a lot of beating, oppression and abuse" (Parent 9, 2009). "They use the 'deaf' word to call them but we hate this word because we hate people calling them 'deaf'" (Parent 6, 2009). Another mother adds, "Many of them are young, we see that coming to school is difficult for them. So, our children and other children beat, throw stones and abuse them. When it is time, children leave from school, they run so that other children won't catch them and the community groups have poor attitude children that they cannot do anything. Many groups believe that they cannot talk and that they are low" (Parent 9, 2009).

Another mother adds, "Those children get a lot of abuse because they are Deaf. Because of ignorance. Many don't know about Deaf. Some people are fine because of their intelligence and would be fine with Deaf but for others who are ignorant, they abuse Deaf. Some will call them stupid, that's what most of them would do. Some will beat them up because they think Deaf are stupid. OK., what can we do to stop this problem? We need special attention to the special unit, provide support, provide motivation and they need a special place where they can be cared for" (Parent 10, 2009). Another parent

adds his insight, “For me, I noticed why Deaf children have many challenges because for example, my son stand at school, other people will shout, abuse and bother him. Because they all know he is Deaf. So Deaf children are not given quality education. So he doesn’t get a special attention, he doesn’t have support. He doesn’t have people who know about special education. So with all those barriers, [it is] hard for him to go to school” (Parent 11, 2009).

### *Integration and Access to Communication*

Several parents have had come to face with some of issues encountered with frustrations stemming from integration and lack of communication access. “When they were integrated with hearing children, there was a problem because they learned slowly but now, we have no problems because they have been separated. Now there is a Deaf unit, separated in different class now and teachers teaching in separate way. From that time, we have no problems now. So they learn well and are happy now. Before, teachers are hearing and at same time [they would just] speak. Other people listen then the class would end. No remedial class for my son, teacher would just go, so those hearing children understood OK but for our Deaf children here, they understood nothing. Teacher finished the lesson. So that’s the problem they had there” (Parent 7, 2009). Another parent adds, “Deaf children always have a lot of problems in schools, they have problems with sign language and are without sign language. How is that possible? Teachers here don’t know how to care for these Deaf children. They don’t know how to care for special education children. Sometimes they face so many problems while teaching because of what? They don’t know how to care for these children because of communication problems!” (Parent 8, 2009).

### *Separate Deaf School as a Solution*

Several parents have come up with an alternative solution, a mother said, “if it is possible, a separate place for Deaf children. All that we can for is that these children must be given special attention and a special place to learn from. They only want a special school, that’s all. Some said that if have special school for them.. so we have to work hard and want to ask you for your support, also. There is no other way where we can put these children. So, support from them, support from you, support from us, can make them okay and learn” (Parent 9, 2009). A father describes the frustrations his child has in an integrated class and would like to see a Deaf school for his child too, “like special schools, like good teachers who know and are fluent in sign language, because the teachers here are hearing teaching normal children and don’t know sign language. They just sit and write on the black board, these Deaf children write what the black board said. That’s it. If they get a separate in school here, and get fluent and good teachers with sign language for sign language class, then I would be much happier. It can be more, able to do more. Because now, he is in class 7 here soon will become class 8, I am worried about what they are going to do. If they pass or fail, I am worried about that because they don’t know sign language” (Parent 8, 2009). A parent appeals the administrators to consider the possibilities, “If possible, wouldn’t mind have a boarding school for them. Maybe a boarding school in the camp, or outside of the camp. Outside in Kenya. Some school will close for holidays, now what can those children do? Maybe if possible, do something like that, maybe ideas, or something like that” (Parent 10, 2009). It appears that the majority of the parents would like to see a separate Deaf school for all Deaf students and have come up with several possible strategies for achieving a Deaf school where their child(ren) may attend school without any abuse, frustration, or lack of access to communication, and truly learn.

Another parent further elaborated on the idea of having a separate school for the Deaf, “That now they require all normal kids go to school, they have normal ways, no problems. They will abuse, throw rocks, bother Deaf kids. That’s why I want to ask to give separate school for, special for Deaf kids only where they won’t be bothered and where they can receive quality education, to avoid more abuse. For example, here at camp, they have if you think about it, if there is 100 kids in each camp, then... if they count number, population of all camps, over 300 kids. They will be surprised that have many Deaf children, then why not give them their own school. Have 300 of them; why not put them in special school with special attention? Maybe through donations, or something else. Why not give them special school; I don’t understand why they can’t give them that. For example, if each camp has their own boarding school, then instead of sending kids to Kenya, you could put them in boarding school here with their own people with their own culture, have their own food, have a place where they can play and stay within. That is easier. Ok, that, school would good, stay there from morning to night. School could be like home. No one would come and abuse them. All disabilities” (Parent 11a, 2009).

Several parents also further stress the important of providing adequate support to Deaf children in the Deaf Units if the Deaf school is not feasible financial wise, “Deaf children need education and must be supported in school and teachers, teaching materials of learning things they need. They need some things to be supported” (Parent 7, 2009). Another parent adds that they need more teachers of the Deaf in the Deaf Units, “But you see one person [teaching in the Deaf Unit]... One person can’t finish that work; have no one to work with this. Children in different classes, 7, 5, 4, like that” (Parent 8, 2009).

### **Summary of Community Members' Opportunities and Obstacles**

The parents recognize and understand the opportunities and obstacles associated with the Deaf Units and especially its impact on their child(ren). The opportunities presented for their Deaf child(ren), for example, discovering Deaf Units and observing positive changes in their child, are heavily laden with new sets of obstacles associated with the Deaf Units. The obstacles being, the impact of community stigma on the emotional well being of their Deaf child(ren) attending Deaf Units and new set of communication barriers that comes with integration of students in the upper levels. On the contrary, many of the parents were prepared and came up with an alternative solution to address obstacles associated with the Deaf Units by establishing a separate Deaf school for Deaf students. The parents are familiar with the challenges of creating a new learning environment for Deaf students but are prepared to step up and do what is needed to ensure that their Deaf child(ren) has access to a positive and quality education in the camps.

### **Conclusion**

As Deaf education came to birth and evolved over nearly two decades, it remained the sole opportunity for the majority of Deaf refugees to access to education both in Somalia and in the refugee camps. In the first place, the obstacles may seem insurmountable under the present conditions to the stakeholder groups but if those conditions were to change, the obstacles might be reduced or disappear. By listening to four stakeholders; administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members, this allows us to identify and understand the trends of their opportunities and obstacles and critically examine the existing structure and link it to new possibilities for improvement.

All four stakeholder groups; administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members, agreed that the community stigma is one of their leading obstacles in bringing education to the majority

of Deaf students in the camps. All concurred that the Deaf population have faced many different forms of abuse; some of the teachers, the Deaf students and community members have stated that they continue to experience different forms of community stigma, i.e. refusal to sell goods to teachers of the Deaf at the markets, throwing stones at Deaf students, and community members yelling derogatory remarks at Deaf individuals. However, the administrators and some of the teachers saw the Deaf Units as a positive strategy to eradicate community wide stigma by illustrating how the Deaf Units acts as role model in raising community awareness through modeling positive outcomes of the Deaf Units and facilitate access to education for Deaf children. Several administrators have indicated that community stigma issue is not as extensive as it was. Whereas the majority of the community members have illustrated their interest in establishing a separate Deaf school to reduce the severity of the impact of community stigma on Deaf students. Furthermore, the Deaf students themselves have unmistakably demonstrated their dislike towards integrated education due to several reasons; abuse from peers, lack of sign language and failure to participate fully in the learning process. This indicates a gap in the understanding of the extent of community stigma and especially its impact on the Deaf students between the administrators and some of teachers with some of the teachers, Deaf students and community members.

It is noteworthy to highlight the consensus agreement among all four stakeholder groups that the capacity of the teachers of the Deaf in pedagogical skills and linguistic skills need to improve. All groups discussed and agreed that the importance of increasing the teachers' proficiency in sign language is critical in bringing quality education to the Deaf students. However, the Deaf teachers also discussed about the importance of barrier-free communication with colleagues and supervisors to enable equal access to same privileges as any other teachers whilst the teachers of the Deaf emphasized their need for

intensive training in sign language to remove what they perceive as insurmountable obstacles stemming from insufficient access to sign language learning. Moreover, the administrators believed that the best learning environment for learning sign language is to assign the teachers to the Deaf Units to enable the teachers of the Deaf with opportunities to interact and learn from the Deaf teachers and Deaf students. This reflected a disparity between the teachers, those who are Deaf and those who are not proficient in sign language and the administrators. There were no solid consensual solution raised by the teachers and administrators in addressing the sign language capacity issue.

All stakeholder groups shared their experiences about their growing awareness and appreciation of the positive benefits of accessing to Deaf education program as one of the best ways to reduce the impact of community stigma and ignorance of the Deaf population and it helps lay a solid foundation for self-determination and development for the Deaf students. Many of the community members were especially pleased that their Deaf child(ren) were able to go to school and learn. Deaf students themselves do encounter a lot of obstacles that come with accessing education whether in the Deaf Units, integrated class or secondary school in Kenya. Despite the odds, the majority of Deaf students are very happy to be given the opportunity to learn, to meet others, to grow and flourish as a Deaf individual complete with language, identity and culture. Teachers and administrators also agree that accessing to quality education in sign language for Deaf students is critical in tackling and empowering sustainable development of Deaf individuals as a whole and a citizen of the society. On the contrary, they all agree that there is a need to expand the accessibility to education for more Deaf children throughout the three camps by advancing the Deaf Units' capacity and facilities.

To sum up the experiences and perspectives of the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members, the majority are concerned with availability, accessibility and acceptability of education for Deaf students. Availability is the access to education for all; administrators aiming to bring education to all refugee children including Deaf children in the camps. However, the teachers, Deaf students and community members are more concerned about the accessibility of the education. By accessibility, they, the teachers, Deaf students and community members, especially mean language accessibility, the elimination of discrimination in the classroom. For Deaf students, the major form of discrimination they often experience is the oppression and removal of information created by communication barriers. They want to have the right to use their language which is sign language in the classroom.

Furthermore, the Deaf students and community members are especially concerned about acceptability in the Deaf Education program; they want to be respected for their identity, cultural and linguistic preferences and for education to meet a minimum standard that is acceptable to both Deaf students and community members. By this, they want to see education relate to the learners in terms of the environment they are living in and be culturally and linguistically appropriate. “Education should be directed to the full development of every individual and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Women’s Commission, 2006, p.18).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Findings: Looking at their Experiences and Perspectives with the ‘Triple I’ Lens**

The initiation, implementation and institutionalization of Deaf Units in Dadaab Refugee Camps to provide access to education for Deaf students have had an impact on the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members. Utilizing this ‘Triple I’ framework (Video Journal of Education, 1993; Fullan, 2001) for understanding the development and implementation of Deaf education in the camps, this study aimed to include the experiences and perspectives of involved stakeholders to assess the opportunities and obstacles as they associate with the Deaf Units. An examination of their experiences and perspectives as elaborated in chapter 5 & 6 and a study of their impact on the role that Deaf units play in the Deaf refugees’ lives were undertaken. As the themes emerged, the opportunities and obstacles as presented by four different groups became interrelated and began to overlap to the extent where the impact on one group would begin in one specific area and its effects came to be felt throughout the entire Deaf education community.

Applying the ‘Triple I’ lenses on the recurring themes of opportunities and obstacles faced by four different stakeholder groups was helpful in understanding the underlying forces and their influence on the daily reality that the involved stakeholders face as they play their roles in the implementation of the Deaf education programs and services. The key critical themes that emerged from the experiences and perspectives of the stakeholders were defined, contextualized and analyzed to relate specifically to the ‘Triple I’ factors. This framework allows us to identify and bring specific areas to the foreground related to the initiation, implementation and institutionalization processes of the Deaf Units which are interlinked to the majority of opportunities and obstacles faced by the school community. The following

factors are formatted to follow the thirteen focus areas as outlined by Fullan drawing upon the work of Miles (Video Journal of Education, 1993), under each of the three major stages. It is important to point out that these thirteen areas have been identified through research on educational change as critical to the successful implementation of innovative educational policies, programs and services. In the following analysis, specific factors are mentioned only if they are related to the opportunities and obstacles experienced by the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members.

## **Initiation**

### *High Profile Need*

During the initiation stage, it is critical to have the educational improvement initiative linked with a political, academic, or social need. In this case, the CARE's foremost aim is to provide access to education for all refugee children in the Dadaab Refugee camps to meet their basic human rights regardless of their backgrounds (Administrator 1, 2009). Education for all refugee children included Deaf refugee children as well; thus several strong advocates during the early days located, identified and brought Deaf refugee children together. This process attracted the attention of CARE organization which is the implementing partner for Basic Education programs in the camps who recognized the academic and social need of Deaf refugee children who needed different access to education.

These events in turn facilitated the initiation of Deaf Units to accommodate the language and cultural needs of Deaf students. As the first three Deaf Units were established in each camp, new high profile needs emerged which further modified and shaped the current existing Deaf Unit facilities, services and programs. Once implementation of the Deaf Units got underway, political and community awareness of the educational needs of the Deaf community actually grew, thereby contributing to not

only continuation of the original Deaf Units and services, but to their expansion that may have actually contributed in the long run to the institutionalization of Deaf education in the camps. For instance, the identification of widespread community stigma towards the Deaf population facilitated the new community awareness and outreach activities implemented and managed by the administrators and teachers of the Deaf Units. The introduction of sending Deaf refugee students to attend Kenya Deaf Secondary Schools is another instance of a new high profile need. As the Deaf students progressed throughout the primary education level, a new high academic need surfaced and the existing infrastructure was unable to support the new academic needs of Deaf students. So the Deaf Education program facilitated the mobilization of Deaf students to attend existing Kenya Deaf secondary schools.

In this highly transient environment, high profile needs and strong advocates are critical factors in the introduction and initiation of new programs, services and activities for the Deaf population in the camps. This brings me to the next section.

### *Strong Advocate*

Again during the initiation stage, strong advocates are critical in acting as ‘catalyst for change’ in promoting and facilitating the educational improvement initiative. By reviewing the historical timeline and experiences of many teachers, Deaf students and community members who were part of the early endeavours, it became very transparent that there were several strong advocates, especially Mr. Ibrahim Mboya, Mr. Marangu Njogu, Mr. Ahmed Sheik, Ms. Apondi Nyang’aya and Mr. Stephen Gachuhi, who were the driving forces in the initiation and implementation of the Deaf Education program. Although those advocates were not always the administrators of the Deaf Education program and did not all work directly for the Deaf Education program by CARE, they did all occupy positions of influence at key

political and administrative decision-making levels. It is evident that the successful initiation and continuing implementation of the initiative involved engaged and enthusiastic individuals who had strong connections with the Deaf population in the camps, and who had the power and influence to get the project underway initially, and to keep it going and expanding over time.

The major influential strong advocate for the Deaf Education program in the camps was Mr. Stephen Gachuhi whose memory is still strongly etched in the experiences and perspectives of majority of teachers, Deaf students and community members. His persistent advocacy was particularly critical in facilitating the transition from initiation to early and continuing implementation. He managed to supply the teachers, Deaf students and community members with much needed resources and linked them with high profile individuals who were able to provide links to appropriate programs and services within the camps and within Kenya. Moreover, it is significant to point out that as Mr. Stephen Gachuhi is also Deaf himself, he was able to empathize with and understand the experiences and perspectives of majority of the teachers, Deaf students and community members. Throughout the implementation stage, with his comprehensive knowledge of existing facilities and resources in Kenya, he was able to ensure that the educational improvement initiatives met the foremost aim of CARE in providing access to education for the Deaf students by incorporating much needed links to technical assistance, support and rewards for all groups, teachers, Deaf students and community members.

The strong advocate factor is also critical throughout the implementation stage as well. The strong advocate(s) is the critical key factor in a highly transient environment such as in a refugee camp where the majority of the participants (teachers, Deaf students and community members) in the educational improvement initiative had a very limited degree of say in the implementation stage which

directly affects the opportunities and obstacles experienced by the involved stakeholders. Furthermore, the presence of strong advocate is not only important in the initiation stage but also in the widening of advocacy to others, teachers and so forth, during the implementation which led to further innovations within the broader provisions for Deaf Education such as the Deaf girls education initiative of Horseed Unit and the higher level of education such as the enrolment of students in Kenya Deaf Secondary Schools. The strong advocates need to have the critical ability, status and power to bridge the needs of the participants with the system to ensure that the delivery of the educational improvement initiative is successful and that it continues especially in an unpredictable and changing context such as a refugee camp. Mr. Gachuhi, while not acting alone, continued to play this advocate role during the implementation phase of the Deaf Units.

#### *Clear Model of Change Process*

This factor will be mentioned briefly to stress the diversity in the perspectives of administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members regarding what the Deaf Education program should be, should be doing, should look like, and how it should be supported. The “model of the change process” refers on the one hand to the vision for what the program to be implemented should look like in practice, and on the other hand to the plan for supporting its implementation with resources, training, and so on. In regards to the first, there were two dissimilar perspectives among the stakeholders of applying the foremost aim which is to provide access to education for the Deaf students, the first perspective included the majority of teachers, all Deaf students and all community members who advocate the idea of having a separate space for the Deaf students to receive their education. The second perspective included the majority of administrators and several of the teachers who are promoting ‘inclusive education’ approach by integrating Deaf students into public primary schools. The emergence of the two dissimilar

perspectives originated from their daily experiences with community stigma, constant struggle of the Deaf students to understand information presented in integrated classrooms, constant pressure on the teachers to facilitate and assist in the learning of Deaf students integrated in upper primary levels and constant frustrations faced by Deaf students in the presence of community members especially families. It is evident that there is as yet no cohesive and clear and consensually agreed upon model for Deaf education program delivery in the camps, and in fact, both models have been co-existing in an uneven balance, sometimes competing for resources and support. This lack may be attributed to the restrictions imposed by the macro factors including financial constraints, high transiency environment and competing priorities which administrators are very aware of and forced to work within, which relates to the concurrent absence of a clearly defined strategy and plan for supporting the implementation of the Deaf Units. Competing priorities are a constant factor obstructing the successes of implementing the educational improvement initiative: with financial restrictions, it becomes difficult more often than not for the administrators to ensure that the technical needs are met for the active players who are the teachers in the implementation and institutionalization stages to continue implementing the activities of Deaf Education programs. These needs include: training in sign language, resources, teaching materials, additional teachers and appropriate space for learning, support (constant support by the experts and administrators) and rewards (financial incentives and recognition for those with additional responsibilities) It becomes transparent that the active players, the teachers, becomes disillusioned when they do not receive the much-needed technical assistance, support and rewards, they are more likely to become unmotivated and perform poorly, a result which in turn influences the successes of the education in the Deaf Units. It also has an impact on the learning experience of Deaf students as well.

The development and contribution of a cohesive and clear model of change process which involves an understanding of the multi-dimensionality of factors that has an effect on the model itself would have an impact on the expectations, behaviours and beliefs of the involved stakeholders as they identify with a cohesive model to address the needs of the recipient community.

## **Implementation**

### *Orchestration and Shared Control*

The implementation process engages both the administrators and teachers and would have the capacity to affect the output of the educational improvement initiative. This process in turn creates a domino effect as they recognize the opportunities associated with the improvement. However in this case, there is a very modest evidence of shared control and orchestration between the administrators and teachers. One could attribute this fact to the inherent and entrenched habit of a refugee camp where the operating and implementing organizations determine and set the conditions and refer to external consultants to provide input throughout the planning and implementation of the initiative. Furthermore, it would be fair to mention that the instability and high turnover in key administrative roles in charge of overseeing and facilitating implementation may have worked against shared control between administrators and teachers. This process in turn gave birth to two dissimilar perspectives of what the Deaf Units should be, should be doing and should look like as mentioned above in the 'clear model of change process' section.

A shared control should ideally be the result of synergy of the vision and action by the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members alike. However from the accounts of the experiences of all groups, it becomes unmistakably transparent that there was no shared dialogue and

control over the Deaf Units. All of the significant decision-making and dialogue occurs on the organizational level amongst the administrators. It would be unlikely to see shared control to arise spontaneously without the establishment of mechanisms to enable regular communication and input between teachers and administrators about implementation concerns as they arise. Notwithstanding the role of the special education teachers and inspectors in the camps, no such mechanisms were in place. Thus with the dynamic micro and macro factors influencing the output of the initiative, it would have been critical to provide the key players of the implementation, the teachers, with ownership of the initiative by valuing shared control to ensure and evoke a strong desire to actively engage and participate in the process.

Orchestration involves the daily dynamics of a living and breathing entity with multi-faceted ability to influence number of people, programs and communities into orchestrating support system for the implementation of the program. Again, the key players in the orchestration of the Deaf education program in the camps are the teachers. But according to the experiences of the majority of teachers, they are actively seeking for technical assistance, support and rewards to assist them with the orchestration of the initiative out in the front lines. But yet, there is no particular individual or group to take charge of and facilitate the establishment and delivery of the support system, technical assistance, resources and rewards to assist with the enactment of the initiative out in the frontlines. Ideally, the orchestration by the administrative leaders should be grounded in inputs from those out in the front lines that are responsible for the actual enactment of the program into practice, i.e. teachers. From time to time, the front line players may have the capacity to produce new insights and techniques that have the ability to open new doorways for the future of Deaf Education program. One of the early strong advocates, Mr. Gachuhi, in particular took responsibility for the overall orchestration of the Deaf Education program

during the implementation phase by providing an unique mechanism of shared control that fed into and influenced decision making about ongoing implementation of the Deaf Units over time. Both factors, shared control and orchestration, are interwoven, In this case, they set off a new cycle of obstacles in the orchestration of the initiative where many felt powerless to do much about the obstacles they faced on daily basis. Today, teachers feel powerless, not simply because of lack of shared control, but because of lack of someone genuine to share control with, and because of the absence of a mechanism for sharing that control that influenced the decision making about the ongoing implementation of the Deaf Units over time.

### *Pressure and Support*

The pressure itself is often evoked by the introduction of the initiative and especially the performance of the key players in implementing the initiative. Teachers on a daily basis face pressure from the Deaf students, community members and administrators. Their expectations from the Deaf Units depend on the delivery of the teachers and administrator in meeting their needs.

On the contrary, the key players more than often do not receive the much needed support to respond to and at the same time to sustain the pressure. This result is because of the intertwined dynamics of many different factors, the lack of support in forms of training in sign language, deficiency in teaching materials, resources, facilities, classroom space, teachers and rewards (recognition and financial incentives). The major challenge that key players face in obtaining support is that the administrators have the tendency to make them wait without defining a plan or timeframe, a process which creates further disillusion among the key players.

The existing support provided by the administrators in the light of their numerous constraints of serving the entire special education programs throughout the camps, financial and structural limitations and high turnover is still not satisfactory for the key players. The administrators often facilitate the key players to become self-sufficient with meagre ongoing support in form of appointing Deaf teachers into the Deaf Units, limited training opportunities covering the special education and community awareness and outreach activities.

It appears that there is not really any strong continuing political and accountability pressure on the Deaf Units regarding their implementation and quality. The 'pressure' to the extent that it exists seems to be coming from the groundswell of pressure from the Deaf community itself to continue once the program was first established and its benefits for the Deaf children became evident. It seems that there is a form of pressure on CARE to maintain the programs in keeping with their broader commitments to the Education for All and to special education in accordance to basic human rights. Although, with the absence of strong advocates and once the implementation got underway, there has been little pressure and little coordinated support from the top thus the pressure and support approach has been more to manage the status quo of implementation, without attention to quality.

### *Technical Assistance*

In the accounts of their experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders, they presented a lot of evidence with persistent emphasis on the fundamental need for adequate technical assistance to assist the key players, the teachers, with the implementation of the initiative. Technical assistance is a critical component of any educational improvement initiative; it can include networking, knowledge acquisition, resources and training to facilitate the successes of the initiative. It is significant to

continuously search for new and effective ways to engage more directly and critically with the ongoing concerns and priorities faced by the teachers, Deaf students and community members, not simply with resources and assistance needed initially to get things up and running during the beginning implementation phase.

In essence, the teachers are screaming for training in sign language and resources in sign language along with appropriate teaching materials for Deaf students. Expertise and proficiency in sign language is the key factor for a successful implementation of the Deaf Education program's aims, regardless of whether the program adopts an integration or a segregation model of delivery of Deaf education. Without the expertise and proficiency in sign language in the Deaf Units, the quality of education drops dramatically low which in turn creates new obstacles and challenges for the teachers and Deaf students. Sign language is the foundation of the learning experience of all Deaf students; without information in sign language; learning becomes an impossible feat for Deaf students.

All involved stakeholders concur with the above statement; however, there are several obstacles impeding the administrators from providing the much-needed technical assistance and training. From the administrators' interviews, it appears that the competing priorities of the CARE Basic Education program have compromised the quality of technical assistance provided to the teachers. Not only competing priorities, but financial constraints imposed by the limited budget allocated for the special education program, also had an impact on the amount and degree of training and technical assistance that the teachers of Deaf receive in the light of the whole special education program. In several instances, teachers have mentioned of training in areas that are not relevant to their daily realities. Furthermore, the high turnover among the teachers and administrators has dramatically affected the

results of the program's efforts to provide much-needed training and technical assistance to the front line players. Presently, resources available for teacher training are often directed towards training in instructional methods, leaving the acquisition and development of skills in signing to teachers to acquire informally amongst themselves and with the community, rather than as a systematically organized component of their ongoing professional development as teachers of the Deaf. In light of all the possible obstacles, perhaps it would be significant to reconsider the methods of addressing the deficiencies in the area of technical assistance by investing in the Deaf students and quality education so that they in turn may become teachers themselves as has already happened to apparently positive effect with some of the current teachers.

It is important to stress that the support, technical assistance and rewards factors are interrelated in the sense that one factor has the ability to either negatively or positively influence another factor. Without the much-needed technical assistance, the teachers feel abandoned by the administrators in terms of support. Moreover, with the continuous frustrations arising from the lack of technical assistance, it becomes harder for the teachers to recognize rewards associated with their efforts. The relationship among the three factors continues, creating a substantial impact on the implementation of the initiative by the key players, the teachers and administrators, and its outputs which directly affect the Deaf students.

### *Rewards*

Foremost, it is habitually difficult to recognize rewards associated with educational improvement initiatives immediately. The inherent rewards of school improvement efforts are often not observed until the process has been in place for at least three years (Fullan 2001; Anderson and Stiegelbauer, 1994).

However, many teachers and administrators do recognize community rewards associated with the Deaf Education program. For instance, there has been a dramatic improvement in the community attitude and perceptions towards the Deaf population, more and more Deaf are achieving secondary level education, Deaf teachers are appointed to teach, and Deaf Units are proliferating throughout the camps. The rewards are in the form where they benefit the community and especially the Deaf population. Without the tangible evidence of these benefits to Deaf students and the Deaf community, it is unlikely that the implementation of the Deaf Education Units would be sustained in the camps.

However, it is not just rewards for the clients (i.e., students, parents) that are at stake in the implementation of new education policies, programs, and services. As evident in the data from this study, many teachers and administrators would like to receive rewards in individualistic form where they are recognized for their individual contribution to the initiative in face of all of the obstacles. For instance, many feel that they are not recognized for their efforts and are often berated for their lack of language proficiency. Evidence presented throughout the interviews points out that in order to reduce the high rate of turnover among the teachers, the administrators will need to understand and recognize the relationship between individual rewards and high turnover. It indicates a need for immediate individual rewards to sustain retention among trained and qualified teachers in the Deaf Units. High turnover compromises the quality of education as well at the expense of technical assistance, thus making it hard to sustain the technical expertise within the Deaf Education program. Several instances presented throughout the interviews hinted at rewards in such forms as a Deaf school, a friendly space for teaching and learning, financial incentives, recognition of teachers as equal player in the initiative, sustaining professional growth and especially appreciation of their contribution to the Deaf Units often in the form of additional and unique responsibilities beyond those of the majority of teachers teaching in the camps.

Rewards may not be apparent in both forms, community and individual; however, they need to be pointed out and facilitated by the administrators to ensure that the positive implementation cycle continues. To overcome the inherent difficulty of ‘seeing’ rewards by the teachers, Deaf students and community members, it would be beneficial to initiate an open dialogue with the involved stakeholders and encourage all to recognize the rewards through a new lens.

## **Institutionalization**

### *Embedding*

When an initiative becomes a part of the schooling culture and structure, then it has become a ‘way of life’ within the fundamental education ‘system’. There are many different ways of embedding an initiative into the education system. In this case, the Deaf Education program has become embedded into the Special Education sector under the CARE Basic Education program. By reviewing the historical timeline, one will recognize the embedding of Deaf Education program into the education infrastructure in the camp by the appointment of a Special Education Officer to manage special education program in three camps and also the Special Education Teachers to implement the Special Education in each camp. Furthermore, the special education sector continues to hire new teachers for the Deaf Units, and the Deaf Units continue to proliferate throughout the three camps. Moreover, in a refugee camp where limited facilities and services exist, the Deaf Units have now become the nexus for Deaf services, information exchange, and network including support. These are strong indicators that the Deaf Units within the special education program have been institutionalized in the camps.

### *Widespread Use*

Widespread use is linked to the evolution and expansion where the chains of lending and borrowing of the very educational improvement initiative epitomize the benefits and successes of the initiative beyond its initial setting and participants to other settings and participants who could benefit from its implementation as well. It is evident that as the use of the Deaf Units expand, the potential for sustainability increases, because more people are becoming involved in its enactment and its presence becomes more embedded in the institutional policies, procedures and structures. The critical mass of power is attributed to a number of individuals including the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members recognizing the significance of the benefits and successes associated with the Deaf Units and their ability to affect a change in the community's perception and attitude towards the Deaf population. This case is a feasible example of successful widespread use. The number of Deaf Units in the camps continues to grow from 3 to 7 in the span of approximately 10 years. The increasing high profile need in different areas of the camps not served by the existing Deaf Units along with the strong advocates within the administration level prompted the widespread dissemination of the Deaf Units throughout the three camps. The critical mass especially the teachers, Deaf students and community members have the ability to continue support the initiative. A Deaf teacher states that if there are no school for the Deaf in the camps, he will continue to "complain and fight for the Deaf in the camps" (Teacher 10, 2009). This clearly demonstrates the engagement and commitment of the critical mass.

The form of institutionalization has evolved from the initial aim of CARE to provide access to education for all refugee children in the camps into a nexus designed to meet the needs of the Deaf population. The Deaf Units have changed their form and impact by simply providing Deaf students with access to education. Initially, the Deaf Units were just a place for Deaf students to go and learn. At this present time, the Deaf Units have evolved into Deaf Education program where one may obtain support

in pursuing higher level of education well into secondary education level and where one may receive new skills from the trainings provided by the special education sector. The widespread use has expanded not just horizontally in wider provision of basic education but vertically in terms of attention to access to secondary education for graduating primary students. The multi-dimensionality of the initiative along with the unpredictable dynamics of individuals involved in the initiative have modified and shaped the Deaf Units into their own unique entities.

### *Removal of Competing Priorities*

This is a critical factor which continues to undermine the steady progress of the Deaf Units. An important strategic factor in any educational improvement initiative is that it must be introduced and presented as something that can be integrated with what teachers or schools are already doing. However in this situation, the Deaf Units are under the Special Education sector which falls under the CARE Basic Education program which is one of countless programs and services implemented and managed by UNHCR in providing basic human rights and meeting needs for the refugee population in the refugee camps. The Deaf Units become one of the many programs and services implemented and managed in the camps for a marginalized population. It is not possible to remove competing priorities of many different programs and services vying for the limited allocated budget and resources from the UNHCR in Dadaab. It is more a matter of continuing on the political front to maintain active support for Deaf Education program in the debate about the allocation of limited resources and funds for multiple priorities. Moreover, to ensure that the resources allocated to Deaf Education are allocated to resources and support that are really needed to improve the program such as professional development in sign language for teachers, teaching materials and so forth.

Furthermore, there are also competing priorities for resources between the Deaf Education program and other Special Education programs. And there are also competing priorities within the provisions of Deaf Units themselves. As mentioned earlier, there is lack of consensus on the Deaf Education program model amongst the involved stakeholders on what the Deaf Units should be, should be doing and should look like; do we devote more resources to helping regular classrooms teacher integrate Deaf students in the regular classroom? Or do we devote more resources to the segregated Deaf units and their staff? Or do we try to find a strategic and better balance between the two differing models to meet the needs of Deaf students?

On the other hand, each group has identified several obstacles that continue to create difficult conditions for the involved stakeholders to successfully perform their tasks. The obstacles are interlinked to each others, defining the narrow parameters of successes attained by the administrators, teachers and Deaf students. Various obstacles are faced by different groups which create new needs and demands on the existing structure and especially administrators. This looping process requires administrators to constantly search for opportunities to address the obstacles whilst being constrained by existing competing priorities of meeting the needs of 300,000 refugees in the camps. Feasibly, it would be productive to consider developing alternatives to address the obstacles instead of continuing the cycle of addressing the obstacles directly. One perhaps should consider developing alternative solutions whether on a big or small scale to address the persistent obstacles faced by the Deaf Units, administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members.

### *Continuing Assistance*

The continuing assistance should be intertwined within the school framework and not seen as gradually being removed. Their relationships with other programs and services must remain strong and involved to continue ongoing support. Despite the ‘permanent’ presence of the Deaf Units in the camps, key front line players continues to face seemingly insurmountable obstacles on a daily basis. This process continues to have a tremendous impact on the implementation of the initiative if morale, motivation, technical expertise and many more intangible aspects continue to ‘decline’, affecting the accessibility and quality of education for Deaf students.

From the evidence presented in the experiences of the interviewees, it becomes transparent that the initial source of technical assistance and incentives has gradually reduced over the years because of competing priorities, declining high profile need at the administrative levels, consistent high turnover and departure of strong advocates. Without continuing technical and program assistance, this process of decline has had an impact on the quality and successes of implementation and institutionalization of the initiative. Even with problematic approaches in addressing the obstacles that teachers and Deaf students face on daily basis, dealing with such challenges will demand the bridging of much more than continuing enrolling more Deaf students and the appointment of more teachers of the Deaf. This solution will require fundamental change that recognizes the obstacles and aim to address and change the ways of educational provisions for the Deaf students in the camps.

### **Conclusion**

In this case, the successful institutionalization of the Deaf education programs in the camps was perceived by the various stakeholders as a successful educational improvement, as its presence in the

camps met the foremost goal of meeting refugees' access to basic human rights by providing access to education for the Deaf students. However, upon on closer inspection, the groundwork appears insubstantial and the foundation weak for the provision of high quality education, beyond the basic challenges of access. So what does this mean? In the institutionalization stage, each factor has been met; however the same cannot be said for the initiation and implementation stages. This is attributed to the fact that several factors in the initiation and implementation phases are not met nor effectively applied during the early stages. As a consequence, there are still weak and missing links which mean that the foundation has yet to be grounded fully despite its embedding in the camp's education program. This conclusion applies to the countless obstacles, frustrations and the gaps within the program experienced by the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members as the foundation has not been laid properly.

For example, in the initiation stage, there are two divergent perspectives of what the Deaf Units should be, should be doing and should look like that implies that there is not one cohesive and clear model of the change program. Moreover, in the implementation stage, the orchestration and shared control of the Deaf Education program fall short from including the key front line players, the teachers. Additionally, there are tremendous pressures on the teachers to perform without substantial support, or sustainable technical assistance such as training and resources and rewards. Lastly, in the institutionalization stage, there is lack of continuing assistance despite the immense need for assistance. From the macro perspective, the Deaf Education program may look satisfactory as it has been implemented and utilized throughout the camps: however from the micro perspective especially from the front line, it has been shown in this study to be unsatisfactory and in need for ongoing support for improvement in many ways.

Another challenge is that this educational improvement initiative is located in a highly transient environment where the majority of strong advocates are no longer in the picture. Therefore the teachers continue to play 'catch-up' with the newly involved stakeholders such as administrators and teachers with the hopes that they will have as much enthusiasm and value for the program as the predecessors, but without any institutionalized mechanisms and opportunities for teachers to influence the understanding and actions of changing participants in program administration and delivery. Many of the teachers and administrators move on once they receive a personal promotion, as the majority of the refugees have individual incentives to succeed in earning more money or relocating to third country. Those who are very committed to the changes often become burnt out and leave for the sake of their sanity.

One of the aims of utilizing this initiation, implementation and institutionalization framework in this analysis is to provide insight that has the capacity to assist in clarifying the complexity of the obstacles faced by the Deaf Education program while capturing individual experiences, definitions and the meaning of events throughout the process.

This improvement manages to sustain because the program has been institutionalized into the local education system. However the groundwork for quality of education has not been firmly set during the initiation and implementation stages; thus the program is lacking substance. Broader recognition, acceptance and support for Deaf Education program as a high profile need grew out of the early provisions in the camps thus contributing to its likely institutionalization notwithstanding continuing challenges to quality. This observation justifies the conclusion that any improvement change effort can easily be institutionalized in the face of high bureaucratic input without meeting the necessary factors for

successful initiation and implementation of the program to promote a paradigm shift in the micro structure of the improvement and behaviour, not just attitude and beliefs. This conclusion challenges the involved stakeholders to rethink the conditions of work for key front line players responsible for the implementation of educational improvement initiative, empowering them to lead the implementation and teaching effectively.

This process has the ability of reducing the pressure on the teachers to achieve and meet the needs of Deaf students. This can be attained in the refugee camps by providing avenues for all interested and involved stakeholders to participate in an open dialogue to assess and identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses. By introducing and illustrating a comprehensive picture of the structure/system where the Deaf Units are located, those in authority can gain a better understanding of the challenges that are beyond the parameters of their influence such as competing priorities of a refugee camp. Also by promoting and utilizing the existing programs, facilities and resources, the involved stakeholder are encouraged to come up with innovative adaptations and variation in use to suit the community's needs. However it is critical that the innovations are integrated into the groundwork and address the emerging obstacles faced by the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research and Conclusion**

This study has brought forth the experiences and perspectives of ‘real people’, namely the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members with linkages to the Deaf Units in Dadaab Refugee camp. We were able to listen and understand their experiences and perspectives in terms of educational opportunities and obstacles and to verify the ‘real needs’ of involved stakeholders. Now knowledge has been gained on the opportunities and obstacles faced by the involved stakeholders in the context of stressing the importance of access to education for the social, cultural, linguistic and academic development of Deaf children in refugee camps.

By identifying and highlighting the trends and patterns of opportunities and obstacles from the eyes and experiences of the involved stakeholders, we could recognize and identify structural weakness (lack of immediate internal solutions) and different players (administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members) including identifying those with decision-making power in the refugee camps. This study in turn creates new possibilities of producing new ideas to address Deaf refugees’ contemporary issues especially in the initiation and implementation stages of the educational improvement initiative. Bakewell (2007) reminds us that with “large gaps in our understanding and there are some prospects that greater knowledge may improve the conditions of people’s lives” (p. 7). Furthermore, this process also contributes to new perspectives of the contemporary issues and situations which hopefully will be realized by the key players and strong advocates with access to policy makers, educators, and other stakeholders.

## **Recommendations for Successes of a Deaf Education Program in a Refugee Camp**

### *Why bother?*

One may wonder why we should bother with such a small marginalized population when we have a much bigger issue of protracted refugee situation for approximately 300,000 refugees of Dadaab Refugee Camp. I reached the contrary conclusion on World Refugee Day 2009, when UNHCR delegates along with several high-ranking visitors visited a compound designed as a safe haven for those who are persecuted in the camps. This made me realize that there are groups, organizations and agencies dedicated to those who are persecuted (i.e. the safe haven centre), women refugees, children refugees, marginalized religious groups, refugees living with disability and many more. This prompted me to wonder where are the groups, organizations and agencies dedicated to the Deaf population? Several questions arose, should a National Association of the Deaf be responsible? Is it sufficient to remain under the disability group umbrella? Should there be a partnership with an external organization who is interested in working with the Deaf community? Regardless of which group, organization or agency is working with the Deaf community, they need opportunities and avenues to include their voices; moreover, the ability to access to communication is a basic human right and need. Furthermore, as participating citizens, they will contribute better to the society and system if they are given the opportunities to contribute. This process in turn removes community stigma which in turn creates a better and sustainable community development and society and tolerance for diversity. The extraordinary complexity and the scale of a modern refugee society/system often mask and even preclude education's communal functions as individualistic functions ordinarily command our attention.

### *Recommendations*

This brings me to my next point. I am fully aware of CARE and especially UNHCR's massive burden of meeting the needs of all refugees in Dadaab; however, CARE's existing special education program's intentions are theoretically to cater to the community in which they serve. Thus it is crucial to the success of developmental efforts that the aims of the local community not only have been identified but have also been incorporated into CARE's Deaf Education program's plan of action. I do not want to discount the existing Deaf Education program; however the existing structure, skills and capacities can be acknowledged and further improved and constraints can be reduced, thus removing the internal pressure and strain placed on administrators, teachers, Deaf students, community members and the system itself.

Furthermore, each context is different, this suggests feasible indicators that can be adapted for other situations. Every situation must be contextualized since every context is different, the indicators in this study are neither universally applicable to every situation, nor to every potential user. They need to be contextualized i.e. adapted to each specific local situation.

After listening to and observing the opportunities and obstacles faced by the administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members, I identified three general areas that need to be addressed; accessibility of sign language, quality of education and community awareness. Then, as a Deaf outsider, I was able to step outside of the box and observe from afar when writing up this study to capture the overview of linking opportunities and obstacles to the existing structure. Upon identifying three general areas from the interwoven opportunities and obstacles faced, I further identified a dominant pattern which is accessibility to sign language. The current problematic ways of addressing the deficiencies in the Deaf Education program are to either ignore it or to 'wait and wait' thus by locating

the ‘missing gaps’ in the provisions of sign language. This finding facilitated the development of my recommendation which is ‘doable, sustainable and feasible’ in light of the existing structure, capacities and skills. New developments do not necessarily lead to structurally different approaches but are a matter of relegating and reutilizing existing resources, capacities, facilities and skills in the camps.

*Recommendation #1: Sign Language as a Tool for Accessibility*

Utilizing ‘Sign Language as a Tool for Accessibility’ should be the foremost concern of CARE and any other implementing organizations who work with the Deaf population. From the interviews, it becomes very transparent that there is lack of opportunities to access to sign language in the camps. Thus to address the depleted sign language proficiency among involved stakeholders of the Deaf Units, it would be feasible and sustainable to invest in training several Deaf adults in teaching sign language. This investment will have the capacity to introduce sign language throughout the camps on several different levels. On one level, they would be able to provide sign language classes to the community to assist in eradicating community stigma. With a better understanding and tools to communicate with the Deaf population in the camps, this process also has the capacity to promote growth of proficient sign language users in the camps as well. With proficient sign language users in the camps, it has the potential of producing sign language interpreters to address the insurmountable communication barriers in the camps both in the schools and out in the community. This in turn creates a ‘snowball effect’ where on the next level, the Deaf sign language trainers also would be able to provide much needed training in sign language for teachers of the Deaf on a continuous basis. They also can provide sign language support in the Deaf Units. Also for this initiative to sustain itself, it is crucial that the Deaf sign language trainers train other Deaf community members in becoming sign language trainers as well. This overall

process would be a feasible improvement initiative for CARE and Handicap International as this will have immediate impact on the successes of their programs and services for the Deaf population.

*Recommendation #2: Deaf as Change Agents*

Deaf refugees can be the agents in new directions in educational provisions for Deaf students as this training will empower them with much stronger hands and voices in the policy and educational development that affect their lives and livelihoods. Not only the Deaf refugees themselves, but the involved stakeholders especially the parents, have expressed their desire to participate in the advocacy, mobilization and implementation of new initiatives to take up control of their lives and livelihoods. This is from a teacher who is ready to contribute as a community member who values the importance of education, “I think this [Deaf Unit] is not good because Deaf and hearing are equal, if [we cannot locate or secure] no donors, to support them then the community will be able to organize something like community school, for example, [they] already have secondary school set up by the community. We as community can try to do something” (Teacher 12, 2009). Furthermore, by investing into the very Deaf community that CARE serves, this has the ability to empower them in taking up responsibility and control of their needs. For instance, by empowering the Deaf in self-determination, organizations and agencies working in the refugee camps may become an exemplary role model by hiring few Deaf employees thus setting the wheels in motion for the total inclusion of people with a disability into the community. Moreover, community outreach and activities could be conducted in teams with one hearing and one Deaf as many have illustrated the fact that Deaf people are walking posters of successes of providing education to Deaf children. It also has the capacity of getting the Deaf refugees to understand the opportunities and obstacles of the refugee system to bridge the communication gaps between both

worlds; the refugees and the refugee system (as a strong advocate, Mr. Gachuhi used to link both worlds; the refugee and the refugee system).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

One of the purposes and aims of this research is to aim to throw light into the ‘prism’ of an isolated iceberg floating in a sea with thousands of icebergs. With the collection of experiences and perspectives from administrators, teachers, Deaf students and community members in this study, I have attempted to explore the iceberg above the sea. However an iceberg has much more mass hidden under the sea. With the surplus mass under the sea, there is a need for further research on Deaf refugees in refugee camps, Deaf education in Somalia, Kenya and Africa, borrowing/transplanting Deaf educational innovations and/or approaches to Africa for the Deaf community, sign language research on Somali Sign Language, the needs of Deaf refugees in a refugee camp, gender inequalities among Deaf community members, cultural/linguistic imperialism and new forms of educational practices found among innovative educational approaches for Deaf students (i.e. inclusive education, integration and special education).

Furthermore, it seems to me that there is more to the underlying reasons for the extensive role that the school plays in Deaf refugees’ lives especially with limited / basic infrastructure where they are situated in. I believe that the centuries old dichotomy; pathological perspective versus cultural and linguistic perspective and the general image of Deaf people has an influence on the shifting paradigms of the role that school plays in Deaf refugees’ lives. There have been several indicators of the influence of certain image that one has on their experiences and perspectives of the opportunities and obstacles as they associate with the Deaf Units throughout this study. I would like to encourage future researchers

into utilizing contemporary comparative & international development education frameworks such as the north/south relationship, indigenous knowledges, transnational cooperation, neo-colonialism and dependency theory into examining the relationship and development within the field of the Deaf education and the Deaf community.

I realize that there is a great need for research in the field of the lived experiences of Deaf individuals and Deaf Education in the developing world, especially in Africa. There are many existing educational and civil society opportunities and/or programs that have gone undetected by the international Deaf community, both in the academic and voluntary sectors. In addition; the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), an international, non-governmental, central organization of national associations of Deaf people which holds a consultative status in the United Nations, has called for action into documenting endeavours for/by/of Deaf in Africa. Research in the refugee field is a relatively new field, and this study will be one of the first attempts to explore existing educational and civil society opportunities for Deaf refugees in a refugee camp. Ideally, this thesis has the capacity to generate awareness of and interest in further research related to provisions and services for Deaf refugees in both refugee camps and host countries. I hope that upon identifying and epitomizing the educational experiences of involved stakeholders in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya will produce new possibilities of addressing Deaf refugees' contemporary issues especially in the initiation, implementation and institutionalization stages. It is hoped that this study will make a contribution towards the understanding of Deaf refugees in a refugee camp that would ultimately lead to furthering educational and civil society initiatives for Deaf refugees both in refugee camps and host countries.

## **Conclusion**

This research has further verified the importance of listening to the experiences and perspectives of the very people who are implementing and receiving the outputs of an initiative. For example, if you want to know how to make an authentic Italian meal, you would ask an Italian instead of your aunt who knows someone who visited Italy once. The same principles should be applied in all ‘development’ projects, programs and services. The significant contribution of this thesis is the inclusion of the hands and voices of the very Deaf refugees to sign and share their experiences and perspectives to tell the audience in their own words about the roles Deaf education play in Deaf refugees’ lives.

By grouping the experiences and perspectives of the involved stakeholders into opportunities and obstacles, this enables us to better visualize the relationship of their experiences with the Deaf Units. This also allows me to comprehensively understand how the external and internal macro and micro factors influence the existing Deaf education delivery and provisions in the camps with assistance from the Triple ‘I’ framework. From the opportunities and obstacles identified by the involved stakeholders, it appears to me that the knowledge and power relations in the Deaf Education program are diverse and complex as they include multiple and often differing interests and ideas. This places the involved stakeholders and institutions within a constantly shifting field.

With the application of the Triple ‘I’ framework, it becomes explicit that the majority of the obstacles encountered by the majority of involved stakeholder groups originated from factors that need to be critically addressed during the initiation and implementation stages. As the school improvement and change process is a never-ending process, thus the Deaf Education program in Dadaab refugee camp has expanded and evolved horizontally and vertically to address the new high profile needs and

widespread use that arose from the institutionalization of this school improvement effort throughout the three camps. This generates a new and constantly shifting field where the opportunities and obstacles appear, intertwine, disappear and/ or detach from each others as the playing field constantly renews itself with the continuation of new school improvement and change efforts throughout the three stages. For example, all stakeholders have recognized the need to address the capacity of sign language proficiency among the teachers of the Deaf as an obstacle, however with the introduction of Deaf teachers into the Deaf Units according to the administrators, the ‘obstacle’ created by language barriers detaches itself from the obstacles and is now intertwined with opportunities associated with the Deaf Units. Moreover, the Deaf teachers now face a different facet of communication barriers, thus this is where a new obstacle created by a feasible solution to address an obstacle appears however this has the ability to become an opportunity itself in a different facet as well. For instance, the introduction of Deaf teachers into the Deaf Units provide a positive image of a successful outcome of the Deaf Units which facilitate the eradication of entrenched community stigma. As expected, this cycle continues; the need for constant addressing of the critical factors throughout the three stages remains.

In nutshell, the Triple ‘I’ framework further verified the importance and powerful contribution that Deaf Units make among the communities by presenting positive sites for linguistic and cultural acquisition which later provides ample opportunities for self determination and inclusion with the wider community. With the inclusion of the Deaf and wider refugee communities, the input and ownerships of these communities are currently ‘shaping’ the school improvement and change efforts to better meet their needs and wants. This in turn strengthened prospects for further initiation, implementation and continuation. Furthermore, this framework also implies that the school improvement and change efforts

are still underway despite its institutionalization in the Dadaab refugee camp continuing the cycle of its growth both horizontally and vertically.

In light of numerous opportunities and obstacles faced by the involved stakeholders, this research has informed us that the Deaf Units plays multiple roles in the Deaf refugees' lives. The main role of the Deaf Units is to provide access to education for Deaf students in the camps by assigning a space for Deaf students to learn in sign language. The Deaf students and teachers have identified the Deaf Units as a pivotal entity that allows them to discover a distinct population group complete with its own social, cultural, linguistic and community characteristics. Moreover, the Deaf Units also has been used as a tool to eradicate community stigma, to provide language model and act as nexus for information and support for Deaf refugees, their families and their communities. Lastly, it becomes unambiguous that the administrators were able to identify more opportunities associated with the Deaf Units than the teachers and Deaf students themselves who identified more obstacles as they associate with the Deaf Units which still lack the capacity to facilitate quality learning in sign language.

However, this is a strong indicator of their recognition and ownership in the roles that the Deaf Units play in the Deaf refugees' lives. Instead of reverting to the more often than not the 'classic refugee attitude' where a refugee is now accustomed to depending on the operating system to manage and implement projects, programs and services to meet their needs, i.e. CARE, UNHCR etc where 'everything is in their hands' and they are the only ones with the power to make a difference in their lives. They have assessed their experiences and were able to provide alternative recommendations and solutions to improve the impact of the role that Deaf Units play in the Deaf refugees' lives. Again, a strong indicator of the successes of the Deaf Units' role in Deaf refugees' lives depends on stability and

visibility of the Deaf Education program and its successful outcomes. With the positive outcomes and rewards; identity, culture, language empowered with self determination among the Deaf students, prospects for implementation and continuation of the Deaf Education programs are strengthened. The successful outcomes of the Deaf Units are further verified by the proliferation of the Deaf Units throughout the three camps, the steady increase in enrolment and the addition of Deaf teachers.

By proactively addressing the opportunities and obstacles as it associate with the school improvement and change effort, one may make a student's hopes come true. Student 7 hopes to successfully complete his studies and go on to become a teacher of the Deaf in order to establish a Deaf school in Somalia when peace arrives in Somalia. In conclusion, it is important to recognize of the positive impact that Deaf Units play in terms of opportunities for Deaf refugees which outweigh the obstacles. The obstacles are heterogeneous both in their places within the school improvement and change efforts and with the involved stakeholders in a constantly shifting field. By adding comparative dimension of all involved stakeholders' experiences with opportunities and obstacles, new and feasible strategies present itself to complement the existing structure to further improve the engagement of the successful outcomes and positive impact on the Deaf refugees and their communities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Consent letter and form for Group B Participants

<To appear on OISE/UT letterhead >

Date

#### **Re: A Study of Deaf Education in Dadaab Refugee Camps: The Roles of Deaf Units in Deaf Refugees' Lives**

Dear

I am a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) in Canada. Having taught in Kenya for two and half years at Takaye Primary School, Deaf Unit in Malindi, I am very interested in the area of Deaf education in refugee camps. For my thesis, I am conducting a study focusing on the roles that the Deaf Education plays in Deaf refugees' lives. The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson.

The struggle to attain both educational and civil society opportunities in a refugee camp is one that is shared by many Deaf individuals, both in refugee camps and other parts of the world. As someone who is very involved in providing access to educational opportunities for Deaf refugees, I am very interested in learning more about how you feel about your role in ensuring access to educational opportunities for Deaf refugees. But very little is known about educational and civil society opportunities for refugees, let alone Deaf refugees in a refugee camp. I believe that much can be learned from understanding your perceptions and experiences with the existing educational and civil society opportunities in a refugee camp. This research will help advance the idea that a school is capable of integrating services to ensure that Deaf refugees are presented with equal access to both educational and civil society opportunities.

For my study, I would like to interview you as a **teacher / headmaster / local stakeholder (i.e. parent, former student) / education sector specialist** from \_\_\_\_ **Deaf Unit** as I am interested in finding out more about your **perception and experience working / associating at / with the Deaf units**. I would also like to know about your role within the education system. Upon learning more about your perceptions and experiences, I would also like to know your personal thoughts and feelings about educational and civil society opportunities for Deaf refugees and your future hopes for Deaf refugees and Deaf units.

For my research, I will be conducting semi-structured interviews approximately one to two hours long, which will be done at a time and place of your convenience. The interviews will be videotaped with your permission and later transcribed into paper to assist me in recording the responses and the surroundings of the study. The data collected from the interviews will be recorded and kept in a locked cabinet in my residence. After I return to Canada only myself and my supervisor will have access to the original interviews and the data collected from the interviews will be destroyed 5 years after I complete my masters' degree. All data collected will be used for the purposes of a M.A. thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles and public presentations.

At any time during the interview/research process you are free to comment, request changes or ask me to remove any piece of information. Your name, or the name of anyone involved, will **not** be reported in the study. I will use a code name for each participant and related people that only I will recognize. Although actual names will not be used and pseudonyms will be used, you may be identifiable by your position, because of the location of the site and the small size of the Deaf units, it will be impossible to completely conceal your identity. For example, there is only one **headmaster of a unit / one program director**. However, it is important to note that the questions asked will be of a general nature and **not** designed to reveal personal opinions or beliefs that may be damaging to your reputation or that of the program. You and your school will **not** be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm. I will **not** disclose the source of individual interview comments or observations to other participants in the study or to camp/unit supervisors.

Your participation in this study is strictly **voluntary**. At no time will value judgements be placed on your responses now will any evaluation be made of your effectiveness as **teacher/headmaster/local stakeholder/education sector specialist**. If for any reason, you wish to withdraw from the study, you are free to withdraw your consent and the information you provided me with would be removed from the study without judgment, consequence or penalty. You can also choose not to answer any question in the interview. You can communicate with me directly at the address provided below.

You are free to contact me after I return to Canada at any time, to ask questions or to request a change or removal of the information you gave me. If you would like to receive a summary of the research results, please provide me with your mailing address or email address.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it me. I will keep a copy of your signed copy and will also give you a copy of the form to keep.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Youngs  
M.A. Candidate, Educational Administration / Comparative, International and Development Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto  
252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6  
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T: 1-416-978-0748  
[sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca)

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I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please initial if you agree to have your interview videotaped: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like a summary of the results of the study, please check here

Please enclose your mailing or e-mail address. The summary of the study will be either mailed or e-mailed to you after completion of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the investigators listed below. Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any questions about your rights as a participant.

**Principal Investigator**

Megan Youngs

[myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca)

**Project Supervisor**

Dr. Stephen Anderson

1-416-978-0748

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**Office of Research Ethics**

1-416-946-3237

[ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca)

## Appendix 2: Consent letter and form for Group A Participants

<To appear on OISE/UT letterhead >

Date

### **Re: A Study of Deaf Education in Dadaab Refugee Camps: The Roles of Deaf Units in Deaf Refugees' Lives**

Dear

I am a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) in Canada. Having taught in Kenya for two and half years at Takaye Primary School, Deaf Unit in Malindi, I am very interested in the area of Deaf education in refugee camps. For my thesis, I am conducting a study focusing on the roles that the Deaf Education plays in Deaf refugees' lives. This study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson.

The struggle to attain both educational and civil society opportunities in a refugee camp is one that is shared by many Deaf individuals, both in refugee camps and other parts of the world. As a parent/guardian of someone who has been successful in obtaining access to educational opportunities, I am very interested in learning more about how your son/daughter feels about his/her access to educational opportunities. Very little is known about educational and civil society opportunities for refugees, let alone Deaf refugees in a refugee camp. I believe that much can be learned from understanding your son/daughter's perceptions and experiences with the existing educational opportunities in a refugee camp. This research will help advance the idea that a school is capable of integrating services to ensure that Deaf refugees are presented with equal access to both educational and civil society opportunities.

For my study, I would like to interview your son/daughter as a Deaf student from upper primary level as I am interested in finding out more about his/her life and schooling experience at the Deaf units. I would also like to know about his/her perceptions and experiences with the education system and especially how the Deaf units have affected his/her life. Upon learning more about your son/daughter's perceptions and experiences, I would also like to know his/her personal thoughts and feelings about his/her education, Deaf units, and future hopes.

For my research, I will be conducting semi-structured interviews approximately one to two hours long, which will be done at a time and place of your convenience. The interviews will be videotaped with your permission and later transcribed into paper to assist me in recording the responses and the surroundings of the study. The data collected from the interviews will be recorded and kept in a locked cabinet in my residence. After I return to Canada only myself and my supervisor will have access to the original interviews and the data collected will be destroyed 5 years after I complete my masters' degree. All data collected will be used for the purposes of a M.A. thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles and public presentations.

At any time during the interview/research process your son/daughter is free to comment, request changes or ask me to remove any piece of information. Your son/daughter's name, or the name of anyone involved, will **not** be reported in the study. I will use a code name for each participant and related people that only I will recognize. Your son/daughter and the school will **not** be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm. I will **not** disclose the source of individual interview comments to other participants in the study or to camp/unit supervisors.

Your son/daughter's participation in this study is strictly **voluntary**. At no time will value judgements be placed on his/her responses nor will any evaluation be made of his/her effectiveness as a student. If for any reason, your son/daughter wishes to withdraw from the study, you are free to withdraw your consent and the information your son/daughter provided me with would be removed from the study. Your son/daughter can also choose not to answer any question in the interview. You can communicate with me directly at the address provided below.

You are free to contact me after I return to Canada at any time, to ask questions or to request a change or removal of the information you gave me. If you would like to receive a summary of the research results, please provide me with your mailing address or email address.

If your son/daughter is interested in participating in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it me. I will keep a copy of your signed copy and will also give you a copy of the form to keep.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Youngs  
M.A. Candidate, Educational Administration / Comparative, International and Development Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto  
252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6  
[myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca)

Dr. Stephen Anderson  
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto  
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T: 1-416-978-0748  
[sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca)

**Consent Form**

<To appear on OISE/UT letterhead>

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give full consent to allow my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in a study about Deaf Education in Dadaab Refugee Camps.

1) I understand that the study will involve approximately one to two hours long interviews at a time and place of convenience. Participating in these interviews may involve answering questions about:

- Previous educational experiences
- Perceptions and Experiences about/at the Deaf school
- Thoughts and feelings about school, learning, and my future

2) I understand that any information shared during the interview will be kept anonymous and confidential. My child’s name will not be used.

3) I understand that my child will not be required to participate in the study, it is voluntary. There is no penalty or negative consequence if I withdraw my consent at a later point.

4) I understand that I or my child will not benefit directly from participating in the study, though the information gained may assist researchers and others in the academic community to better understand the lives and experiences of Deaf students in the refugee camps.

5) I understand that my child will be videotaped during the interview and the videotapes will be kept in a locked cabinet in Megan Youngs, the principal investigator’s residence.

6) I understand what this study involves and I agree to allow my child to participate. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

Participant’s Printed Name	Participant’s Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian’s Printed Name	Parent/Guardian’s Signature	Date
--------------------------------	-----------------------------	------

\*\*\* If you would like a summary of the results of the study, please check here.

Please enclose your mailing or e-mail address. The summary of the study will be either mailed or e-mailed to you after completion of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the investigators listed below. Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any questions about your rights as a participant.

**Principal Investigator**

Megan Youngs

[myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca)

**Project Supervisor**

Dr. Stephen Anderson

1-416-978-0748

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**Office of Research Ethics**

1-416-946-3237

[ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca)

### Appendix 3: Interpreter and Translator Confidentiality Form

<To appear on OISE/UT letterhead >

Date

#### **Re: A Study of Deaf Education in Dadaab Refugee Camps: The Roles of Deaf Units in Deaf Refugees' Lives**

Dear

I am a MA student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) in Canada. For my thesis, I am conducting a study focusing on the roles that the Deaf Education plays in Deaf refugees' lives. This study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson.

This study requires the assistance of an interpreter and/or translator. As an interpreter and/or translator, you are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct in your capacity and identity as an interpreter and/or translator. High standards of professional conduct involves:

- a) the respect and protection of the privacy and identity of consumers;
- b) hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service delivery;
- c) conduct oneself in a professional manner at all times and shall refrain from using the professional role to perform other functions (i.e. badgering, coercing, counselling, manipulating, advising or interject personal opinions onto the consumers for personal benefit or gain);
- d) commit to providing quality professional service throughout one's practice;
- e) professional accountability, accepting responsibility for professional decisions and actions;
- f) professional competence of service delivery and practice;
- g) non-discrimination, approaching professional service with respect and cultural sensitivity; and
- h) integrity in professional relationship, dealing honestly and ethically in all practices.

If you agree to adhere and maintain high standards of professional conduct in your capacity and identity as an interpreter and/or translator, please sign the attached consent form and return it me. I will keep a copy of your signed copy and will also give you a copy of the form to keep.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Youngs

M.A. Candidate, Educational Administration / Comparative, International and Development Education

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[sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca)

I understand and agree to adhere and maintain high standards of professional conduct in my capacity and identity as an interpreter and/or translator, please check here.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Interpreter/Translator's Printed Name                      Interpreter/Translator's Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail & telephone/fax number

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the investigators listed below. Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any questions about your rights as an interpreter and/or translator.

**Principal Investigator**  
 Megan Youngs  
[myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:myoungs@oise.utoronto.ca)

**Project Supervisor**  
 Dr. Stephen Anderson  
 1-416-978-0748  
[sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca)

**Office of Research Ethics**  
 1-416-946-3237  
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