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Access To Higher Education For Refugees In Crisis Settings: Adapting An OER to mLearning

Student Dissertation

How to cite:

Simpson, Ken (2019). Access To Higher Education For Refugees In Crisis Settings: Adapting An OER to mLearning. Research Summary for the Open University module H818 The Networked Practitioner

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FRI: Access To Higher Education For Refugees In Crisis Settings: Adapting An OER to mLearning (Ken Simpson)

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[Kenneth Simpson](#)

17 January 2019

Abstract

According to UNESCO (2018) there are now a record number of refugees in the world, some 22.5 million out of a total of 65 million globally displaced people. The average length of time for a refugee to be displaced is not two or three years but 17 years (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2014) which is a long period of time to be living in limbo. Only 1% of the global population of refugees gain access to higher education, this corresponds to 50% accessing primary and 25% accessing secondary education. As a population refugees are excluded from many opportunities being stateless and ineligible for many initiatives.

As Crea (2017) indicates, tertiary education may be seen as a psychosocial intervention as much as an educational program renewing a sense of dignity to those who may otherwise feel excluded and allowing them to contribute positively to their community.

Gaskell (2018) notes, there may be limited access to technology, support and electricity in crisis settings. Creed and Morpeth (2017) view Open Education in emergency and conflict areas as giving an element of continuity to learning that would otherwise be disrupted. Though its use is admirable OER may not specifically be meeting the needs of the refugee population being neither culturally appropriate nor language specific.

Information and communication technology is increasingly available at refugee camps in Kenya and to a lesser extent in Uganda (Dryden-Peterson et. al., 2017). In Dadaab and Kakuma camps refugees would unplug computer monitors to charge their phones instead. Hounsell and Owuor (2018) found that mobile phone ownership by refugees in camps was very high, 96% at Kakuma and 93% at Nakivale. Focusing on the type of phone, 44% at Kakuma had Smartphones and 25% at Nakivale. This was followed by 14% and 21% having a feature phone and 39% and 46% having a basic phone. The possibilities for delivering a strong supplementary education by mobile are therefore very applicable.

This project looks at adapting an Open Educational Resource to be more mobile friendly for

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use in refugee contexts. The course is called 'Learning to Learn' which is a preparation course for tertiary study, this was selected to be the most appropriate and useful focus in the absence of a defined and certified tertiary curricula. It will consider two mobile learning models: the Framework for the Analysis of Mobile Education (FRAME) model (Koole, 2009) and the Three-level Evaluation Framework (Vavoula & Sharples, 2009). The three-level framework looks at usability, learning experience and integration into the existing learning environment. The FRAME model considers the convergence of mobile technologies, learning capacities and social interaction.

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[Munir Moosa Sadruddin](#)

8:04pm 21 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi

Hello, I can relate your work to the refugees, who came to Pakistan a decade ago and they had no access to education. My area of interests besides human rights education is the education of people living in conflicted areas. Your topic can really help saving youth from radicalization and extremism.

I am curious to learn if you have also looked at the literature about the need for vocational education at the time of crises?

Your strong literature review highlights the strong trend of using mobile by refugees. Are you planning to loop any governmental or funding body in your project or will it be an independent project? Is this course already available and you will be adapting it for the mobile version? Are you setting any criteria or duration for this course?

What are your plans for the evaluation of your project with potential users?



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Munir



[Kenneth Simpson](#)

7:42am 23 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hello Munir,

Thanks for your comments on my project.

I have briefly looked at the need for vocational education without going into too much detail but I understand the provision of it is a major challenge but of great necessity in refugee contexts. It is an area of education that I would be interested in pursuing.

I think I am concerned with the mechanics of the design first, how material can be delivered and be accessible with the identification of three types of phone, the smart phone, the featured phone and the basic phone.

The course is an adaptation from Open Learn, which is why I want to adapt it to mobile learning, or should I say, more suitable to the environment that refugees are living in. It is an independent project but I would be interested in evaluating it or developing it to tie in with a degree course being offered. So, at the moment it is a project that is being designed out of interest and finding out how to do it.

Ken



[patrick shearer](#)

9:36pm 23 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Ken,

We have a significant number of students who are 'refugee' status. They are very committed to their programmes. I felt very humble when a young Syrian student disclosed his story to me. I am perhaps assuming that you are directing your project at refugees that are in crisis settings in terms of their socio economic situation? and not geographical location. For us, everything comes down to status and funding - especially when it comes to progressing 'up the ladder' into HE.

Enjoyed your poster and looking forward to your presentation



[W Taleo](#)

4:54am 24 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Interesting project Ken, I'm interested in that aspect of 'no network connection required' with all the information available in the app. This seems to be similar to work around educational materials, online in prisons. There maybe some linkage there.

I'm sure you are aware, there is a Cert IV Australian qual for Adult Tertiary Preparation.

Most Uni's have some equivalent bridging program. Would be interesting to see if there is anything specific to mobile design in there.



[Kenneth Simpson](#)

12:26am 25 January 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Patrick,

When I refer to 'crisis' settings I am thinking of pre-settlement refugees, they can either be in camps or in urban settings but access to wifi or computers may only be possible for limited times, during the day. My information is based on two camps at the moment, Nakivale in Uganda and Kakuma in Kenya. Therefore, I would like to provide learning material that is deliverable on Micro SD cards like initiatives from the British Council.



[Phill Grimes](#)

12:57am 13 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

What about a feasibility study of improving wifi access? How would costs compare as the scalability of micro sd cards and distribution of, must be logistically a challenge.



[Kenneth Simpson](#)

10:49am 14 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hello Phil.

It's a good idea and the camps I am looking at are getting improved connectivity. In fact I recently came across an article about a solar powered internet cafe, connected via the local mobile data network. This 'zubabox' is converted from a shipping container and costs \$101000 US. It's not going to hold a lot of people.

The literature I have come across so far talks about limited connectivity and access (the environment is typically not safe to travel and sometimes, getting to a classroom or computer lab provided by one of the aid organisations is too far, so an app that can be downloaded once then used at home is probably my ideal solution.

Micro Cards have been used by other Higher Education providers as a means of delivering the learning material so it seems to be a common practice.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

3:19pm 18 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Ken

Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose.

Best wishes

Simon

- ▶ There is a lot of factors to deal with, mobile hardware, screen size, apps, OER. What will you concentrate on first?
- ▶ How much is a Feature Phone? Apologies if I missed this.
- ▶ How did you motivate REFUGEES to use this app for learning?
- ▶ Thanks Ken for the work in the area of refugees. I agree with you on the need to include the disadvantaged in the learning system. Does 25% smartphone ownership come with any challenges especially if you wish to aim at democratising learning among refugees? -Any insights on how to overcome such a huddles?
- ▶ What place will you have for audio content
- ▶ What are the analogues/ 'anti-logues' for Duo-Lingo?



[Kenneth Simpson](#)

5:04am 23 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

There is a lot of factors to deal with, mobile hardware, screen size, apps, OER. What will you concentrate on first?

I would concentrate on the creation of the App first, I believe that onces the screen size and format of phone is known it is much easier to

How much is a Feature Phone? Apologies if I missed this.

Feature phones can cost around \$25 US up to \$80 for the Jio Phone I mentioned in the presentation.

How did you motivate REFUGEES to use this app for learning?

The app is not tested on refugees yet. I would like to contact an NGO or University that is offering education to refugees and work on developing the content for the app.

Thanks Ken for the work in the area of refugees. I agree with you on the need to include the disadvantaged in the learning system. Does 25% smartphone ownership come with any challenges especially if you wish to aim at democratising learning among refugees? -Any insights on how to overcome such a huddles?

It is actually around 60% ownership between Feature Phones and Smartphones so that is a pretty good start I believe. As mobile phone ownership in total ranges from 90% to 100%, the rest of the 30-40% ownership consists of basic phones that have simple messaging and call features, it would be interesting to see how a basic phone could also be used. There is a tool being developed in France called Nowall which uses SMS to provide refugees with interpretation and translation services.

What place will you have for audio content

Audio can easily be added to the Captivate file then output to an html file or app so the considerations are to do with file size and the optimum size of the project, whether delivery

is via download once or through Micro SDC cards.

What are the analogues/ 'anti-logues' for Duo-Lingo?

Duolingo is used by refugees when they reach a country of settlement to learn the language of that country, it is free and can be used offline once downloaded. There are audio samples included that help with pronunciation.

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