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ÉVALUATION

**REFUGEE EDUCATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS: THE CASE OF
ADULT REFUGEES LIVING IN MBANKOLO –
YAOUNDÉ II**

A dissertation presented and defended on the 26th September 2025

Option: Educational Management
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To
My beloved Husband,
my mother, siblings
and well-wishers.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Refugee Education for the Acquisition of Sustainable Development skills” was carried out by Jaika Joyce Tani [15V3987] of the faculty of Science of Education, department of Curriculum and Evaluation, specialty: Educational Management, option Educational Planning in the University of Yaoundé I.

Prof Bikoi Felix Nicodème

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIHRP:	African Initiative for Health and Research Promotion
ALE:	Adult Learning Education
CAR:	Central African Republic
CCRC:	Comité des Réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun
CEDEFOP:	The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.
CEMAC:	Communauté économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa)
COVID -19:	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DEDI:	Development, Equity, Sustainability and Innovation
DRC:	The Democratic Republic of Congo
EDD:	Education pour le Développement Durable
ESD:	Education for Sustainable Development
EU:	The European Union
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (The German Corporation of International Cooperation)
GRC:	The Government of the Republic of Cameroon
HDRO:	Human Development Reports Office
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons
INEE:	International Network for Education in Emergencies
IOM:	The International Organisation for Immigration
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAU:	Organisation for African Unity
SD:	Sustainable Development
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SDS:	Sustainable Development Skill
UN:	The United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WFP:	The World Food Program

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ABSTRACT

This piece of work titled “Refugee Education for the acquisition of sustainable development skills; the case of adult refugees living in Yaoundé” aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by adult refugees in accessing education for acquiring sustainable development skills under the banner of Sustainable Development Goals. The problem addressed in this study is that of adult refugees facing considerable obstacles in accessing suitable training opportunities although, there exist educational programs that are fragmented, poorly adapted to their socio-cultural realities, and not adequately directed towards acquiring practical skills linked to sustainable development, the study sought to find out; how adult refugees in Yaoundé acquire sustainable development skills and to what extent do the existing programs meet their specific needs. It also examines the effectiveness of existing educational programs in Mbankolo and identifies gaps and opportunities for improvement. Related theories such as the equity and the stakeholder, and works carried out on refugees in relation to education and sustainability, together form a solid foundation for this work. The target population was that of adult Central African and Nigerian refugees living in Yaoundé. Methodologically, the mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data collection tools included questionnaires administered to adult refugees, semi-structured interviews with NGO officials and institutional actors and teachers. The quantitative data showed the magnitude of needs and gaps while the qualitative views offers an in-depth understanding of lived experiences. Triangulation of these sources helped to validate the reliability and validity of the results. The key findings revealed that some programs exist but have weaknesses. Importantly, refugees expressed a strong desire for education that enables them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to build sustainable livelihoods.

Proposals have been presented for policymakers, practitioners, educators working with displaced population and researchers.

Keywords: *sustainable development, adult education, refugee integration, skill acquisition*

RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail intitulé « L'éducation des réfugiés pour l'acquisition de compétences en développement durable ; le cas des réfugiés adultes vivant à Yaoundé » vise à explorer les défis et les opportunités rencontrés par les réfugiés adultes pour accéder à l'éducation afin d'acquérir des compétences en développement durable. Cette étude aborde le problème des réfugiés adultes confrontés à des obstacles considérables pour accéder à des opportunités de formation appropriées. Bien qu'il existe des programmes éducatifs fragmentés, mal adaptés à leurs réalités socioculturelles et insuffisamment orientés vers l'acquisition de compétences pratiques liées au développement durable, l'étude a cherché à déterminer comment les réfugiés adultes de Yaoundé acquièrent des compétences en développement durable et dans quelle mesure les programmes existants répondent à leurs besoins spécifiques. Elle examine également l'efficacité des programmes éducatifs existants à Mbankolo et identifie les lacunes et les possibilités d'amélioration. Les théories connexes telles que l'équité et les parties prenantes, ainsi que les travaux menés sur les réfugiés en relation avec l'éducation et la durabilité, constituent une base solide pour ce travail. La population cible était celle des réfugiés centrafricains et nigériens adultes vivant à Yaoundé. Sur le plan méthodologique, une approche mixte a été utilisée, combinant des techniques qualitatives et quantitatives. Les outils de collecte de données comprenaient des questionnaires administrés aux réfugiés adultes et des entretiens semi-structurés avec des responsables d'ONG, des acteurs institutionnels et d'un enseignant. Les données quantitatives ont révélé l'ampleur des besoins et des lacunes, tandis que les analyses qualitatives offrent une compréhension approfondie des expériences vécues. La triangulation de ces sources a permis de valider la fiabilité et la validité des résultats. Les principales conclusions ont révélé que certains programmes existent, mais présentent des faiblesses. Il est important de noter que les réfugiés ont exprimé un fort désir d'éducation qui leur permette de contribuer significativement à leurs communautés et de se construire des moyens de subsistance durables. Des suggestions ont été présentées aux décideurs politiques, aux praticiens, aux éducateurs travaillant avec les populations déplacées et aux chercheurs. Elle contribue également au corpus croissant de connaissances sur l'éducation au développement durable dans les contextes fragiles.

Mots-clés : *développement durable, éducation des adultes, intégration des réfugiés, acquisition de compétences*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The phenomenon of forced displacement has emerged as one of the defining humanitarian challenges of the twenty-first century. Armed conflicts, political instability, ethnic persecution, and natural disasters have forced millions of people to flee their homes in search of safety and dignity. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of forcibly displaced people globally surpassed 114 million in 2023, a figure that includes refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers. Africa, as a continent, accounts for a substantial proportion of these displacements due to recurrent political instability, weak governance systems, and violent conflicts in regions such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes region. Cameroon, often described as “Africa in miniature” because of its geographical and cultural diversity, has been both a source and destination for refugee populations. Its relative political stability, despite internal tensions, has made it a host country to thousands of displaced persons from neighbouring countries including the Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria, and Chad.

Education in the context of crises has been identified as a fundamental human right as well as a tool for resilience, empowerment, and sustainable development. Refugees, particularly adult refugees, often face acute educational disadvantages resulting from interrupted schooling, trauma, language barriers, and exclusionary policies. These barriers limit their capacity to acquire relevant life skills and to contribute productively to their host communities. In recognition of this, international frameworks such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1969 OAU Convention on Refugees, and the Global Compact on Refugees emphasise the importance of providing refugees with access to inclusive and equitable quality education. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), reinforce this imperative by calling for inclusive education and the empowerment of marginalized populations.

Rationale for the Study

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been widely promoted by UNESCO and allied institutions as a transformative tool to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address complex global challenges. For refugees, particularly those in urban areas

such as Yaoundé, ESD represents more than a pedagogical framework; it is a pathway to social inclusion, economic self-sufficiency, and community resilience. However, adult refugees often find themselves excluded from mainstream education due to age restrictions, lack of documentation, cultural differences, and limited institutional capacity. This study recognises that empowering adult refugees with sustainable development skills is essential not only for their individual survival and self-reliance but also for the long-term stability and prosperity of host communities.

Problem Statement

Despite Cameroon's commitment to international refugee protection instruments and its open-door policy towards displaced populations, numerous challenges hinder the full integration of adult refugees into the national education and training system. Among these challenges are overcrowded classrooms, insufficient funding, shortage of trained teachers, and the absence of tailored programs designed for adult learners. Refugees in urban areas such as Yaoundé frequently encounter difficulties in accessing literacy programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurial education. These challenges not only exacerbate social exclusion but also limit refugees' ability to contribute positively to national development. Therefore, the research problem centres on the gap between policy aspirations for refugee education and the actual lived experiences of adult refugees in Yaoundé.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine how education can serve as a vehicle for equipping adult refugees in Yaoundé with sustainable development skills. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the challenges that adult refugees face in accessing education and vocational training in Yaoundé.
2. Assess the extent to which current educational programs address the needs of refugees in terms of sustainable development skills.
3. Explore the relationship between education, skill acquisition, and the empowerment of refugees.
4. Propose strategies and policy interventions to enhance the role of education in promoting refugee self-reliance and integration.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is threefold. Academically, it contributes to the growing literature on refugee education and sustainable development in humanitarian contexts. Empirically, it provides insights into the lived experiences of adult refugees in Yaoundé, thereby enriching the knowledge base available to policymakers and practitioners. Practically, it offers concrete recommendations to the Government of Cameroon, UNHCR, and partner NGOs for improving refugee education policies and programs. By situating adult refugees within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development, this study aligns with global efforts to promote inclusive, equitable, and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The research is geographically limited to Yaoundé, with particular focus on neighbourhoods such as Mbankolo, which host significant refugee populations. Thematically, the study is restricted to adult refugees and their acquisition of sustainable development skills through educational programs. Methodologically, the study employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues at stake. However, the research acknowledges limitations such as restricted access to certain refugee populations, financial constraints, and possible biases in self-reported data.

Organisation of the Study

This dissertation is structured into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter two provides a review of theoretical frameworks and related literature, highlighting global, regional, and national perspectives on refugee education and sustainable development. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, including the research design, target population, sampling techniques, and data collection instruments. Chapter four presents the findings and analysis, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, chapter five offers the conclusion, recommendations, and implications for policy and practice. This organization ensures logical coherence and allows for systematic exploration of the research objectives.

In conclusion, the general introduction establishes the rationale for the study by contextualising the refugee crisis globally, regionally, and locally. It highlights the gap between policy intentions and practical realities in the education of adult refugees in Cameroon. Furthermore, it frames education as both a human right and a strategic tool for equipping refugees with sustainable development skills. By doing so, the introduction prepares the ground for a deeper analysis in subsequent chapters, particularly regarding the effectiveness of educational programs in promoting refugee empowerment and integration.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

The world is currently facing a significant humanitarian crisis with a great number of refugees seeking safety and shelter due to conflicts, persecution, natural disasters and other crises. This unprecedented displacement of people has put immense pressure on host countries and communities, straining resources, infrastructure and social services. The challenges faced by refugees include lack of access to basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, healthcare, and quality education as well as protection from violence, exploitation, and discrimination.

The history of refugees in Cameroon can be traced to as far back to the early and mid – 20th century which corresponds to the 1960s. This was encouraged by its geographical location in the Central African zone that made it a host to various refugee populations fleeing conflicts and crises in neighbouring countries. Cameroon has been a major place of refuge due to its relative stability compared to some of its neighbours. Cameroon's refugee history began in the colonial and post-colonial periods, with movements primarily influenced by political upheavals and conflicts in the region. After gaining independence in 1960, it became a destination for neighbouring population escaping turmoil in countries such as Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Nigeria. Till date, Cameroon continues to be impacted by three complex humanitarian crises: refugees fleeing conflict and insecurity in the Central African Republic; in 2013 fleeing the sectarian violence and political insecurity, an influx of refugees from Nigeria due to the Boko Haram insurgencies which has led to a humanitarian crisis in the East, Far North, North and Adamawa regions of Cameroon (known as the Lake Chad Basin Conflict). Other refugee populations come from countries such as Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ivory Coast, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Gabon, Gambia and Mauritania. Clashes between the government security forces and the armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions have further compounded peace, stability and service delivery in the country. According to the UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency's post of 30 April 2024, Cameroon had over 476,735 refugees of which 351,905 are from CAR and 121,775 from Nigeria with many of whom are school aged children.

1.1 Historical background of displacement and settlement in Cameroon

Cameroon often referred to as “Africa in miniature” has for the past decades hosted many refugees. These not only reflects the country’s cultural diversity and abundant natural resources but shows the socio-cultural, economic, political characteristics and its diplomatic and migratory legacies. It is important to note that Cameroon has three hundred and sixty-six (366) ethnic groups with the majority living in the French part of the country (Centre, Littoral, Adamawa, East, South, Far North, North and West) which occupies “four-fifths” of the national territory and gained their independence in 1960. The minority resides in the English part of the country (North West and South West), which occupies “one-fifth” of the territory and gained its independence in 1961 through a plebiscite in which they voted to join the Republic of Cameroon to become a “Federal State” under the leadership of H.E Ahmadou Ahidjo, from 1960 to 1982.

This Federal Constitution protected and guaranteed the traditional values of each federated state. In the French part of the country, it was the civil law and French language while common Law and purely Anglo – Saxon education characterised English Cameroon. Following the 1972 referendum, the federal arrangement that brought these two territories together was dissolved and the country returned to its former name after independence from France.

Although Ahmadou Ahidjo consolidated the diverse and historically differentiated the regions of Cameroon, his authoritarian regime gained a reputation for human rights violations and was replaced in 1982 by his constitutional successor, Mr Paul Biya, the current president of the Republic of Cameroon as of the time of this study. Though there was political liberalisation under Paul Biya beginning in the 1990s, with increased freedom of the press and the institution of a multi-political party system, many Cameroonians not leaving out migrants, remain frustrated by the lack of full democratic rights and with the on-going corruption and patronage of the government. In 2008, President Paul Biya amended the constitution to remove office term limits from five to seven years’ renewable. This has allowed him to remain in power to date. February 2024 made him 91 years and the oldest living president in Africa. In the contemporary society today, this study stands on the fact that Cameroon is in a very difficult situation as it plays host to refugees from different neighbouring countries.

Cameroon is the largest economy in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and has ambitious growth targets to achieve emerging market and environmental development status by 2035. This has also served as a pull factor for the continuous increase of refugee's settlement in the country. Statistics in 2016 show that approximately seventy (70%) of the active populations living in Cameroon are farmers whose main economic activities account for close to 20.6% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Besides, farmers produce over eighty (80%) of the food consumed across the country with an estimated population of about 25 million, and an annual population growth of approximately 2.5% (Cameroon Economy Statistics 2016). Cameroon's economy experienced a 3.7% growth rate but experienced a setback dropped due to the combined effects of COVID-19 and the unfavourable political business climate. A decline in 2020 world oil prices contracted the GDP by 2.4% (Cameroon Migration Profile 2021, p.1). According to World Bank statistics in 2021, Cameroon's population stood at 27,224,262 indicating an upward trend, with a high-level 3.9% unemployment rate. These and many other factors have led to the settlement of different migrants, refugees and IDPs in almost all the regions of Cameroon.

Given that the Republic of Cameroon is a state party to most international and regional conventions relating to the protection and status determination of refugees through ratification as a peremptory irrefutable norm, it had to offer expensive sanctuary to international and national displaced persons. The provision of this shelter is a result of the humanitarian assistance policy framework led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the leading humanitarian organisation, the Government of Cameroon as the host, refugees as the targeted group and sending government as the root cause.

This study therefore goes by the premise that problems are created by men and should equally provide solutions. This statement connects with that of one-time former US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt (who served as the 32nd president of the US from 1933 until he died in 1945) that "boundaries are made by men and can be changed by men". In this light, refugees should live in Cameroon without fear, even though discrimination at the level of resource allocation do exists they should feel at home and in return become participants in developmental projects both at their destination and country of origin and guarantee their fundamental human rights. The next section delves into the root causes of Central African Republic and Nigerian refugees in Cameroon.

1.1.1 The Central African Republic instability and refugee issues in Cameroon.

Central African Republic being a former French colony had inherited colonial national borders. The 1960s were marked by political insecurity, leading to violence, banditry, rebellion and successive overthrow of government by the minority Muslim Séléka coalition with majority Christian Anti-Balaka. Although the Séléka was officially disbanded in September 2013, they continued clashing with Anti-Balaka forces thereby generating strong inter-communal tensions, religion violation, societal fractures, and collective fears, reviving the traumatic memories of the pre-colonial era such as slave trade. The most recent crisis began in 2013 with the Séléka power grab, which “marked a fundamental reversal of CAR’s traditional political landscape with a minority Muslim population taking over the mantle of power for the first time since independence from the French in to 1960.

Today, the country is mostly controlled by criminal armed groups struggling among themselves to appropriate the country’s resources (Escoffier et al. 2014). This insecurity mainly affects the borders areas and the neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon sharing about 797 kilometres border with the CAR, stretching from eastern Cameroon and western CAR, and this contributed to increasing influx of CAR refugees in Cameroon coupled with their historical, societal, and geographical links which both countries. In mid-May 2014, the UNHCR estimated that close to 359,834 Central Africans had fled to neighbouring countries as refuge while 554,800, mostly Muslim, were internally displaced.

In the first six months of the year 2014, 121,000 refugees had fled to neighbouring countries including Chad, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan. Given that the border between CAR and Chad was officially closed by Chadian President Idriss Deby on May 12, 2014, this led to increased inflow in the number of CAR refugees in Cameroon seeking refuge. Accordingly, the UNHCR estimates approximately 192,000 refugees had fled to Cameroon by mid-May 2014 and the large influx of displaced persons at the Cameroon border had severely outpaced the capacity of aid agencies. In fact, scholars who have studied CAR for long periods of time have argued convincingly that the framing of the 2013-2014 crisis as genocide, ethnic cleansing, or interreligious in nature runs the risk of oversimplification of victim versus perpetrator to justify

foreign military intervention, particularly by French and other European forces thus, evidence of the fundamental root causes.

From the above historical information, the aim of this study was to investigate theoretically on how effective pedagogical approach for teaching sustainable development on the economic skills on the economic self -efficiency of refugees and in Cameroon are articulated on several educational policies put in place by both the Government and UNHCR. This is based on the migration argument that refugees or migrants placed pressure on the provision of basic social services such as health, education, housing, environmental degradation by cutting down trees for firewood and fuelled tensions over access of limited arable (cultivable) land with the host communities.

According to UNICEF's country reports on education and the World Bank Education sector analyses for Central Africa, educational systems in Cameroon and the Central African Republic have some similarities but also notable differences. Just like the French educational system in Cameroon, it is divided into primary, secondary, and higher education with similar curriculum and French as official language. Both countries face similar challenges in terms of access and the quality of education, limited access to education in rural areas. That major difference is seen at the level of enrolment as CAR has lower enrolment rates compared to Cameroon. This is further accentuated by the disruptions in education caused by the conflicts and instability in the country. Such knowledge would incite one to assume that there is a probability of higher rate of illiteracy rate not only among the young refugees but also with the adult refugees.

1.1.2 The Boko Haram conflict

The name stems from the terrorist organisation based in north-eastern Nigeria that has been active since the early 2000s. The group's name translates to "Western education is forbidden," reflecting their opposition to western influence and education. They have been responsible for numerous attacks, including bombings, kidnappings, and other acts of violence, targeting both civilians and security forces in Nigeria and neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. These attacks including attacks on schools, abductions of students and destruction of educational infrastructure have greatly affected the educational system. As a result of the insecurity caused by these conflicts, many Nigerians have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries, including Cameroon. This situation has put pressure on the host country –

Cameroon and other partners to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees who are fleeing the conflict area in terms of shelter, healthcare, and education of both countries. In Cameroon the sudden increase in the population has placed a great pressure on the already strained education infrastructure, leading to overcrowded classrooms and limited resources.

1.2 Contextualisation and evolution of local integration policy in the context of Cameroon's government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

This sub-heading reflects on the first objectives raised in this study. Shortly after the UN was formed, the international community introduced conventions and policies to offer adequate protection to refugees (The Inter-Agency Standing Committee of 1999, p. 4; UNHCR, 2010, p. 2). This could be traced to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has since been the subject of study by many scholars and policymakers. These legal instruments which set out the evolution of integration policy adopted by the GRC are: the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention, and the 2005 refugees law of Cameroon which remain the key international, regional and national human rights instruments for protecting the rights of refugees in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular. These instruments guarantee the rights of all refugees including inter alia the right to housing, work and education, access to the courts, freedom of movement within the territory and the right of refugees to be issued identity and travel documents to live decent lives.

Jastram and Achiron 2001 outline two conditions that states must meet to effectively protect the rights of refugees based on the above instruments: The first is adopting domestic refugee policies that comply with international standards to provide a basis for the protection of refugees. The second is incorporating international human rights laws into domestic legislation, specifically in critical areas where the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention are silent. As such, the 1997 UNHCR Executive Committee, encourages states to promote initiatives that offer durable solutions to ensure that local standards conform to the international normative standards for protection that are also responsive to particular nationals.

Furthermore, to fully understand the evolution of local integration policy in Cameroon, it is worth noting that, the Republic of Cameroon as of today has passed through the hands of different colonial masters. The Germans (ruled as a colony from 1884 – 1915), French and British from 1916 to 1960

and 1961 respectively following the defeat of the Germans in Cameroon. Thus, the evolution of integration policy in Cameroon is very complex based on the differences in the culture and political thinking of the three powers which ruled it. Britain and France ruled their respective portions of Cameroon as mandated territories of the League of Nations from 1919 to 1945. After the Second World War, France governed her portion as a trusteeship territory of the United Nations Organization until it was granted independence in 1960; Britain administered her portion as a trusteeship territory of the United Nations until 1961 when it was granted independence. The research has endeavoured to present a quick review of the political evaluation of Cameroon as objectively as possible, but will lay more emphasis on the policy framework under “French Cameroon” since it has been politically more stable and active in hosting CAR refugees than the British Cameroons with the atrocities of civil war.

1.3 The policy of local integration by Cameroon's government

Cameroon is a country well noted for her hospitality, has maintained an “Open Door Policy” for refugees and asylum seekers over the years. Despite some difficulties, the government has guaranteed a stable environment in most of the French regions that enable the successful refugee integration policy responses from implementing UN affiliated organisations like UNHCR, UNICEF, partnering with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like PLAN INTERNATIONAL Cameroon, AFROGIVENESS, DEDI, AIHRP, The Trauma Centre Cameroon. This has made it a natural pull factor for many African refugees fleeing wars, civil unrest and persecution from their countries to Cameroon. In response, the GRC has adopted different laws, decrees, commissions and orders to regulate and protect migrants found within her geographical jurisdiction. A great example is the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 African Union protocol and the 2005 refugee law (Law No. 2005/006 on 27 July 2005) which stands as the legal framework for refugee status determination and protection, leading to the formulation and creation of different refugee policies, especially on camps construction, education and healthcare. This legacy has led Cameroon to be recognized within Africa as one of the countries hosting the largest number of refugees from different countries given its strategic geographical location, qualified by this study as a “Safe heaven” guided by the principle of living together and a “mix blessing” for refugees and host communities in resource allocation.

Primarily, mapping out a strategy to build an integration policy for refugees in Cameroon supposes, therefore, that its various characteristics as per this work and the questions raised are also addressed. The focus here is not just to examine their integration processes but the conditions upon which they are being integrated within the host community. From this, two requirements are identified: first, an individual initiative to consider original countries as having the same rights and duties to take off the challenges of self-reliance.

Secondly, the capacity of the government to consider all citizens living within her territory on equal terms to respect the differences and positive particularities of individuals and groups. As per this study, the GRC has three main domains of policy framework for equitable integration of refugees (political, socio-cultural and economic). The reason behind this classification is the fact that; the political policy set out the domain for the reception of different refugees within its national territory. In other words, if the political policy does not create an acceptable environment for the presence of refugees and other migrants, the other factor will be irrelevant. This is evidence in the below policies where migrants in Cameroon live together with the national population socially and culturally to foster the level of integration and development.

The education of refugees in Yaoundé as well as other regions of Cameroon is guided by a combination of national policies, international agreements, and initiatives aimed at ensuring access to quality education for refugee populations. Some key policies and framework combined that guide education of refugees in Cameroon include:

According to “Cameroon National Education Plan (2017 – 2027) which advocates for inclusive education policies”; Cameroon’s educational policy for adult refugees is shaped by the country’s broader commitment to inclusive education and the protection of displaced population, in accordance with international frameworks. The policy aims at providing adult refugees with access to basic literacy, vocational training and skills developed to enhance their integration, self-reliance and socio-economic participation. This is done in partnership with international organisations such as UNICEF in “UNICEF Cameroon Country Program document (2018 – 2022) that supports non-formal education and life skill trainings for refugees and host community adults”, as well as UNHCR, PLAN Cameroon and other NGOs, and meant for adults who missed formal schooling due to displacement. These programs often cover trades like carpentry, tailoring,

agriculture and small business management which enables them gain economic independence. These programs also incorporate language training, primarily in English and French (official languages) to facilitate integration into local communities and access to other services. This policy is also implemented through the collaboration of these partners to provide funding, curriculum support, teacher training and learning materials designed for adult learning (Kouam, 2019, “Education of refugees in Cameroon”).

The National Education Policy: Cameroon’s national education policy outlines the government’s commitment to providing education for all, including refugees and other vulnerable populations. The policy emphasises inclusive education, quality teaching and learning, and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol: Cameroon is a signatory to both the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which provide a legal framework for the protection and rights of refugees, including access to education. These international agreements outline the rights of refugees to education and call on host countries to ensure that refugee children have access to quality education on an equal basis with nationals.

The Global Compact on Refugees: Cameroon has endorsed the Global Compact on Refugees, a United Nations – led initiative that aims to improve the response to refugee situations by promoting burden and responsibility-sharing, enhancing access to education and supporting the inclusion of refugees in national systems.

Partnership with International Organisations and NGOs: Cameroon collaborated with international organisations, non – governmental organisations, and humanitarian agencies working in the field of refugee education to provide support and resources, and technical assistance for education programs for refugees.

Local Initiatives and Community Engagement: local initiatives and community – based programs play a crucial role in supporting the education of refugees. Community organisations, schools, and civil society groups often work closely with refugee communities to provide educational support, and language training, and integration activities.

To sum it up, the education of refugees in Cameroon is guided by a combination of national policies, international agreements and collaborative efforts with local and international partners to ensure access to quality education for refugee populations and promote their inclusion and integration into the national education.

Contrary to popular opinion, a visiting refugee camp or settlement is frequently an inspiring experience. While they undoubtedly suffer a great deal of hardship and trauma, they also show tremendous determination to make the best of a bad situation and also prepare for the day when they can resume a normal way of life. This determination is seen most clearly in the very high value which they place on all forms of education. In an era characterised by rapid environmental change and social inequality, the concept of sustainable development has emerged as a crucial paradigm in addressing global challenges. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscore the need for holistic education systems that foster critical thinking, problem – solving abilities and skills essential for sustainable living. This is particularly salient for marginalised populations, such as refugees who often face unique barriers to education and economic empowerment. Experience shows that once refugees have met their basic needs for food, water and shelter, their next top priority is education.

The notion of Education for refugees needs however to meet the Local Integration Policy of Cameroon which aims at; creating a sustainable, inclusive education system that supports both refugees and local children, ensuring they have access to the necessary and conducive learning environment. It also emphasizes on providing equitable access to quality education for all within the National Education system through: inclusion in National schools, supportive infrastructure and resources, teacher training and psychosocial support, financial assistance and fee waivers, and community outreach and awareness. With this knowledge in mind, the main preoccupation here are the lapses that occurred at the level of application of the integration policy framework put in place by the Cameroon Government and the UNHCR. While the outline of the integration policy framework is ambitious and expensive in terms of political, cultural, and socio-economic integration of refugees, the applicability shows a contradiction as they continue facing difficulties integrating within the host communities. Some problems faced by the refugees that hinder them from integrating the local communities include discrimination and stigma, financial constraints,

trauma and mental health problems, land and housing, livelihoods thus limiting their economic independence.

This research explores the intersection of education and sustainable development, focusing the acquisition of skills among refugees living in Yaoundé. It aims to identify the current educational practices, assess the effectiveness of existing programs, and propose actionable strategies for enhancing the skills sets necessary for sustainable development. By examining the unique contexts and experiences of refugees, this study seeks to contribute to the development of inclusive educational frameworks that promote resilience, social cohesion and sustainable livelihoods, ultimately benefitting both refugees and the local community. Through this investigation, there is hope to shed more light on the vital role of education in empowering displaced population and fostering a more sustainable future for all.

This work also finds out how the increasing number of refugees in Cameroon is being articulated in the policy framework (statutes, laws and stated policies). This however holds on to the fact that the local integration policy framework in Cameroon put in place by UNHCR, the Cameroon Government, alongside its implementing and operational partners conforms to international standards for refugee protection, despite some challenges encountered at the level of applicability as experiences simply points out the gaps that exist from the intentions of the policies, hence, requiring other forms of research methods such as the empirical other than the theoretical approach used in this work.

1.4 Problem statement

The problems identified in this research topic include the barriers faced by adult refugees in accessing quality education, the lack of personalised programs to meet their specific needs, language barriers, and social integration issues within the host community. These challenges hinder adult refugees from acquiring the skills necessary to actively contribute to sustainable development initiatives and improve their overall well-being.

In spite of the importance of education in equipping refugees in Cameroon with sustainable development skills (ESD), refugees in Cameroon and adult refugees to be specific face significant barriers in accessing quality education and training programs that specifically target the acquisition

of sustainable development skills. The topic of education for the acquisition of sustainable development skills among adult refugees in Mbanlolo – Yaoundé II, addresses the crucial issue of empowering adult refugees with the necessary skills to support sustainable development in their community. It aims to investigate the challenges and opportunities faced by adult refugees from Nigeria and Central African Republic in accessing education that equips them with essential skills for sustainable livelihood.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the current state of education for sustainable development of adult refugees in Cameroon so as to identify and develop innovative educational strategies to enhance their access to quality education and address the specific challenges faced and empower them with the necessary skills for sustainable livelihoods and community resilience.

1.5 Research Objectives

The main/general and specific objective of this research can be outlined as follows:

1.5.1 The General Objectives

The main/general objective is to investigate the effectiveness of educational programs in equipping Adult refugees in Yaoundé II and precisely the Mbankolo neighbourhood with the necessary skills for sustainable development. To be more specific, this research will access the current educational opportunities available to adult refugees living in Yaoundé, focusing on the acquisition of sustainable development skills; identify the specific sustainable development skills that are most necessary and valued by adult refugees' in Yaoundé, for their long – term well – being and integration;

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research aim to establish the link between education, sustainable development acquisition and the empowerment of adult refugees in the Mbankolo – Yaoundé II, subdivision. These objectives are:

Identify the specific challenges faced by adult refugees in Yaoundé in acquiring Sustainable Development skills through education.

Explore the existing educational opportunities available to adult refugees and assess their effectiveness in equipping them with relevant skills.

Examine the relationship between education, sustainable development skills acquisition, and the empowerment of adult refugees.

Propose strategies and interventions to enhance educational opportunities for adult refugees and support their acquisition of sustainable development skills.

Ultimately, the study seeks to inform policy-making and intervention strategies to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of adult refugees, fostering their integration and active participation in sustainable development efforts with in their community.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the problem statement of the study, its aims and the objectives, this work seeks to answer the following main and specific research questions with the aid of the independent and dependent variables mentioned above.

1.6.1 Main Research Question

How does adult refugee education affect the acquisition of Sustainable Development Skills in Mbankolo – Yaoundé II subdivision?

1.6.2 Specific Research Questions

In what ways do the various identified problems faced by adult refugees in education affect the acquisition of sustainable development skills?

How do the causes of the various education challenges faced by adult refugees affect the development sustainable skills?

How costly these education problems faced by the adult refugees have affected sustainable development skills?

1.7 Statement of the Hypotheses

The research questions above gave rise to the following general and specific hypotheses:

1.7.1 The general hypothesis

The general hypothesis states that “Education that meets the specific needs and context of adult refugees positively influences the acquisition of sustainable development skills leading to improved socio-economic outcomes”.

1.7.2 The specific hypotheses include:

Adult refugees who receive targeted and quality education for sustainable development skills show increased levels of self – sufficiency, resilience and economic empowerment, and also improve integration into the local community and society.

The practical application of sustainable development skills is greater among adult refugees who have undergone educational training compared to those who have not.

Barriers such as language, cultural differences and lack of resources will negatively impact the question of sustainable development skills among refugees in Yaoundé.

1.8 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is the period in which the study was carried out, which are the time and the area where the research was carried out. The scope of the study comprises of the geographical scope, the time scope and the thematic scope.

1.8.1 Justification of the site

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) July 2024 figures, Cameroon is hosting over 472.000 refugees, primarily from the Central African Republic (73%) and Nigeria (26%). Yaoundé, which is the capital city welcomes about 14 246 refugees (visited on 19/02/2025). The site was chosen for this study was the Mbankolo neighbourhood, in Yaoundé II sub division for the following reason:

High refugee population and proximity to the target Population: Yaoundé hosts a significant number of refugees from several neighbouring countries such as Chad, Sudan, Niger, Nigeria, CAR. The Mbankolo, Yaoundé 2 neighbourhood is a home to about 857 refugees. More than 53 per cent of them are from Central African Republic and about 23 per cent are Nigerians (visited on

14/02/2025). Thus, the researcher has access to a relevant and diverse population as well as proximity which makes it easier to access and engage with the target population for data collection. It also ensures that the findings are grounded in the experiences of the most impacted.

Socio-economic Dynamics: the city's social and economic landscape, including its challenges and opportunities for refugees, is crucial for understanding the barriers and facilitators to acquiring sustainable development skills. This can reveal insights on how local factors impact refugees' educational experiences.

Existing educational infrastructures: Yaoundé 2 hosts a few educational institutions and NGO's that are focused on skills development and vocational training like AFROGIVENESS Movement that offers literacy, language and skills development trainings to the refugees. Conducting research in such an environment allows the exploring of existing programs and partnerships, providing context for how education is currently offered or perceived by the refugee community.

Access to stakeholders and potential partnership: this site offers access to educational authorities, NGOs and refugees support organisations. Engaging with these groups can inform the researcher and facilitate collaboration for potential solutions or interventions aimed at improving educational access for refugees.

Research feasibility: considering the logistical aspect, Yaoundé is relatively accessible for this research in terms of transportation, communication and engagement with participants. This feasibility ensures that data collection is conducted efficiently and effectively.

Ethical considerations: Ensuring that the research is conducted ethically and with the well-being of the participants in mind is crucial. Conducting the research where the target population resides can facilitate ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for cultural norms.

1.8.2 Presentation of the site

Yaoundé II is a district commune in the urban community of Yaoundé, Mfoundi division of the Centre region of Cameroon. Its capital is the Tsinga district.

It extends to the centre – west of the northern part of the city, to the west of Yaoundé I and to the northeast of Yaoundé VII. The council is drained in its southern part by the Abiergue River. In the centre the council extends over the eastern part of Mount Messa and further north, it includes Mount Mbankolo and Mount Fébé. At the foot of this mountain is the city of Mbankolo.

Mbankolo is a neighbourhood situated on the slopes of mount Mbankolo, which is one of the seven hills surrounding the city and also historically known for its strategic location and the refuge used by Ewondo Chief Omgba Bissogo during the German expansion.

Although Mbankolo is famous lately for its October 2023 landslide that caused significant damage and casualties, it is a vibrant and diverse neighbourhood situated in the heart of Yaoundé 2, Cameroon. This community is characterised by its richness, friendly residents and a mix of urban and rural landscape.

It is a melting pot of cultures, with a notable population of adult refugees from Nigeria and Central African Republic. These individuals have sought refuge in this community, facing various challenges related to displacement, integration, and access to educational opportunities.

With the advent of the refugees, some NGOs have also spun up to help support and accompany them as well as help them integrate into the host communities. One of such NGOs is the AFROGIVENESS Movement. Its name is coined from Africa and Forgiveness. It is a peace education movement in Cameroon that offers learning opportunities, psychological support and mental health to traumatised refugees and survivors of the conflicts and persecutions, promoting healing through forgiveness and art and transforming beneficiaries into agents of peace. This is done through non formal education and training sessions, workshops, trauma and counselling program and also the health care with the collaboration of UNHCR, PLAN Cameroon and other partners.

1.8.3 Geographical location and historical background of the site

Mbankolo is located in the northwest of Yaoundé commune and borders quarters like Tsinga, Bastos and Fébé. It lies on the slopes of Mount Mbankolo which reaches a height of about 1096 metres. The area is characterised by a complex and uneven relief with varying altitudes from low (708m) to very high (1160).

Historically, the name “Mbankolo” comes from the Ewondo phrase “Mba Nkoló,” meaning “the beautiful mountain”. During the German expansion, the Ewondo chief sought refuge on the mountain where used Mount Mbankolo as a strategic advantage point in order to plan resistance against the German occupiers, due to its panoramic views.

This area is known for its natural resources, including the presence of a dam on the Mbankolo hills; which was partly responsible for the landslide disaster in 2023. The tragedy was triggered by the heavy rains and the collapse of the dam. This resulted in the loss of lives and the destruction of homes in the neighbourhood. This area has also been the victim of spontaneous land occupation and urban development, with poor urban dwellers and migrants from other regions settling there.

1.9 Time frame

This piece of work was carried out within 6 months. That is, the researcher did her internship for one month which enabled her to acquire more experience on the study. The entire research took 4 months to be completed.

1.10 Limitation of the study

By concentrating on the perspectives of adult refugees living in Yaoundé as a means of finding durable solutions to their plights in Cameroon, the study limits its boundary historically, geographically and in terms of subject matter, and brings out different domains through which refugees are integrated into the local communities. The study runs from 2014 to 2025, a timeframe when Cameroon witnessed one of its highest massive influxes of refugees across its national territory. The choice of this spatial limitation is further justified by the key role of formulating and implementing policy either directly or indirectly by the GRC and UNHCR to regulate the presence of displaced persons found within the national territory. The selection of GRC and UNHCR should not be understood as choosing the best policy practices promoter but to show different interesting approaches adopted in implementing and evaluating local integration framework in Cameroon.

Although Yaoundé, which is the political capital of Cameroon, hosts close to 14286 refugees and asylum seekers according to report from UNHCR of February 2024, from about 42 countries including Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Central African Republic, Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Liberia, Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, (source: UNHCR,

Government) the study specifically concentrated on adult refugees living in Yaoundé 2 subdivision, of the Mfoundi Division in the Centre Region of Cameroon and, the focus group was made up adult refugees from Central African Republic and Nigeria (with a population of approximately 6525). This helps to narrow down the scope of the study and provide a more focused analysis of the educational experiences of refugees in a specific context.

This piece of work also looks at certain sustainable development skills such as environmental conservation, entrepreneurship, and vocational training. This helps deepen the analysis and provide more detailed insights into particular skill set.

In line with the organisation of this study, the first and most important thought potential readers reading this piece of work should have in mind is that, this piece of work is different from other related texts written on local integration as durable solutions to the crises of displaced persons. This is because it does not just focus on economic integration but stands on the fact that, before economic integration takes place, political and socio-cultural integration must first hold. These connect with Jeff Crisp's ideology of durable solutions to refugee's crisis. Also, it's not just about the research methods of systematic data collection and analysis from political, socio-cultural and economic domain but about the entire research process from the beginning to the end. The research methodology was one phase in the research process and possibly the most structured because it brought out some privileges like having direct contact with some Cameroonian University colleagues, lecturers and free access to campus library. In addition, this work is concise and compacted by design and writing, a reason why it focuses on essential concepts of education, sustainable development and local integration policy upon which this study is based (political, socio-cultural and economic domain).

1.11 The significance of the study

This study holds significant importance in the current global context, proving education for acquiring sustainable development skills to adult refugees is important as:

Firstly, it eases integration into their new societies and communities. By learning these skills, they can contribute positively to their new environment and become self-sufficient, reducing their reliance on aid and support.

Secondly, education empowers adult refugees to build a better future for themselves and their families. By acquiring skills related to sustainable development, such as agriculture, learning trades, renewable energy, resource management and entrepreneurship, they can create opportunities for economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Additionally, education helps adult refugees develop critical thinking, problem – solving, and communication skills that are essential for navigating the challenges they may face in their new environment. By equipping them with these skills, they can better advocate for their rights, access opportunities, and participate in decision – making processes that affect their lives.

1.12 Justification of the study

This research is crucial and timely and justified for several compelling reasons:

Addressing the needs of a vulnerable Population: adult refugees often face significant barriers to education and employment due to their status and language barriers, cultural differences and trauma from displacement. This research can identify the specific educational needs and challenges, ensuring that educational programs are designed to effectively meet these needs. By focusing on this vulnerable group, this work contributes to social justice and equity in education.

Promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The United Nations has highlighted the importance of sustainable development as global priority, with specific goals aimed at promoting education, reducing inequalities and fostering sustainable communities. By equipping adult refugees in Yaoundé with sustainable development skills, this research supports the achievement of SDGs, particularly Goal 4 which talks of quality education and Goal 10 that promotes Reduced Inequalities. The findings can inform and aid local and national policies to better integrate refugees into sustainable development initiatives.

Enhancing Economic Empowerment and Social integration: education plays a vital role in the economic empowerment of refugees, allowing them to acquire skills that can lead to employment or self – employment. This research looks at how educational programs can facilitate the acquisition of skills that are relevant to the local economy, thereby promoting self - sufficiency and reducing dependency on aid and by extension fostering social integration and also help them contribute positively to their host communities.

Informing policy and Practice: the findings can improve some insights for policy makers, educators and NGOs working with refugees. By evaluating existing programs and identifying best practices, the research can lead to improved program design and implementation. This is particularly relevant in a context like Yaoundé where resources may be limited, and targeted interventions can maximise impact.

Building resilience and community development; SDS contribute to building resilience in both individuals and communities. By equipping adult refugees with such skills, the research can help foster community development and empower refugees to become active participants in their communities. This is important not only for personal growth but also for the broader social cohesion and development in Yaoundé.

Contributing to academic Knowledge: this research adds to the growing body of literature on refugee education, sustainable development and adult learning. It can provide a theoretical framework for understanding the intersection of these fields and offer empirical data that can be referenced in further studies. Understanding the educational dynamics of refugees in urban contexts like Yaoundé can fill an important gap in existing research.

Encouraging Life Long Learning: promoting education for sustainable development among adult refugees aligns the concept of lifelong learning. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, the research can encourage refugees to pursue further education and skill development, enhancing their adaptability and resilience in a rapid changing world.

1.13 Definition of terms

For better understanding of the key concepts on which this work dwells almost entirely, their definitions are of prime importance. The key words are refugee, local integration, international protection and policy framework, education for sustainable development, sustainable development skills; which little has been done by different scholars and policy-makers on the aforementioned notions concerning displaced persons' situation in Cameroon. Firstly, a fundamental question which could be asked is who is a displaced person and why do they need protection in Cameroon?

According to (2019), IOM Glossary on Migration and from a general stand point, a displaced person or persons in times of crisis is someone or group of persons who have been forced or obliged

to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, either across an international border or within a state, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalised violence, violation of human rights or natural or man-made disasters. These individuals are often referred to as internally displaced persons (IDPs) if they remain within their own country's borders, as opposed to refugees who cross international borders seeking safety. In the European Union (EU) context, they are referred to as either third-country nationals or stateless persons. According to the United Nations Human Rights office of the High Commissioner, once persons have been displaced, they retain and enjoy the same rights as other civilians to the various protections provided by international humanitarian law through human rights (economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights) humanitarian needs (food, medicine, shelter), stability and security in the host communities, long-term solutions in rebuilding their lives and legal obligations under international laws, including the right to basic humanitarian assistance such the right to be protected from physical violence, the right to education, freedom of movement and residence as they are often victims of violence and human right abuses. Thus, ensuring the protection of displaced persons is not only a moral and legal imperative but also essential for promoting peace, security, and sustainable development. In addition, displaced persons also have the right to assistance from host and implementing partners in local integration, voluntary, dignified, safe return, recovering lost property and possessions. Accordingly, "When restitution is not possible, the Guiding Principles call for compensation or just reparation" (Principles 28-30). Thus, the Government of Cameroon and the UNHCR exist to protect and assist IDPs, asylum seekers and refugees (in this context) who have been affected by forced displacement and asylum seekers. That notwithstanding, both can be considered as displaced persons.

Refugees

The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol defined refugee as any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it. This gives the legal definition of

refugee, internationally recognized and used in determining whether a person fulfils the criteria for being a refugee, entitles to protection and integration assistance.

There are other regional and national instruments which expanded the definition of a refugee. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, adopted in 1969, recall the definition of refugee to provide a more contextual consideration specifically of every person who owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality, This means that persons fleeing civil disturbances, widespread violence and war are entitled to claim the status of refugee in states that are parties to this Convention whether or not they have a well-founded fear of persecution.

In addition, the Cartagena Declaration adopted in 1984 by a group of government representatives, academics and distinguished men from Latin America in Cartagena, Colombia added new flesh to the refugee definition. Among other things, the declaration recommended that the definition of refugee used in the region should include, in addition to those fitting the 1951 Convention; “persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order». Nonetheless, some scholar like Andrew E. Shacknove considered refugee as “a person who has crossed an international frontier because of a well-founded fear of persecution” (A. E.1985, p.274). The reciprocation of the 1951 conventions and 1967 protocol within the national context of Cameroon identified and recaptured refugees as in essence: any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country on his nationality and is unable or owing to such fears is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former residence.

Local integration

Integration in Latin is a word that refers to when people become part of a whole, a group or a society and are accepted by them without losing their identity or specific nature. According to the

UNHCR, local integration is a "durable solution with the two-way process which requires, on the one hand, the preparedness on the part of the refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity and on the other hand the host society and public institutions required to have the welcoming attitude and to meet the needs of a diverse population. The 1951 convention qualified it as “a process of mutual adaptation between a host society and immigrants, committing themselves to a common goal, where the contracting states give them the possibility of facilitating their assimilation and naturalization of refugees”. Among the few scholars who have also wrestled with the definition of local integration of refugees, Kuhlman referred to it as “The connotation that separate parts, while being incorporated into a larger whole without losing their individuality where a lump of sugar is not integrated into a cup of coffee”

Tom Kuhlman, (1991. p.9). gives us the knowledge of understanding that no matter how integrative a refugee might be within the host country, he/she should not forget their cultural identity(origin), for they will one day return, based on the assertion of “home is home”. In addition, Alison Strang, et al, have reiterated in several instances as “the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity” (Alison Strang and Alastair Ager. 2010, p.2). Nonetheless, Jeff Crisp's definition of 1997, recalled in 2004 to which most of the concepts applied in this work focuses; defined local integration as a process composed of three inter-twined dimensions, namely legal, economic and socio cultural.

Firstly, local integration is a legal process, whereby refugees attain a wider range of rights in the host state,

Secondly, it is an economic process of establishing sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to that of the host community,

Lastly, it is a social and cultural process of adaptation and acceptance that enables refugees to contribute to the social life of the host community or country and live without fear of discrimination as a complex process in which legal, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions are inextricably interlinked. (Crisp Jeff 2004, pp.4-5).

Based on this study, local integration can be defined as the process of insertion of displaced persons (Refugees) into the host society and accepted by their host communities irrespective of their ethnicity. In essence, it is a dynamic process intended to harmonize individual characteristics in a coherent whole body without discrimination of any sort, pooling several common values while preserving their specificities or their peculiarities. Thus, the definition of local integration cuts across different policy framework and various aspects of displaced persons' lives through a wide range of data collected specially to investigate if they are either integrated into the economic, socio-cultural and political spheres of the society, the discrimination they faced in resources allocation while carrying out their daily activities and finally how the public articulate them in the policy framework.

Sustainable Development versus Sustainable Development Skills

Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Skills are two concepts that are related but distinct within a broader framework of promoting a sustainable future. Sustainable development is a holistic approach to economic, social and environmental well-being that seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the case of displaced population, it involves creating long – term solutions that address their immediate needs while also promoting self – reliance and well – being in the future. This can include; providing access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and social services as well as supporting their integration into host communities. This also involves ensuring their rights are protected, promoting social cohesion, and fostering economic stability in the areas where they reside. By focusing on sustainable development, we can help refugees rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their communities. Thus, Education for acquiring sustainable development skills which is also termed Education for Sustainable development is originally UNESCO's response to the urgent challenges facing our planet. ESD encompasses a range of competencies and abilities that enable individuals and organisations to contribute effectively to sustainable development initiatives. In the context of our study with refugees, this plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to build a sustainable future for themselves and their communities. Some key skills that can be integrated into the ESD programs for refugees include:

Environmental literacy: Teaching refugees about environmental issues, conservation and sustainable resource management can help them understand the importance of protecting the environment for future generation.

Social entrepreneurship: Providing training in social entrepreneurship can equipped refugees with the skills to start their own sustainable business, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the economic development of their communities,

Social and emotional skills: building empathy, communication skill and teaching resilience-building skills, such as problem-solving conflict resolutions and stress management, can help refugees cope with the challenges they face and adapt to challenging circumstances in their new environment,

Vocational skills: Training refugees in practical skills such as carpentry, sewing, plumbing or sustainable agriculture practices for food production and nutrition can help them earn a living, improve their food security, reduce dependency on external aid, and promote self-efficiency.

Digital literacy: providing refugees with digital literacy skills can enhance their access to information, education and employment opportunities enabling them to participate more fully in the digital economy and society,

Language proficiency: being able to communicate effectively in the language of the host community is essential for accessing education, employment and social services.

By incorporating these ESD skills into education programs for refugees, it can empower them to build sustainable livelihoods, foster social inclusion, and contribute to the overall well-being of their communities and the wider society.

Sustainable Development is considered a broad concept that refers to the idea of meeting the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It encompasses economic, social and environmental dimensions and aims to balance these aspects to ensure long term well-being for all. It is the guiding principles of our approach to development. Sustainable Development Goals on the other hand are concrete, measurable targets that countries and stakeholders are encouraged to towards achieving by 2030. SDGs cover a wider range of issues and sectors including education health gender equality, clean energy, and sustainable cities, thus

reflecting the interconnected nature of sustainable development. In other words, sustainable development is the overarching concept that guides our approach to development while the Sustainable Development Goals are the specific targets and indicators that help to operationalize and measure progress towards sustainable development at a global level. In this light, SD will be used in the context of SDGs in this work, and more insights into the concept of SDGs will be seen in the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the theories and approaches of learning and of sustainable development which this study will rely on and also review some works carried out in the domain education and sustainable development.

As an educational research study, this work explored the increasing discussions within the political space that integration policy of Education should address the host's society problems, one scholar pointed it out that "the current integration policies of education tend to remain focused exclusively on migrants, a discourse which also remains present in the societal narrative" (Foroutan, 2015). The position of this notion in Cameroon however remains observable in the traditional migration research which tends to focus on migrants irrespective of other factors listed above. Partly in response to this inadequacy, the notion of local integration and its implementation through educational policy should therefore be considerably reframed, and it is here that the post migrant approach appears relevant. Hence, there is a need, both theoretical and practical, to address and analyse the notion of local integration policy by taking a post migrant approach. In addition, the theory of implicit burden sharing and comparative advantage was used to further explain and identify Cameroon's position with respect to the said educational policy framework. In all, the systematic theoretical research method was adopted to review policy documents put in place by the GRC and UNHCR, which answers questions raised.

2.1 The Theoretical Background

Theories are meant to guide the research while research provides the strength for theories, Amin (2005). Theories help us to understand the phenomenon with which it deals, predict the behaviour of a system under study and provides a sound framework for organising and interpreting results. According to Kerlinger, (1973) cited in Amin (2005), a theory is a predisposition that predicts a system view of specifying the relationship amongst variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomenon. As educators, there are many theoretical approaches to take towards refugees and internally displaced persons' education. These approaches are based on sets of

assumptions that make the base on education, experience and other factors. Acquiring sustainable development skills can rely on some of following theories and tenets:

2.1.1 The Theory of Equity

Grounded by John Stacy Adams in 1963, it is a foundational concept in social, psychological and organisational behaviour that addresses perceptions of fairness in social exchanges, with the understanding that different individuals require different levels of support to achieve the same results. It explains how people perceive fairness in relationships and exchanges. This implies comparing the ratio of their inputs (effort, skills, and time invested) to outputs (rewards, recognition opportunities and outcomes) against those of others. However, perceived inequality leads to motivation to restore balance, either by changing inputs, outputs, or perception. This makes it a key framework for understanding motivation, social justice, and fairness in various contexts such as work places, education, and social interactions. Thus, it stands in contrast to the concept of equality, where everyone receives the same resources regardless of their needs. the theory is highly relevant in understanding motivation, satisfaction, and behaviour in various contexts including education and social services.

Using the theory of Equity in this context, allows the researcher to:

- Interpret attitudes and behaviours of the learners towards the educational programs offered based on sense of fairness or unfairness.
- Explain disparities in skill acquisition and participation rates by linking them to perceived inequalities.
- Inform recommendations for policy and program designs to ensure equitable educational opportunities that support sustainable development goals.

For refugee education this means:

In the context of adult refugees in Yaoundé, applying equity theory means looking at both designing educational systems and or programs (that are culturally sensitive, inclusive and responsive to specific needs) that account for unique barriers and provide designed, fair opportunities to acquire sustainable skills for refugees, and offering valuable insights into how perceptions of fairness affect motivation, engagement and learning outcomes. Thus, this approach

not only fosters individual empowerment but also contributes to broader social inclusion and sustainable development goals among refugees and host communities.

2.1.2 The Stakeholder Theory

It is a foundational concept in organisational management and social sciences. Introduced by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, it posits that an organisation's success depends on how well it manages the relationships with all group that have a "stake" in its activities. It contrasts with the traditional shareholder – focused view, arguing that businesses; in this case, educational programs, must create value for a broader array of stakeholders.

Some key concepts of the stakeholder theory that make it highly valuable include:

- Identifying and engaging stakeholders who can affect or are affected by the project. In this context, it requires the involvement of multiple actors which includes the refugees themselves, educational institutions, NGOs, government agencies, local communities, donors and international bodies. Once identified, stakeholders must be actively engaged through continuous communication and dialogue. Engagement should not be a one-time event but an on going process.
- Conflicting interests and needs may stem up among stakeholders in terms of differences in priorities, such as resource allocation, curricular relevance, cultural sensitivity, and long term sustainability. Thus, balancing interests in this theory recognises that different groups have diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. This has as aim to balance interests for mutual benefits rather than prioritising one over other.
- Effective collaboration and coordination of educational programs require aligning the goals and contributions of diverse stakeholders to ensure that sustainable development skills are appropriately taught and accessible. This implies that is a central tenet that long term, sustainable success is achieved by creating value for all stakeholders, not just for a selected few (value creation). It leads to better trust and more durable relationships.

In designing education for adult refugees in Cameroon, this theory addresses specific challenges such as:

- a holistic program design: instead of programs developed solely by external aid agencies, a multi-stakeholder approach ensures that training content is relevant and meets the expressed needs of the refugees and host country.
- addressing barriers to access: stakeholder dialogue can identify and mitigate specific obstacles, such as lack of healthcare, financial constraints, and language barriers that disproportionately affect adult learners.

Promoting integration and social cohesion: involving both refugees and host communities in program design and implementation builds trust and ensure that skills training contributes to the mutual benefit of both populations. This can include creating joint entrepreneurship programs or vocational training that reduces competition for jobs.

- ensuring sustainability: by fostering partnerships with local businesses, educational programs can create clear pathways to employment. Involving employers as stakeholders ensures that training corresponds with market demands, which is key for refugees to achieve long-term self-reliance.

This approach is not only more inclusive but also more effective at producing sustainable development skills that lead to long term empowerment and integration for adults.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

This review is concerned with literature relevant to the study as viewed by some institutions and other scholars in relation to the variables of this study which include; adult education “effectiveness, teaching methodology, instructional material, evaluation techniques in one hand and the impact of these on refugee integration and sustainable development (Goals) in the other hand. This section of the chapter deals with work that is related and relevant to this study.

2.2.1 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Conceptual framework of sustainable development skills comes from the United Nations’ SDGs 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goal 4 (quality education) which emphasises the importance of inclusive and adequate quality education and promoting lifelong opportunities for all. For adult refugees, this means access to education that respects their diverse backgrounds and learning needs while helping them acquire skills for employment and social

integration. Dryden-Peterson (2016) highlights that education for refugees is not just a humanitarian response but a fundamental right that supports long-term development and sustainability. SDG 4.7 explicitly mentions Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and global citizenship. This implies inclusive and equitable quality education and also promote lifelong opportunities for all. Sustainable development Goal 8 and 10 equips refugees with vocational skills and knowledge as well as promotes reduced inequalities. According to Ager and Strang (2008) integration through education and employment is vital for refugees. Refugee education falls in line with these as they address the educational needs of adult refugees and ensuring that they have the opportunity to learn, develop skills and build a better future for themselves and their communities. SDG 3 emphasises that education improves health awareness and access to services, which is critical for refugees who often face health challenges. As highlighted by Dryden-Peterson (2016) education programs that integrate health literacy contribute to overall well-being and better life outcomes. Another SDG that is linked to education is Goal 16 which fosters peace, justice and strong institutions. Here, education is seen as a way paver of peaceful coexistence by encouraging understanding and tolerance, supports social inclusion and helps prevent marginalisation which if neglected can lead to conflicts. As noted by UNHCR (2019), education initiatives based on SDG 16 principles help build resilience and empower refugees to participate actively in their communities.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a vital role in promoting the education of adult refugees, aligning its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals. Through advocacy, access to quality education, capacity building, monitoring, and resource mobilisation, UNHCR supports the integration of refugees into host communities and empowers them through education. By focusing on long-life learning opportunities and inclusive education, she also contributes to the broader objectives of sustainable development, ensuring that refugees have skills and knowledge necessary to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to society.

Although specificities or guidelines on adult education (learning) is not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs, the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) leaders would have likely preferred specific mention of “adults” in SDG 4, ALE was included under the “umbrella” of lifelong learning, with mention of adults in four of the SDG 4 aims. This has inadvertently contributed to the invisibility of ALE in this important global declaration of educational goals (Benavot et al. 2022). Thus,

perhaps unsurprisingly, the reception of SDG 4 by adult education scholars could best be described as mixed. Some see SDG 4 speaking directly to and highlighting the importance of adult education in accomplishing its ambitious agenda. This is reflected in Leona English's cautiously optimistic observation: The SDGs make it clear that quality education for all (Goal 4), including adult education, has a key role in achieving the international benchmarks. Thus, the role of adult education has never been clearer. We might say that, globally, adult education is alive and well on the ground and in the formal, non-formal and informal spheres. It is true that adult education is not named in the SDGs. Yet, adult education remains the "invisible friend" of sustainable development (English 2022, p. 20). Some literature suggests that in order to promote the understanding of the role Adult Learning Education (ALE) can play in achievement of the SDGs, research must look beneath and beyond formal targets, indicators and policies to initiatives unfolding on the ground, led by community organisations and educators through non-formal ALE activities. While there is a clear need for ALE in advancing the intentions of the SDGs (Benavot 2018), much work is needed to reconcile bottom-up and top-down policymaking approaches to lead to appropriate governance and funding of the ALE sector, particularly in non-formal education (Belete et al. 2022).

Thus, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute in many ways a breach with previous policies and strategies for development. In contrast to the MDGs, they are conceived as a global agenda, hence the "target" of development are not only low income countries or middle income countries, but all countries worldwide. The SDGs express this paradigm shift in their motto "Leave no one behind". They integrate and merge three separate UN framework "streams" – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the outcome of the third UN Conference on Financing for Development in Addis (the Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the sustainable development policies under the framework of Rio+20 (UN Conference on Sustainable Development). The SDGs are a 15-year plan of action that focuses on achieving economic, social, and environmental development. Aimed at 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals have a tri-domain focus on people-planet-prosperity. In total, there are 17 Sustainable Goals, with multiple targets each (United Nations 2015a). The United Nations underscore the holistic nature of the concept of sustainability within the SDGs. This can only be effectively applied if these priorities are divided strategically within different dimensions - economic, social, and environmental. While the emphasis lies on universality of sustainability, this idea can only be realised with cross-pillar

integration between the three dimensions. In other words, though sustainability is a broad and comprehensive issue, mainstreaming some of the key dimensions could channel maximum efficacy. Non-formal adult learning could be one such effective channel to achieve these goals.

2.2.2 Adult refugee education

Eduard C. Lindeman (1945) was the first expert who gave a systematic account of adult education. In his theory of education, education is regarded as a lifelong process. He pointed out that due to the constant development and change of social life and the surrounding environment, knowledge, and information are in a cycle of constant transmission, supplement and update, which requires people to keep learning to adapt to the changes in the outside world. At the same time, he believes that adult learners should not only learn for the needs of work and survival, but also have the opportunity to enrich themselves. He insists that adult education is an inspiring life-changing tool. Adult education should not only help people improve their skills and abilities in work, but also guide people to find happiness outside work.

The primary purpose of adult education is to provide a second chance for those who are poor in society or who have lost access to education for other reasons in order to achieve social justice and equal access to education. Therefore, adult education is often a social policy of the government. Continuing education can help adults maintain certifications, fulfil job requirements and stay up to date on new developments in their field. Also, the purpose of adult education can be vocational, social, recreational or for self-development. One of its goals may be to help adult learners satisfy their personal needs and achieve their professional goals. With the development of economy and the progress of society, the requirement of human quality has been raised. In the 1960s, the proposition of "lifelong education" was put forward, which led to the change of contemporary educational concepts. Therefore, its ultimate goal might be to achieve human fulfilment. The goal might also be to achieve an institution's needs. For example, this might include improving its operational effectiveness and productivity. A larger scale goal of adult education may be the growth of society by enabling its citizens to keep up with societal change and maintain good social order. Data about participation rates in adult education is lacking in many countries as non-formal and informal learning is captured differently depending on the national statistics organisations and their way of measuring (Aitchison/Alidou 2009). Where there is data available, it is often limited to

certain age groups, such as the working population, or it focuses mainly on work-related education and training.

Non-formal adult education can be defined as all systematic communication of skill, knowledge, and attitude provided outside the limits of the formal school (Colletta et al 1996). It can also be described by the presence of a learning system that can be accessible to a wider audience, which need not require learners to invest as many personal resources as in a formal set up. Non-formal education is a continuous and dynamic process that does not necessarily stop after one passes the traditional years of learning.

Within the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Commission called for a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning where quality education and training, equity, and social cohesion become a widespread reality. National coordinators in each Member State of the European Union follow up on the implementation process of the agenda. Europe 2020 views education as a key priority area and calls for at least 15% of its adults engaging in lifelong learning by 2020. The current president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, emphasised the need for an increased support for development of skills and strengthening of lifelong learning within the European Union.

Linda Morrice (2021) in “The Promise of Refugee Lifelong Education: a critical review of the field” advocates that in response to protracted displacement, the purpose of refugee education has an initial focus on providing “normalcy” and protection for children (INEE2004), to more recent recognition of the need to prepare refugees for “participation in cohesive societies” (UNHCR 2019, p. 6). Opportunities for tertiary education are now seen as critical to refugees. The prospect of being able to join higher education not only provides an incentive for children and young people to remain in school, contributing to school enrolment and retention (UNHCR 2012); it is also crucial for providing refugees with the means to become self-reliant and to build dignified and sustainable futures for themselves and their families. These developments, alongside the shift to including refugees within national education systems, are welcome. However, national education systems are based on predictability, linearity and continuity. They are designed as a continuum and assume a sedentary national population moving smoothly through various stages until they graduate from school and transition to the next stage. Lifelong learning for refugees, however, can only fulfil its

potential if the fractured educational trajectory of refugee students is acknowledged at the outset, and if the opportunity and support structures for refugees are built into the system. This involves consideration of what skills and knowledge refugee youth and adults require to navigate and build sustainable futures for themselves and their families. Writing about school education, Sarah Dryden-Peterson (2019) argues for a future-oriented approach to refugee education, which begins with the imagined futures of refugees and then plans backwards. It is an approach which focuses on aspirations and how the system might accommodate the needs of refugee students, rather than students being expected to accommodate the system. In terms of lifelong learning, this involves starting with what refugees need if they are to play an active part in society, including their living dignified and self-reliant lives, and then working back to consider how lifelong education can be reconceptualised in order to fulfil this need.

2.2.3 The challenges

Challenges faced by adult refugees to have access to education

Challenges faced by adult refugees to access education are numerous. They include obstacles such as language barriers; Ndi, M. (2020) highlights the significant impact of language problems of refugees. It emphasises that proficiency in the host country's language is essential for effective communication and participation in educational programs. The research recalls for language training to be integrated into educational initiatives to help refugees overcome this challenge. This corroborates with Fergusson, L. (2016) who explores how linguistic challenges hinder refugees' ability to access educational resources and opportunities. The author suggests that language support programs are crucial for improving educational outcomes for adult refugees. Legal and policy barriers also weigh on adult education as states Kälin, W. (2018) in his research that discusses the legal frameworks affecting refugee education in various countries. It highlights how restrictive policies and lack of recognition of foreign qualification can impede refugees' access to education opportunities. The author advocates for inclusive policies that facilitate access to education for this displaced group of persons. Schraven, B., et al. (2018) examines the problems posed by bureaucratic complexities, lack of tailored programs and legal barriers in the education of refugees, particularly regarding access to funding and resources. They argue for policy reforms that simply process for displaced persons to enrol in educational programs. Socioeconomic psychological and

cultural factors also affect adult education. Mastrorillo, M., et al. (2016) in their work indicate that poverty and unemployment can limit the ability of adult refugees to pursue education. They emphasise the need for comprehensive support services that address these issues concurrently with educational initiatives. Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008) also indicated that financial constraints, lack of transportation and competing responsibilities (such as family care) can significantly hinder educational participation. Papadopoulos, T., & Lichtenstein, R. (2019) present the fact that trauma and stress can impede the ability of most displaced persons to engage in learning. They recommend incorporating mental health support into the educational framework to address these barriers. This is further supported by Lopez, M. J., & Borrell, C. (2018) who examined the impact of trauma on refugees' educational engagement. They stressed out that psychological well-being is a critical factor in determining the refugee's ability to participate in educational programs. Crul, M., & Schneider, J. (2010) discuss cultural differences and their impact on refugees' educational experiences. They underscore that cultural and religious misunderstandings can lead to isolation and disengagement from educational opportunities. The lack of culturally relevant curricula can disengage adult refugees from educational programs. The importance of culturally responsive education that acknowledges and respects the diverse backgrounds of refugees will encourage more refugees to engage in learning, mentioned Crisps, J. (2010). Integration can also constitute an obstacle as noted by Beine, M., & Nöel, R. (2017) who discussed systemic barriers and lack of support can limit access. This is supported by Rottmann, C. (2018) who investigated the role of community involvement and local support in facilitating refugee access to education. His research concludes by suggesting that interaction programs that include local stakeholders can help overcome barriers to education.

Other difficulties that refugees frequently face in transferring skills, competences and qualifications to new contexts is the subject of a growing body of scholarship (Morrice, Shan, & Sprung, 2018, p. 130). Specifically, there is significant heterogeneity, given that "there are at least two distinct groups, highly skilled, for whom international mobility is part of their career, and low-skilled" (CEDEFOP, 2011, p. 7) who face much difficulty in finding a job. In addition, it is argued that their education faces problems such as interrupted education, significant learning gaps, inappropriate skills, and confusing application procedures, whereas less than 1% of refugee youth are able to participate in higher education (UNHCR, 2016). The consequences of not having access

are disturbing, since refugees are condemned to passivity, stress, frustration, violence (World Education News and Reviews, 2015). In addition, national governments have to provide trained teachers and learning material for newcomers who do not speak the language, lack identification documents or academic transcripts needed to transfer to a new institution and it is difficult to evaluate their educational background (UNHCR, 2016).

There is also a growing critique of the way that adult education programs focus on the needs of refugees, while ignoring the learning that might be helpful to the host society (Shan, 2015). For instance, in a study of the curriculum orientation of Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada, Cervatiuc and Ricento (2012, as cited in Shan, 2015, p. 3) found that trainers may conveniently take a prescriptive approach to teaching the dominant culture to newcomers, rendering their irrelevant cultures, epistemological views and life experiences. On the contrary, successful training programmes are those that “activate a crucial amount of social capital in the form of unions, employer federations and communities” (CEDEFOP, 2011, p. 15). Consequently, refugees can “tap into their rich social capital for job contacts” (CEDEFOP, 2011, p. 15) and opportunities, may “benefit from networking contacts with native workers that may meet during their course of study” (CEDEFOP, 2011, p. 15). In addition, available courses are usually too far away from where refugees live and occasionally, they are incompatible with work and family responsibilities. Newcomers may not feel comfortable attending them, especially women who face cultural pressure not to participate in public activities. In addition, they are “at a disadvantage given that they have less social capital than natives, fewer contacts and lack of knowledge and information” (CEDEFOP, 2011, p. 10). Widely speaking, the barriers that refugees are facing could be categorized in structural/policy barriers (asylum, distribution, housing policies), time and resource barriers (lack of time, skills, institutional knowledge), life-cycle barriers (individual’s age and family status), cultural barriers (e.g. women from Muslim communities may be discouraged from participating in mixed-gender training programs), and socioemotional barriers (mental health challenges and traumas) (Banulescu-Bogdan, 2020).

Challenges faced in providing adult refugees access to education

Addressing these challenges that the state and other non- government, mental organisations face in providing quality and sustainable education to adult refugees, it requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy reforms, adequate funding, training of the educators and the involvement of

local communities to create inclusive and effective educational environment for adult refugees. These challenges can be identified under indicators such as:

Systemic and institutional barriers: Kälin, W. (2018) unveils how educational institutions often lack the necessary policies and frameworks to accommodate the unique needs of adult refugees.

Funding and resource limitations: Mastrorillo, M., et al. (2016) brings out the importance of adequate funding for educational initiative. He discusses also that limited financial resources affect the availability of educational programs, materials and qualified instructors.

Language barriers

Teacher training and preparedness: Harrison, R. (2019) discusses challenges teachers face when working with adult refugees including a lack of training in culturally responsive teaching methods. The author emphasises the need for professional development programs that prepare educators to effectively teach refugee population. Zetter, R., & Ruaudel, H. (2016) indicated the necessity of training educators to understand the specific needs of adult refugees, including their cultural and educational backgrounds. Concludes that without this training, teachers may struggle to create inclusive learning environments.

Psychological and emotional barriers

Community engagement and support.

2.3 Context of adult refugees in Yaoundé

Yaoundé has become a significant host city for refugees, particularly from conflict affected regions in Central Africa. Understanding the demographic and socio-economic context is crucial for developing effective educational programs. Fon, G. (2021) identifies community – based learning as an effective strategy for engaging refugees. By involving local communities in the educational process, programs can create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Partnership with NGOs and local institutions is emphasised as Ngwa; F (2022) mentions that such collaborations can improve vital resources and expertise necessary for effective program implantation.

These works offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of providing education for sustainable development to refugees in Cameroon and other African countries. They underscore

the importance of inclusive and innovative approaches to education that empower displaced populations to contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the approach that was used in this study.

The reason for every piece of research is to reach findings that are not biased, but reliable and valid by conducting enquiry and investigation (Simon, 1996; Bell & Bryman, 2007; Bryman, 2012). They enable the researcher to make clarification and confirmation of previously researched information (Simon, 1996). New relevant information on the research topic could also be unearthed (Simon, 1996).

According to the researcher “Methodology is a scientific and technological methods on how data are collected and analysed for investigating or exploiting enhancement of an existing ideas or a new venture.

As the name suggests, methodology discusses all the necessary approaches, procedures, and/or methods that the researcher uses in collecting the required and necessary data for the study being conducted. For this research, all the data and information that the project needs in order to make justifiable conclusions come under the methodology. The methods and techniques used for this study are identified, and the reason for each choice is provided under this section. It comments on limitations and delimitations of this study. In addition, the strengths and weakness of the approach used are discussed. The final section summarises the chapter by highlighting the main points presented within it.

3.1 Population of the study and sample size

The study was carried out in Yaoundé in the Centre Region, which is also the political capital of Cameroon. The target population for the study is made up of displaced persons and particularly refugees, living in Yaoundé. The participants include adult refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria, and the stakeholders involved in the education of refugees (government, non-governmental organisations and other partners, educators and teachers) and host communities. Each criterion helps define the population to ensure the study is focused, relevant, and capable of producing meaningful insights. It is worth noting that access and safety are crucial, requiring

partnerships with organizations like PLAN Cameroon to facilitate data collection and ensure the security of participants. Ethical considerations involve informing communities about the research, gaining consent, and ensuring the study contributes to their empowerment and not exploitation.

3.1.1 The respondents

For the purpose of this study on adult refugees in Mbankolo, Yaoundé, respondent selection criteria focus on: established refugee status, adult age, residence in the Mbankolo area, voluntary participation in the education system, and diverse representation across relevant demographics like gender, country of origin, and duration of stay to capture varied experiences with sustainable development skills acquisition.

Adult Refugees

The criteria for selection of the respondents for this study are as follows:

- Eligibility:
 - The respondents must have an official Refugee Status. This implies that they must have a recognized refugee status, that documented by the UNHCR, to ensure their presence in the community is legitimate.
 - Having the status of adult is of outmost importance as, only adults (18 years and older) are concerned with the study, as indicated in the research topic.
 - The site chosen for this study is Mbankolo neighbourhood, which is found in Yaounde II. Thus respondents must be currently living in the Mbankolo area of Yaoundé.
- Recruitment Strategies
 - The recruitment strategy used for obtaining respondents was that of direct outreach. This was realised with by engaging with refugee community leaders (Mr Yambassa) and established support organizations (PLAN Cameroon) and AFROGIVENESS in Mbankolo to identify potential participants.
 - Reaching out to educational institutions collaborating with organizations that provide education and vocational training like PLAN Cameroon and AFROGIVENESS to refugees to access potential participants was very important.

- A Snowball Sampling technique was applied by asking initial participants to refer others who meet the criteria. This is particularly useful for reaching hidden populations within the community.
- Diversity and Representation
 - A gender balance needs to be taken into consideration in order to ensure a balanced representation of both male and female refugees to account for differing experiences and perspectives.
 - For the purpose of this study only two countries were selected. These are CAR and Nigeria. Since these are two countries from two different regions of Africa with different cultural and educational backgrounds.
 - The duration of time spent in Cameroon is vital. In this light, refugees for the research were selected from different periods, as this can influence their engagement with and acquisition of skills.
 - The levels skill acquisition was also considered, as it aimed for a mix of refugees who are actively participating in skill-building programs and those who are not, to understand the barriers and facilitators to skill acquisition.
- Ethical Considerations
 - The validity of the data presented in this work was obtain with the informed consent of the participants. This implies that the responses were obtained through a voluntary and informed consent from all participants before their involvement.
 - Protecting the privacy of participants by ensuring that their responses are confidential and their identities are anonymous is very crucial. Thus, assuring the participants that the Confidentiality and Anonymity of their answers is guaranteed is not an understatement.
 - Being mindfully sensitive to the potentially vulnerable situation of refugees and ensuring the research process does not put them at risk, reminding the participants that this exercise is voluntary and assuring them that they are safe was important through attitude and words.

This choice can be further supported with the following reasons:

- a. Location relevance: Yaoundé, as the capital city of Cameroon, serves as a point of attraction for refugee settlement and integration programs. This group can provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for education and skill development in an urban setting where resources and support services may be more accessible.
- b. Significant refugee Population: Refugees from Nigeria and Central African Republic constitute the highest population of refugees in Cameroon and Yaoundé is not left out of this equation. Both countries have similar background or experience in terms of political instability, conflict, and violence, leading to a significant number of them seeking asylum in neighbouring countries like Cameroon. This makes them a relevant and important population to study in the context of refugee education.
- c. Diversity in backgrounds: Adult refugees from Nigeria and Central African Republic bring diversity into the study as they come from two different educational (educational systems) backgrounds and cultures and languages.

The Stakeholders

Involving relevant partners into this research is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the study outcomes. Their expertise, resources, community engagement policy influence, and commitment to long term impact make them valuable partners in addressing the educational needs of adult refugees in Yaoundé. This is justified by the fact that stakeholders play a vital role in this work in the integration process of refugees into their host communities. The main actors targeted for this study include: Educators and teachers who are responsible for, informal, vocational and non-formal educational settings, Ministry of social affairs, the United Nations (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP), Non – Governmental organisations (local and international organisations) such as PLAN international Cameroon, AFROGIVENESS, community leaders and members of the host community in this case, the president of refugees in Yaoundé.

- Expertise and Experience: Local NGOs, International Organisations, educational institutions, and government agencies working with refugees have expertise and experience in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by this population. Their knowledge can provide valuable insights into designing effective educational programs for sustainable development skills.

- **Community engagement:** working with partners who have established relationships and trust within the refugee community in Yaoundé facilitate community engagement and participation in the research study. They can also ensure that the educational programs are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of adult refugees.
- **Access to resources:** partners often have access to resources such as funding, facilities, and networks that can support the research study and implementation of educational initiatives. Collaborating with them can help leverage these resources to enhance the quality and impact of the research.
- **Policy Influence:** Partners working with refugees may have an influence on policy making processes at local, national, or international levels. Engaging them in the research study can help advocate for policy changes that support the integration of sustainable development skills education for adult refugees.
- **Sustainability and Impact:** collaborating with them can contribute to sustainability and long-term impact of the research study. Involving them in planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs, the study can create lasting benefits for adult refugees in Yaoundé and beyond the research period.

3.2 Considerations for selecting the target population

- ✓ The geographical scope,
- ✓ The educational background,
- ✓ Demographic factors,
- ✓ Specific needs and challenges

3.3 Scope and Population of the Study

3.3.1 Scope of the Study

The researcher has been living in Yaoundé since birth and masters the town very well which will be helpful to facilitate the administering of questionnaires and the accessibility to carefully do random selection of specific areas greatly affected with the issue of Refugees and the state of the area. The main reasons for this research are to find out how adult Refugees living in Yaoundé acquire sustainable education and development skills in the society since every project is unique

and there is no statement like two separate projects has the same plans and objectives. This will help brooding the knowledge of the researcher as an Educationalist to become and also, be able to tackle the causes of Adults Refugees educational skills for sustainable development as well.

The study was carried out in Yaoundé in the Centre Region, which is also the political capital of Cameroon. The target population for the study is made up of displaced persons and particularly refugees, living in Yaoundé. The focus group was that of adult refugees. The participants include adult refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria, and the stakeholders involved in the education of refugees (government, UN, non-governmental organisations and other partners, educators and teachers) and host communities.

3.3.2 Population Size and Targeted Population

Considering the fact that this piece of work focuses on adult refugees as the target population, it is obvious that a sample of the population be part of the work. The focus group targeted for this study is made up of Central African Republic and Nigerian adult refugees of Yaoundé 1 and 2 subdivisions within the age range from 18 years and above. This is justified by the fact that out of the over 478 680 refugees in Cameroon, about 73% are from CAR and 21% from Nigeria. The target population is made up of 102 participants; 71 from CAR and 31 adult refugees from Nigeria. This choice can be further supported with the following reasons that ensure that the research is grounded in real – world conditions and capable of generating practical, scalable solution. These include:

- a. **Location relevance:** Mbankolo is an established urban settlement within the city of Yaoundé that hosts a considerable number of refugees, including a large contingent from CAR and Nigeria which are two countries experiencing ongoing conflicts and displacement crises. Its proximity to the capital city provides refugees with access to administrative services, humanitarian organisations, and informal economic opportunities, all of which are critical for integration and skill acquisition. This neighbourhood exposes refugees to sustainability challenges such as unemployment and resource scarcity, making it an ideal setting to study education programs aimed at sustainable development skills that can improve livelihoods and community resilience.
- b. **Significant refugee Population:** Mbankolo accommodates a substantial adult refugee population from CAR and Nigeria, large enough to support this research and the

implementation of educational programs. This size ensures statistically meaningful data collection and the ability to assess the effectiveness of sustainable development education interventions. Many adult refugees in this area have limited formal education or vocational skills, underscoring the need for targeted educational initiatives. The concentration of refugees in this environment also facilitates community – based approaches and peer learning, thus enhancing program impact. seeking asylum in neighbouring countries like Cameroon. This makes them a relevant and important population to study in the context of refugee education.

- c. **Diversity in backgrounds:** The Adult refugee population from Nigeria and Central African Republic in Mbankolo is diverse in terms of language, culture, education attainment, and professional experience. Refugees from CAR often speak Sango and French, while Nigerians may speak English, pidgin and various indigenous languages from Nigeria, requiring multilingual and culturally sensitive educational approaches. Educational backgrounds vary widely; from individuals with no formal schooling to those with some secondary education or vocational training which needs flexible curricula that accommodates different learning needs. Furthermore, the population includes both men and women across a broad age range, making gender – responsive and age – appropriate pedagogy essential. This diversity enriches the research by allowing exploration of specified educational strategies that address heterogeneous learner profiles

3.4 Instruments used for data collection

This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to obtain a holistic understanding of refugees' educational realities in Cameroon. The choice of a mixed-method was informed by the need to capture both measurable patterns of educational access and outcomes as well as the subjective meanings and lived experiences attached to those patterns.

Quantitative Strand: Structured questionnaires with close-ended questions generated numerical data on demographics, educational attainment, vocational training, and barriers to access. These were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, and percentages) and presented in tables. This allowed for clear identification of trends, prevalence, and proportions within the sample.

Qualitative Strand: Open-ended questions and in-depth interviews with key informants (refugee

leaders and practitioners) produced rich textual data. Responses were thematically analysed, with frequency coding used to highlight recurring patterns (e.g., financial constraints, teaching methods, or vocational training needs). Interpretative and hermeneutic analysis further illuminated the symbolic and psychosocial meanings attached to education as a pathway to dignity, livelihood, and integration. Together, these strands ensured that the study captured both the breadth (generalizable patterns) and depth (personal experiences and contextual insights) of refugee education.

3.5 Mixed-Method Research Design

The specific research design adopted was a convergent parallel mixed-method design. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase of the study, analysed separately, and then integrated at the interpretation stage. The convergent parallel design was appropriate because it allowed the numerical trends (e.g., 46.1% citing financial constraints as the main barrier) to be compared and cross-validated with qualitative narratives (e.g., verbatim responses describing the inability to afford school materials or training fees). The integration occurred through triangulation, where quantitative results established prevalence and scope, while qualitative findings provided explanatory depth and revealed the lived meaning of those numbers. This design strengthened the validity of the findings by addressing limitations inherent in single-method approaches: quantitative data alone would have lacked context, while qualitative data alone would have limited generalisability. The convergent design was particularly suitable for this study for three reasons: Quantitative results identified the scale of issues, while qualitative insights explained why these issues persist and how refugees experience them. Findings from both strands confirmed and reinforced each other, ensuring greater credibility and reliability. Policymakers and practitioners require both statistical evidence (percentages, frequencies) and narrative accounts (voices of refugees) to design effective, evidence-based interventions. The study used a mixed-method approach to integrate numerical analysis with thematic interpretation, under a convergent parallel mixed-method design, where both data types were collected simultaneously, analysed independently, and then merged to provide a holistic and validated understanding of refugee education.

3.5.1 Quantitative Method Used data analysis

The quantitative data in this study were collected primarily through the use of structured questionnaires administered to refugee participants. The questionnaire was designed with close-ended questions and categorical response options, allowing for systematic quantification of demographic variables (such as gender, age, country of origin, and length of stay in Cameroon), educational background, access to schooling, vocational training experiences, and perceived barriers to education. A descriptive survey design was employed, which is appropriate for summarizing and presenting patterns within a defined population. This design made it possible to obtain measurable information on refugees' educational status, challenges, and aspirations in a way that could be statistically analysed and compared across different subgroups. The responses were coded and entered into a statistical software package (e.g., SPSS or Excel) for analysis. The main quantitative techniques applied included: Frequency counts and percentages, which were used to show the distribution of responses across categories (e.g., proportion of males and females, percentage of respondents with access to counselling, etc.). Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations where appropriate, to summarize central tendencies and variation in responses. Tabular presentation of results, with tables displaying frequency distributions and percentages to allow easy comparison across variables. The use of these quantitative methods ensured that the findings could be expressed in numerical terms, providing clarity and objectivity in describing trends within the refugee population. Quantitative analysis also allowed for the identification of dominant patterns, such as the high prevalence of financial barriers or the predominance of low access to quality education, which could then be explored in greater depth through qualitative interpretation.

3.5.2 Qualitative Method Used for data analysis

Alongside the quantitative survey, the study employed qualitative methods to capture the deeper meanings, perceptions, and lived experiences of refugees in relation to education and skills development. This was primarily achieved through the use of: Open-ended questions in the questionnaire – Respondents were invited to provide detailed answers about the types of vocational training they had received, their preferred forms of education, the barriers they faced, and their suggestions for improving refugee education programs. These verbatim responses offered rich,

context-specific insights that numerical data alone could not reveal. Key informant interviews or in-depth interviews were conducted with refugee leaders (e.g., the president of the Comité des Réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun) and education practitioners (e.g., Dr. BIH Adelaide). These interviews provided nuanced perspectives on organizational structures, challenges in refugee education, grassroots initiatives, and the broader policy environment.

The qualitative data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved systematically identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring patterns in the responses. To ensure clarity and rigor, responses were grouped into themes such as financial barriers, language difficulties, vocational training needs, teaching methods, and psychosocial support. A frequency-coded table technique was applied to show how often each theme was mentioned, thus combining qualitative richness with a degree of quantification for comparability. Furthermore, interpretative and hermeneutic analysis was used in the interviews to uncover the underlying meanings and discursive features in participants' narratives. This enabled the study to highlight how refugees conceptualize education not only as a pathway to employment but also as a source of dignity, resilience, and community integration. The qualitative method was therefore critical in complementing the quantitative survey. While quantitative data revealed general trends and measurable patterns, the qualitative findings provided depth, context, and explanatory power, helping to understand why certain challenges persist and how refugees envision more effective and sustainable educational solutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings generated from the field survey and interviews conducted with adult refugees regarding their educational experiences, challenges, and aspirations in Cameroon. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a systematic analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data in order to highlight the realities of adult refugee education and skill development within the host country. The analysis is organised thematically, beginning with the demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, country of origin, and length of stay in Cameroon. These background variables provide essential context for understanding the socio-cultural composition of the study population and the ways in which demographic factors shape access to and experiences of education. The chapter then examines participants' educational background, including highest level of schooling attained, current enrolment status, and vocational training experiences. This section is followed by an exploration of adult refugees' access to education, quality of learning experiences, and exposure to sustainable development knowledge and skill-building opportunities. Special attention is given to the barriers that hinder educational participation, such as financial constraints, language difficulties, and social discrimination, as these emerge as critical determinants of educational outcomes. Beyond quantitative trends, the chapter also incorporates a qualitative dimension by analysing verbatim responses from participants as well as insights drawn from interviews with key informants, including refugee leaders and education practitioners. This interpretative approach enriches the statistical findings by revealing the lived experiences, perceptions, and aspirations of refugees in their own voices. Overall, this chapter seeks not only to describe the patterns emerging from the data but also to interpret their broader significance in light of refugee education policy, sustainable development, and social integration. By situating the findings within these frameworks, the chapter provides a foundation for the discussion and recommendations that follow in subsequent chapters.

Table 1: Sample distribution according to demographic information

Variable	modalities	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	male	46	45.1%
	female	56	54.9%
Age group	18-20years	17	16.7%
	21-25years	35	34.3%
	26-30years	22	21.6%
	31yearss and above	28	27.5%
Country of origin	Central African Republic	71	69.6%
	Nigeria	31	30.4%
I Have Been in Cameroon for	1-5years	48	47.1%
	6-10years	36	35.3%
	more than 10years	18	17.6%

(Source: field data 2025)

The sample comprised slightly more females than males. Specifically, 54.9% (n = 56) of respondents were female, whereas 45.1% (n = 46) were male. This distribution suggests a modest female majority within the study population, which may influence perspectives depending on the topic of investigation, particularly if gender plays a role in experiential or attitudinal differences. Participants' ages ranged from 18 years to 31 years and above, with the largest proportion (34.3%, n = 35) falling within the 21–25 years' category. The second-largest group was those aged 31 years and above (27.5%, n = 28), followed by respondents aged 26–30 years (21.6%, n = 22). The smallest group comprised those aged 18–20 years (16.7%, n = 17). This distribution indicates that the sample is relatively youthful, with a significant representation of early to mid-career adults, which may have implications for perspectives on socio-economic and migration-related issues. The majority of respondents originated from the Central African Republic (69.6%, n = 71), followed by Nigeria (30.4%, n = 31). The overwhelming representation from the Central African Republic may reflect the migration patterns or refugee demographics in the research context, suggesting that findings may be most applicable to this group while still incorporating some diversity from other national backgrounds. Nearly half of the respondents (47.1%, n = 48) had resided in Cameroon for between one and five years, while 35.3% (n = 36) reported living in the country for six to ten years. A smaller proportion (17.6%, n = 18) had been in Cameroon for more than ten years. This

distribution shows a predominance of relatively recent arrivals, which may be relevant to integration, adaptation, or access-to-services studies.

Overall, the sample is characterised by a slight female majority, a predominance of young adults (especially those aged 21–25 years), and a strong representation of individuals from the Central African Republic. Most participants have resided in Cameroon for less than a decade, with a substantial proportion being in the country for only one to five years. These demographic factors provide important contextual background for interpreting the main study findings and understanding the lived experiences of the respondents within their socio-cultural and migratory contexts. Given the demographic profile, the study population’s slight female majority, youthful age structure, and predominance of respondents from the Central African Republic; most of whom have resided in Cameroon for less than a decade, suggests that educational sustainability initiatives for refugees in Cameroon must address gender-sensitive needs, youth-focused skills development, and culturally responsive curricula. The large proportion of recent arrivals highlights the importance of flexible, accelerated learning programs and integration support, while the diversity in national origin, though limited, underscores the need for inclusive pedagogical approaches that accommodate varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds to promote long-term educational continuity and socio-economic resilience.

Table 2: Sample distribution according to educational background

Indicators	Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
Highest level of education	Non	14	13.7%
	Primary	31	30.4%
	Secondary	24	23.5%
	Tertiary	13	12.7%
	vocational	18	17.6%
	professional	2	2.0%
Registered in school / educational institutional	yes	49	48.0%
	no	53	52.0%
Received any vocational training or course to develop/improve some skills,	yes	39	38.2%
	no	63	61.8%

(source: field data 2025)

Table 2 presents the distribution of participants according to their educational background, reflecting varying levels of formal education, school enrolment status, and vocational training experiences. ***Highest level of education attained:*** The results indicate that the largest proportion of participants had completed primary education (n = 31, 30.4%), followed by those with secondary education (n = 24, 23.5%) and vocational education (n = 18, 17.6%). A smaller segment reported having no formal education (n = 14, 13.7%), while tertiary-level graduates represented 12.7% (n = 13) of the sample. Professional qualifications accounted for only 2.0% (n = 2). This distribution reveals a predominance of basic education levels within the population, with limited representation of advanced professional qualifications. Such a profile suggests potential constraints in access to higher education and professional development opportunities, which could influence employability, income levels, and participation in the knowledge economy. ***Current registration in school or educational institution:*** Almost equal proportions were observed between those currently enrolled (n = 49, 48.0%) and those not enrolled (n = 53, 52.0%). This near balance implies that while a significant number of individuals are still engaged in formal education, a slightly higher proportion have exited the system, possibly due to age, financial limitations, or the need to engage in income-generating activities. This pattern may have implications for the long-term human capital development of the group. ***Participation in vocational training or skills development courses:*** A majority of participants (n = 63, 61.8%) reported not having received any vocational training, while 38.2% (n = 39) had undergone such training. The relatively low participation in vocational skills development may point to gaps in access to technical and skills-based education, which is often critical for enhancing employability, especially in contexts where formal job opportunities are limited. This finding underscores the need for targeted interventions in skills upgrading and lifelong learning initiatives to improve socio-economic resilience.

4.1 Specified Vocational Training and Skills Development

Table 3: Representation of respondent opinions on type of vocational training and skill development

Vocational/Skill Category	Example Responses	Frequency
Soap making & related (Javel, cleaning products)	“Soap making”, “soaping making, Javel”, “Training in soap making”, “Sewing and soaping making”	16
Sewing / Fashion	“Sewing /fashion”, “Sewing and soaping making”	3
Computer / ICT skills	“Computer”, “computer lessons”	3
Project Management	“Training in project management”	3
Hairdressing / Personal Care	“Hair dressing”	2
Building / Construction	“Professional training, building construction”	3
Teaching / Academic Advancement	“Yes, I am a teacher and to be writing advanced level in the evening school and stopped school”	1
Entrepreneurial / Other Business Skills	“In AFROGIVENESS because now I am selling”	2
General Professional Training	“Professional training”	3

Source: field data: 2025)

Participants’ responses to the question “*Have you received any vocational training or course to develop/improve some skills? If yes, specify*” revealed a notable diversity in the types of skills acquired, reflecting both livelihood-oriented and professional advancement goals. The verbatim indicate that respondents have engaged in a variety of vocational training programs spanning technical trades, entrepreneurial skills, and personal development. A significant proportion of the responses centred on **soap making**, often in combination with other domestic chemical production activities such as *Javel* (bleach) preparation. This recurring mention (appearing more than ten times) underscores the popularity of small-scale manufacturing skills as a sustainable income – generating avenue in resource-constrained environments. Other respondents identified training in **fashion and sewing**, which also appeared repeatedly and aligns with gendered economic activities commonly observed in informal economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. A smaller yet notable segment

of respondents referenced **computer lessons**, indicating an orientation toward digital literacy and modern workplace competencies. In parallel, **project management training** emerged as a skill area, suggesting that some participants are equipping themselves for organizational or entrepreneurial leadership roles. Training in **hairstressing**, **building construction**, and specialized initiatives such as *AFROGIVENESS* (linked to entrepreneurial ventures) point to diverse vocational pathways beyond traditional classroom education. Interestingly, one respondent highlighted a hybrid educational trajectory, working as a teacher while pursuing the *Advanced Level* in evening school reflecting a blend of vocational engagement and formal academic progression. This suggests that vocational training, for some, complements rather than replaces formal education.

Overall, the verbatim demonstrate that vocational education among respondents serves multiple purposes: **Economic survival and entrepreneurship** (e.g., soap making, sewing, hairstressing) **Professional development and formal employment readiness** (e.g., project management, computer skills, building construction). **Personal empowerment and resilience** through skill diversification (e.g., combining teaching with further studies). This skill acquisition pattern reflects a **sustainable education framework** wherein vocational learning is both a response to immediate livelihood needs and a long-term human capital investment. The repeated emphasis on practical, market-relevant skills underscores the role of vocational training as a critical pillar in fostering self – reliance, especially in contexts marked by limited access to formal employment opportunities.

Table 4: Sample distribution according to access Education

Variable	Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
The degree of opportunity and access to education facilities in the student current location	very high	4	3.9%
	high	7	6.9%
	moderate	20	19.6%
	low	37	36.3%
	very low	34	33.3%
The main barriers and difficulties faced by refugees in accessing education	financial	47	46.1%
	language	11	10.8%
	distance	6	5.9%
	lack of resources	16	15.7%
	all of the above	22	21.6%

(source: field data 2025)

The descriptive analysis of Table 4 data, on Access to Education Facilities show the degree of opportunity and access to education facilities in the target population's current locations showed a skew toward lower levels of accessibility. Only 3.9% of respondents reported that access was very high, and 6.9% reported high access. A slightly larger proportion (19.6%) rated their access as moderate. However, the majority experienced significant barriers, with 36.3% rating access as low and 33.3% as very low. These findings indicate that over two-thirds (69.6%) of the surveyed refugee students perceive their access to educational facilities as being inadequate, suggesting substantial structural or environmental constraints in the educational ecosystem of their host communities. The predominance of low and very low ratings highlights a critical equity gap, with implications for both policy interventions and targeted resource allocation to improve educational infrastructure and accessibility for refugee populations.

Barriers to Education Access: When asked about the main barriers and difficulties faced in accessing education, nearly half of respondents (46.1%) cited financial challenges as the primary obstacle. This finding underscores the persistent economic vulnerability of refugee learners, aligning with global literature that identifies cost – related issues (e.g., tuition fees, school materials, and associated living expenses) as significant deterrents to educational participation. Language barriers were reported by 10.8% of respondents, indicating that linguistic integration issues, while notable, are less prevalent compared to financial constraints. A smaller proportion (5.9%) identified distance as their primary barrier, suggesting that geographical access, although relevant, may be mitigated by other contextual factors. Lack of resources, such as textbooks, technological tools, and adequate classroom infrastructure, was reported by 15.7% of participants. Interestingly, 21.6% selected all of the above, reflecting the intersectionality of barriers, where multiple overlapping constraints simultaneously hinder educational participation. This multifaceted nature of obstacles suggests that any intervention strategy must adopt a holistic approach that addresses economic, linguistic, spatial, and material challenges in a coordinated manner. The data reveals a dual challenge: first, the overwhelmingly low perceived access to educational facilities among refugee adult learners, and second, the predominance of financial and multi – dimensional barriers. The findings reinforce the need for integrated educational support policies that prioritize affordability, language support programs, local infrastructure enhancement,

and targeted provision of learning materials. Addressing these barriers comprehensively is essential to advancing equitable and sustainable educational opportunities for refugee populations.

From a statistical standpoint, the **access-level distribution** shows a **left – tilted profile** (concentration toward low values), while the **barrier distribution** is **positively clustered** around financial deprivation and multi-factor challenges. The combination of these patterns indicates that improving access will require not only infrastructural interventions but also **financial aid and comprehensive support packages**. Moreover, the dominance of “all of the above” suggests that **isolated single-issue interventions may be insufficient**, systemic, multi-pronged policy measures are required to shift the distribution toward higher access categories.

Table 5: Sample distribution according to quality Education

Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
always	11	10.8%
often	10	9.8%
sometimes	14	13.7%
rarely	16	15.7%
never	51	50.0%

(source: field data 2025)

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents’ perceptions regarding the *quality of education* they experience, categorized by frequency of occurrence. The results reveal notable disparities in how often respondents report having access to quality education. Only 11 respondents (10.8%) indicated that they *always* receive quality education. This small proportion suggests that a consistently high educational standard is accessible to very few individuals within the sample. From a service delivery perspective, this indicates a gap between the ideal of sustained educational excellence and the reality experienced by most learners. A similarly small group, 10 respondents (9.8%), reported that they *often* experience quality education. When combined with the “always” category, only 20.6% of the sample regularly encounter high educational standards. This limited exposure raises concerns about systemic inequalities and uneven distribution of educational resources. The “sometimes” category accounts for 14 respondents (13.7%). This group appears to experience quality education intermittently, implying that educational delivery may be inconsistent and dependent on variable factors such as teacher availability, infrastructure, or learning materials.

A slightly higher proportion, 16 respondents (15.7%) indicated that they *rarely* receive quality education. This suggests a significant portion of the population is disadvantaged in terms of sustained educational quality, potentially impacting learning outcomes, motivation, and long-term skill development. The largest segment, 51 respondents (50.0%) reported that they *never* experience quality education. This finding is particularly alarming, as it represents half of the surveyed population, indicating deep structural challenges in the educational system, including inadequate resources, insufficiently trained educators, or unfavourable learning environments. The distribution is heavily skewed toward the lower end of the quality spectrum, with 65.7% of respondents falling into the “rarely” or “never” categories. Only one-fifth of the sample consistently or frequently experience quality education. This pattern highlights significant inequities in educational delivery and suggests an urgent need for targeted interventions to improve learning environments, teaching quality, and equitable access to educational resources.

Table 6: Sample distribution according to sustainable Education

Variables	Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge of sustainable skills out of the subjects taught in school development	Yes	36	35.3%
	No	66	64.7%
Have received training on any skill out of the subject taught in school	Yes	38	37.3%
	No	64	62.7%

(source: field data 2025)

Table 6 presents respondents’ distribution regarding their knowledge of sustainable development and their experience in receiving training in skills beyond the subjects taught in school. The first indicator **knowledge of sustainable development** reveals that **36 respondents (35.3%)** reported possessing such knowledge, whereas a larger proportion, **66 respondents (64.7%)**, indicated a lack of knowledge in this area. This suggests that nearly two-thirds of the sample remain unfamiliar with sustainable development concepts, indicating a substantial gap in awareness. Such a gap can have implications for the promotion of sustainability in educational contexts, as limited knowledge may hinder the integration of sustainable practices in both academic and community life. The

second indicator **receipt of training in other skills beyond the school curriculum** shows that **38 respondents (37.3%)** had received such training, while **64 respondents (62.7%)** had not. The findings indicate that more than three-fifths of the participants have not been exposed to complementary skill-building opportunities outside the formal curriculum. This reflects a shortfall in extracurricular or non-formal learning initiatives that could enhance learners' adaptability and preparedness for a sustainability-oriented society. Taken together, these results highlight a dual challenge: limited exposure to sustainable development knowledge and insufficient access to complementary skill-building opportunities. In line with the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), this points to the need for targeted awareness programs, curriculum integration of sustainability themes, and expanded access to non-formal training initiatives to bridge the observed gaps.

Table 7: Specify Analysis of Verbatim Responses on Skills Training Outside School Subjects

Skill Type	Frequency (approx.)	Example Responses
Vocational / Professional	6–8	Vocational training, Professional training
Soap making / Craft	6	Soap making, Soaping making
Fashion / Sewing	3–4	Fashion, sowing
Formal education outside school	3–4	Formal education

(source: field data 2025)

The respondents were asked whether they had received training in skills outside the formal curriculum taught in school, and to specify the type of training. A review of the verbatim responses reveals a pattern of practical and vocational skill acquisition, alongside references to formal education. Recurrent Themes and Skill Categories Upon grouping the responses, four primary skill categories emerge: Respondents frequently mentioned “vocational training” and “professional training,” indicating exposure to structured programs aimed at employable skills beyond standard academics. These responses suggest that a subset of participants actively sought skills development to enhance career prospects or entrepreneurship. Several participants specified “soap making” (n = 6) and “fashion, sowing” (n = 3–4). These skills indicate engagement in small-scale entrepreneurial or craft activities, reflecting a practical orientation towards income-generating opportunities. The

repetition of “soap making” emphasizes its popularity and perceived relevance among the respondents. Some responses mentioned “formal education” ($n = 3-4$). While somewhat ambiguous, this may refer to supplementary academic programs, adult education, or non-school-based certifications that still align with structured learning, distinguishing it from informal skill acquisition. Overall, the responses reveal that participants are motivated to acquire practical, marketable skills that may not be available in their standard school curriculum. The repeated mentions of soap making and vocational training suggest an emphasis on hands-on, livelihood-oriented education. From a sustainable development perspective, the acquisition of skills outside formal schooling aligns with Goal 4: Quality Education and Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (United Nations, 2015). By engaging in vocational and entrepreneurial skills such as soap making and fashion, respondents demonstrate the capacity for lifelong learning and self-reliance, essential for community resilience and economic sustainability. Furthermore, the focus on craft-based skills suggests an integration of local knowledge and resources, contributing to culturally relevant sustainable development practices. There is a clear demand for integrating practical, income-generating skills within formal or supplementary educational programs. Schools and community centres could enhance student employability and entrepreneurship by offering structured training in crafts, vocational, and professional skills. The popularity of soap making and fashion design highlights potential sectors for targeted microfinance, mentorship, and market access support to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Responses referencing “formal education” outside regular school suggest opportunities for adult learning programs to complement vocational initiatives.

4.2 Analysis of Educational Needs and Preferences of Refugees

Table 8: Count Frequency of Each Category Looking carefully at the repeated mentions in data

Training Type	Verbatim Examples	Frequency
Formal Education	“Formal education,” “civil engineering”	8
Vocational Professional Training	“Professional training,” “professional maintenance (plumbing),” “Professional training in sewing,” “vocational training”	16
Language Learning	“English and French”	4
Commerce Entrepreneurship	“Commerce groundnut selling”	4
Online Learning / Digital	“Online course”	4
Other / Novel Skills	“waddling”	4

(source: field data 2025)

The data collected from the respondents regarding their preferred types of educational training reveal diverse interests that span formal academic learning, vocational skills, and professional development. From the responses, several thematic categories emerge, reflecting the educational aspirations of the refugee population. Several participants explicitly expressed a desire for formal academic learning, including “Formal education” and subject-specific programs such as “civil engineering.” These responses indicate that a portion of refugees seeks structured, accredited education that can provide recognized qualifications and potentially enhance employability in professional and technical sectors. The interest in civil engineering reflects an orientation toward specialized knowledge that may align with local labour market needs or personal career aspirations. A significant number of respondents emphasized vocational and professional training as their preferred educational path, citing areas such as “Professional training,” “Professional maintenance (plumbing),” “Professional training in sewing,” and general “vocational training.” These responses highlight the practical orientation of many refugees, who appear to prioritise skills that can be

directly applied to income – generating activities or self-employment. The repeated mentions of sewing, plumbing, and commerce – related skills suggest a focus on trades that require relatively low start – up capital and are accessible in local communities. The desire to learn languages, particularly “English and French,” was also mentioned. This indicates recognition among refugees that multilingual competencies are crucial for social integration, communication, and access to wider employment opportunities in host communities where multiple languages are used. Language training is therefore seen as both an educational and a socio – economic priority. A smaller subset of participants expressed interest in “online courses.” This reflects an awareness of digital learning platforms and the potential for flexible, self – paced education that can overcome traditional barriers to access, such as displacement, mobility, or time constraints. Some responses included less conventional skills such as “waddling,” which may indicate either a misinterpretation of the question, a culturally specific activity, or a unique personal interest. While this category is less common, it suggests the importance of allowing open-ended responses to capture diverse and unexpected educational aspirations.

Table 9: Frequency Distribution of Educational Training Preferences among Refugees (N = 40)

Training Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Vocational / Professional Training	16	40%
Formal Education	8	20%
Language Learning	4	10%
Commerce / Entrepreneurship	4	10%
Online / Digital Learning	4	10%
Other / Novel Skills	4	10%
Total	40	100%

The frequency – coded table shows that vocational and professional training dominates the educational preferences of the refugee population, comprising 40% of all responses. This emphasizes a strong orientation toward practical, income – generating skills. Formal education

follows at 20%, reflecting a substantial interest in academic and professional qualifications. Language learning, commerce, digital courses, and novel skills like “waddling” each account for 10% of responses, suggesting a diversity of educational aspirations that extend beyond purely economic considerations. This quantification reinforces the earlier thematic analysis and provides a clear empirical foundation for designing refugee education programs that integrate both vocational skill training and formal academic pathway.

The responses collectively highlight that refugees’ educational needs are multidimensional, encompassing formal academic pursuits, vocational skill acquisition, professional development, language learning, and digital competencies. This pattern underscores the necessity for refugee education programs to adopt a flexible, needs-based approach that integrates both formal and informal learning modalities. Vocational and professional training appears particularly salient, reflecting immediate economic and livelihood concerns, while formal education and language acquisition indicate longer-term aspirations for social mobility and integration. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing that refugee populations often balance short-term survival skills with longer – term career – oriented educational Program designers and policymakers should consider offering a modular educational approach that allows participants to engage with both practical skill training and formal academic pathways according to individual needs and aspirations.

Table 10: Sample distribution according to access to counselling services educational institutional/schools.

Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
yes	25	24.5%
no	77	75.5%

(source: field data 2025)

Table 10 presents the distribution of respondents according to their access to counselling services within their educational institutions or schools. The results indicate that only **25 respondents (24.5%)** reported having access to counselling services, whereas a substantial majority, **77 respondents (75.5%)**, indicated that such services were unavailable to them. The low proportion of learners with access to counselling underscores a significant gap in institutional support systems.

Counselling services play a critical role in addressing adult learners’ academic, emotional, and social challenges, particularly in contexts where learners may be facing displacement, socio-economic hardship, or adaptation difficulties. The fact that three-quarters of the respondents lack access to these services suggests a potential vulnerability in the educational environment, as students without adequate guidance and psychosocial support may experience reduced academic performance, lower retention, and diminished well – being. In line with international best practices in inclusive and sustainable education, these findings point to an urgent need for educational policymakers and institutional leaders to strengthen guidance and counselling provisions. Doing so could enhance learners’ coping strategies, decision-making skills, and personal development, thereby improving both individual outcomes and institutional performance.

Table 11: Statistical Distribution of Participation in Educational Programmes Designed Specifically for Refugees

Participation in Educational Programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participated – Primary school in Cameroon	4	8.3%
Participated – Thermic Centre	4	8.3%
Participated – AFROGIVENESS Movement	4	8.3%
Did not participate / No / Not at all / non	36	75.0%
Total	48	100%

(source: field data 2025)

The participants’ responses to the question on participation in educational programmes for refugees show a clear pattern of limited engagement, with some notable exceptions. Out of the 48 responses recorded (after accounting for repetitions), only a minority indicate participation, while the majority explicitly state non-participation. The specific programmes mentioned include primary school in Cameroon, educational programmes at the Thermic Centre, and initiatives organized by the ‘AFROGIVENESS Movement.’ Several respondents emphasized absolute non-participation using responses such as “No,” “Not at all,” or “non,” indicating both linguistic variation and consistent meaning. This distribution demonstrates that the majority of refugees in the sample have not had access to educational programmes specifically tailored for their needs. The low

participation rate highlights a significant gap in refugee – targeted educational interventions. Although some refugees have accessed primary schooling or programmes from non-governmental initiatives (e.g., AFROGIVENESS Movement, Thermic Centre), these opportunities appear limited and not universally accessible. The repeated references to “No” and “Not at all” reflect both the lack of available programmes and possibly barriers such as limited awareness, logistical constraints, or eligibility restrictions. The few instances of participation suggest that targeted interventions do exist, but coverage is sparse and fragmented. Programmes like those offered by the AFROGIVENESS Movement and Thermic Centre may represent valuable models of community-based refugee education, emphasizing practical accessibility and culturally relevant approaches. There is a clear need for awareness campaigns to ensure refugees are informed about available educational programmes. Governments and NGOs should scale up programmes like those at the Thermic Centre and AFROGIVENESS Movement to reach a broader refugee population. Develop refugee – focused curricula that address both foundational education (literacy, numeracy) and vocational skills to improve socio – economic integration. Facilitate refugee enrolment in national education systems (e.g., primary and secondary schools in Cameroon) while, providing supplemental support for language, social integration, and trauma-informed education. The verbatim responses reveal a marked disparity in educational access for refugees, with the majority reporting non-participation. Limited engagement with structured programmes underscores the need for strategic, inclusive, and accessible educational interventions. Targeted initiatives that combine formal education and community – based programmes offer promising avenues for bridging this gap, enhancing refugee learning outcomes, and fostering social inclusion.

Table 12: Statistical Distribution of Financial Support, Professional/Vocational Training, Employment/Livelihood, Psychosocial Support/Dialogue, and Institutional/Policy Support.

Theme	Sample Verbatim Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial Support	“Money for to be trained in wedding”, “Financial”, “Financial support will greatly help”, “lack of financial resources”, “Finance”	16	33.3%
Professional/Vocational Training	“Professional training in all the domains”, “money and training materials”, “money for to be trained in wedding” “moyens financiers”	12	25.0%
Employment/Livelihood Opportunities	“Look for a profitable job”, “I done the prostitution and commercial”	8	16.7%
Psychosocial Support / Dialogue / Relocation	“dialogue”, “Sustainable solution is to travel to the United States of America”	6	12.5%
Institutional / Policy Support	“Lack of government subventions and some NGOs towards refugees”	4	8.3%
Total		46	100%

(source: field data 2025)

The responses from refugees regarding the resources and interventions needed to overcome their current challenges reveal four dominant thematic areas: financial support, professional/vocational training, employment opportunities, and psychosocial support through dialogue or relocation. These themes are consistently reflected across the multiple verbatim entries, indicating persistent and overlapping needs among the refugee population. Frequencies were calculated based on the number of unique mentions in the repeated verbatim responses. Percentages reflect each theme’s proportion of total responses, providing a quantitative perspective on refugees’ prioritized needs. The table visually demonstrates that financial support (33.3%) and vocational/professional training (25%) are the most frequently cited needs, highlighting the economic and skills – development gaps among the refugee population. A substantial proportion of the respondents emphasized the need for financial resources as a critical means of overcoming difficulties. Terms such as “money,” “financial support will greatly help,” “lack of financial resources,” and “finance” appeared repeatedly in the dataset. This suggests that economic insecurity is a primary barrier to refugee

empowerment, consistent with literature indicating that financial constraints hinder access to education, training, and livelihood opportunities. The repeated emphasis indicates that refugees perceive monetary support as both an immediate relief and a prerequisite for accessing other forms of assistance. Several responses highlighted the desire for skills development, particularly in vocational domains. Statements like “money for to be trained in wedding [craft],” “professional training in all the domains,” and “money and training materials” illustrate a clear interest in acquiring skills that can generate sustainable income. This aligns with the broader evidence that targeted vocational training enhances economic self-sufficiency among refugee populations. The specificity of training requests (e.g., wedding – related services) reflects both practical aspirations and potential local market opportunities. Closely linked to financial and training needs, some respondents explicitly mentioned seeking “a profitable job” or expressed a willingness to engage in commerce. This underscores the interdependency between skill acquisition and economic opportunity. Notably, one respondent referenced engagement in “prostitution and commercial” activities, highlighting the precarious and sometimes exploitative avenues refugees may pursue when formal support is lacking. Such responses emphasize the urgency of structured livelihood programs that provide safe, sustainable income-generating opportunities. A smaller, yet significant subset of responses suggested non-material solutions, including “dialogue” and “sustainable solution is to travel to the United States of America.” These reflect psychosocial needs, aspirations for political or social advocacy, and the desire for broader systemic or international interventions. The mention of dialogue may indicate a need for conflict resolution, advocacy platforms, or inclusion in decision-making processes that affect refugee welfare. Several responses pointed to structural shortcomings, such as “lack of government subventions and some NGOs towards refugees.” This indicates an awareness among refugees of the broader systemic and institutional deficiencies that limit access to support services. The repetition of this concern emphasizes the need for coordinated policy interventions and targeted programmatic support.

4.3 Analysis of Refugees' Challenges in Accessing Education and Skills Development

Table 13: Statistical Distribution of Challenges Faced by Refugees in Accessing Education and Skills

Theme	Verbatim Examples	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial Constraints	"money", "financial problems", "funding problems", "money for training fees", "need of financial means"	25	52.1%
Information/Orientation Gaps	"Information from plan international", "Lack of orientation"	6	12.5%
Language Barriers	"language", "Money and language", "language, money, and lack of work"	6	12.5%
Social Discrimination	"There is disrespect, segregation but it cannot finish", "disrespect given that you are not Cameroonian"	4	8.3%
Geographical/Distance Barriers	"Distance, money disrespect given that you are not Cameroonian"	3	6.3%
Other / Not Specified	N/A	2	4.2%
Total Responses		46	100%

(source: field data 2025)

The responses provided by the refugees reflect multiple barriers to education and skill acquisition. These challenges can be categorized thematically into financial constraints, information and orientation gaps, language barriers, social discrimination, and geographical/distance-related obstacles. Financial constraints are the dominant challenge, appearing in over half of the responses (52.1%), highlighting the central role of economic barriers in limiting access to education and skill acquisition. Information gaps and language barriers each account for 12.5% of responses, reflecting secondary challenges related to awareness of programs and communication. Social discrimination and distance/geographical barriers affect a smaller but still significant portion of refugees (8.3%

and 6.3%, respectively). A very small number of responses (4.2%) could not be categorized explicitly. The most recurrent theme across the verbatim responses is financial difficulty, explicitly mentioned in over half of the responses (e.g., "money," "financial problems," "funding problems," "need of financial means," "money for training fees").

This indicates that refugees face severe economic barriers that limit their access to both formal education and vocational or professional training. The repetitive emphasis on monetary challenges highlights that cost of training, materials, and educational fees constitutes the primary obstacle to skill acquisition. Several respondents highlighted the lack of information and orientation, referencing the need for guidance (e.g., "Information from plan international," "Lack of orientation"). This suggests that even when opportunities exist, refugees may not be fully aware of available programs, application procedures, or institutional support. This gap can lead to underutilization of educational programs and delays in skill acquisition. Language emerged as a notable challenge, with multiple respondents citing it as a barrier to learning ("language," "Money and language," "language, money, and lack of work"). Refugees, particularly those whose first language differs from the host country, may face difficulties understanding instruction, communicating with educators, or accessing learning materials, which can impede both formal education and vocational training. Some respondents reported experiences of social discrimination and disrespect in educational settings (e.g., "there is disrespect, segregation but it cannot finish," "disrespect given that you are not Cameroonian"). This points to the psychosocial and cultural barriers that exacerbate educational exclusion, highlighting the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive educational practices.

A few respondents mentioned distance as a limiting factor ("distance, money, disrespect given that you are not Cameroonian"). Physical access to educational institutions or training centres can be a significant barrier, particularly when combined with financial limitations for transportation or relocation. The refugee responses illustrate a multifaceted set of barriers to education and skills development. While financial constraints dominate, non-monetary factors such as lack of information, language difficulties, social discrimination, and geographic inaccessibility also play a critical role. These findings align with existing literature on refugee education, which emphasizes that economic, structural, and sociocultural factors interact to limit educational participation and skill acquisition.

In practical terms, addressing these challenges requires integrated interventions, including: Financial support programs (scholarships, training subsidies, provision of materials). Information dissemination and orientation services to improve awareness of educational opportunities. Language support programs, such as intensive language courses or bilingual instruction. Anti-discrimination policies and inclusive pedagogical practices to reduce social barriers. Local or decentralized training centres to minimize distance-related challenges. Overall, these verbatim responses underscore that refugee access to education and skill-building is not determined solely by individual motivation but is heavily mediated by structural, social, and economic factors.

Table 14: Statistical Distribution of Impact of Education on Refugees' Life and Career Goals

Theme	Sample Verbatim	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive Effects	“Yes, it prepares me for a better future”; “This has affected my life positively”; “Yes I know what I have to do tomorrow”	4	20%
Negative Effects / Psychosocial Impact	“Early pregnancy and prostitution”; “Stress”; “He who has lived a bad experience will never forget”; “Forceful displacement and lack of mental mastery”	6	30%
Barriers / Challenges	“All is frustrating because I am not going to school”; “No financial assistance”; “The teachers’ way of speaking is different from ours which means we do not understand well”; “War in our country affected everyone”; “Yes due to war”	10	50%
Total	—	20	100%

(source: field data 2025)

The responses to the question “Has access to education affected your life and career goals as a refugee? How?” reveal a mixed yet insightful landscape of experiences. Analysis of the verbatim statements highlights four main sub-themes: positive impact, negative impact, barriers to education, and psychosocial consequences of displacement. Several respondents indicated that education positively shaped their life perspectives and career aspirations. Statements such as “yes,

it prepares me for a better future” and “this has affected my life positively” suggest that access to education equips refugees with a sense of direction and preparedness for future opportunities. This aligns with research demonstrating that educational access fosters self-efficacy, hope, and resilience, which are critical for displaced populations in planning their future careers. Additionally, the remark “yes I know what I have to do tomorrow” reflects the acquisition of structured life skills and daily planning competencies through education, which can enhance agency even under displacement. Other responses highlight structural and contextual challenges that hinder educational impact. For instance, statements like “All is frustrating because I am not going to school” and “no financial assistance” indicate that lack of resources, financial constraints, and systemic limitations prevent some refugees from benefiting fully from education. Similarly, “the teachers’ way of speaking is different from ours which means we do not understand well” points to language barriers and cultural mismatches in the educational environment, consistent with findings that refugee learners often struggle with curriculum and instructional language differences.

A subset of respondents highlighted the adverse social and psychological effects linked to disrupted education and displacement. For example, statements such as “Early pregnancy and prostitution”, “Stress”, and “Forceful displacement and lack of mental mastery” illustrate how displacement and limited educational access exacerbate vulnerability to risky behaviours, psychological strain, and reduced mental well-being. Moreover, remarks like “He who has lived a bad experience will never forget” underscore the lasting trauma associated with conflict, which can hinder learning engagement and career planning. Several responses directly attribute life disruptions to conflict-related displacement, e.g., “war in our country affected everyone” and “yes due to war”. These statements highlight that for many refugees; education is not only a tool for personal development but also a buffer against the long – term socioeconomic and psychological consequences of war. Education, when accessible, may therefore serve as a protective factor that restores routine, instils hope, and mitigates some of the life disruptions caused by forced migration. Overall, the verbatim responses reveal a dual impact of education on refugees’ lives: while it can positively influence future planning, skill acquisition, and resilience, barriers such as financial constraints, language differences, and psychosocial stressors may undermine these benefits. The findings underscore the critical need for refugee – sensitive educational programs that address both material and psychosocial barriers to maximize positive outcomes. Importantly, the data reflect that education

cannot be viewed in isolation; its impact is intertwined with broader humanitarian, social, and cultural factors affecting refugee life trajectories.

4.4 Thematic Analysis of Suggested Improvements to Refugee Education Programs

Table 15: Statistical Distribution of Practical Training & Materials, Professional Training & Employment, Teaching Methods & Teamwork, and Accessibility/Expansion of Education.

Theme		Sample Verbatim	Frequency (Number Mentions)	Percentage of Total Mentions (%)
Practical Training & Materials		“You need the material that allow you to do the practice”, “More of practical training”	8	22%
Professional Training & Employment		“Professional training”, “More training for better job opportunities”, “More training that can permit me to have work”	18	50%
Teaching Methods & Teamwork		“Work as team, radically change the teaching methods”	4	11%
Accessibility/Expansion of Education		“Train more children”, “For the brothers and sisters to be well trained”	6	17%
Total mentions:		36		

The verbatim responses provided by the refugee participants indicate several recurring themes regarding the improvements they perceive as necessary in educational institutions and programs. A frequency – coded qualitative examination reveals four prominent themes: practical training and resources, professional skills development, teaching methods and teamwork, and accessibility/expansion of education. The majority of participants (50%) emphasized professional and vocational training, reflecting a strong focus on employability and practical career outcomes.

Practical training and access to materials (22%) were also highlighted, showing the importance of hands – on learning. Teaching methods and teamwork accounted for 11%, indicating some concern about pedagogy, while expansion and accessibility (17%) reflect community – oriented educational needs. This table visually quantifies the main improvement suggestions and strengthens the descriptive analysis by integrating clear, frequency – based evidence. A substantial number of respondents emphasized the need for practical training and adequate materials for hands-on learning. Statements such as “You need the material that allow you to do the practice” and “More of practical training” were repeated multiple times, highlighting a critical perception that theoretical instruction alone is insufficient for skill acquisition. This aligns with experiential learning theories, which stress that active engagement and practice are essential for knowledge internalisation, particularly in vocational or skill – based education. For refugee populations, who often seek employable skills to improve livelihood opportunities, the lack of materials and practical exposure can be a significant barrier to effective learning.

The second major theme is the demand for professional and vocational training that leads directly to better job prospects. Verbatims such as “More training for better job opportunities”, “More training that can permit me to have work”, and repeated mentions of “Professional training” illustrate a strong orientation towards employability. This suggests that refugees prioritize education as a pathway to financial independence and social integration. The repetition of these responses indicates that professional and vocational training is perceived as the most tangible outcome of education, which resonates with human capital theory, emphasizing investment in skills as a means to improve economic productivity. Several participants highlighted the need to improve pedagogical approaches and encourage teamwork. Statements like “Work as team, radically change the teaching methods” suggest dissatisfaction with current instructional strategies, which may be predominantly didactic or non – collaborative. Refugees expressed a desire for innovative, participatory, and interactive teaching methods that accommodate diverse backgrounds and learning paces. This is consistent with socio – constructivist approaches, which argue that learning is most effective when it is collaborative and contextually meaningful.

Another theme emerging from the data relates to expanding access to education for both children and adults. Responses such as “Train more children” and “For the brothers and sisters to be well trained” indicate a concern for broader inclusivity and the community – level impact of education.

This underscores the collective orientation of educational needs among refugee populations, suggesting that improving individual skills is intertwined with improving opportunities for family and community members. Overall, the verbatim responses point to a multifaceted understanding of what constitutes “improved education” for refugees. The participants prioritize practical, hands – on learning, professional and employable skills, interactive teaching methods, and broader access to educational opportunities. These preferences reflect both immediate economic aspirations and long – term community development goals. The repeated emphasis on professional training and practical learning materials indicates that educational programs must be designed not only to deliver knowledge but also to equip refugees with skills that can directly improve their livelihoods. The responses also highlight the importance of adapting educational content and methodology to the specific context and lived experiences of refugees, which may differ significantly from mainstream learners. Programs that combine vocational skills, practical experience, collaborative learning, and inclusive access are likely to produce the most meaningful outcomes, both in terms of employability and psychosocial development.

4.5 Interpretative analysis of the qualitative data from the interview guide ‘

The interview with Mr. Yambassa, president of the Comité des Réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun (CRCC), sheds light on the organization, challenges, and educational opportunities of refugees in Cameroon. His discourse oscillates between descriptive accounts (structure of CRCC, partnerships) and normative statements (value of education, recommendations). Through his words, education emerges not merely as a service but as a transformative and existential necessity for displaced populations.

4.5.1 Organisational Structure and Representation

Mr. Yambassa underscores that the CRCC is built on principles of inclusivity and representation. With seven core members and 42 nationalities represented, the committee reflects a “*collective governance model*”. ensuring that refugees’ voices are channelled from the communal to the central level. This structure illustrates a form of “*participatory governance in exile*”, where displaced people reconstruct community leadership and create a sense of belonging despite displacement. It also reveals a capacity for “*self – organisation and resilience.*”

4.5.2 Education as Survival and Reconstruction

Repeatedly, education is framed as *the only durable resource* in contrast to food, clothing, or financial aid which eventually “s’épuisent.” Education is seen as: “*a tool for rebuilding lives after trauma (“retenir son nom, son numéro de téléphone”), a gateway to dignity and integration, and a foundation for intergenerational transformation (“préparer l’avenir des enfants”).*” Education here is conceptualized beyond literacy or schooling, it becomes an existential anchor. Refugees’ narratives about learning to read, write, or even remember dates of birth reflect the psychosocial healing dimension of education, not only its economic utility.

4.5.3 Educational Opportunities and Stakeholder Collaboration

The interview highlights strong collaboration between: “*Government (open borders, free education), UNHCR and Plan Cameroun (school placement, financial and logistical support), NGOs (distribution of kits, supplementary training centers).*”: These multi – actor partnerships embody a hybrid model of humanitarian governance, where state institutions, international organizations, and local civil society converge. Importantly, Mr. Yambassa emphasizes that refugees are not segregated but integrated into the same education system as nationals—a discourse of equity and social cohesion.

4.5.4 Community Responsibility and Parent Engagement

The respondent stresses the role of “*refugee parents in sustaining education*”. He cautions against transforming minor school discipline cases into intercommunity conflicts, insisting that parents must trust teachers and encourage children’s learning.” This reflects an internal critique of refugee community behaviors. By urging responsibility, he frames education not only as an institutional responsibility but as a shared community duty, placing agency back into refugees’ hands rather than portraying them as passive aid recipients.

4.5.5 Education as Dignity and Future Security

The metaphors used “*l’école c’est comme planter des graines,*” “*l’école donne de la dignité*” emphasises the symbolic and moral weight of education. Even for basic jobs, literacy is seen as a minimum requirement.” These metaphors signify a cultural and ethical valuation of education. It

is not framed solely in economic terms, but as a human right, a moral obligation, and a seed for long-term self-reliance.

4.5.6 Discursive Features

From a discourse perspective, Mr. Yambassa’s testimony blends: “*Gratitude discourse: repeated thanks to the Cameroonian government, Plan Cameroun, and NGOs. Legitimacy discourse: presenting certified teachers, official recognition, and government collaboration to underline credibility. Empowerment discourse: stressing agency, courage, and responsibility of refugees to engage in education.*” This hybrid discourse allows him to maintain diplomatic respect towards host institutions while reasserting refugee agency. It situates refugees not as passive recipients of charity, but as partners in their own educational development.

The interview provides a rich narrative of resilience, integration, and community-driven governance in refugee education. Interpreted qualitatively, it highlights three key insights: Education as Existential Capital that is unlike material aid, education constitutes a durable resource that empowers individuals and communities to reconstruct identity, dignity, and future security. The partnership between the state, international actors, and NGOs demonstrates a multi – levelled governance approach to refugee education that fosters both inclusion and sustainability. Refugees are not depicted as victims only, but as actors with responsibility toward their children’s future, their community’s integration, and their own lifelong learning. Thus, education emerges as the “*clé du changement*” not only in the respondent’s conclusion but also as the interpretive core of the narrative: a pathway from survival to dignity, from marginality to citizenship, and from dependency to autonomy.

Table 16: Thematic Frequency-Coded Table – Dr. BIH Adelaide’s Interview

Theme	Illustrative Statements	Frequency (mentions/instances)
Teacher Training & Volunteering	Teachers are qualified, government-trained, and volunteer; courses in psychology of learners; state-certified professionals support literacy programs.	3
Psychological Support	Voluntary therapy sessions offered by Dr. BIH and co-founder (psychologist) to help refugees cope with trauma and focus on skills.	2
Vocational Training Projects	2021 photography project (14 refugees, cameras, certificates); 2022 soap & menthol production for women (starter kits provided).	4
Financial Constraints	Photography project cost 2–3 million CFA; lack of financing limits scale and sustainability of training initiatives.	2
Integration & Community Engagement	Refugees prefer living in communities; challenges: no phones, isolation, need for fieldwork to locate them; reliance on community heads.	3
Language & Literacy Barriers	Literacy is key; lack of reading/communication skills isolates refugees and prevents awareness of opportunities.	2
Future Educational Opportunities	Scholarships from AFROGIVENESS, PLAN International/HDRO, and GIZ; opportunities exist if refugees are motivated; skills complement formal degrees.	4
Stakeholder Collaboration	Need for government to collaborate with grassroots NGOs; NGOs lack visibility and funding; grassroots actors offer free/subsidized health and education.	3
Recommendations for Improvement	Expand financing; support farming, carpentry, mechanics, crafts; focus on refugee autonomy and self-reliance.	3

Summary of Frequencies

Most frequent themes (4 mentions): Vocational training projects, Future educational opportunities. Moderately frequent themes (3 mentions): Teacher training, Integration/community engagement, Stakeholder collaboration, Recommendations. Less frequent but significant (2 mentions): Psychological support, financial constraints, Language/literacy barriers

4.6 Interpretative Analysis of the Interview with Dr. BIH Adelaide

The interview with Dr. BIH Adelaide provides valuable insights into the dynamics of refugee education, skills development, and integration support. Drawing from her experiences with literacy programs and vocational training initiatives, the transcript highlights both the opportunities and the challenges involved in promoting sustainable skills education for displaced populations. This analysis adopts an interpretative qualitative approach, emphasizing meaning – making and the underlying social realities reflected in her discourse.

4.6.1 Teachers’ Training and Pedagogical Support

Dr. BIH emphasizes that *“the literacy program is largely staffed by qualified government teachers who volunteer. Their professional backgrounds including degrees in education and courses in learner psychology suggest that while refugee – focused training may not be specialized, the educators possess transferable pedagogical competencies.”* The voluntary nature of teaching reflects both resilience and systemic gaps: while the commitment of professionals ensures quality instruction, reliance on unpaid efforts reveals a lack of institutionalized, refugee – specific teacher training. Her mention of psychological support services (through herself and a psychologist co-founder) highlights an awareness of trauma – informed pedagogy, yet these services remain ad hoc rather than embedded in formal programming.

4.6.2 Sustainable Skills Education: Initiatives and Challenges

Dr. BIH recounts several vocational projects: *“Photography project (2021): 14 refugees trained, provided with cameras, and enabled to generate income through events. Soap and menthol production (2022): Women trained in income – generating skills, with starter kits provided. These interventions demonstrate a practice-oriented, livelihood-based model that addresses unemployment and fosters autonomy. However, sustainability is constrained by financial limitations; a single photography project costs between 2–3 million CFA, indicating high resource demands.”* The interviewee frames skills education as a pathway to economic self – reliance and psychosocial empowerment. Yet, she also reveals structural dependency on donor support. The projects’ short duration (three days) raises questions about long – term impact and depth of skills acquisition, though the provision of materials (cameras, starter kits) enhances continuity.

4.6.3 Refugee Integration and Barriers

“Integration challenges surface repeatedly. Refugees often leave camps to live in communities, where they struggle with isolation, limited communication, and lack of access to technology (e.g., phones). Language emerges as a central barrier, making literacy education crucial for broader integration.” Her discourse highlights the intersecting barriers of linguistic exclusion, economic precarity, and social isolation. Literacy is positioned not only as an academic skill but as a gateway to rights, resources, and community belonging. The emphasis on fieldwork to locate and engage refugees underscores the grassroots, relational dimension of support efforts.

4.6.4 Future Opportunities for Refugee Education

The interviewee paints an optimistic picture of educational opportunities, citing organizations such as *“AFROGIVENESS, PLAN International/HDRO, and GIZ offering scholarships. These programs expand horizons beyond immediate survival to higher education and professional development.”* This optimism reflects a narrative of possibility: refugees’ futures are not foreclosed but contingent on access to existing opportunities. However, her statement that *“almost everybody rolling a bag has a degree”* points to the credential – employment mismatch, where formal education does not guarantee livelihood security. Hence, skills training is positioned as complementary, ensuring employability even when degrees fail to translate into jobs.

4.6.5 Stakeholder Collaboration

Dr. BIH stresses the importance of *“government collaboration with grassroots NGOs, which, despite proximity to refugees, often suffer from inadequate funding and recognition. She advocates for leveraging community – based actors to improve health, education, and training services.”* Her call reflects a bottom-up governance model, emphasising local ownership and subsidiarity. It critiques the current imbalance where grassroots actors bear responsibility but lack resources. This resonates with wider debates in development studies on the need for *multi-stakeholder partnerships* and *capacity strengthening*.

4.7 Research Inputs for Educational Improvement

Her recommendations highlight: *“Expanding financing to support sustainable vocational training (e.g., carpentry, farming, mechanics, handicrafts). Prioritising projects that foster refugees’*

financial autonomy. Scaling government and international organisational support to local initiatives.” The underlying assumption is that education should be functional, practical, and economically empowering. This shifts refugee education away from purely academic trajectories toward integrated models of skills, entrepreneurship, and livelihood security (sustainable).

The interview with Dr. BIH Adelaide illuminates the tensions and possibilities within refugee education. On one hand, it reveals remarkable grassroots innovation volunteer-led literacy programs, community-based vocational projects, and psychological support. On the other, it underscores systemic fragilities: insufficient funding, limited specialization in refugee pedagogy, and structural barriers to integration. From an interpretative perspective, her discourse constructs education not merely as formal schooling but as a holistic ecosystem combining literacy, skills, psychological well-being, and livelihood support. Ultimately, the future of refugee education, in her vision, depends on cross-sector collaboration, sustainable financing, and practical skills development that empower refugees to move from dependency to autonomy.

The analysis presented in this chapter has provided a comprehensive understanding of the demographic profile, educational background, access to learning opportunities, and lived experiences of refugees in Cameroon. The findings reveal a predominantly youthful population with a slight female majority, largely originating from the Central African Republic, and with most having resided in Cameroon for fewer than ten years. This demographic composition highlights both the potential and the urgency of designing education programs that are gender-sensitive, youth – focused, and responsive to diverse cultural and linguistic needs.

The results further show that while many refugees have attained at least basic levels of education, access to higher education, vocational training, and sustainable skill development remains limited. Financial constraints, language barriers, social discrimination, and lack of adequate resources consistently emerged as the most pressing challenges hindering participation in education. These barriers are compounded by the fact that more than two-thirds of respondents rated their access to education facilities as low or very low, while half reported never experiencing quality education. Such findings underscore deep structural inequities that demand urgent and coordinated intervention. Nevertheless, the data also point to resilience and aspiration among refugees. Many expressed interests in vocational and professional training, language learning, and entrepreneurial

skills, reflecting both immediate livelihood needs and longer-term integration goals. Practical training, access to materials, and innovative teaching methods were frequently cited as areas requiring improvement. Qualitative accounts further revealed the existential role of education not only as a tool for employability but also as a means of restoring dignity, identity, and hope in the aftermath of displacement. In summary, this chapter has demonstrated that refugee education in Cameroon is characterized by significant challenges but also by opportunities for transformative intervention. Addressing financial barriers, expanding vocational and sustainable skills training, improving teaching quality, and strengthening institutional support systems such as counselling services are central to achieving equitable educational outcomes. The insights from both quantitative data and qualitative narratives provide a strong foundation for the subsequent chapter, which will discuss these findings in relation to existing literature and policy frameworks, and propose recommendations for enhancing sustainable and inclusive refugee education.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research, entitled “*Refugee Education for the Acquisition of Sustainable Development Skills; the Case of Adult Refugees Living in Yaoundé*”, was undertaken within a context marked by humanitarian urgency and the educational challenges faced by displaced populations. Its main objective was to analyse the mechanisms through which adult refugees in Yaoundé acquire sustainable development skills, to identify the difficulties they encounter, and to propose practical recommendations for improving existing programs. This conclusion provides a synthetic overview of the key elements of the study: the restatement of the research problem, the synthesis of the literature and theoretical backings, the summary of the methodology, the main results and discussions, followed by general implications and future research perspectives.

The problem addressed by this study stems from a simple yet troubling observation: despite the recognized importance of education in processes of integration and empowerment, adult refugees living in Yaoundé face considerable obstacles in accessing suitable training opportunities. Cameroon hosts a growing number of refugees, especially from the Central African Republic and Nigeria. However, the educational programs available to them remain fragmented, poorly adapted to their socio-cultural realities, and insufficiently oriented towards the acquisition of practical skills linked to sustainable development.

This inadequacy has the consequence of keeping a large number of refugees in situations of dependency, economic precariousness, and social exclusion. Yet, international literature and development policies remind us that education is an essential tool for resilience, social cohesion, and civic participation. The central research question, therefore, was: how do adult refugees in Yaoundé acquire sustainable development skills, and to what extent do the existing programs meet their specific needs?

The literature review anchored the study in a solid theoretical framework. Several educational approaches were mobilised: John Stacy Adams’s theory of equity, which connects social justice concerns with educational practice and R. Edward Freeman’s Stakeholder theory which provides a comprehensive framework for analysing the complex network of actors involved in refugee education. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to analyse and improve

educational programs by ensuring equitable access, motivation, and collaboration among all involved actors or parties.

From an empirical standpoint, previous studies revealed several points: refugee education is a key factor for social and economic integration, but it is often hindered by linguistic, financial, legal, and psychological barriers. Education for sustainable development (ESD) plays a strategic role in promoting autonomy, environmental awareness, solidarity, and community resilience. Best practices identified elsewhere emphasize non-formal learning, contextualized vocational training, the strengthening of local capacities, and the involvement of host communities. Thus, the literature confirmed the relevance of focusing this research on the acquisition of sustainable skills by adult refugees in Yaoundé, while highlighting that few empirical studies had yet documented this specific case.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Geographically, it focused on adult refugees living in the Yaoundé II district; precisely the Mbankolo neighbourhood, which hosts a large number of Central African and Nigerian refugees. The target population consisted of 102 participants, including 71 from the Central African Republic and 31 from Nigeria.

The data collection tools included questionnaires administered to refugees to identify their educational paths, skill's needs, and the barriers they face. Semi-structured interviews with NGO officials, institutional actors, and teachers to capture collective perceptions. This methodology provided both quantitative data illustrating the magnitude of the needs and gaps, and qualitative insights offering a deeper understanding of lived experiences. Triangulation of these sources enhanced the reliability and validity of the results.

The findings of the research revealed several major points. Firstly, although programs exist, they are insufficiently accessible and unevenly distributed. Formal training opportunities are scarce, costly, or poorly suited to the specific needs of adult refugees. Non-formal programs, often implemented by NGOs, are more flexible but remain too limited in scope. Secondly, refugees face significant language barriers, especially those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. Financial difficulties, the lack of recognition of prior qualifications, social discrimination, and psychological trauma further exacerbate their vulnerability. Women in

particular face additional challenges related to domestic responsibilities and cultural norms. Thirdly, participants expressed a strong interest in practical skills linked to daily life and economic integration: entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, sewing, mechanics, carpentry, welding, crafts, agriculture, basic computer skills, and language proficiency in French or English. These preferences indicate that skill acquisition must meet immediate subsistence needs while preparing for long-term autonomy. Furthermore, the study confirmed that ESD not only improves living conditions but also fosters social cohesion between refugees and host communities. Educational initiatives incorporating environmental, social, and economic dimensions strengthen refugees' capacity to adapt and actively contribute to local development. Lastly, although Cameroon's policy framework is aligned with international norms, its implementation remains incomplete. Educational integration mechanisms often remain theoretical and lack concrete means. Collaboration between institutional actors and international partners is insufficiently coordinated.

The discussion of this study highlights the opportunities, challenges, and implications surrounding refugee education for sustainable development skills in Yaoundé. The findings confirm that while some educational initiatives exist, they remain limited in scope and accessibility. Formal training programs are scarce, often expensive, and poorly adapted to the realities of adult refugees. In contrast, non-formal programs implemented by NGOs provide more flexible opportunities but cover only a small portion of the refugee population.

The study reveals that refugees face numerous barriers that hinder their ability to participate in education and training. Language differences, financial hardship, lack of recognition of prior qualifications, and social discrimination were recurrent themes. In addition, psychological trauma and cultural expectations, particularly for women, further restrict access to learning opportunities. These barriers combine to perpetuate economic dependence and social exclusion.

Despite these challenges, the research shows that refugees are highly motivated to acquire practical skills that can improve their livelihoods and foster self – reliance. Skills such as entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, sewing, mechanics, computer literacy, and language proficiency are viewed as essential for both immediate survival and long-term integration. This reflects a pragmatic orientation towards education, where learning is valued not for its abstract benefits but for its direct application in daily life and economic activities.

Another key outcome is the recognition of the positive role played by Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Programs that integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions not only improve refugees' living conditions but also strengthen social cohesion between refugee populations and host communities. By promoting shared values of resilience and sustainability, ESD initiatives contribute to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

At the institutional and policy level, the study found significant gaps. Although Cameroon's framework for refugee education aligns with international standards, implementation remains weak. A lack of resources, poor coordination among stakeholders, and limited political commitment reduce the effectiveness of existing strategies. This calls for stronger collaboration between government institutions, NGOs, international agencies, and host communities.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that education is both a right and a necessity for refugees. When well-designed, it can transform vulnerability into resilience and dependence into autonomy. However, without adequate structures, policies, and resources, the transformative potential of refugee education remains underutilized.

Several implications can be drawn from this study. For policymakers, they need to design more flexible educational programs integrated into the national system, explicitly addressing the needs of adult refugees. For practitioners and NGOs, the importance of developing short-term, practice-oriented training closely linked to local employment dynamics. For researchers, the opportunity to carry out comparative studies in other cities in Cameroon or across Africa, in order to better understand commonalities and specificities in refugee educational experiences. The study also calls for stronger gender-sensitive approaches, the expansion of psychosocial support, and the fostering of closer partnerships between refugees, host communities, public institutions, and international donors.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that education represents a true bridge between exile and integration, between vulnerability and resilience. For adult refugees in Yaoundé, acquiring sustainable development skills is not merely an academic requirement but an essential condition for restoring their dignity, integrating into the host society, and contributing to its development.

The issue remains complex, as it simultaneously involves public policies, available resources, social dynamics, and individual experiences. Nevertheless, the findings confirm that investing in refugee education is not a cost, but a strategic investment in cohesion, peace, and sustainability.

Thus, this research is part of a broader dynamic aimed at “leaving no one behind,” in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. It advocates for an inclusive, contextualized, and skills-oriented education, capable of transforming refugees from passive beneficiaries of aid into active agents of their own future and of the development of their host community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Authorization

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix-Travail-Patrie ***** UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I ***** FACULTE DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION ***** DEPARTEMENT DE CURRICULA ET EVALUATION *****		REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON Peace-Work-Fatherland ***** UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I ***** FACULTY OF EDUCATION ***** DEPARTEMENT OF CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION *****
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N° _____ UYI/FSE/VDSSE/

AUTORISATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, **Professeur Barnabé MBALA ZE**, Doyen de la Faculté des Sciences de l'éducation de l'Université de Yaoundé I, certifie que **Madame JAIKA JOYCE TANL**, matricule **15V3987**, est étudiante en Master II à la Faculté des Sciences de l'Education, Département : **Curricula et Evaluation**, Option: **Management de l'Education**.

L'intéressée doit effectuer des travaux de recherche en vue de l'obtention de son diplôme de Master. Elle travaille sous la direction du **Professeur BIKOI FELIX**, Professeurs des Universités, et son sujet porte sur : *«Refugee Education For Asustainable Development : Case Of Refugee Camps In The East Region.»*

Je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir mettre à sa disposition toutes les informations, susceptibles de l'aider.

En foi de quoi, cette attestation de recherche lui est délivrée pour valoir et servir ce que de droit.

Fait à Yaoundé, le 26.03.2013

Pour Le Doyen, Par ordre



D. Quality of Education

11. Do you have easy access to learning materials (textbooks, computer etc.)?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

E. Sustainable Development

12. Have you heard of the concept “sustainable development”?

Yes No

13. Have you received training on any other skill out of the subjects taught in school? If yes, please specify

Yes No

Specify _____

F. Educational needs and preferences

14. What type of educational training would like to get?

15. Do you have access to counselling services in your educational institution/school?

Yes No

G. Challenges and solutions

16. What are the difficulties you face in getting education and other skills/abilities?

17. What do you need that would help you overcome these difficulties?

18. Have you participated in any educational programs designed specifically for refugees? Which one?

Thank you!

Research Questionnaire Adult Learners (French version)

Chers répondants, veuillez remplir ce questionnaire. Vos réponses permettront au chercheur de connaître votre opinion sur l'éducation dispensée aux réfugiés et d'évaluer son utilité pour eux/vous.

Évitez toute réponse susceptible de révéler votre identité.

Veuillez cocher (✓) ou fournir des explications supplémentaires si nécessaire.

A. Informations démographiques

1. Sexe : Homme Femme
2. Tranche d'âge : 18-20 ; 21-25 ; 26-30 ; 31 ans et plus
3. Pays d'origine : République centrafricaine Nigéria
4. Je suis au Cameroun depuis : 1 à 5 ans 6 à 10 ans plus de 10 ans

B. Niveau d'études

5. Quel est votre niveau d'études le plus élevé ?

Primaire Secondaire Supérieur Professionnel

6. Étiez-vous scolarisé dans votre pays d'origine avant de devenir réfugié ?

Oui Non

7. Êtes-vous actuellement inscrit dans une école/un établissement d'enseignement ?

Oui Non

8. Dans quel type d'établissement d'enseignement êtes-vous inscrit ?

École publique École privée Centre de formation professionnelle Éducation non formelle

C. Accès à l'éducation

9. Quels sont les principaux obstacles/difficultés que vous rencontrez pour accéder à l'éducation ?

Finances Langue Distance Manque de ressources

10. Y a-t-il des matières ou des compétences spécifiques que vous aimeriez apprendre, mais que vous ne pouvez pas acquérir ? Si oui, veuillez préciser.

Oui Non

Préciser _____

D. Qualité de l'éducation

11. Avez-vous facilement accès au matériel pédagogique (manuels scolaires, ordinateur, etc.) ?

Toujours Souvent Parfois Rarement Jamais

E. Développement durable

12. Avez-vous entendu parler du concept de « développement durable » ?

Oui Non

13. Avez-vous suivi une formation sur d'autres compétences en dehors des matières enseignées à l'école ? Si oui, veuillez préciser

Oui Non

Précisez _____

F. Besoins et préférences en matière d'éducation

14. Quel type de formation souhaitez-vous suivre ? _____

15. Avez-vous accès à des services de conseil dans votre établissement d'enseignement/école ?

Oui Non

G. Défis et solutions

16. Quelles difficultés rencontrez-vous pour accéder à l'éducation et acquérir d'autres compétences/aptitudes ?

17. De quoi auriez-vous besoin pour surmonter ces difficultés ?

18. Avez-vous participé à des programmes éducatifs spécialement conçus pour les réfugiés ?
Lequel ?

Merci !

Appendix 3: Interview questions for stakeholders

a. Long – term goals

1. What are the long – term benefits and challenges of providing sustainable skills education to refugees from the perspective of stakeholders?
2. How do you envisage the future of educational opportunities for refugees?

b. Collaboration and improvement

3. How can stakeholders (government, NGOs, community members, educators) cooperate more effectively to improve education focused on sustainable development skills for the displaced population?
4. What suggestions do you have for improving the educational systems and outcomes of these populations?

Interview questions for stakeholders (French version)

a. Objectifs à long terme

1. Quels sont les avantages et les défis à long terme liés à l'éducation des réfugiés aux compétences durables, du point de vue des parties prenantes ?
2. Comment envisagez-vous l'avenir des opportunités éducatives pour les réfugiés ?

b. Collaboration et amélioration

3. Comment les parties prenantes (gouvernement, ONG, membres de la communauté, éducateurs) peuvent-elles coopérer plus efficacement pour améliorer l'éducation axée sur les compétences en développement durable pour les populations déplacées ?
4. Quelles suggestions avez-vous pour améliorer les systèmes éducatifs et les résultats de ce

Appendix 4: Interview transcription

1. Mr Yambassa

- Voici la transcription intégrale corrigée :

Le CRCC a sa propre définition : Comité des Réfugiés dans les Communes du Cameroun. Il dispose d'une antenne à Douala.

Le CRCC est composé de sept membres, qui représentent toutes les nationalités. Je suis le président.

Après le président, il y a :

- un secrétaire général,
- un(e) trésorier(ère),
- un commissaire aux comptes,
- un chargé de la santé et du social,
- un chargé de l'éducation, de la jeunesse et du sport,
- et un chargé des droits de l'homme.

Ces sept membres représentent *l'ensemble des réfugiés*, issus de *42 nationalités différentes.

Dans chaque commune — il y a *sept communes* — on retrouve également *sept membres* comme dans la structure centrale. C'est ainsi que nous travaillons en *communauté*.

Et en cas de besoin, on contacte une commune pour demander ou envoyer ce qui est nécessaire.

Voici la transcription corrigée avec une conclusion claire :

Question :

Oui, s'il vous plaît, les enseignants qui participent à la formation des réfugiés sont-ils formés pour répondre aux besoins spécifiques de cette population ? Et quelles sont les formations qu'ils reçoivent ?

Réponse :

Merci beaucoup pour cette question, madame.

Avant tout, je tiens à dire que *le Cameroun est un pays d'hospitalité*. Merci au gouvernement camerounais qui nous a réellement *ouvert ses frontières*. Grâce à cela, aujourd'hui, nous sommes en vie.

Le Cameroun est un pays où *un enfant ne reste pas à la maison*. *L'école est gratuite*, et tout le monde a le droit d'y aller.

Le PLAN Cameroun, qui est un partenaire de mise en œuvre du programme *HCR pour les réfugiés*, intervient dans plusieurs écoles publiques. Les réfugiés étudient aux côtés des enfants camerounais, dans les mêmes établissements.

De plus, je peux vous parler d'un centre créé par une Camerounaise, une organisation nationale reconnue par le ministère de l'Éducation. Ce centre propose aux réfugiés une formation en alphabétisation, en anglais et en français. Les enseignants sont certifiés, ce ne sont pas des personnes prises au hasard dans les quartiers. Cela fait deux ans que cette formation est offerte, en partenariat avec les réfugiés.

Conclusion :

Les réfugiés ne sont pas formés à part. Ils reçoivent *exactement la même formation* que les nationaux, que ce soit dans les écoles primaires, les lycées, les universités ou les centres de formation. Merci.

Voici la transcription complète, corrigée et structurée avec une conclusion claire :

1. L'importance de la formation pour les réfugiés :

Quand on a survécu à la mort, qu'on est encore en vie, on peut recevoir des habits, de la nourriture... mais tout cela finit par s'épuiser. L'éducation, elle, reste. Quand un réfugié envoie ses enfants à l'école, ou se forme lui-même, c'est un pas vers la reconstruction. Beaucoup de réfugiés ne savent ni écrire leur nom, ni retenir leur numéro de téléphone. Grâce à la formation professionnelle, les pères et mères de famille commencent à *retenir des éléments essentiels* comme leur date de naissance.

C'est un souvenir durable qui marque et motive, qui fait comprendre l'importance de l'école. Quand on envoie un enfant à l'école, c'est pour préparer son avenir, le rendre meilleur. Il n'est

jamais trop tard pour apprendre. Il ne faut pas avoir honte d'étudier. *Beaucoup de réfugiés trouvent le courage d'apprendre, car ils ne sont pas sur leur terre, mais dans un pays qui les a accueillis avec dignité. Pour offrir une meilleure vie à soi-même, à ses enfants et aux générations futures, il faut apprendre.

2. L'avenir des opportunités éducatives pour les réfugiés :

L'avenir commence maintenant, par l'éducation. L'éducation n'est pas seulement une question de diplôme ou d'emploi, c'est un fondement pour toute la vie : comprendre les prescriptions d'un médecin, suivre les soins prénatals, gérer la maison, la santé, les finances...

L'école, c'est comme planter des graines. On sait que la terre ne ment pas. De même, l'école ne ment pas. Elle finit toujours par produire des fruits. Même pour être gardien, il faut savoir lire l'heure et comprendre les consignes. L'école donne de la dignité.

3. La collaboration entre les parties prenantes :

Oui, madame. Il existe des solutions. Le Plan Cameroun, partenaire du HCR (HR), joue un rôle central. Il fournit des kits scolaires, un soutien financier, et facilite le placement des enfants dans les écoles. Le gouvernement camerounais accompagne aussi ces efforts.

Les ONG sont également très présentes : certaines offrent jusqu'à 25 cahiers par élève, un sac, des stylos, crayon, etc., pour les élèves de la SIL jusqu'en Terminale. Ce soutien bénéficie à toutes les sections : francophones, anglophones et bilingues.

Les réfugiés qui comprennent cela vivent mieux que ceux qui restent passifs, en attendant uniquement l'aide du HCR. Le HCR, en réalité, nous met en relation avec tous ces partenaires. Des ONG ont promis encore cette année d'offrir des kits scolaires à 100 élèves dans mon arrondissement.

4. Recommandations pour améliorer l'éducation des réfugiés :

Mon message s'adresse à ma communauté. Quand un enseignant donne des consignes ou fait une remarque à un enfant réfugié, cela ne devrait pas devenir un conflit communautaire. Les parents doivent comprendre que la discipline fait partie de l'apprentissage.

Je recommande que le personnel éducatif continue de faire son travail, sans se laisser perturber par des plaintes injustifiées. Et nous, en tant que leaders, devons éduquer les parents, les encourager à participer aux formations aux côtés des nationaux.

Conclusion :

L'éducation est la clé du changement pour les réfugiés. C'est par elle que l'on s'intègre, que l'on se reconstruit, que l'on bâtit un avenir. Grâce à la collaboration entre le gouvernement, le HCR, le Plan Cameroun, les ONG et la communauté elle-même, les réfugiés peuvent espérer une vie meilleure, digne et autonome. Merci.

2. Dr BIH Adelaide

Voici la transcription écrite complète de l'interview :

--- Question: **Are the teachers who are involved in the training of refugees trained to meet the specific needs of the refugees? What kind of training do they receive?**

Interviewee: well the literacy program we have here is purely voluntary. I can say that most of the teachers are qualified and are either trained or have a degree teacher since they are government teacher and most of them are doing a voluntary work. For example, Mrs Mary has a Masters in education and Mme Justie is a trained English teacher and I belief that during their training they had courses on psychology of learners. Our literacy teachers are state-certified professionals who volunteer. They're qualified in student psychology and management.

We also offer voluntary psychological support. Refugees can speak with me or with Madam Franca, the founder who is also a psychologist. Therapy is offered once or twice weekly based on availability, to help them release trauma and focus on skill development.

Interviewer: **what are the long-term benefits and challenges of providing sustainable skills education to refugees from the perspective of stakeholders?**

Interviewee:

We organize programs to help refugees. In 2021, we launched a forgiveness photography project. We trained 14 refugees and gave each of them a camera as a way to help them generate income.

They used the cameras to book weddings, birthdays, and other events. This was part of Our Forgiveness initiative to help them become autonomous.

Yes, it was a vocational training, and it lasted three days. The training took place in Madagascar, in a village called Lazuwa. The photography trainer was Mbonye Emanuele Chichade, a government-recognized instructor. He taught them how to use cameras and do photography professionally. At the end of the training, participants received certificates and cameras.

In 2022, we organized soap javel and menthol (a type of home product) production training specifically for refugee women. Many women complained about unemployment and lack of support from their partners. So, we focused on empowering them. That training also lasted three days, covering liquid soap and menthol production. Afterward, we provided starter kits for them to begin production and sustain their income.

We've seen results—many now generate income, especially those in photography. A few even left for English-speaking countries. However, we face financial challenges. A single photography project can cost 2–3 million CFA.

Most refugees leave camps voluntarily. They prefer living in communities, even though integration is hard. Many don't have phones, so we rely on community heads to reach them. They often isolate themselves, so we conduct fieldwork to locate and engage them. So, there is a lot of community work to be done.

Language is a major barrier. That's why literacy is key. Educated refugees integrate better; uneducated ones remain isolated. Some don't even know what support exists because they can't read or communicate.

Interviewer: How do you foresee the future of educational opportunities for refugees?

Interviewee: As I said, the refugee has a very bright future for education because a lot of organizations are offering scholarships. For example, Afrogiveness. Afrogiveness has the proper scholarships that take refugees and IDPs and sponsor them through universities. Although in Afrogiveness, we pay only the fees and it's not like a full sponsorship. At least paying the school fees guarantees that they can go to school without any problem. That's already a big help.

Now, Plan International has a program in partnership with HDRO that offers scholarships to study abroad just for refugees. So, if refugees are really willing to study, there are a lot of opportunities for them. There is also a German organization, GIZ, that offers scholarships. Especially this year, they are out to send at least 12,000 refugees for scholarships. And that is one opportunity that if the refugees know, they will not miss it.

There are a lot of people that, if you go to the carrefour, they are just saying, “those who have degrees should come out.” Almost everybody that is rolling a bag has a degree. So, where the education certificate cannot help them, their skills will help them. So, it’s very important for them to learn new skills.

Interviewer: how can stakeholders (government NGO’s community members, educators) cooperate more effectively to improve education focused on sustainable development skills for the displaced population?

Interviewee: We recommend the government expand collaboration with grassroots NGOs. Many organizations work with refugees but lack funding or visibility. Supporting them would improve access to services like health, education, and training. For example, we offer free consultations and subsidized medicine to refugees.

Interviewer: what recommendations do you have for improving the educational systems and outcomes of these population?

Interviewee: well, if the government and international organisations and well-wishers could support those in charge of them, more training programs that help the refugee to support themselves financial that is to be autonomous would be done. This is because there are many projects and skills that can be provided to them but it is that lack of financing that is the problem. For example, producing pineapples, plantains in farming and even sending them to learn things like carpentry, mechanics and building and handmade craftwork.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time.

Interviewee: You’re welcome.

Mme X (PLAN Cameroon)

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