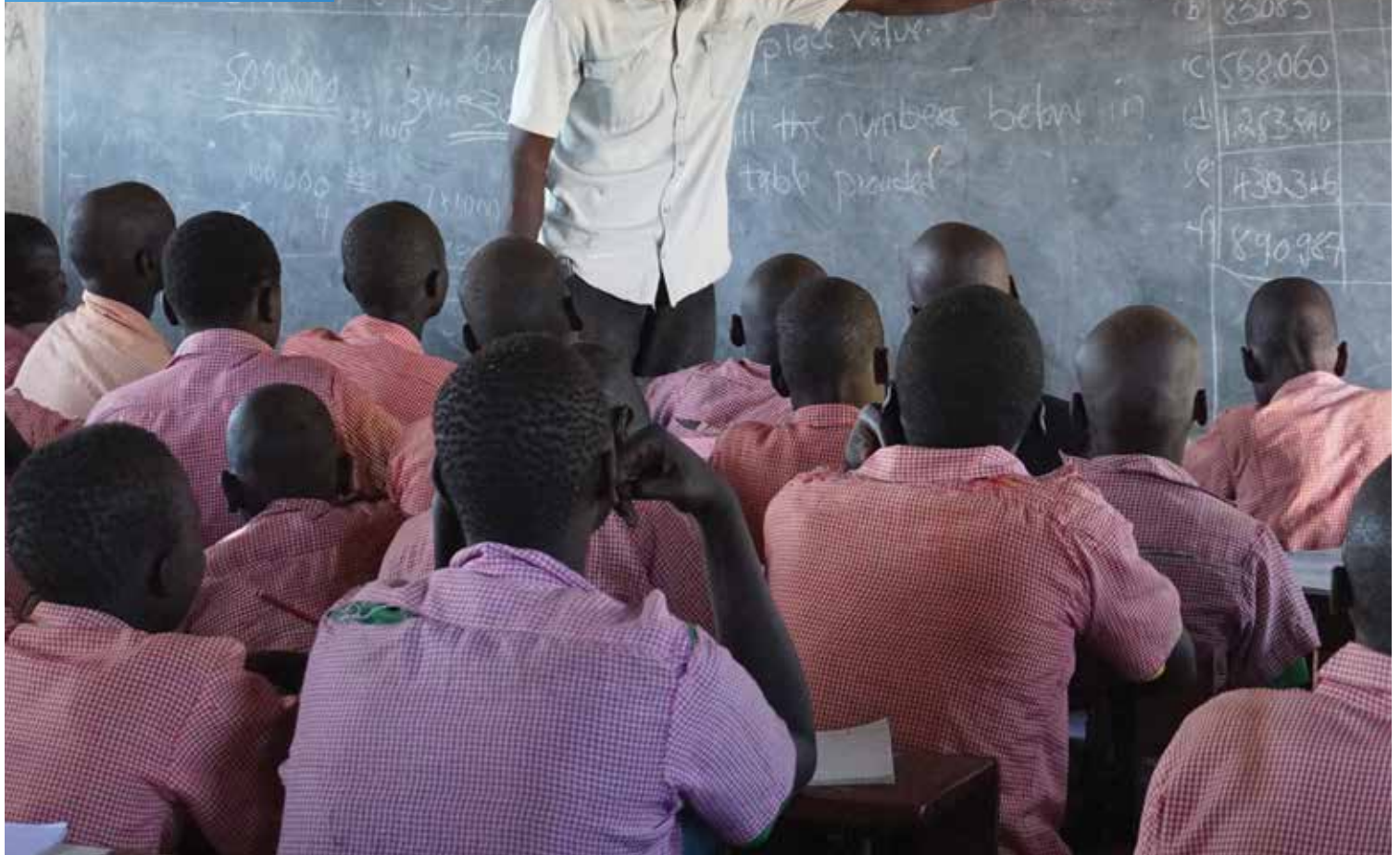


# PROMISING PRACTICES IN REFUGEE EDUCATION

CASE STUDY



## STRENGTHENING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Local and global communities of practice in Kakuma Refugee Camp | Kenya

### Teachers For Teachers

<b>Location:</b>	Kakuma refugee camp in Turkana County, Kenya
<b>Target population:</b>	Refugee & host country teachers.
<b>Intervention type:</b>	Teacher professional development initiative that integrates teacher training, peer coaching, and mobile mentoring
<b>Date started:</b>	Initiated May 2016
<b>Beneficiaries reached:</b>	130 primary school teachers, 33 Global Mentors based around the world, over 30,000 learners reached



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Co-contributors: Lauren Bowden, Jihae Cha, Sophia Collas, Danielle Falk, Sarah French, Shenshen Hu, Emily Richardson, Makala Skinner

# KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Robust teacher professional development models are needed to effect change:** Teachers who participated in the *Teachers for Teachers* initiative found the continuous and integrated model effective for making positive changes to their teaching practice, creating safer learning environments, improving their relationships with their learners, as well as bolstering their own confidence, motivation and well-being as teachers. These positive changes to both teaching practice and teacher identity take time and teachers must be supported long enough and through multiple modalities to effect this change.
- 2. Teacher collaboration is essential for maximizing changes in teaching practice:** When teachers have opportunities to collaborate with other educators – either locally or globally – they have important opportunities to reflect on their work, try new teaching and learning practices with support from their peers, and expand the learning to non-participating teachers.
- 3. Adapting teacher professional development approaches to local contexts is critical:** Time, effort, and energy must be invested by education authorities, implementing organizations and their partners in adapting and contextualizing teacher professional development initiatives to the local context in ways that simultaneously involve the teachers who will ultimately participate in and benefit from the training.
- 4. Mobile technologies can extend the reach and impact of teacher professional development initiatives:** Technology, used to complement and not usurp critical face-to-face teacher professional development activities, can create opportunities for educators around the world to support teachers working in crisis contexts as well as to connect teachers from different schools in the same area.
- 5. Bolder advocacy and policy-making is needed to address larger systemic issues for teachers working in crisis contexts:** There is a clear need for continued advocacy and policymaking that supports longer-term, integrated approaches to teacher professional development and tackles head on the significant challenges presented by overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning materials, low compensation, and un-recognized teaching certifications.

Cover: A refugee teacher using the skills he has learned from Teachers for Teachers to teach Mathematics effectively,  
© Teachers College/Sophia Collas





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# INTRODUCTION

Teachers are at the heart of learning—whether they teach in a building, a tent, or a space under a tree—and they can provide life-saving information and skills that help to provide an alternative to child labor, early marriage, or recruitment into armed forces. Perhaps most important, teachers can bring a sense of stability and hope and disrupt the cycle of violence by equipping learners with the skills to heal, grow, and participate in the peaceful reconstruction of their communities.

Numerous studies show that teachers are the strongest school-level predictor of student learning.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Teacher education and professional development are vital in improving and sustaining the quality of teaching. Yet, in refugee contexts like Kakuma, new teachers may be selected, given chalk, and placed in a classroom of 100-200 students with little or no preparation.<sup>4</sup> As such, teacher professional development is particularly important in these challenging contexts, where there are limited educational resources, large class sizes, multiple language backgrounds, students with special needs, and health and safety issues.

High quality teacher professional development, including pre-service and in-service support, can have a significant and positive impact on teachers' classroom instruction. However, teacher professional development initiatives are too often one-off workshops, which neither provide sufficient time to learn content and pedagogy, nor the time for teachers to apply what they learned in their own classrooms.<sup>5</sup> Studies show that teachers learn best when they receive multi-modal professional development—a combination of on-site workshops, opportunities for peer learning, as well as intensive mentoring.<sup>6,7</sup>

The *Teachers for Teachers* case study presented here aims to respond to this gap in support to teachers working in refugee and crisis-affected contexts. During 2016-17, Columbia University's Teachers College collaborated with UNHCR, Lutheran World Federation, and Finn Church Aid, to pilot a robust professional development initiative for teachers in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya that includes teacher training, peer coaching, and mobile mentoring.



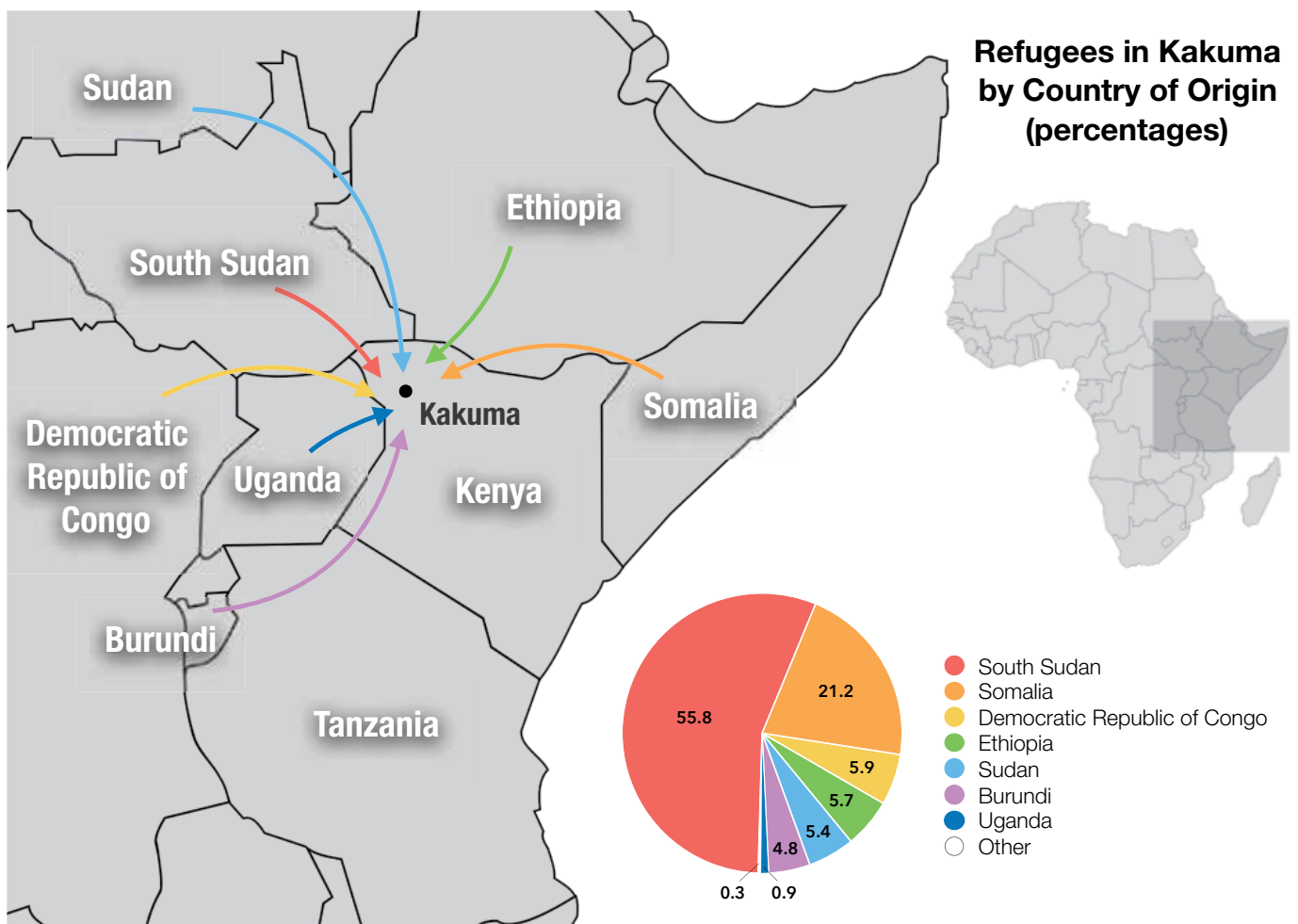
Photo: Teachers can bring a sense of stability and hope in crisis-affected contexts © UNHCR/Tony Karumba

# CONTEXT

## Kakuma Refugee Camp

Established in 1992, Kakuma refugee camp is in Turkana County in northwest Kenya close to the border with South Sudan (see map). The camp remains one of the largest refugee camps in the world currently hosting 177,798 refugees from 20 different countries. The majority of the refugees hail from Somalia and South Sudan, but also Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Uganda. There are a number of international organizations working in the camp.

In the education sector, UNHCR is the lead operational partner and they collaborate with Lutheran World Federation (at the primary education level) and Windle Trust (at the secondary level), among several other NGOs and UN agencies that provide support for school construction, teacher training, girls' education, and scholarships, to name a few key activities.



Kakuma is marked by a booming and disproportionately high number of youth as over 60% of the current total camp population is under the age of 18.<sup>8</sup> Within the total school-aged population of 78,902 (5-17 years), 35.7% of children are out-of-school at the primary level.<sup>9</sup> The out-of-school rates at the secondary level are more dire, with 95% of youth out of school.<sup>10</sup>

### Education Statistics in Kakuma

- 60% of camp population is under 18 years old
- 36% of children are out-of-school at primary level
- 95% of youth are out-of-school at secondary level
- 80% of teachers are refugees
- 31% of teachers are trained



Photo: Teachers take part in a Teacher Learning Circle to create a professional community of teachers who support one another.  
© UNHCR/Tony Karumba

Over 80% of the teachers in Kakuma are refugees and are relatively unprepared to manage enormous class sizes, provide psychosocial support to learners, handle multiple languages spoken in the classroom, and cope with a scarcity of resources including desks and textbooks. Further complicating the situation, only 31% of the teachers in Kakuma have received any form of teacher training,<sup>11</sup> which may be as little as one day. Even fewer teachers benefit from on-the-job supervision, mentoring, and certified pre-service and in-service professional training.<sup>12</sup>

The insufficient number of teachers, particularly female teachers who comprise only 19.5% of the teaching population,<sup>13</sup> along with the unprecedented challenges these teachers face greatly affect the quality of education available to children within Kakuma refugee camp. This results in high attrition and dropout among both teachers and students, respectively. The high rate of teacher turnover is a multifaceted phenomenon, with teachers identifying low “incentive” pay, heavy workloads compared to other available positions in the camp, and the varied needs of their learners as demotivating factors.<sup>14</sup> Among the high rates of out-of-school youth, the lack of trained and motivated teachers, and the insufficient resources, there is much room for improvement regarding educational quality in Kakuma refugee camp.

### Schools in Kakuma-at-a-Glance:

#### Primary School:

Total Enrollment: 64,884 students  
Total Number of Schools: 21  
Average Student-Teacher Ratio: 1:96

#### Secondary School:

Total Enrollment: 7,399 students  
Total Number of Schools: 5  
Average Student-Teacher Ratio: 1:38

# INTERVENTION

## Teachers for Teachers Camp

In response to the significant gaps in providing robust support to teachers working in displacement contexts, *Teachers for Teachers* provides competency-based, continuous teacher professional development for educators working in refugee and other crisis settings. Building on earlier field-testing of the training model and complementary research and needs assessment findings, we launched the *Teachers for Teachers* initiative in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya in May 2016 to support refugee and other teachers in their efforts to improve their own teaching practice and student learning in the camp.

*Teachers for Teachers* provides the knowledge and skills necessary for teachers to make their classrooms protective, healing and learning environments. Drawing on the best evidence for developing the expertise, knowledge, and motivation of teachers,<sup>15,16,17</sup> *Teachers for Teachers* integrates in-person teacher training, peer coaching, and mobile mentoring to foster local and global communities of practice among teachers in the camp.

### Teachers for Teachers' Reach by Numbers (2016-2017)

130 teachers trained

- 123 refugee and 7 national teachers
- 113 male teachers and 17 female teachers
- 20 out of 21 total primary schools represented

129 hours of training over 4 workshops

25 peer coaches trained (5 women)

77 Teacher Learning Circles facilitated by peer coaches

33 classroom observations conducted by peer teachers

33 global mentors recruited

Over 30,000 learners taught by newly trained teachers

## TEACHER TRAINING

**“I was never train[ed] or oriented on what I should do as [a] teacher. That means all that I was doing within [the] school compound and classes, it was totally unprofessional when I am comparing to where I am today... [a] train[ed] teacher through *Teachers for Teachers*. I feel very sorry to [an] extent that I may have affected many learners at that time through other factors that may have block[ed] them from succeeding. Before, I never had any skills or knowledge about teaching. When I go to class, it is only taking a book. That is what I had before. But I never knew there are some plans, there are some trainings that some teachers normally go through”**

Kamal, primary school teacher, Sudan, age 24\*

The training model consists of two tracks and utilizes the *Training Pack for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts* (see Box 1 more details about the training pack): (1) a short-term training conducted over a period of four days, consisting of 12 sessions in 23 hours; and (2) a long-term training that runs over several months, consisting of 18 sessions and 60 hours. Training takes place in the form of workshops where international and local staff lead in-person training sessions with cohorts of ideally 25-30 teachers. Topics for both training schedules include: Teacher's Role and Well-being; Child Protection, Well-being and Inclusion; Pedagogy; and Curriculum and Planning. Trainings are interactive, practical, and draw on local expertise in the Kakuma context.

### Box 1: Training Pack for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts

The *Training Pack for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts* is an inter-agency, open-source training pack developed by INEE's Teachers in Crisis Contexts Sub-Working Group. The pack builds basic teaching competencies for unqualified or under-qualified teachers often recruited to teach in emergency settings. The materials can also be used with qualified teachers who require refresher training or who would benefit from additional support in critical areas like child protection.

The Training Pack includes a facilitator's guide, participant handbook and PowerPoint slides for each component of the training and can be adapted to the needs of local contexts. The training pack can be accessed on the INEE website at [www.ineesite.org/tpd](http://www.ineesite.org/tpd).

\* Pseudonyms have been used for all teachers

## PEER COACHING

“In the coaching...what I learned most is team work.... [Our coach] really motivated us to embrace team work. In our school, if I have a problem in a certain aspect or a lesson, I'll call one of the teachers to come and help me. And later the teacher will tell me where I went wrong, where I should improve, and what I needed to do to improve that lesson so that the learners will understand. So we are really helping each other in that team, in that coaching session.”

Abel, South Sudan, age 21

For peer coaching, small groups of teachers are connected with a peer coach, another teacher from their training cohort, who facilitates continued opportunities for learning through Teacher Learning Circles and classroom visits (see Box 2 for more details about these activities), which take place on a monthly basis. All teachers who have completed the training are invited to apply to be peer coaches, and those selected go through an additional 2-3 day training on adult learning, positive leadership, supportive communication, and goal setting. Peer coaches are trained to create a supportive network, tap into the range of expertise and knowledge among local teachers, and develop collaborative learning opportunities among their peers as they work to apply what they learned during the training in their own classrooms. Peer coaching takes place for several months after the training workshops and establishes a network of support to encourage the transfer of newly gained knowledge from the training to teaching practice in the classroom. Teachers are in a unique position to collaborate as they best understand the challenges their peers face.

**Box 2: Teacher Learning Circle (TLC):** small group meetings that aim to create a professional community of teachers who support and encourage one another to meet their needs. There are 4 key activities that take place in each TLC; 1) setting goals, 2) sharing challenges; 3) brainstorming solutions; and 4) celebrating teaching successes.

**Classroom observations or visitations:** peer coaches provide one-on-one support in teachers' classrooms and support reflection post-lesson; teachers may also invite one another to observe their lessons to demonstrate effective teaching or classroom management strategies, or to seek support on a challenge they are facing. These opportunities are mutually beneficial for peer coaches and teachers alike as they learn from observing their colleagues and reflecting on the experience.

## MOBILE MENTORING

“[M]entoring has helped me that I am able to communicate to my fellow teachers and gain the knowledge and the skills that I don't have...[such as] how to control and manage the school, manage the learners and socialize with my fellow teachers. I'm really very happy. I've seen even the world has become very small, because when I communicate to [my Global Mentor] and she is in USA, I'm in Kakuma, I feel that she is next to me...it is a community...I'm able to socialize with others and gain knowledge from one another.”

Ritah, Uganda, age 34

Upon completion of the training, all participating teachers are assigned a Global Mentor, who provides online practical support for approximately 6 months. Global Mentors are recruited and trained through online webinars to connect with groups of 4-5 refugee teachers over WhatsApp and a private Facebook page on a regular basis to share experiences, offer teaching tips directly connected to the training through a mobile mentoring curriculum developed to complement the training pack, and problem-solve in real-time with teachers on issues they face in the classroom. Safaricom Foundation provided all teachers with phones, airtime, and data, making it possible for Global Mentors and teachers to easily discuss strategies and solutions to challenges in the classroom. In addition to the small-group WhatsApp chats, teachers also participate in a WhatsApp group with all members from their training cohort, which serves as a platform for teachers to exchange information and ideas with a larger group of approximately 30 teachers. The Global Mentors have the same opportunity to post questions to all Global Mentors as they brainstorm possible strategies and solutions for their mentees.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation framework requires varied data collection efforts to account for the different components of the *Teachers for Teachers* model. Teachers complete pre- and post-training questionnaires to identify changes in their teaching practices and any improvements to their knowledge and skills related to the core teaching competencies covered during the training workshops. Peer coaches contribute to data collection efforts by completing logs and goal tracking sheets for each Teacher Learning Circle they facilitate as well as observation forms when they visit teachers' classrooms. Peer coaches then send photographs of these forms via WhatsApp to the *Teachers for Teachers* team for further analysis. *Teachers for Teachers* team members export the chat histories for every mentoring group for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis to learn more about the frequency and nature of text message exchanges between mentors and mentees. To better understand what is proving to be most effective about our program and the ways in which teachers' teaching practices are changing over the course of the year, we also conduct regular focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews as well as collect Most Significant Change stories from teachers and some of their students.



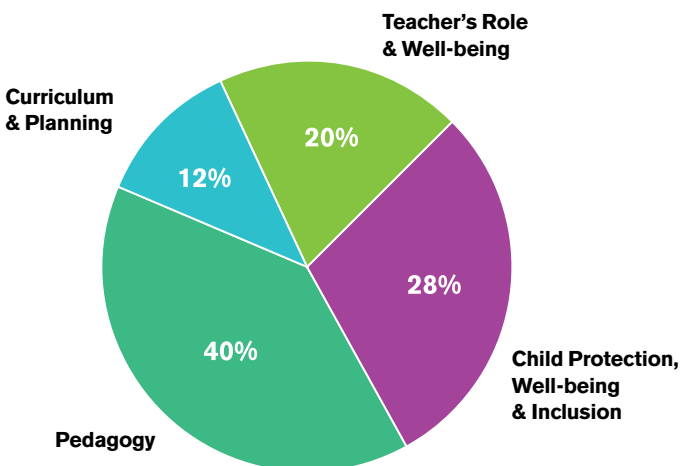
# KEY MILESTONES AND OUTCOMES

Teachers who participated in the *Teachers for Teachers* program reported better preparation, higher confidence, a stronger sense of purpose—not just as educators, but also as advocates for child protection and positive discipline—and that they were more aware of useful practices that can be used in their classrooms. Many teachers reported on the training's practical relevance and noticeable impact on their effectiveness as teachers and role models in the classroom. Samuel (Sudan, age 30) reflected on the benefits of the training: *“Nowadays, I have [noticed] a great change in me. When I am going to class, there is no scrambling. In the class there is order and discipline. There is more participation in the class than before. The pupils feel very happy.”*

## The power of teacher collaboration

Through collaboration during training and coaching activities, teachers could overcome extremely challenging issues, especially those concerning child protection. For example, the most frequently mentioned challenge in Teacher Learning Circles was the issue of corporal punishment. More than half of peer coaches (15 out of 25) reported talking about corporal punishment during their time together. Among colleagues, teachers felt comfortable speaking openly about this harmful practice and thinking through alternative discipline strategies they had learned in the training. Kariem, a head teacher from the training explains, *“I personally had used [caning] and then after the training I learned about alternatives.... Other teachers in our TLCs had similar cases, they had confessed it.... I have learned ways of solving learner's problems especially with discipline”* (Sudan, age 30). When teachers had the opportunity to openly discuss the use of corporal punishment, they could revisit the positive discipline strategies learned in the training and reduce this practice in their classrooms and schools.

Collaboration also created a network of support where teachers could encourage one another despite the extraordinary circumstances in which they work. Words of encouragement and support have a major impact on teachers' motivation and sense of identity. Juma explains, *“I've been teaching but no one has ever commented about how my class is progressing. Not in the school, not even the head teacher...So when [my peer coach] came to my school [to visit my classroom], I said, “ah, at least my objective and my goals are achieved.”...now I feel like, yeah, I'm a real teacher”* (South Sudan, age 27).



## Crowdsourcing strategies locally and globally

The mentoring program provided a space for teachers to connect with resources outside of the camp and to reach out with specific questions, allowing them to tap into the experience of not only their Global Mentor, but their fellow teachers as well. Mentors and mentees discussed a range of topics connected to the teaching competencies presented during the training (see pie chart for distribution of texts across competency areas). Analysis of WhatsApp conversations revealed that one of the most significant outcomes was not only teachers' implementation of shared strategies, but the success of these strategies. In fact, nearly half of all teachers stated that they tested potential solutions shared within their WhatsApp conversations and found them to be effective in the classroom.

The top three topics of discussion in WhatsApp conversations were *overcrowded classrooms, student attendance, and classroom management* (see **image 1** for distribution of WhatsApp exchanges by topic).

Pedagogy (549 exchanges)	Overcrowded Classrooms	Child Protection, Well-being & Inclusion (387 exchanges)	Student Attendance
	Teaching Strategies		Discipline
	Classroom Management		Student Motivation
Teacher's Role & Well-being (265 exchanges)	Teacher-Student Relationships	Curriculum & Planning (164 exchanges)	Assessment
	Teacher-Parent Relationships		Student Performance
	Teacher Motivation		Lesson Planning

Image 1: Distribution of WhatsApp exchanges by topic

The digital nature of mobile mentoring allowed Global Mentors and teachers to share ideas and resources around these topics through videos and images as well as text. By providing teachers with a space to effectively crowd-source classroom challenges with one another, teachers gain real-time, contextualized strategies that they can test and tweak in their classroom.





Photo: Mobile Mentoring © Teachers College/Danni Falk

### Teachers advocate for their students

Teachers also reported both the desire and willingness to advocate on behalf of their students. Several teachers shared stories about how they confronted child protection issues inside and outside of the school compound (e.g. talking with a caregiver about the demanding chores that regularly kept two adopted/foster sons out of school, and seeking to improve the protection of a young girl who had been a victim of sexual violence and continued experiencing abuse going to and from school. While the teachers' desires and determination to confront these issues should be lauded, their own personal security and well-being can also be threatened in the process, one of the challenges we expand on further in the next section.

#### Sharing Teachers' Stories

During the project, several teachers shared their stories in writing or through video. Teachers responded to questions about why they believe the provision of education is important in Kakuma, their roles as teachers in the camp and what they hope for when they think of their students. Teachers generously offered their insights, hopes and frustrations about the state of education in Kakuma, as well as their thoughts about the future. These compelling stories helped to shape our continued work in the camp and can be found online at [www.tc.columbia.edu/refugeeeducation](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/refugeeeducation).

### Improved teacher-student relationships

While it was hard for teachers to identify any one part of the *Teachers for Teachers* model they liked the best or that proved to be most effective from their perspective, overwhelmingly teachers talked about the improvements they noticed in the relationships with their students. They commented that students now approached them to ask questions about class in a way they had not before, and they attributed these improved relationships to the changes they had made in utilizing positive discipline in their classrooms. Adnan (South Sudan, age 23) stated: *"The change in advance[d] knowledge is significant to me because it has enabled me to positively interact with all students, creating a safer learning environment where students are able to approach me openly with trust and honesty."*

### Sustaining and Expanding the Teachers for Teachers Model

In the coming year, the *Teachers for Teachers* program will continue to expand in Kakuma refugee camp and to a new local settlement nearby to reach over 400 refugee and national teachers working in the area. While the *Teachers for Teachers* model requires an initial investment of time and financial resources, we found convincing evidence of teachers who continue to share resources, devise new strategies, and sustain their collaboration with one another even after our direct support had ended. Since the teacher professional development approach is based on a set of open-source materials available for other individuals and agencies to use, the approach can be readily adapted and implemented in other crisis-affected contexts in which teachers require additional training and support. Although the training pack was initially designed for primary school teachers in crisis contexts, the teaching competencies are fundamental to all types and levels of education, including secondary education and non-formal education programs.

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## CHALLENGES

*Teachers for Teachers* has proven to be an overall success; however, we inevitably confronted some challenges over the past year. Some of the big-picture challenges arose in our efforts to build and expand partnerships with local actors working in Kakuma, to follow protocols when it came to child protection violations that emerged in schools, and to generate an evidence base that drew on varied data points, and not solely teacher-reported data.

First, while we worked very closely with organizations based in Kakuma, it was difficult to find opportunities through which partners working in the primary and secondary education sub-sectors could be even more involved in contextualizing, implementing and ultimately sustaining the *Teachers for Teachers* program. This proved difficult due to our remote working arrangements and local partners' competing programmatic priorities as well as overstretched staff resources. We hope in the future to establish a more formal relationship with key implementing agencies at both the primary and secondary levels in hopes that they might take leadership of this approach in a more sustainable way (e.g. for their induction training of all new teachers, and to provide ongoing support beyond the induction period).

Second, a key challenge that arose in the implementation of this project entailed managing child protection violations. Across the training, peer coaching, and mobile mentoring activities, a common thread of discussion and concern was related to child rights and child protection. As teachers continually grappled with how best to support learners who might be experiencing physical, verbal, emotional, and/or sexual abuse inside or outside of school, they also lamented the weaknesses of the child protection system and protocols in place to protect children and youth as well as the teachers willing to advocate for them. On multiple occasions during focus groups, mentoring exchanges, or direct follow-up by *Teachers for Teachers* team members or local partners, teachers spoke about how there is limited to no confidentiality for the victim or for those who report the violations. Furthermore, there is a disconnect between the protection system that exists within the larger refugee camp and the child protection system in place within the education sector. As teachers who are trained in the *Teachers for Teachers* approach become important advocates for the young people in their classrooms, as reported in the previous section, they will also require better and more ample protection if they are to effectively address the ongoing child protection violations that occur in this setting.

Third, although the teachers provided richly descriptive accounts during interviews and focus groups about the ways in which their teaching practices were changing because of their involvement in the *Teachers for Teachers* approach, we primarily have teacher-reported data to draw on as we analyze what is proving to be effective in this approach. We are piloting the Most Significant Change technique with students from participating teachers' classrooms, but it can be quite difficult for students to reflect on what has changed or not changed in their learning environments, particularly for younger children. While we initially tried to track students' grades, this proved to be overly burdensome on the teachers who had to write out copies of the marking sheets each term. During this initial pilot project, we found it incredibly valuable to maintain the focus on the teachers, including their perceptions and experiences of their time participating in the program, as they clearly describe the changes that have taken place in their classrooms, the benefits of collaboration both locally and globally, and the overall improvements in their confidence, motivation and well-being as teachers in Kakuma. Moving forward, we will include more pre- and post-classroom observations to help identify changes in teaching practice that can be triangulated with teacher self-report data.

Finally, despite the significant success of this initiative, we cannot ignore the larger challenges facing refugee education in contexts like Kakuma refugee camp. The lack of resources for protracted displacement in the camp, the overcrowding in the schools at the primary level, the lack of opportunities for secondary education, the limited teaching and learning resources, and ongoing threats to child rights are all serious challenges stemming from larger systemic issues in the humanitarian and development sectors as well as within the countries hosting refugees over protracted periods of time. As teachers gain access to training and recognize what it takes to provide quality education in refugee contexts, they will hopefully be able to join the global education community in advocating for better and more quality teacher professional development support to improve their work and ultimately the lives of their learners. We need to do everything we can to support teachers in these efforts.

# LESSONS FOR PROMISING PRACTICE

We have learned many lessons in both developing and implementing this project. Given that all the resources developed for this project will eventually become open-source materials, we reflect in this section on the key lessons learned and our primary recommendations for different actors who may adapt this approach to different settings.

**Involve teachers in all teacher professional development design and planning processes:** Despite the lack of training and support in many of these contexts, teachers bring immense knowledge and experiences that need to be integrated into all design, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation activities for projects that will directly (or indirectly) affect them. While the international community working in the field of Education in Emergencies has gotten better at acknowledging the importance of contextualizing and adapting approaches to the needs in the local context, the degree to which these activities actually take place in a meaningful way has yet to follow in most cases. Time and space to learn about the local setting, especially for anyone coming in from outside the local context, is critical, as is conducting a needs assessment that allows all actors (local and visiting) to check their assumptions about the most appropriate objectives and methodologies for meeting those needs.

**Provide continuous and multi-modal teacher professional development:** While it requires an investment of both time and money, the benefits to teachers, their learners, and the larger community will far outweigh the costs. While more evidence is needed to understand the most effective approaches, including cost-benefit analyses, more robust approaches to teacher professional development like the *Teachers for Teachers* model will not only improve teaching practice and student learning, and foster protective and constructive learning environments, but also bolster teacher confidence and their motivation to remain teachers. Opportunities for teachers to collaborate (locally and/or globally) will also have a ripple effect that extends to teachers who may not have initially had the opportunity to participate in the training program as trained teachers become more confident and keen to share their learning and support to fellow teachers.

## **Leverage technology and other innovative practices wisely:**

As educational technology is increasingly presented as a panacea to the challenges that ail education in contexts of displacement, humanitarian and development actors need to carefully contemplate the best ways to leverage technology. In most cases, it may be difficult or impossible to redirect the funding earmarked for technological innovations to other costs (e.g. hiring and training more teachers); however, there may be ways to think more strategically about how to use technology and to couple it with other approaches to support teachers. When technology is introduced, teachers should be the first to be trained on these new approaches and to receive continued support as they get up to speed on its potential.

Teachers working in crisis contexts are incredibly resilient, innovative, and resourceful—given adequate support and opportunities to collaborate, they can improve the quality of education amidst truly extraordinary circumstances.



Photo: Overwhelmingly, teachers talked about the improvements they have noticed in their relationships with students, following the teacher training. © UNHCR/Tony Karumba



## CHALTU'S STORY (PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER)



I am Chaltu Megesha Gedo. I vividly remember the day when I joined teaching back in the year 2014. I went to class with two hundred and fifty children. These were class one learners. These are children ages between 5-10 years. I got into the class and I was mesmerized. I actually did not know where to turn to because the learners were so many. Some were fighting, some were crying, some were playing games. I stood there for more than twenty minutes telling them to keep quiet but it all fell onto deaf ears. I tried to use a cane but no one listened to me. I ran out of the class very furious and frustrated. I went to the office and called one of my colleagues who came and made them settle down to begin a lesson. I had to start teaching almost at the end of the last lesson.

I used to be a reactive teacher but due to different skills and experiences I gained in the trainings I am now a proactive teacher and I really appreciate the people who are taking us through the trainings. I was a kind of a teacher who could not talk without a cane. If I say sit down, I cane you first and then I say sit down. Oh my God, I was harsh. I used to punish learners, using corporal punishment. I used to be very frustrated, stressed. I used to even to say, 'I wish I would just leave teaching'. Before, I also used to quarrel with teachers. I was so gloomy. Whenever a person asks me 'good morning,' [I would respond] 'which good morning?' You see, I had this stress. I would just reply the way I want because I was stressed out.

But now since I took those knowledge and skills that [Teachers for Teachers] taught us in the training, I applied it in my class, and now every learner likes me. When I pass through, even I am at home, I am on leave, but even when they see me from far, 'Madam Chaltu' because I applied those methods, methodologies and techniques that you taught us in the trainings. Whenever I am in my class, I apply those like, 'did you understand, thumbs up. If you did not understand, thumbs down.' And they really enjoy that one, especially that one. You see, I teach small children. So when you say, 'who has understood? Thumbs up!' Ohh, you see all thumbs up. 'If you did not understand, thumbs no.' And nobody's there. You just say, 'thumbs up!' they will laugh and all of them will be like that laughing, I really enjoy with them. I really miss them. I noticed these changes first when I went to class and my learners were ready to listen.

Second, the school administration also congratulated me, and also I saw changes in myself. I did not have stress anymore. And also, you see before I did not even use to lesson plan or make a scheme of work because I didn't see their importance. But after attending the training, I saw that the scheme of work and lesson plan, they are very important, they are vital in teaching. I go to class, I see now I am a changed teacher, I see every learner smiling back. Because I smile, they also smile.





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[www.tc.columbia.edu/refugeeducation](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/refugeeducation)

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# APPENDIX

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**Promising Practices in Refugee Education is a joint initiative of Save the Children, the world's largest independent children's rights organisation, UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, and Pearson, the world's learning company.**

Launched in March 2017, the initiative set out to identify, document and promote innovative ways to effectively reach refugee children and young people with quality educational opportunities.

This case study is one of more than twenty promising practices that were selected as part of the initiative.

The practices have been grouped under one or more of six themes.



The practices and the experience of implementing partners have been used to identify ten recommendations, grouped under three overarching pillars, aimed at improving refugee education policy and practice. They are:

**Approaching the immediate crisis with a long-term perspective:**

1. Strengthen inclusive national systems
2. Commit to predictable multi-year funding for education in refugee responses
3. Improve collaboration and develop innovative partnerships

**Understanding different contexts and meeting distinct needs**

4. Adopt user-centred design and empowering approaches
5. Establish diverse pathways that meet distinct needs
6. Use space and infrastructure creatively

**Improving outcomes for all**

7. Support teachers to help ensure quality
8. Prioritise both learning and well-being
9. Use technology as an enabling tool in pursuit of education outcomes
10. Build a robust evidence base

Our reflections on all of the promising practices that we identified and documented and their implications for policy and practice are available in a separate Synthesis Report.

More information including case studies, the Synthesis Report and a series of articles from thought leaders in the field can be found at

**[www.promisingpractices.online](http://www.promisingpractices.online)**

