An aerial photograph of a refugee camp in Malawi. The camp is densely packed with small, rectangular houses. Many of the houses have walls made of dark mud and roofs made of thatched straw or corrugated metal. Some houses have satellite dishes mounted on their roofs. The ground is a mix of dirt and patches of green vegetation. In the background, there are rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The overall scene depicts a settlement in a rural, hilly area.

# Uncertain futures. Youth and their self-reliance within a protracted refugee situation

A case study of Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi

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## Abstract

*This research aims to understand how viable the UNHCR aim of self-reliance is for 18-25-year olds at Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi. The key concepts used in this research are protracted refugee situations, care and maintenance, self-reliance and livelihoods. Using in-depth semi structured interviews and focus groups, this research explores how the concept of self-reliance is implemented at Dzaleka in the form of interventions, including the promotion of livelihoods, educational and vocational trainings. It seeks to uncover the perceptions of 18-25-year olds as to whether these interventions are working, and ultimately whether self-reliance is a viable aim. This is achieved through exploring the challenges they face and the strategies which they are taking, regardless of interventions.*

*18 – 25-year olds are engaged in various livelihood activities in the absence of aid. While they are demonstrating agency, they face many challenges which hinder their self-reliance. There are examples of community self-reliance being exhibited, yet this does not match the more individualistic aim from the UNHCR which focuses on access to employment and entrepreneurship. These interventions may be assisting some, but with budget cuts and an increasing population, the numbers of individuals being advantaged are decreasing, and even the most vulnerable are not being protected. The UNHCR with the concept of self-reliance promotes refugees as active agents, but at Dzaleka they are excluded from decision making and, in many ways, treated as beneficiaries of aid. This paper highlights the need for interventions which better support refugees' goals and strategies. Ultimately, though, it emphasizes that it is the laws in Malawi which prevent self-reliance being achieved, and more attention is required in advocating for changing legislation.*

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## Abbreviations

**IDP** – Internally Displaced People

**PRS** – Protracted Refugee Situation

**UN** – United Nations

**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**UNCRC** – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

**UNDP** – United Nations Development Programme

**UNRWA** – United Nations Relief and Works Agency

**CBO** – Community Based Organisation

**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation

**WFP** – World Food Programme

**WHH** – Welthungerhilfe

**SGBV** – Sexual and Gender Based Violence

**CARD** – Churches Action in Relief and Development

**TEVETA** - Technical Entrepreneurial Vocational Education and Training

**DRC** – Democratic Republic of Congo

**DFID** – Department for International Development

**LUANAR** – Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

**CRRF** – Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

**JRS** – Jesuit Refugee Service

**TEVETA** – Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority

**WUSC** – World University Services Canada

**LGBT** – Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender

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## Introduction

In February 2019 there was a total of 38,297 refugees and asylum-seekers residing at Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi, from countries throughout Africa including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2019). Dzaleka is just one of many protracted refugee situations across the world, and over two-thirds of the 25.4 million refugees are living in a protracted situation (UNHCR, 2019) (Loescher, 2008). These situations now last an estimated 26 years on average (UNHCR, 2016). Entire generations grow up in exile. Although their lives may not be at risk, their 'basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile relying on external assistance' (UNHCR, 2004: 1). Despite the long-term nature of refugee camps, humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR remain responsible for these people. Arguably this is due to political action and inaction, within the international community, the country of origin and the country of asylum (UNHCR, 2004).

In recent years, the UNHCR recognised the shortcomings of care and maintenance programmes, a temporary approach which seeks to provide basic needs alongside pushing for 'durable solutions' (repatriation, naturalisation or resettlement). In recent years expectations for achieving a durable solution have decreased, and meanwhile, pressure has increased to reduce the costs of protracted refugee situations which have no immediate resolution. Approaches developed are now based on self-reliance (where refugees can support themselves instead of being dependent on humanitarian aid). Funding now channels towards the promotion of self-reliance in the form of interventions, rather than providing essential relief (Miller, 2018). The basis of this approach is to prepare refugees for a durable solution 'wherever that might be' (UNHCR, 2008: 14). Self-reliant individuals may be more likely to return home and would be better able to do so in a sustainable way, contributing to the development of the country of origin. According to the UNHCR, if refugees can be self-reliant, this can stimulate the local economy, benefitting host populations and therefore increasing the host governments inclination to continue hosting refugees (Cranford, 2014).

Scholars such as Crisp, however, argue this has limited success (Sanyal, 2014). While the decreased role of humanitarian agencies can encourage self-reliance, this is not feasible in the absence of other support (Easton-Calabria et al., 2017). Humanitarian organisations risk transferring the prime responsibility to refugees, with dwindling funds as crises persist. Structural barriers such as

legal challenges, limited opportunities, inequalities and prejudice from the host community can remain unacknowledged or become the background of projects if all the attention is on refugees' adaptation to these situations; overlooking more extensive efforts to improve them. Self-reliance, as proposed by the UN, has also been critiqued as being too individualistic and solely based on the preparation for employment or access to the market, excluding other aspirations valued by refugees. Self-reliance schemes often fail to consider the strategies and perceptions of displaced people; how they already build their livelihoods and what self-reliance means to them.

According to the UN, 'youth' is defined as being between the ages of 15 and 24 years; however, this paper focuses specifically on those aged between 18 – 25 (UNHCR, 1994). Children, as defined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) as persons under the age of 18, are guaranteed specific protection measures, particularly for those who are unaccompanied, yet turning 18 means the loss of those rights. It leads to the expectation that they are adults and can take care of themselves. A vast proportion of displaced populations are young people. Although they have a role to play in contributing to the host country or peacebuilding in their country of origin, many young refugees live in protracted situations, such as Dzaleka. Here they do not possess the rights to work legally, proceed to higher education or move around freely. Solely increasing self-reliance for gaining employment in host countries where working is illegal, creates issues as whether this prepares youth refugees for exploitation.

The concept of self-reliance can thus be problematised, specifically within the context of a protracted refugee situation where the host state provides limited legal rights for refugees. In general, protracted refugee situations differ vastly, and there are no one-size-fits-all, yet Dzaleka represents a useful case study worth studying. Crisp (2003) described protracted refugee situations as most prevalent in Africa, possessing some similar characteristics to Dzaleka. Therefore, the primary research question that this thesis will address is the following:

**Is self-reliance a viable aim for 18-25-year olds within the protracted refugee situation at Dzaleka?**

## *Relevance*

With a world of instability, conflict and climate change, protracted refugee situations will not disappear any time soon, yet current solutions are failing to address the scale of the crisis. Globally, protracted refugee populations are increasing, and similarly, in Malawi, it is estimated that by the end of 2022, the refugee population will have reached 59,000 (UNHCR, 2019). This vast increase is due to the flow of arrivals at present averaging 500 individuals per month; mainly from the DRC and Burundi.

‘Warehousing’ refugees in such protracted camps have implications for regional conflict and peacebuilding. In the 1980s and early 1990s, almost 2 million Mozambicans fled to Malawi, where at one point, refugees constituted 10 per cent of Malawi’s resident population (Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). This placed strains on resources, but local integration efforts including enabling access to land and employment, alongside extensive cooperation with the UNHCR and the WFP (World Food Program), prevented the spread of conflict from Mozambique (Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006). Such cases demonstrate the importance of host countries in providing opportunities for refugees, which can prevent security risks or the radicalisation of disillusioned refugees in the future. These local integration efforts with Mozambican refugees in Malawi contrasts with refugees in Dzaleka currently being denied the right to land or legal employment.

Many scholars highlight the relationship between protracted refugee situations and peacebuilding both in the host country and country of origin, with the dependency of refugees in protracted camps increasing frustrations, enabling conflict to spread (Lawson, 2018). Local integration initiatives premised on self-reliance, therefore, ought to be essential for peacebuilding, as ‘warehousing refugees’ in protracted camps and keeping them dependent upon humanitarian aid poses problems for conflict and instability (Milner, 2011). Improving the self-reliance of refugees at face value ought to be a worthy goal; for refugees’ dignity, reducing the poverty they face, and increasing their opportunities in life. It is also crucial for broader society; for the international community to spend less money on humanitarian aid, for the host countries’ development and regional prospects of peacebuilding.

Conversely, there are criticisms of self-reliance on both a conceptual and implementation level. Self-reliance is arguably too individualistic and detached from refugees’ experiences. It is, therefore, vital to understand their perceptions. Understanding refugees’ perspectives can ensure that interventions are better tailored to suit local economic conditions. Concerning the implementation

of self-reliance, research is necessary for assessing whether such projects are working and whom they are working for, particularly in a camp setting with more apparent barriers to achieving self-reliance. Measuring self-reliance has value in assessing how high the likelihood of a 'durable solution' of local integration is, which in turn has significant implications for the development of the host country.

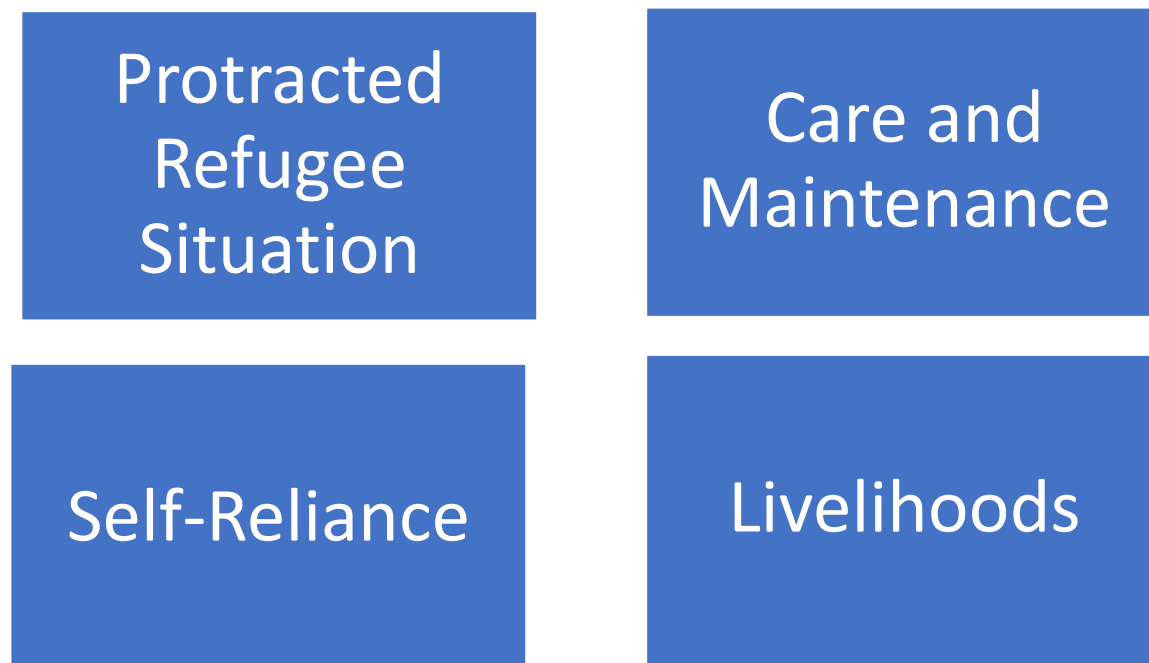
Milner argues how important it is for youth to be included in such concerns, as they hold an essential role in peacebuilding as well as the development of the host and origin countries. Despite youth refugees representing one of the most significant percentages of the total refugee population, little of the literature about refugees or displaced people concerns those aged 18-25, focusing more on children and adolescents (Chatty, 2007). A UNHCR review of protracted refugee situations noted the importance of studying the psychosocial dimensions of such situations, yet this was mainly concerned with the circumstances of children and adolescents (Crisp, 2003). Literature focusing on youth above the age of 18 tends to explore the opportunities for higher education within protracted refugee situations, and at Dzaleka this is the only academic research focusing on youth (Donald, 2014). Gopal (2013) looks at youth agency for Karenni refugees in Thailand, aged 18-25, yet does not refer to the new UNHCR model of promoting self-reliance. Youth, having just transitioned into adulthood, are a large group of refugees in protracted situations, and have the potential to make contributions to future development and peacebuilding. There is a lack of research exploring perspectives of 18-25-year olds, the strategies they take and what they see as vital for themselves and their future.



*Figure 1 - PLAN International mural at Dzaleka Refugee Camp*

## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Assessing the literature on the topic, four key concepts identified for this research are Protracted Refugee Situations, Care and Maintenance, Self-Reliance and Livelihoods.



### 2.1. PRS (*Protracted Refugee Situation*)

According to the UNHCR, “a protracted refugee situation is one where, over time, there have been considerable changes in refugees’ needs, which neither UNHCR nor the host country has been able to address in a meaningful manner” (UNHCR, 2002: 1). Protracted refugee situations leave refugees in a “state of material dependency and often without adequate access to basic rights (e.g. employment, freedom of movement and education) even after many years spent in the host country” (UNHCR, 2002: 1). Protracted refugee situations involve over 25,000 refugees in exile for more than five years (UNHCR, 2002). The UNHCR in 2004 added to the definition that these situations must have no imminent possibility of a durable solution. However, both these definitions were viewed as problematic because it excluded populations of 20,000 Rohingyas in Bangladesh, for instance, 17,000 Burundians in the DRC, or 20,000 Congolese in Sudan (UNHCR, 2009). Therefore, the Conclusion’s definition of 2008 (UNHCR) removed the limit of 25,000.

Crisp (2003) argues that refugees are living in a protracted situation when they face no prospect of finding a durable solution through voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement. They are trapped in limbo, unable to return to their country of origin, unable to settle permanently in

the host country, and without the option of moving onwards elsewhere (Crisp, 2003). Many of the residents at Dzaleka, therefore, fit into this standard definition. However, this definition has been problematised by scholars such as Loescher and Milner who argue that it “leaves out small residual populations that often remain after repatriation, those outside the UNHCR’s mandate, or changes that arise due to repeat migration” (Betts, 2006: 510). According to Milner (2011), refugee emergencies and other international security concerns often have priority over protracted refugee situations.

## *2.2 Care and Maintenance*

Care and Maintenance was the initial strategy of the UNHCR for protracted refugee situations which tended to focus on protection and basic needs, such as food and nutrition, education, health and shelter. It took the assumption that a displacement crisis is a short period before those in exile can return (Crawford et al., 2015). Care and Maintenance was the dominant model during the 1980s and 90s and is an encampment strategy which contains refugees in government-designated land. With regards to protracted refugee situations, the term ‘warehousing’ refers to refugees deprived of the freedom necessary to pursue healthy lives, such as restricted mobility, not being allowed to work or gain citizenship (Smith, 2004).

The care and maintenance model can be reinforced by host governments, who may restrict access to land and work or educational opportunities (Crawford et al., 2015). Further, host countries do not include refugees in national development plans, so humanitarian agencies continue to be the source of funding for protracted refugee situations. Funding usually goes straight to the refugee situation, and bypasses the host state, although host communities may benefit to some degree and state refugee agencies may receive some support. In contrast, states receive development funding according to their development plans. There is less effort to include host populations who may also be affected by the present refugee population, as they are not assumed to be residing there permanently. Further, there is less incentive to integrate the host community and refugee population on a social and cultural level. As a result, there may be increased tensions between the camp and local population, and local host communities view the presence of refugees as a burden.

## *2.3 Self-Reliance*

Due to the continuing conflict in countries of origin, repatriation is not a possibility for most refugees. Meanwhile, host countries are not making significant steps towards granting refugees

resident status, nor other rights which host citizens enjoy. Finally, being resettled in a third country is very limited. For instance, at Dzaleka, this is for less than 1% of the population. Securitisation of asylum in the West, alongside nationalist policies, has heightened significantly in recent years. Durable solutions are not working, and as the displacement becomes increasingly protracted, international interest and donor support tend to drop off. Over time, displaced people in camp situations face a declining quality of life, as with their overall rights (Durieux, 2009). Refugees housed in precarious conditions are sometimes born in the encampment and remain there over 20 years later. The prevalence of protracted situations undermines the success of UNHCR's mandate to protect refugee populations.

By 2008, the UNHCR (2008: 13) concluded that the care and maintenance model was “flawed in several ways”. They released a document containing a shift to the management of protracted refugee situations, moving from long term care and maintenance programmes to an approach focused more on self-reliance and local solutions for refugees, preparing refugees for a durable solution wherever that may be (Milner, 2011). Self-reliance is the “social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity – developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian assistance” (UNHCR, 2008: 13). Recently becoming prominent on the agenda of the UNHCR, self-reliance hopes to enable displaced communities to support themselves alongside strengthening the capacities of their host communities. Self-reliance attempts to build the capacities of refugees, including their “capacity to claim their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (UNHCR 2014: 8). This stresses their ability to support themselves with minimal support, aligning with free-market economics.

Examples of self-reliance programmes include vocational skills training, negotiations to open-up business and markets, or finding other methods for international organisations, the local population and refugees to cooperate (Miller, 2018). Unlike the care and maintenance model, this recognises that repatriation is unlikely to occur anytime soon and is partly motivated by declining funds (Crawford et al., 2015). Many interventions are taken in and around refugee camps, working off the existing infrastructure of care and maintenance regimes and focusing on opening economic opportunities for displaced refugees while preparing them for return or integration. (Crawford et al., 2015).

## Strengths

### *Promoting self-reliance brings benefits to refugee populations and host states and therefore precedes integration*

According to the migration policy institute (Aleinikoff, 2015), protracted displacement distracts humanitarian agencies from responding to emergencies, and declining funds places refugees in more considerable adversity. The transition is therefore from humanitarian relief to development, yet he also argues that this is not merely a shift in policy which is required but a new narrative, which highlights how refugee populations have the potential to contribute to host and origin societies (Aleinikoff 2015). Crisp (2003) looks at how the international community should promote the principle of refugee self-reliance pending time for voluntary repatriation. He highlights how refugees who have led a productive life in exile may be better prepared and equipped to go home and contribute to the reconstruction of their country, unlike those who have remained in camps on years dependent on minimal levels of humanitarian assistance (Crisp, 2003). Further, Aleinikoff (2015) argues that they can be seen to offer dual benefits to the growth of host states through their efforts, and international funding which their presence is likely to attract. It suggested this new approach may, therefore, encourage solutions via local integration. Instead of assuming that refugees are a burden on refugee-hosting areas, but that the presence can bring benefits.

Conversely, Polzer (2009) argues that the potential to explore increased self-reliance lies beyond the concept of refugee rights and state policies, arguing that the host community and refugee push successful integration. Wake argues that refugees should define self-reliance themselves (Chatty & Mansour, 2011). Interventions ought to support what refugees are already doing to achieve self-reliance. This can include subsidising work or mobility permits or using technology to improve links to networks and markets (Betts et al., 2014). Zetter (2014) argues that the Dadaab camp in Kenya has grown from displaced people achieving much with limited humanitarian or development assistance. The emphasis ought to be on enhancing opportunities that refugees already utilise and which benefit the host communities. These ideas are useful in showing that displaced people themselves often have different ideas about what they feel they need to pursue self-reliance and livelihoods. The recent conceptualisation, with a focus on self-reliance, is attempting to overcome refugees' treatments as vulnerable and passive, rather emphasising their agency and abilities instead.



## Criticisms

### Individualistic and ignores legal barriers

According to Field (2017), self-reliance as a conceptual approach to humanitarian programming is problematic because it views individual jobs or economic goals as the aim of self-reliance when more collective goals are apparent amongst refugee communities (Easton-Calabria et al., 2017). Calabria and Mookherjee also argue that it ignores more collective goals of self-reliance, which are more prominent in other cultures (“The Many Selves in Self-Reliance,” 2017). Furthermore, viewing self-reliance as an individual matter can exacerbate inequalities amongst refugees and pit one against the other, when community support is often embedded traditionally in people’s way of survival. The international refugee regime may benefit from supporting collective aspects of refugees’ economic autonomy – without neglecting a responsibility to provide enabling environments and necessary resources.

Shelly Dick referred to it as an imposed Western concept, too individualistic, referring that it makes more sense to promote ‘family or community reliance’. (“Review of CORD community services for Congolese refugees in Tanzania - the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” 2002). Refugees are actively mobilising their resources to fill the gaps in official protection and assistance, and these existing community-based models of assistance should be built upon to heighten self-reliance. (*Ibid.*) Rather than focusing so explicitly on an individuals’ self-reliance, which cannot target more than some, the UNHCR needs to continue working for livelihood opportunities at a community level.

Criticism from Easton-Calabria (2018) is that neoliberalism has played a significant role in fostering the concept of self-reliance. The UNHCR attempt to reshape refugees from helpless victims to resilient agents responsible for themselves may appear worthy yet relying on others is often a necessary feature of human life. In northern countries, those with the highest standard of living and lower levels of inequality tend to have stronger social security and welfare systems, yet refugees living in harsher conditions and fewer rights are expected to be responsible for themselves with limited support. Easton-Calabria (2018) claims this rhetoric is embedded in broader neo-liberal discussions in Western societies as well as attempting to reduce state welfare and increase citizen individualism. Promotion of refugee’s self-reliance ought to shift from traditional relief aid to development assistance, yet juxtaposing self-reliance and dependency as opposites can oversimplify the matter. There is the assumption that refugees’ self-reliance is achieved simply by reducing their aid.

The aim of employment or refugee entrepreneurship within a market economy is a crucial aim of self-reliance, yet refugees face numerous barriers, which make this difficult. Legal challenges prevent refugees from working formally, accessing work permits, moving freely, and being included in financial institutions providing credit or loans. For some refugees, it is difficult to find markets in which to sell goods or services. This idea of self-reliance is better suited to urban displaced people or those who can move freely in and out of camps. Crawford et al. (2015) note problems which emerge, the first of which is that policy and research experts advocate policies which are either unrealistic or contested by the host state. Self-reliance often cannot be achieved due to the legal framework such as restrictions on work, access to education and freedom of movement, which the host government holds authority in changing. However, in the conceptualisation of self-reliance, refugees are held fully responsible for achieving economic autonomy, and they are portrayed to be a failure if they ask for to help (Easton-Calabria, 2018).

Sanyal (2014) explores how protracted refugee situations are evolving towards the conditions of Palestinian refugees living under the administration of UNRWA. While there have been attempts by UNHCR to provide a development- and solutions-oriented approach to refugee assistance, in the form of self-reliance projects, he argues that this has met with little success (Sanyal, 2014). Sanyal (2014: 151) also claims that refugees are being “calculated, managed and warehoused” with limited rights, ensuring that the production of a refugee regime is self-perpetuating. Only until the UNHCR acknowledges its limitations will other actors play their part.

Aleinikoff (2015) is one scholar advocating for labour market rights, better understandings of livelihood opportunities at individual or community or system level, the inclusion of private investors and diaspora in third countries, and broader development opportunities including large scale agricultural projects and infrastructure. However, this requires development actors to become more involved and for refugees to be included in development planning, using national and local development plans. Arguably the model of promoting self-reliance places too much of the burden on refugees, when restrictive government policies and problems with the humanitarian funding model can limit results. Part of the model for self-reliance strategies, therefore, lies with the UNHCR advocating for asylum states to respect the Geneva convention.

Looking at protracted displacement in Africa, Dev (2003) describes the reluctance of host states because they fear the consequences of long-term refugee settlement, mainly for security and

resources reasons. They view self-reliance as encouraging local integration, which is also politically unpopular, and including refugees in development plans could contradict the notion of refugees being a burden and thus reduce financial support from the international community. Often countries in the South view solutions as ways for those in the North to contain refugees there. Restrictions on asylum in the North affects their ability to advocate for Southern governments to change their policies (Easton-Calabria, 2018).

#### *Fails to protect refugees*

Regarding the interventions, Aleinikoff (2015) argues that there has been little analysis or monitoring of whether numerous projects have enabled large numbers of refugees to be self-reliant, and most projects only provided a limited number of refugees with some skills. Trying to reduce refugees' dependence on aid amidst declining funding risks undermining their protection. The UNHCR mandate is to protect refugees, so they still carry the responsibility to enhance their protection not reduce it via the promotion of self-reliance. However, with funding cuts, refugees must rely on others who may be on a similar scale of poverty.

Kaiser (2002: 22), studies a refugee settlement in Uganda, and claims that refugees were afraid of being perceived as self-reliant by the UNHCR because they then are in “danger of losing the protection of that organisation, and being left with no recourse to any other source of legal and material protection”. The UNHCR operates on a needs-based approach, yet decreasing financial resources reduces the number of people receiving assistance. However, for the clear majority who are vulnerable but not ‘extremely vulnerable’, means they cannot advance beyond survival and living for the day. Bakewell refers to this situation as a “poverty trap”, where “recipients have to show they are poor to receive any help, and they are discouraged from improving their situation, as their gains will be offset against any grants” (“Giving out their daughters for their survival”- Refugee Law Project: 246). Due to this, promoting self-reliance can amplify inequalities between refugees. Shelly Dick's study in a Congolese context highlight how refugees are vulnerable to various challenges and exploitation, lacking their fundamental human rights (Dick, 2002).

## *2.4 Livelihoods*

Self-reliance and livelihoods are intertwined concepts. Self-reliance refers to strengthening livelihoods, and livelihood programming should, therefore, assist refugees in becoming self-reliant (Refugees, 2009). Livelihood programs ought to reduce the vulnerability of refugees and their long-term reliance on humanitarian assistance (UNHCR, 2006). A livelihood framework is a technique

to understand how households or individuals derive their livelihoods, using the triangle of assets, capabilities and activities. There are several livelihood frameworks used by development actors, including the DFID livelihoods framework and the UNDP livelihoods framework. However, as with the concept of self-reliance, the livelihoods framework is problematic. According to Mclaughlin, literature is absent from showing what works in overcoming the constraints to livelihoods development in protracted refugee situations (Mclaughlin, 2015). Improving learning and practice regarding successful approaches to livelihoods development has recently been adopted as a critical pillar of UNHCR's Global Strategy for Livelihoods, 2014-2018 (UNHCR, 2014). However, this is still new, and there exists no independent impact assessment or monitoring evaluations yet to assess its success in protracted refugee situations (Levin, 2014). Furthermore, in the Livelihoods framework, according to Levin (2014: 11) "Surprisingly little attention is given to understanding people's livelihood outcomes – at least, this ought to be surprising given the amount of interest shown in supporting them".

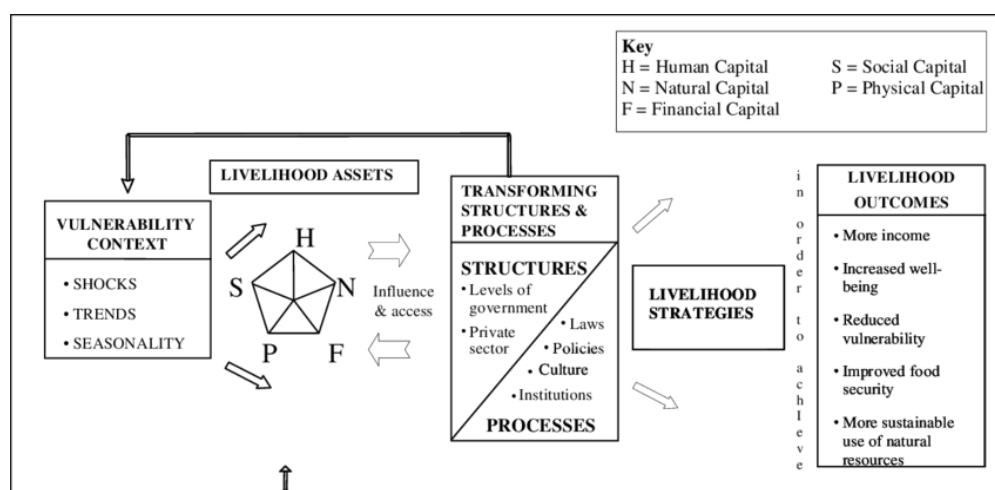


Figure 2 - The DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Cahn, 2002)

The general livelihoods framework has further been criticised as it fails to address issues of violence and conflict (Collinson et al., 2003). Carr (2013: 80) argues that it "places too much emphasis on material assets and economics, and the improvement of material conditions", similar to critiques of the concept of self-reliance. As this framework would be taking place within a refugee camp; profoundly affected by issues of violence and conflict, it makes little sense to use the standard livelihood framework. Levin (2014), adapted the livelihoods framework by focusing more on people's identities, perceptions of their world and the possibilities for themselves within it; their objectives; and including aspects of livelihoods which are not just economic. He also included outcomes, which would address the criticism of limited evaluations.

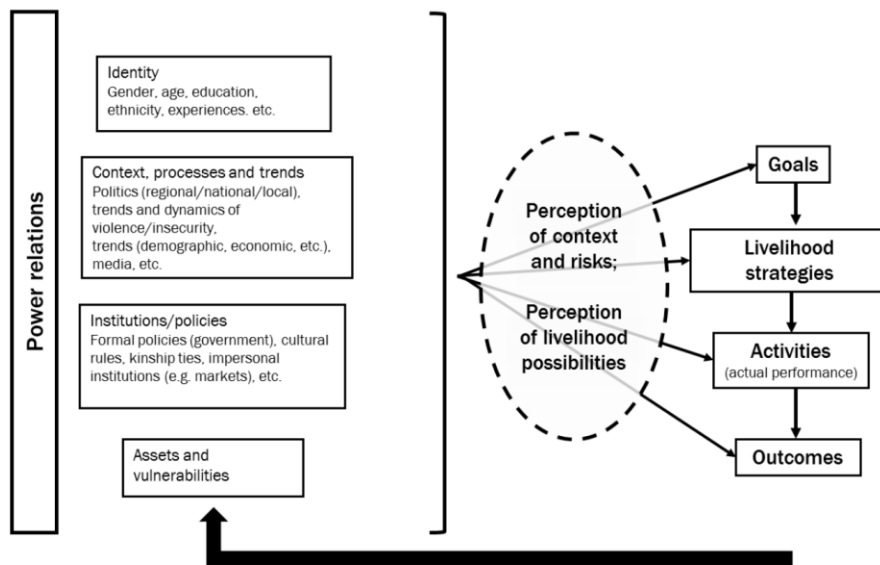
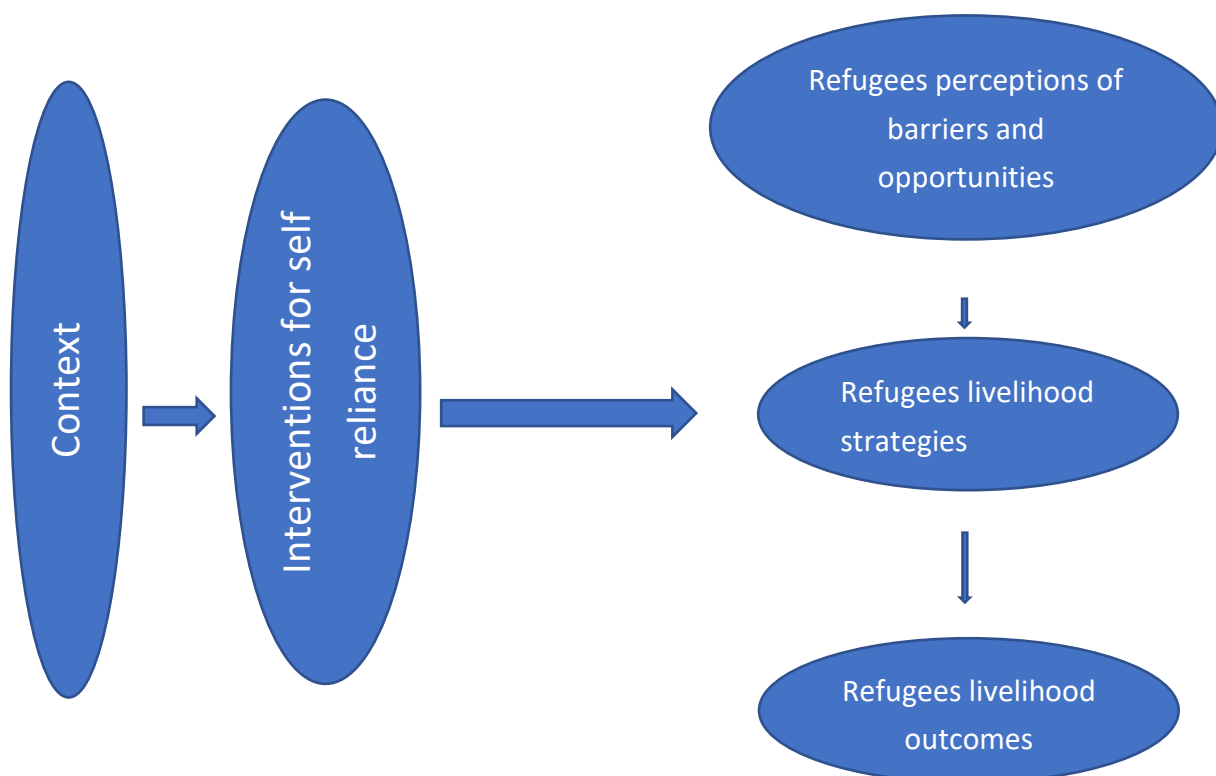


Figure 3 - Levin (2014) adapted sustainable livelihood framework

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

Taking guidance from Levin's conceptual framework, the model used in this research is illustrated in figure 4 below. The conceptual framework assists in discovering whether the youth's perception of self-reliance matches the interventions currently in place. The implementation of self-reliance concept can also be challenged by exploring refugees' livelihoods. Each part of this framework is explained in more detail below.



*Figure 4 – Conceptual model for my research – own source (derived and adapted from Levin)*

### Context and interventions

Exploring contextual factors will help understand structural barriers or opportunities for youth to achieve self-reliance. According to Werker (2007), accessing livelihoods or self-reliance is barred due to restrictions on access to land, mobility, or the right to work, alongside camps isolation from economic hubs – resulting in transport or information costs. Host governments may resent programs which promote the livelihoods of refugees to work, as they would then compete with locals (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016). Constraints can include weak tailoring of interventions to local economic conditions or short term/small-scale nature of programs (McCloughlin, 2016). This will also include beneficial projects within the camp from certain actors and how they implement the concept of self-reliance at the camp, specifically looking at interventions for youth.

Perception of self-reliance barriers, perception of self-reliance opportunities  
Refugees need to be consulted with to introduce the concept of self-reliance successfully. However, the views of young displaced people in protracted contexts are not well documented. Their perceptions are not often explicitly studied as part of livelihoods frameworks. One study conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission in various conflict-affected countries finds that amongst their top concerns is the lack of proper education, which they link to unemployment, poverty, and lack of resources (Robinson & Alpar, 2009). There are many possible reasons why different people will perceive the same overall context in different ways, including their identity, their relative power and wealth, their abilities, and how institutions and policies treat them. These varying perceptions determine actions toward self-reliance.

### Livelihood strategies and outcomes

Standard frameworks show strategies as being shaped by assets and various institutional factors, but this does not always imply a certain economic reality or outcome. Livelihoods research and the concept of self-reliance assume that goals are to strive for optimal economic outcomes. However, for youth refugees, this may be more related to personal security, social integration or acceptance, employment, and education. Few people's wellbeing's solely depend on economic status, and different youth have different goals. According to Crisp (2004), international assistance is only one small part of a search by refugees to build self-reliance, including harmless activities (manipulating and maximising assistance) and more illegal ones (such as exploitative employment, illegal farming or sexual exploitation). Turner (2005) studies Burundian refugees in Tanzania, exploring informal and formal power relations and the renegotiation of space within refugee camps. He looks at how the public authority of the "big men" is secured not through access to resources provided by UNHCR and NGOs, but by the threat of violence. Opportunities for self-reliance can come through a variety of strategies.

The goals section of the conceptual model addresses the issue that self-reliance focuses too much on economic objectives. Instead, this model encompasses the dimensions of livelihood as most relevant to the people concerned (based on perceptions); relating economic and non-economic goals. The success of livelihoods can be measured by discovering whether youth refugees are achieving their objectives.

## Summary

Understanding youth's perceptions on the best outcomes of self-reliance, and what is best in shaping this will help the researcher to make recommendations of how best to support this in the future, improving the operationalisation of the UNHCR's concept of self-reliance. It will become clear why youth using the same strategy may have different self-reliance outcomes, thus understanding why some youth face more significant challenges than others. Understanding outcomes and what shapes greater self-reliance for youth will help know how best to support them in the future.

## *2.6 Research Questions*

**How viable is the aim of self-reliance for those aged 18-25-years within the protracted refugee situation at Dzaleka?**

To realise my main research question, the following research questions will be answered:

- 1) How is the concept of self-reliance implemented by actors at Dzaleka, exploring specific interventions for 18 – 25-year olds?**
- 2) What are 18 – 25-year olds refugees' perceptions of the barriers for their self-reliance at Dzaleka?**
- 3) What livelihood strategies do 18-25-year-old refugees take to become more self-reliant?**



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### *3.1 Sampling*

A translator was worked with in the field, who himself is a refugee from the DRC, now living at Dzaleka. The use of a translator was very beneficial to communicate and conduct interviews with a wide variety of participants, as many different languages are spoken in the camp. As the translator is a refugee and is very involved in different aspects of life in the camp, he could provide a gateway into the camp and arrange interviews. Snowball sampling was therefore used to identify participants, as the translator is involved in various youth groups and has a wide network of 18 – 25-year old's who could be interviewed. Having conducted research for the first few weeks, it was important to look through the demographics of those interviewed. To try and ensure a more representative sample of respondents, the lacking subpopulations were then specifically sought out, using purposive sampling.

Interviews with organisations were conducted by visiting offices and arranging appointments. This was relatively easy with few challenges faced.

### *3.2 In-depth, semi-structured interviews*

This research interviewed refugees using a semi-structured topic schedule, to understand their views on self-reliance, through identifying their perceptions on the barriers and opportunities for their self-reliance, as well as by discovering their livelihood strategies and outcomes. The questions and themes covered were based on preliminary research. The interviews were pre-tested three times, recorded and transcribed, and then necessary changes were made.

15 interviews were carried out with relevant NGO and CBO officials, as well as a UNHCR representative, to see how they the concept of self-reliance has translated into interventions for youth at Dzaleka and understand what the major challenges and opportunities are for 18–25-year-olds. All the NGOs at Dzaleka camp were interviewed.

#### Operation

41 interviews in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted over the course of three months. 26 were with refugees living at Dzaleka, 11 with representatives from the NGOs working at Dzaleka, 3 with CBO representatives and 1 with the Livelihood Specialist from the UNHCR. The demographics of those interviewed are highlighted below.

*Refugees living in Dzaleka*

	Gender	Nationality	Age
1	Male	DRC	20
2	Male	DRC	21
3	Female	DRC	20
4	Female	Rwanda	18
5	Male	DRC	20
6	Male	DRC	19
7	Female	DRC	23
8	Male	Somalia	23
9	Female	Burundi	21
10	Female	Somalia	23
11	Female	DRC	19
12	Male	DRC	22
13	Female	DRC	18
14	Female	DRC	19
15	Female	Rwanda	20
16	Female	DRC	18
17	Female	DRC	23
18	Female	DRC	23
19	Male	DRC	25
20	Male	DRC	19
21	Female	DRC	18
22	Female	Rwanda	18
23	Male	Burundi	25
24	Male	Burundi	19
25	Female	Burundi	18
26	Female	Burundi	18

*Table 1: List of interviewed refugee population**Organisations and UNHCR*

	<b>Organization</b>
1	CBO - Salama Africa
2	NGO - CARD
3	NGO - CARD
4	NGO - Red Cross
5	NGO - There is Hope
6	CBO – Healthy Heart Organization
7	NGO – Jesuit Refugee Service
8	NGO – There is Hope
9	NGO – Plan Malawi
10	NGO – Welthungerhilfe
11	CBO – Tikondwe Freedom Gardens
12	UNHCR – Livelihood Specialist
13	NGO - Plan Youth Friendly Health Service
14	NGO - There is Hope

15	CBO – The Branches
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*Table 2: list of organisations (NGOs and CBOs) and the UNHCR interviewed*

### 3.3 Focus groups

#### Operation

Two focus groups were conducted, one with 10 males living at Dzaleka, and the second with 9 females living at Dzaleka (one participant did not show up). Identified through a community-based organization providing English teaching lessons at Dzaleka, all the participants in both focus groups were from the DRC. The majority could speak English but not very fluently, therefore a translator was used to assist at times.

The genders were separated because in some circumstances, women feel less confident in speaking in a group with both men and women, or vice versa. Furthermore, certain challenges are specific to each gender. Having identified problems within the interviews with a similar number of females and males spoken to, through the focus groups a gendered lens could be applied further in deepening the understanding of challenges for self-reliance.

The data gathered from the interviews was used to explore the prevalent themes to a greater degree, prioritizing the main barriers for their self-reliance with them using problem ranking. It was also useful to use the setting of a focus group to move from personal problems, to more solution focused. This was done by first identifying the key issues and then identifying potential strategies or opportunities for the future.

#### Focus Group Participants

<b>Focus group 1 – males</b>
Participant 1 (DRC, 25)
Participant 2 (DRC, 20)
Participant 3 (DRC, 25)
Participant 4 (DRC, 23)
Participant 5 (DRC, 25)
Participant 6 (DRC, 22)
Participant 7 (DRC, 22)
Participant 8 (DRC, 24)
Participant 9 (DRC, 18)
Participant 10 (DRC, 22)

<b>Focus group 2 – females</b>
Participant 1 (DRC, 20)
Participant 2 (DRC, 25)
Participant 3 (DRC, 20)
Participant 4 (DRC, 21)
Participant 5 (DRC, 21)
Participant 6 (DRC, 19)
Participant 7 (DRC, 19)
Participant 8 (DRC, 19)
Participant 9 (DRC, 22)

*Table 3: List of focus group respondents*

### *3.5 Participant Observation*

For participant observation, time at Dzaleka was also spent attending programmes ran by a Peace Corps volunteer, for young female empowerment, grassroots soccer (education about sexual health, HIV and gender), as well as groups for teenage mothers. Various events were attended such as SALAMA Africa's opening night and a performance from the Branches. Spending three months living with a host Malawian family in the neighbouring community to Dzaleka provided an understanding of the camp from their perspective. As the camp was the closest place resembling an urban centre in the area, it was also used for the market, shops and restaurants.

### *3.6 Research Limitations*

#### Time

The limited time meant that the number of those interviewed is relatively small, which means one cannot generalize the findings. Furthermore, upon discovering that many 18 – 25-year olds lived in the cities, it would have been useful to explore further their self-reliance by interviewing these people, to make a comparison to those living in the camp and understanding the specific barriers they faced residing in the city without legal protections. However, due to time and accessibility, this was not possible as part of this research.

## Sampling

The first challenge came after a few weeks of interviews, as the translator used was mainly connecting with his close friends from his diploma or colleagues at the organisation he worked. This meant that most interviewees were in a certain group at the camp; those who were doing 'better off' in comparison to others. This is because they are enrolled in higher education or working for an organisation, and most of whom spoke English as well. Upon realisation of this, purposive sampling was then used whereby the translator helped arrange more interviews with those less advantaged in the camp, such as not being in further education, not able to speak English, and not working for a similar organisation to the one which he works. Interviewing people from different social groups in the camp was more representative of the situation at Dzaleka and was important for the validity and reliability of the data gathered.

Another challenge was that the translator used is from the DRC, so many of his contacts at the start were also from the DRC. This was not a major issue to begin, as most refugees living at Dzaleka are from the DRC. However, it was important to ensure the research was representative to the other main nationalities living at Dzaleka, so it was requested for more interviews with people from different nationalities such as Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Ethiopia. This managed to be possible, except for 18 – 25-year olds from Ethiopia. This was because there are only 44 of them who live at Dzaleka, and they remain more difficult to arrange interviews with.

Nonetheless, included in the interviewed population are those from different ethnic groups, different educational backgrounds, both genders, different socio-economic backgrounds, some with disabilities, and different ages within the 18 – 25-year-old bracket.

For the focus group, whilst it would have been more ideal to conduct focus groups with a variety of different nationalities, it proved too difficult with issues of language and translation. As respondents were identified by an English teaching class, it also meant that participants livelihoods were similar because they were all learning English to better their opportunities.

## Translator

The use of a translator has its own issues in terms of reliability, as he is also a member of the community at Dzaleka. Some participants may not want to reveal information due to this. This may have been more the case when interviewing female respondents, due to the strong gender norms at Dzaleka. However, the translator is also an active employee of the Plan Youth Friendly Health Services, therefore deals with issues of females' empowerment and reproductive health quite regularly, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of those assisted. Many participants, from

both genders, have shared a lot during interviews, and due to his active role in the community, it seems that interviewees feel comfortable speaking openly with him.

### Positionality

Other challenges faced in the field has been misinterpretation of the researcher's role when interviewing people. Although they are clearly informed at the start that this research is for a master's thesis, my position as a white, outsider with a European background, alongside the content of the interview questions; asking about future goals, led some to ask whether they could be helped in getting resettlement. Some participants would also ask how the research is going to directly benefit them. This is understandable, because of the situation that they are in, but it was important to emphasize that the research will not be of direct or immediate benefit to the lives of those interviewed. To overcome this challenge, the translator was asked to explain more clearly the aim and likely outcome of the research, at the start of each interview. However, some informants may have wanted to make things appear worse or exacerbate certain challenges due to this expectation of help, which could undermine the reliability of findings.

In general, though, the number of challenges has been limited. The contact at LUANAR University and those at Tikondwe Freedom Gardens have helped enormously with ensuring the process has been without many difficulties. Furthermore, organisations and refugees at Dzaleka camp have been very approachable and open, and the proximity of the research site has ensured it was very accessible.

## Chapter 4: Context of Malawi

Malawi, a country bordering Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania, is a peaceful country with a democratic political structure. However, it is also one of the poorest countries in the world, with corruption prevalent and a population mostly dependent on subsistence farming. Established in 1994, Malawi now hosts almost 40,000 refugees at Dzaleka Refugee Camp, in the Dowa District; 50km from Lilongwe. The majority of those living at Dzaleka come from the Great Lakes Region; DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. Some also fled from Ethiopia and Somalia.

Whilst the right of refugees to work was explicitly protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, after the Mozambican influx, Malawi enacted the 1989 Refugee Act, making reservations to nine articles of the Convention. These include exemption from reciprocity, movable and immovable property, rights of association, wage-earning employment, liberal professionals, public education, labour legislation and social security, freedom of movement and naturalisation. (Malawi Refugee Act, 1989). Only very few are naturalised on an exceptional basis. These reservations pose challenges to refugees at Dzaleka, as they are officially forbidden from living or working outside of the camp setting. Refugees have free movement within the district of Dowa for the day but are required to obtain a permit from the Camp Administrator if they travel outside the district or leave for more than one day. This process requires one to go to the camp manager's office, exchange their ration card for a permission letter and exchange it back upon their return to the camp. Previously, if residents wanted to go to town, they could do so daily provided they obtained permission, yet now they are only allowed to leave Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

The camp administration may have got more restrictive in allowing refugees to move around freely, yet one common theme gathered from interviews is the presence of refugees living in the cities, outside the camp. According to some participants, the Malawian government is more flexible than other countries, and Dzaleka is less restrictive than other protracted camps in Africa. The UNHCR livelihood specialist states that this is because it is easy to find refugees having their livelihood activities across the country, in each district, running their business and working with local Malawians. Corruption is prevalent in Malawi, and for most refugees caught by the police, they either face jail or must pay bribes to be released.

*“When a refugee goes out and to city, and runs a business, and gets discovered by police, he is asked to pay a bribe if he wants to be left alone. And these bribes are heavy, 50,000 Kwacha today, and then another*

*police officer says give me another 50,000 Kwacha. And that refugee has no power to stop that police, because he legally has no power” (There is Hope)*

In terms of opportunities, although living with the fear of being arrested, those living in the city can work in private primary and secondary schools, or they can run their businesses. Doing anything outside these two areas puts them at higher risk of harassment.

The government has shown some commitment to the CRRF (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework). CRRF is an initiative asking all governments across the world to take responsibility to include refugees in their national development plan and include issues concerning them in their strategic frameworks. For Malawi, this is the Malawian Growth and Development Strategy, the most recent of which included just a few lines about migration. Last year the president of Malawi spoke highly of and showed commitment to implement the CRRF, and as a result, they promised to get the first 200 skilled professionals to be recruited in the civil service in the government. However, at present, no action has been taken to deliver this reality.

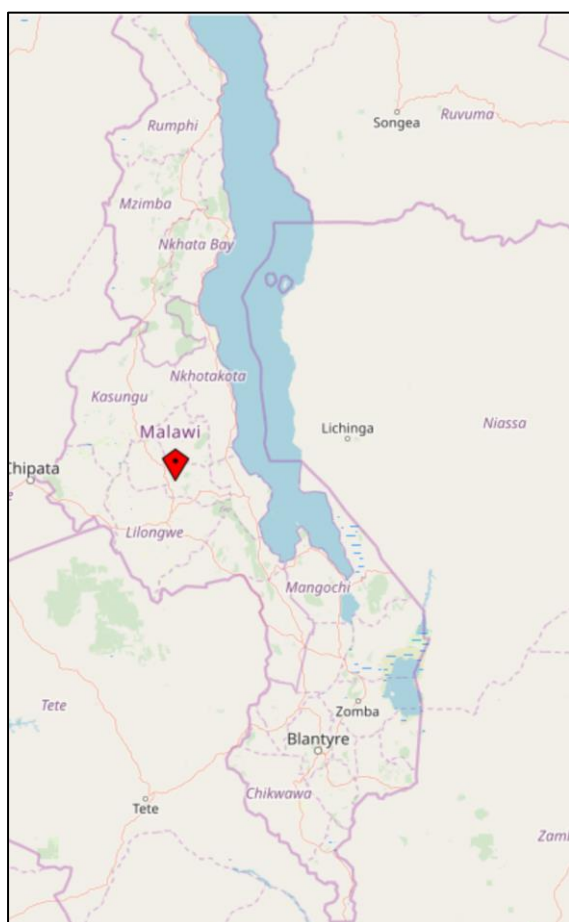


Figure 5 - Refugeemap.com of Dzaleka in Malawi, 2017



## Chapter 5: Results: Interventions

The results in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 are established in such a way to answer the sub-questions, and ultimately the main question. In chapter 5, the first sub-question; interventions are explored. In chapter 6, the second sub-question; refugee's perceptions, is presented. In chapter 7, the third sub-question; refugee's strategies, is shown. Finally, there is a discussion, which answers the main research question.

### 1) How is the concept of self-reliance implemented by actors at Dzaleka, exploring specific interventions for 18 – 25-year olds?

From interviews with NGOs working in the camp and interviews with refugees living there, the shift in promoting 'care and maintenance' to 'self-reliance' has been explored, specifically concerning relevant interventions.

According to the various interviews taken with NGOs and the UNHCR, the main feedback I received regarding the changes is declining funds. This reduction in funding means that both operational and implementing partners of the UNHCR have a lower budget, which has an impact on the quality and quantity of interventions for the camp. There is also a rapidly increasing population at Dzaleka, where the camp has become more congested in recent years.

*“9000 in 1994, now the population of Dzaleka is 39,000. Our resources are inadequate in proportion to the population. Funding problem has been an issue, looking at humanitarian context of Dzaleka, Malawi cannot be compared to Syria, Lebanon, especially Asia you know. Most donors are turning attention to hotspots of humanitarian support, Malawi is not getting attention as it is protracted situation. Budgets are being cut, not being funded.” (JRS representative)*

This reduction in funding translates to the provision of necessary relief being reduced, alongside organisations in the camp having a reduction in the number of people reached or quality of services available. Despite this, the findings show that there are two central interventions promoting self-reliance, livelihoods and education. There are also recreational and psychosocial interventions which can contribute to self-reliance.

### 5.1 Provision of basic needs

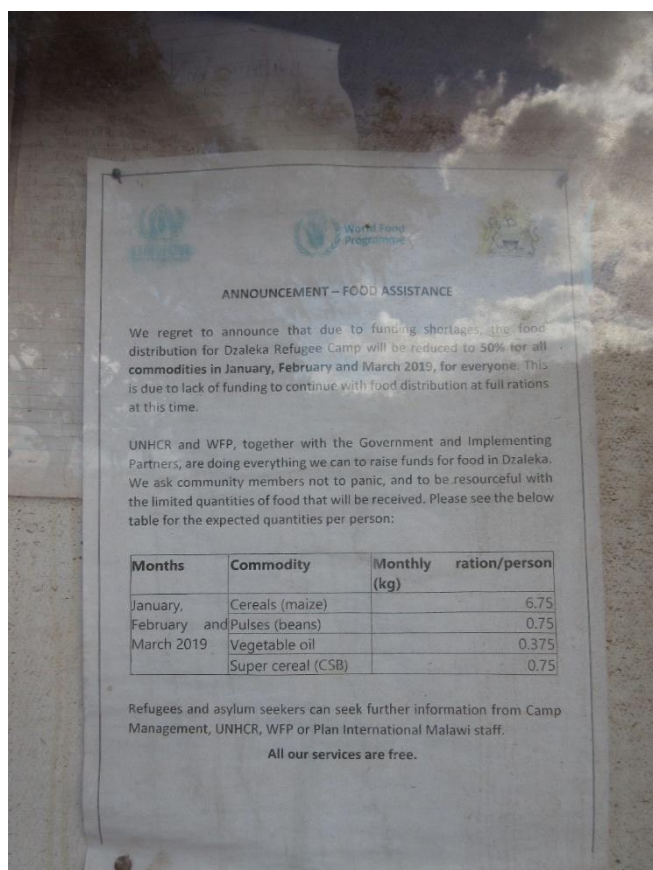
While the shift from care and maintenance to self-reliance implies that relief will no longer be distributed, basic relief is still provided at Dzaleka, yet is reducing in quantity. An arrangement between the UNHCR, WFP and Plan International Malawi provides maize, beans, cooking oil, laundry soap, and occasionally soya, monthly. According to the Plan representative, depending on availability of materials, camp residents are sometimes given materials like washing basins and clothes. Women are provided with a small number of sanitary towels. Building materials are also said to be distributed. However, almost all refugees said that upon arrival they first spend time in a shelter for new arrivals, before being granted some land, with no building materials.

Although there is the encampment policy agreement with the UNHCR and Government of Malawi, those living in urban areas will often return to the camp for receiving their basic relief items. The Plan representative stated that they could not deny these people, as it is first challenging to prove who they are, and it would also mean they are depriving their relatives who still live in the camp.

For Rwandese who came to Malawi prior to the genocide, the Plan representative states that they are still being provided with relief items. However, some Rwandese describe how they were told to repatriate as it is now classified as safe for them to return, and their relief has been halted due to this.

Budget cuts have meant the amount of relief provided has decreased by half. Previously they would last a month, afterwards half a month, and now they now only last 7-8 days.

*“Just because we put them in the camp, they depend on food rations from UNHCR and other agencies, but UNHCR now have financial difficulties. The government has financial difficulties. They cannot feed these people like in the past.” (There Is Hope)*



*Figure 6 - Announcement regarding food distribution reduction*

## 5.2 Provision of livelihood programs

The organisation CARD is the implementing partner of the UNHCR for livelihood programs to assist 800 beneficiaries in the camp, as well as those in the host community. Although they typically target a household, this household can include those aged 18-25-year olds. They provide inputs to beneficiaries in the camp in two forms, the graduation approach and conventional livelihood activities, using market-based interventions.



Figure 7 - Graduation Approach ("Resilience," 2018.)

The graduation approach begins by identifying impoverished households, rather than individuals. These are classed as 'ultra-poor'. The selection criteria must include representation from vulnerable groups (elderly, widows, single mothers, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied minors), as well as some youth inclusion in both the host community and refugee community. 60% tend to be women and 40% men. Then a market analysis is conducted to identify viable livelihoods, and time-bound cash assistance is provided to support the family as the livelihood grows. The graduation approach also advises a refugee on saving money, and technical and entrepreneurial skills are enhanced through training.

For the conventional livelihood activities, there are two types; agricultural and non-agricultural. Agricultural refers to crop production, encouraging the production of high-value crops such as soybeans, tomatoes, onions and cabbages. They have partners on the buyer side, partners on the supply side, and partners for entrepreneurs dealing with value addition.

In terms of livestock, CARD provides dairy cows to host communities to produce milk, as there is no space in the camp. Milk is sold to trained people in the camp, who process the milk into more delicate products, like yoghurt. There are also pig, quale and chicken production for commercial purposes. Currently, there is the production of 22-25 crates of eggs per day, around 48,000 Kwacha, which equates to 1.4 million Kwacha, or \$1950, per month. This figure is for ten households, so, therefore, each household would receive \$195 per month. This is a vast

improvement for self-reliance opportunities to what most receive, which is a food ration costing around 13,000 Kwacha per month, around \$17.



*Figure 8 - Production of chicken livestock for commercial purposes*

Non-agricultural refers to CARD engaging with business enterprises. This includes sausage production, tomato sauce, and this year they are planning on starting mushroom production. CARD also encourages refugees to diversify their income, training in areas of savings, business manual skills and vision building. Finally, CARD has also supported some restaurants, who lacked the capital but had the skills. This included renovating the buildings; providing new furniture and fridges, training them in hospitality, marketing, quality, food, and looking at how they can respond to demand and supply in terms of pricing.

### *5.3 Provision of employment*

Job opportunities are limited as it is illegal for refugees to work in Malawi. The only formal ‘employment’ which is available is to work for an organisation in the camp. However, they are officially employed as volunteers and they therefore only receive a stipend. This is usually in the form of food; however, in some cases, organisations provide stipend with a small monetary allowance. Plan, for instance, pays volunteers the maximum of 30,000 Kwacha per month (\$39).

#### 5.4 Provision of vocational training

There Is Hope are the primary providers of vocational skills training. These are in welding, plumbing, carpentry, tailoring and bricklaying. TEVETA (Technical Entrepreneurial Vocational Education and Training) certifies these. This training is offered to anyone who can read and write, targeting 125 people every six months. After which the organisation provides equipment (such as tools for bricklaying) for free and a loan which they begin to pay back after six months. Vocational training also includes follow up to assess how they are doing afterwards, if they are willing, to measure whether the business is succeeding. There is significant demand, however, with over 700 in the waiting list for tailoring. There is Hope also have vocational courses specifically for widows, disabled people or those with a disabled husband/wife or member of the family. These courses involve making products in the form of crafts or soap.

The UNHCR livelihood specialist described how in the future he hopes for greater involvement with TEVETA:

*“They said it’s difficult to pick refugees into the national system, because of legal problems, and that competition is high, and this could limit opportunities for Malawians. But said if you have institutions in the camp, and can build technical colleges, then what we will do is formalise those institutions, and even provide teachers. But huge funding and infrastructure problems. But that’s why we are using operationalising partners such as There Is Hope.” (UNHCR)*

JRS are also running vocational courses, although their core competence is in education. They offer these in bricklaying, hairdressing, carpentry and tailoring.

#### 5.5 Secondary school and higher education service provisions

In the camp, JRS is the leading provider of educational services. This includes funded primary and secondary education, unlike for Malawians. They also offer scholarships for over 15 girls to attend boarding schools outside the camp, with transport and all fees paid. High demand due to an increasing camp population, and declining funds, however, means that there are increasingly limited places available in the official camp schools. Subsequently, refugees have formed community-based organisations to fill the educational shortage. They cooperate with churches to open schools there, charging a small fee to provide an income for the teachers. JRS provides some capacity training to develop teaching skills to members of the community. However, the exams they take are not accredited in the Malawian national system.

For those who cannot speak English, they must first attend a bridging program to learn English before joining a JRS school. Some churches in the camp provide English lessons for those requiring this at Dzaleka, cooperating with CBOs to open schools in their church during the day.

After completing secondary school, there are formal educational opportunities within the camp, albeit limited for the numbers living there. Higher education in Malawian Universities is currently inaccessible for refugees due to the high cost of fees. Even for those born in Malawi, refugees hoping to access Malawian universities are treated as international students and therefore charged a high amount. Accessing higher education for refugees is, therefore, a limited possibility. However, there are schemes which are trying to address this.

There Is Hope offer 80% funded university scholarships in public and private universities for 20 students - 10 refugees and 10 Malawians, each year. Similarly, JRS has implemented scholarships for 13-18 girls living in the camp to attend both private and public universities in Malawi. A scheme from WUSC (World University Service Canada) provides scholarships for 25 people per year to be resettled in Canada after undertaking a university degree in a Canadian University. WUSC is a highly competitive programme, with 500 – 1000 applicants each year. Another opportunity for higher education in the camp is through Jesuit Higher Learning, an online degree offered from an American university partnered with JRS. JHL offers university degrees in social work, education and business, after having first taken a year diploma with JRS. JRS also offer opportunities for different short-term learning education called tracks for six months, for different paths including culture and computer skills.

### *5.6 Provision of recreational facilities*

For those aged 18-25 in the camp, recreational opportunities are essential as a coping strategy as well as assisting their personal development. Currently, there are football pitches, volleyball courts, tennis courts, and a basketball pitch under construction. JRS provides leadership and management skills for various recreation and sports CBOs in the camp. There is also a youth recreation hall which the UNHCR funds, equipped with pool tables and a television.



*Figure 9 - Football pitch at Dzaleka*

### *5.7 Psychosocial support services*

A key provider of psychosocial support for youth in the camp is JRS. They provide individual counselling, group counselling and support groups. They also train in capacity building for different CBOs. This is because some conflicts from the country of origin spill over into the refugee camp, particularly tribal or ethnic differences. The limited resources in the camp can also lead to conflict; having 24 boreholes for 39,000 people means that tensions often occur there. Each 'zone' (there are 9 of them within the camp) and each nationality has an elected leader. JRS employs conflict resolution training to different groups so that when there are problems, amongst them, they can help to resolve conflicts.

### *Conclusion*

Not only has relief decreased, but the funding of organisations working in the camp is decreasing. The concept may have changed from providing basic needs with the care and maintenance model to promoting the concept of self-reliance, but in terms of interventions, the main shift has been with the introduction of the CARD programme, and yet these only target the most vulnerable. Vocational training from JRS and There is Hope are important in helping individuals establish their own business and providing links to the market. However, these do not guarantee a successful livelihood afterwards as legal limitations make conducting business difficult in this setting. The programs themselves are also competitive and faced with a reduction in funding. Finally, education is a privilege not a right at Dzaleka, without universal primary or secondary education, and higher education is unattainable for most youth at Dzaleka



## Chapter 6. Refugees perception of self-reliance barriers

### **1) What are 18 – 25-year olds refugees' perceptions of the barriers for their self-reliance at Dzaleka?**

One of the primary purposes of the interviews was to discover refugees' perceptions of the challenges they face. These interviews help to explore the impact of self-reliance interventions. By taking the views of 18-25-year olds living at Dzaleka, it provides an important perspective on whether self-reliance makes sense on a conceptual and operational level. Refugees themselves perceive what it means to be self-reliant as different from what authorities may feel is essential. Furthermore, differentiated challenges enable one to see the different assets and vulnerabilities of refugees living at Dzaleka.

#### *6.1 Ranking of challenges – Focus Groups*

Firstly, two focus groups were created for groups of young females and males at Dzaleka to discuss the main challenges they face living at Dzaleka as a refugee. Next, they individually ranked these challenges from the most important to the least important. The most important challenge was assigned 40 points, the second 30 points, the third 20 points and the fourth 10. Afterwards, it was calculated which collected the most points, thus could be concluded as the most significant challenge facing this group of young people. The results of the two focus groups are presented below.

Focus group number one (10 males)

Unable to move freely Being unaccompanied

# Poverty

Limited opportunities to pursue different talents

Poor healthcare Limited job opportunities

Stress/mental health Poor shelter

Being unaccompanied was only mentioned as a challenge for one person, yet that person ranked it as the most critical challenge they face. Surprisingly, access to further or higher education was not viewed as a challenge for this group of 18-25-year olds, as many interviewees mentioned this as an issue. However, in the discussion in the focus group, having limited opportunities to explore their potential links to the limited range of options for further education at the camp. Some had backgrounds in IT or mechanics, yet there was no option to continue this at Dzaleka.

Focus group number two (10 females)



Again, being unaccompanied was a significant challenge for those affected. Lack of educational opportunities was discussed as an issue for females. Survival sex was also explicitly mentioned for females, demonstrating its prevalence at the camp. Although not mentioned in the main challenges, one participant wrote poor healthcare as an additional challenge, citing a lack of medication. It is clear to see that for both focus groups, poverty was placed as the most critical challenge. Both genders placed stress/mental health as a high challenge, alongside limited job opportunities.

From conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews, these challenges and additional ones were discussed in greater depth.

## 6.2 Poverty

Despite the formal provision of basic needs, according to the UNHCR, 76.5% are ultra-poor in the camp. 3-5% are better off, while the remaining are still impoverished. The main challenge discussed with the camp population is acute poverty. Food, sanitation, housing and healthcare are all not adequately addressed. As discussed previously, the rations provided are not enough to last more than 10-15 days of the month.

With limited means of income, food shortages are a problem facing the majority of those living in the camp. A refugee from Somalia (**Female, 23**) describes how “*if you eat in the morning, you don’t*

*know if you can eat for lunch*". There are also problems of nutrition reported, as vegetables are excluded in the rations provided, with another respondent, from the DRC (**Male, 20**), stating how the main issue is *"nutrition, we are not eating well. Even though my body seems good on your side, but inside we can feel weakness"*. Due to this hunger, theft becomes more of an issue. According to the UNCHR representative, a minority of people in the camp will steal maize and other crops from other refugees, or from the host community, to ensure they do not sleep on an empty stomach. This can undermine community cohesion and integration.

Another reported concern which is related to poverty is the poor sanitation and shelters for 18-25-year olds. In terms of shelter, many houses are without iron roofing, therefore are at risk during the rainy season. Knowing people in the camp when first arriving is an asset, as it means they can be helped with shelter, while for others who have no connections, they must go into transit until some land is available for them to build their shelter. Arriving with financial capital means one can buy or rent housing or land.

With 24 boreholes for over 39,000 residents, one participant reported that the central conflict which starts in the camp occurs near to the boreholes, due to overcrowding. Another respondent noted that the water provided causes sicknesses and sometimes rashes. While there are free healthcare facilities within the camp, there is often lack of medicine, unprofessional health staff and according to one respondent, if sent to the nearest larger hospital, refugees face discrimination compared to Malawians.

For the minority in the camp who are not living in poverty, this may be because they own successful businesses or initially arrived with more copious amounts of wealth. There are widespread reports of the involvement of Ethiopians in voluntary trafficking. Allegedly, they assist other Ethiopians travelling from their home country to South Africa, using Dzaleka as a base en-route. This can have a considerable impact on their access to more opportunities. Those in transit pay their trafficker's large sums of money. Large gated houses with displays of wealth including satellite TVs and cars sets apart a minority of camp residents from the majority.

*"Ethiopians are the most elite in terms of financial resources. So, if there are some structures only by them then you would know. If it is a bar it looks as if it was in the city centre. If they are to buy a car it is a posh car. And their wealth wouldn't be described as clean."* (**Plan representative**)

For many of those interviewed, they described their family as their biggest support network, unlike those unaccompanied with no family involved in income-generating activities.

*“When I need basic needs, I turn to parents. I don’t have much to say about that because I am a kid, and I am protected by my parents, so I don’t see far in terms of insecurity. Since the parents take control of everything and they give me all the basic needs I want. I feel like I don’t have that many challenges.”*

**(Female, 19, DRC)**



*Figures 10 and 11 - Displays of wealth inequality at Dzaleka*

### 6.3 Limited job opportunities

While food cuts have increased poverty within the camp, according to 18-25-year olds interviewed, lack of legal employment is the underlying factor. Therefore, the creation of jobs is failing to reach the majority. One respondent argues that *“the main problem is poverty. People are willing to work but they don’t have the chance. Give them a loan or a job for them to work, because they are suffering but not out of their will.”* (Female, 18, Rwanda). Even the formal job creation only leads to refugees being provided with a small stipend or food allowance, with the frustration for those interviewed that Malawian employees in the same organisation are working for a higher wage.

*“We won’t earn the same as Malawians, which is too bad, because we both have problems, we both have needs”* Female, DRC, 23

Furthermore, although several agencies are implementing vocational training targeting these youths in the camps, this is done on a limited scale, and often lacks a transition to meaningful or sustainable employment afterwards. This can leave some more disillusioned. Even if one completes higher education in the camp and finishes with a diploma, the problem remains that working is illegal in Malawi. Many youths feel hopeless and unable to see a future unless they are resettled, and they also feel frustrated that there are so many skilled workers living in the camp who cannot work.

*“People have PHDS, degrees and all else, but when they come here, they can’t do anything, just stay at home waiting to receive food, which doesn’t make sense. We are people, we have strengths skills and knowledge, we can work and take responsibility for ourselves.”* (Male, 20, DRC)

Due to this legislation preventing refugees working, they have little protection and can be exploited for labour. One man, with his own printing t-shirt business in the camp, described how, at the start of his business, he had to travel to Lilongwe to look for ink. He could not find it and ended up working for a man who owned a printing t-shirt business on the market, in order to discover where he could buy the ink. He was given just 500 Kwacha (0.66 USD) per day but was obliged to continue until he could find out and start his own business. For those months he was on an exploitative informal contract with no power or rights to negotiate a higher wage.

## 6.4 Lacking access to capital

When asked about the potential to start a business, an economic activity permitted for refugees living in the camp; the primary response is lacking access to capital. The requirements to establish banking and loans used to involve possession of national IDs, bills and other documentation. Most refugees do not have this. However, the New Finance Bank recently opened in the camp, and in collaboration with the Central Bank of Malawi, is allowing registration of refugee IDs. Therefore, those living in the camp who have refugee status now have more access to financial opportunities. They can access loans if they want in a group of ten, so that if one person defaults, the rest of the group must payback. However, according to the UNHCR Livelihood Specialist *“Youth are very insecure or afraid, of securing a loan, because they don’t have any security. They are very insecure compared to adults, when the adults were willing to go and work in groups.”*

Lacking access to capital is thus seen as a barrier for youth to establish a business, as they are either unaware of this relatively new service available, their mindset fears being in debt, or consider the impracticalities of grouping up with nine others. For youth already engaged in business, a problem cited is that lacking capital means they cannot diversify their sources of income by expanding the existing business or starting a new one. Instead, they must rely on their small business solely to meet their basic needs. Malawians in the surrounding villages have community types of banking, but this is something which is lacking in the camp.



Figure 12 - New Finance Bank at Dzaleka Refugee Camp

### *6.5 Lacking access to education*

Accessing the right to education is a necessary precondition for achieving self-reliance yet lack of educational opportunities is a problem that affects both Malawians and refugees living at Dzaleka. One opportunity for refugees is that Malawians pay for their education, unlike refugees attending the JRS schools in the camp. However, according to the UNHCR representative, an estimated 40% of the camp population do not attend school. The JRS schools cannot cater to all children residing in the camp. While other community-based organisations are attempting to fill the gap, the exams they take are not nationally accredited in Malawi and cost a small fee which many cannot afford.

There is a high dropout rate for all schools at Dzaleka, particularly for young women, mostly due to poverty significantly impacting women in the camp. Lacking basic needs such as sanitary products means that young girls often miss school when they are on their period. When the days add up of missed school, it means they can no longer catch up with the rest and are forced to drop out altogether. Teenage marriages or pregnancies also force more women to drop out of school. Young parenthood disproportionately affects women at Dzaleka, as was the case with one woman interviewed. After she had become pregnant, the father of the child abandoned her and then her parents stopped speaking to her.

*“My father found out I was pregnant and does not want to speak to me anymore. I live with my parents, but I am living like a stranger, not speaking with my father. The father of the child abandoned me. I have nothing, so I face a lot of challenges. (Female, 19, Rwanda)*

Other problems leading to high dropout rates for women in the camp are due to family pressures, underlined by cultural expectations but exacerbated by poverty. One woman spoken to had dropped out because she was expected to stay at home to look after her siblings, and do the chores, so her parents could earn money for them to eat. Her brother was permitted to stay in school.

*“I finished school at form 1. I left school because I was the one to look after my young sister as my parents were busy with the business so that we could eat. I had to look after the little ones. It was difficult for me to go to school as I had to go to school until 1 and then come here and help.” (Female, 21, Burundi)*



One male interviewee described how he had to drop out of school because he needed to work to support his mother, demonstrating how stricter gender roles can also undermine educational opportunities for both females and males at Dzaleka.



Figure 13 and 14 - The work of Plan International in Dzaleka

A prominent challenge for most of those interviewed is how limited opportunities are for further education. Only 195 out of the 7176 18-25-year olds living at Dzaleka are in higher education (University Level, Post University Level, Technical or Vocational). The Malawian government's reservation of the 1951 Geneva convention prevents access to higher education unless refugees pay international fees. Furthermore, within the camp, demand is too high for the higher education opportunities offered. With the JWJ scheme, only three courses are available: social work, business and education. These do not satisfy the varying goals and aims for 18-25-year olds residing in Dzaleka. Aspirations in the camp for a career include being a lawyer, doctor or technician. The educational paths available do not cater for this.

*"I believe education is the foundation of life, so the first thing they could do is give more people opportunities to study. They need to add other domains, technical, pedagogy and others... there are a lot of people with different talents."* (Male, 21, DRC)

## 6.6 Unable to move around freely

Many refugees who have fled from cities or towns in their previous country are unused to being confined to a small, congested space in a rural area, reporting feeling trapped. Many interviewed referred to Dzaleka as a prison, describing how they feel like prisoners. One 22-year-old Male from the DRC stated that *"we are prisoners, we need the freedom to explore what we have inside us."* This is due to the restrictions which prevent those living at Dzaleka from leaving unless they get permission. According to a camp resident, since arriving in 2013:

*“It has become quite complicated to move out of the camp. The time I came it was just daily if you want to go to town you have to go and get a permission letter from the administration, but now they have changed its only thrice a week now. Monday Wednesday and Friday, that’s the only days that you can go to town. Now it’s a bit complicated because you need to leave your ration card, they give you your permission letter once you get back you get your ration letter and give back permission letter, it has become like a prison. You just go for a day, and for you to go first you must join a long queue for you to get that permission letter for you to go out... If I left the camp without permission slip you would be in jail, if you get caught, straight to prison and for you to get out you have to pay.” (Male, 20, DRC)*

## 6.7 Insecurity

Having a sense of security is essential for one to be self-reliant, and value in the lives of many 18-25-year olds interviewed was that there is safety in the camp. Making comparisons to the country they had fled, responses featured the fact that there are no gunshots in Dzaleka. However, not everybody experiences the camp in this way, and fears for safety is a concern for some 18 – 25-year olds in the camp, and this is often dependent on one’s identity.

Twins spoken to from Somalia felt more vulnerable concerning their safety and said that they believe this is due to their nationality. They described how when first arriving *“people start burning our house.” (Male, 23, Somalia).*

Other marginalised groups who face insecurity at Dzaleka are those with Albinism. For one interviewee with Albinism, she fled Burundi when her mother and family was murdered for having the skin condition, and now faces discrimination in the camp.

*“Sometimes when I am walking around the camp, some people follow me. They call me and want me to come but I run away.... Those things, when they are doing this to me, it makes me remember what people did to my mother, they cut her into parts. I feel like this could happen to me. They see me differently to them.” (Female, 18, Burundi)*

Being LGBT makes one highly vulnerable at Dzaleka. According to the UNHCR representative, when they are visible, they are placed in a safe house in town for protection purposes, and most end up resettled. Within the camp, hostile attitudes exist, and they cannot freely engage in relationships or express their sexuality. Due to legislation and societal attitudes in both Malawi and the countries of origin, LGBT 18-25-year-old refugees face significant challenges which put them

at risk when they are in Dzaleka. In the focus group number two conducted with female respondents, an additional challenge recorded demonstrates the insecurity young LGBT residents face at Dzaleka.

*“I have other problem because I am a lesbian, I don’t have any feeling to love a man, now I am not a person. I cannot propose to a girl, because she can’t accept as it is not the traditional culture. When I told one man that I don’t love man, he insults me that I am not normal, maybe I am missing something in my body. I am not very happy about this thing.” (Female, 22, DRC)*



Figure 15 - Poster UNHCR office at Dzaleka

Gender-based violence is an issue which makes women more vulnerable in the camp. According to the JRS representative, 10% of the girls in the camp become victims of this, mainly sexual-based violence. Some women interviewed described how they avoid certain areas at night due to fears for their safety.

Sex work is presumed to be illegal in Malawi, and the rights of refugees in Malawi have limitations, therefore women reporting feel it is difficult to seek legal protection if rape, assault or other types of abuse occurs. Women engaged in survival sex can quickly become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted disease, enhancing their vulnerability. They have limited negotiating power to condom use, and generally, condom use is inconsistent with the public of Dzaleka. This is because

it is a strong Christian setting (and to a lesser extent, Muslim), where contraception is stigmatised, particularly for women. An employee for Plan Youth Friendly Health Services explained that far more men in the camp than women would come and ask for contraception. Being unaccompanied as a young female refugee makes one more vulnerable to exploitation in the form of prostitution. While some parents at Dzaleka will encourage early marriage, having parents can also help provide basic needs which prevents teenage women resorting to different means.



*Figure 16 - Common means of household security in Dzaleka*

### *6.8 Not involved in decision making*

Another challenge discussed is not being involved in decision making. The UNHCR has a complaints box outside their buildings, but refugees spoke to say this has little impact. For every nationality or ‘zone’ a leader is representing the interests and meeting with organisations or the UNHCR. Zone leaders or leaders of nationalities must be over 23 and married, limiting this opportunity for youth at the camp. Youth perceptions of community leaders were contrasting. Some, like expressed below, viewed them as a positive force because it gives them some representation with the authorities. However, the majority felt that this was not enough, and stressed how they still felt voiceless.

*“I go to my community leader. Presence of community leader is helpful because he reaches where I cannot reach, he speaks on my behalf” (Female, 23, DRC)*

*“Sometimes they have meetings with leaders of the community and inform them what is happening, but I am not involved as I am voiceless and not in leadership position” (Male, 25, Burundi)*



*Figure 17 - Complaint Box at UNHCR*

Not only are people not involved in decision making, but they are often unaware of services available as well, as discussed with loans previously. The CBO radio station called Yetu Radio has been valuable in disseminating information and allowing refugees to have a voice, yet this is refugee-run, rather than in the form of any formal interventions.

There is a lack of clarity, particularly with regards to resettlement. As such, most people in the camp feel it could occur any-day from now. Below 1% of the camp population get resettled, and this will decrease further due to America’s reduction in the number of refugees received, as well as the increasing camp population. Furthermore, some refugees say that they cannot speak out against the authorities due to fears for it hindering their resettlement.

Due to the challenges at Dzaleka and Malawian legislation restricting their rights, it is understandable that most wish to be resettled. Additionally, when asked whether the participant would prefer resettlement, repatriation or to stay in Malawi if they could gain citizenship and thus more rights, the clear majority still said resettlement. Most did not even consider repatriation due to concerns for their safety, and many said they would not want to stay in Malawi even if they could gain citizenship, because it is a poor country with limited opportunities. A prevalent mindset for youth is to therefore pin all their hopes on resettlement. However, such longing for a future which is unlikely to happen can have consequences for their present-day lives.

*“Make a follow up on process of refugee status in UNHCR, how resettlement is going, we refugees don’t know what is going on, we just wait for them to call us, so we should change that.” (Male, 20, DRC)*

As many refugees are unsure of the criteria surrounding resettlement, some refugees feel that their situation must be the most desperate in order to be resettled. This prevents some from actively creating livelihoods.

*“Disbelief stops us being self-reliant. Disbelief. Most young people want resettlement. Which is a great barrier. They fail to do something because they want to be resettled. They think that when I get resettled that’s when I’ll start thinking, that’s when I’ll start my life.” (Male, 22, DRC)*

Ultimately it is the lack of opportunities and extreme poverty facing Malawi as a country, both in the camp and outside, global inequalities and neo-colonialism which ensures that refugees desire resettlement to such an extent. However, refugees should not be excluded from the resettlement process so that they understand that this option is only for the more fortunate few.

*“I was invited to talk to students and one student asked me an honest question. He says “when you come here you are told that if you want resettlement you have to look miserable. You need to act miserable, be miserable. Don’t work don’t do anything just look like you are dying tomorrow. In that case you get resettlement. Now that is different from what you just taught us. What can I do?”. It was a reality which had escaped my mind and so I paused, and I say “sir this is a difficult question I don’t have an answer. However, I wish the world knew that it is a shame that a Congolese must pretend to be miserable to get resettlement to the US or to Europe because it is supposed to be the other way around. It should be Americans and Europeans that should be looking miserable to find access to come to the Congo with all that god has blessed the soil of Congo. Which is not benefitting at all. People with power, companies, they know how to get it to work for them. That every gadget you have will have at least a small piece of soil from the DRC.” (There is Hope)*

## *6.9 Mental health challenges*

Lacking basic needs, employment and educational opportunities, feeling voiceless and confined to a congested space, leads many 18-25-year olds to report feelings of hopelessness. Staying idle and fearing for the future has apparent consequences for one’s mental health. These issues can lead to harmful coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, including alcohol. While mental health problems at Dzaleka are generally a consequence of challenges, it can also be a cause of them. Facing stress, anxiety and depression can be debilitating for a young person and their agency, and mental health challenges may mean they cannot properly engage in strategies to better their future. According to one woman living at Dzaleka: *“There is a lot of insecurity, depression, lot of different kind of*

*sicknesses, stress is killing a lot of people. Home is where you get safety, home is where you feel happy and excitement even if you feel down, at least you have someone to cheer you up. Here is not home. You even sometimes feel like committing suicide.” (Female, 23, DRC)*

### *Conclusion*

From conducting interviews and focus groups with 18-25-year olds at Dzaleka, many challenges were highlighted. In terms of safety, while the majority feel safe, certain vulnerable groups are not protected at Dzaleka. Education is not a right at Dzaleka, and thus, many 18-25-year olds reveal how this is a significant challenge for them. This is particularly the case for women, who are often forced to drop out due to teenage pregnancy, prostitution or cultural expectations. Reduction in funding for JRS and transferring responsibility to CBOs means that access to education may become more exclusive to only those that can afford.

The concept of self-reliance ought to mean the camp becomes less under the authority of the UNHCR, yet the exclusion of refugees from decision making contradicts this. Likewise, being prevented from moving freely leaves them more dependent on the UNHCR within a camp setting. Despite self-reliance supposedly being promoted in recent years, freedom of movement at Dzaleka has become even more restricted, which arguably juxtaposes this.

The most noted challenge was widespread poverty facing youth at Dzaleka. If basic needs are not adequately met for all 18-25-year olds in the camp, self-reliance for all this age category seems a remote possibility. An essential safety net is currently being removed with an absence of favourable structures replacing it.

## Chapter 7. Self-reliance strategies of refugees

### 3) What livelihood strategies do 18-25-year-old refugees take to become more self-reliant?

This disjuncture between self-reliance projects and the various challenges faced means that forms of action taken by refugees are vital in their survival, including both individual livelihood strategies and community self-reliance. There is resilience amongst 18-25-year olds living in the camp, and they are supporting one another amidst difficult circumstances. Having limited means of survival may force one to be creative, yet refugees cannot be expected to overcome poverty in the absence of support.

#### 7.1 Community work

Young people are more likely to integrate with Malawians living in the host community than other age categories, through educational, vocational or types of recreational opportunities. This integration has benefited from the shift towards a higher number of CBOs (Community Based Organisations), as they often include Malawian youth. Furthermore, interactions amongst different nationalities generally seemed positive in this age category. One respondent said: *“I have learnt to meet new people, because in my country it is impossible to meet people from different countries... In my organisation we are mixing people from different countries, and different genders, men and female, we work together with no discrimination. We take ideas from others. We are not completed, we take other things from others to complete ourselves. This is so we can have a great and a strong community.”* (Male, 20, DRC)

This sense of community reflects in the types of volunteering which young people do at Dzaleka. A common way for refugees to help one another is to provide small-scale individual assistance, assisting with collecting water for a disabled neighbour, lending a friend their bicycle to help collect their relief, sharing food with neighbours who do not have enough. Further, a large proportion of the goals set by those living in the camp relates to the community, including working for NGOs, the UNHCR, teaching English, making apps or software to assist other refugees better. One respondent describes his motivation for working with the community is that *“I have gone through this suffering and pain, so I am the person that knows how to handle this place.”* (Male, 23, DRC).

With decreasing funding, organisations are increasingly relying on refugees to respond to needs in the community. JRS offers some training in leadership skills with the course MAISHA, promoting community work in refugees, and two refugees mention the impact this has had on them deciding to clean the boreholes or sweep toilets, or on helping an older man with a disability fetch water.



Some organisations employ refugees as community workers for a stipend. However, they must often work long hours with limited rewards and still struggle to meet their basic needs. Being focused on individual survival means one cannot contribute all their time and energy to such deeds.

While NGOs and the UNHCR have decreased their funding and projects within the camp, refugees have been very active in establishing CBOs (community-based organisations) to fill the gap and address the problems in their communities. Many CBOs are established by youth. Quite a few of the interviewees are either working for or running a community-based organisation. The JRS representative states how 18-25-year olds can play a significant role in acting as “change agents”. JRS also helps with capacity building of members of CBOs.

*“I have been the one implementing self-reliance project as part of UNHCR. Mainly community self-reliance making people in camp self-reliant, but as individuals very difficult. So, we encourage individuals to work as a community-based organisation, where JRS does capacity building of the skills of members of CBOs.”*

**(JRS)**

Specific Field		Name of CBO
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT	1	Breath Of Life Ministry
	2	Dzaleka Youth Congress
	3	Life Building Foundation “LIB”
	4	Vijana Africa
	5	AFECOPAD
	6	Dzaleka Adzimai Union “DAU”
	7	Auto- Ecole Dzaleka Camp
	8	Hope Youth Work
	9	WhiteFuture
	10	Umoja Youth Awards
	11	Yetu Community Radio
	12	Refugee Youth For Self-Assistance “RYSA”

*Table 5- List of youth empowerment CBOs at Dzaleka*

There are now seventy-three CBOs in Dzaleka, the majority of which have been formed in the last four years. There are also twenty-eight waiting for certification. There are ones in various categories, such as recreational, psychosocial well-being and educational. Thirty-one of these CBOs specifically target youth. There are twelve which specifically focus on youth empowerment.

Salama Africa is an example of a dance community-based organisation which started in 2014. It provides for creative opportunities and outlets, training youth in different outworks and enabling possibilities for them to travel around and showcase their talents. It has been very successful in campaigning for funding from various sources including the UNHCR, in having its building. However, this demonstrates that for CBOs to be successful, they too need funding from different sources and cannot act in a vacuum of support.



*Figure 18 - Working on the new building for Salama Africa*

*“Young people have been left behind for a long time but at the moment if you check services in the camp, they are all young adults” (Salama Africa)*

## *7.2 Forming Networks*

18 – 25-year olds feel the necessity to forge connections with NGO workers, to heighten their opportunities. Mentioned several times by respondents, having connections to Plan, for instance, means one will be informed of the latest job opportunities or events taking place. Networks are essential anywhere, yet the consequences are amplified at Dzaleka due to the limited opportunities for employment.

For many others, they feel less informed about the opportunities available, and therefore, cannot access the same opportunities.

*“There are a lot of events organised, but those that get involved have close relationships with those in charge, so other people in the community don’t know about it and therefore don’t have the opportunity. For instance, those working for Plan, will know about opportunities, could be job opportunities, and tell their friends, so not everyone has equal opportunities.” (Female, DRC, 23)*

Coming from a certain group may impact on one’s ability to access different opportunities within Dzaleka. Those who are more marginalised socially, are less able to have such connections and therefore cannot access the same opportunities, which are already limited. Teenage mothers or survival sex workers risk becoming more isolated from the community, therefore lacking necessary social capital to further their opportunities in life. Other groups also feel more marginalised, including Somalian’s, those with Albinism and those who are LGBT.

*“Sometimes they favour certain people, and if you don’t know them, they won’t get the opportunity. There is favouritism, and I feel discriminated against because of my nationality.” (Male, Somalian, 23)*

Many interviewed have friends or family living in the city who were previous residents of the camp. This can be a potential link to the market for those running businesses or producing crops in the camp. Income generated by a family member in town can also become a source of remittance for those in the camp. It can also be useful for recreation and a young person’s mental health, to spend some time away from Dzaleka visiting a friend or relative.

### *7.3 Educational strategies*

A more individual level strategy taken by refugees is to further their education and increase their opportunities in life. The first and foremost educational strategy for many refugees when they arrive, specifically those from the DRC, is to learn English. Learning English can provide a gateway for entering secondary school or the different types of educational programs on offer. Having a job with an organisation in the camp is impossible without having first learnt English.

However, the current legal situation in Malawi means that other educational opportunities remain highly limited. Even those who have had success with accessing higher education can very rarely access formal employment afterwards. They only gain a higher chance of working for an organisation in the camp. For the few resettled via the WUSC programme in Canada have the best

chance of achieving this. Furthermore, most youths desire a ‘white-collar’ profession, such as being a lawyer or doctor, which is unachievable under the current circumstance.

#### *7.4 Economic activities - agriculture*

Other strategies which 18-25-year olds seize within the camp is to engage in agriculture. Agriculture is less conventional for young people than those who are older, however, as youth interviewed were more interested in starting a business or a pursuing a ‘white-collar’ job. Nonetheless, for those interested this can mean leasing land from local Malawians, working in association with CARD, or owning small plots of land within the camp. Dowa district (the region Dzaleka is located), never used to produce tomatoes, instead they produced tobacco. However, with tobacco, prices are fluctuating. Rwandese and Congolese refugees diversified production because they are specialised at this, and this trickled down to the local community who began to copy. Now Dzaleka is one of the highest producers of tomatoes in the country, whereby 15-20 trucks per day come to buy tomatoes for markets for Lilongwe. A critical element that the local community learnt from the refugees at Dzaleka is that of farming as a business, not just for consumption. This shift is essential in an era of climate change drastically affecting Malawi and its crop production.



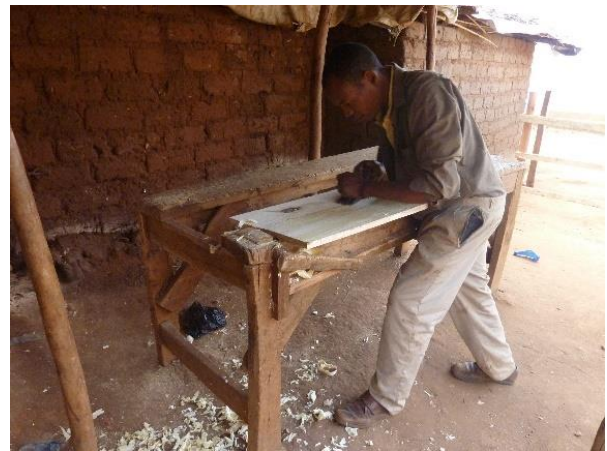
*Figure 19 - Selling high value crops - cabbages and tomatoes, at Dzaleka on market day*

#### *7.5 Economic activities – engaged in businesses*

Non-agricultural types of livelihood activities occurring within the camp include clothes making, tailoring, printing, hairdressing, working in or owning a restaurant or bar. These are more common

in the camp than agricultural, particularly for 18-25-year olds. If they are not currently engaged in these activities, participants spoke of their desire to do so in the future. In separate interviews, two women and one man described how they are in the process of learning hairdressing, as they hope to open a salon in the future. In the camp, according to some, there used to be only two shops, five or so years ago, in comparison to the hundreds existing today.

*“Business, something people do on their own, opportunity some other people have when they don’t have chances to go on to further education. Really helped people to be self-reliant. Camp of Dzakaleka is getting so developed compared to 5-10 years ago, people are doing business, building shops.” (Salama Africa)*



*Figures 20, 21, 22 - 18-25-year olds engaged in economic activities at Dzakaleka*

The vast increase in the number of businesses operating at Dzaleka could demonstrate successes of the self-reliance agenda in pushing for self-reliance, through young refugees attempting to fill the gap. However, just because there are more businesses in operation does not mean that these businesses are succeeding. Although refugees are free to run their businesses in the camp, and organisations such as CARD are trying to link some beneficiaries' businesses to the external market, the restrictions on free movement make expanding business more difficult. Furthermore, an increase in the number of businesses leads to an increase in supply without a correlation in increasing demand, meaning prices have decreased. For example, the increase in the number of tomato vendors at the weekly market has meant that prices have reduced. Furthermore, there are very few 18-25-year olds engaged in businesses which require more capital investment and skills, such as transportation, computer services or restaurants.

### *7.5 Economic activities - volunteering for an organisation*

One strategy taken for livelihoods is to work for an organisation; the only opportunity for employment at Dzaleka. These are limited, however, and mostly this is voluntary, sometimes for a small stipend of either money or food.

*"I first started working for Plan Malawi as a volunteer for 8 months, no salary or anything, the only thing I do benefit is that we get cooking oil, porridge, small fishes, soya pieces. In 2017 started saying we can give you a token of appreciation, and for that period I was getting 10,000 Kwacha. The time I was working as a volunteer interpreter, I got a little knowledge of English to help my fellows, those who cannot say anything. I can speak 5 languages, which is why I was there. And after where they said we can add on that, if I can help translator too. I was getting 18,000 Kwacha from that. Being an interpreter in the office doesn't give me much time to do my own business. But they didn't want to let me go, so they employed me as a mobiliser instead." (Male, 22, DRC)*

For those working as a teacher, they receive 51,000 Kwacha per month, for those working as a community mobiliser, around 31,000 Kwacha. The same respondent as above described how his real income lies with his printing business, rather than working for Plan, due to the limited salary they receive as a 'volunteer'. With funding for organisations in protracted situations, including Dzaleka decreasing, it is uncertain whether wages will be provided for refugees in the foreseeable future.

## *7.6 Economic activities – selling rations and engaging in piece work*

For people who face more significant hardships, a form of economic activity can be through selling part of their food ration. This is unlikely to generate much income. Engaging in piece work such as washing clothes or fetching water for someone with a disability is another technique which camp residents are involved in, in order to survive.

## *7.7 Economic activities – survival sex*

At Dzaleka, sex transactions are a method for women to meet their basic needs. In one interview, a teen mother explained how she would engage in survival sex to buy essentials for her new-born baby. Unaccompanied youth, widows, single mothers, teenage mothers and female-headed households are more vulnerable in the camp, and therefore more likely to engage in survival sex. The UNHCR livelihoods specialist described how many earn 100 Kwacha per transaction, often to buy some vegetables. The payment ranges between 100-500 MKW (0.27 – 0.7 USD), although clients in Lilongwe will pay more, around 2000 (3 USD). UNHCR, CARD and Plan have begun a deliberate policy to include transactional sex workers in their interventions. CARD integrates them with activity coordinators to ensure they are involved in ‘quick cash activities’; making money in a week. If it took longer, the women would go back to the previous profession, because it would be failing to meet their basic food needs at home. However, with interventions reaching only 800 of the most vulnerable people in the camp of 39,000, high numbers are still engaged in survival sex to meet their basic needs. This demonstrates the limitations of the UNHCR promotion of self-reliance, in that many women are highly dependent on sexual transactions to survive. With declining funds to better support these women, it seems implausible that this situation will decrease.

*“There is a big difference between men and women. Women have a lot of demands, and basic needs that they would like to meet. That forces women to do something beyond their wishes when they need something in the camp. For example, a woman that needs money for basic needs because she doesn’t have money, she is forced to do prostitution. That can result in ruining her life. The thing is there is a problem to meet the basic needs for us women.” (Female, 23, DRC)*

## *Conclusion*

Refugees cannot and are not sitting around, waiting for relief. Instead, they are actively seeking opportunities and ways to make a living. In many ways' refugees are taking the lead in pushing for the durable solution of local integration.

In the void of funding and opportunities, refugees have created community-based organisations to support their society. Livelihood and other formal individual interventions are benefiting some at Dzaleka. However, it is the creation of community-based organisations which are benefiting more than just a minority at Dzaleka in building self-reliance. In Dzaleka, JRS is providing some training for community-based organisations and the UNHCR have funded Salama in the creation of its building. They, therefore, recognise the importance of CBOs, yet other CBOs require funding and support to address the problems in the community adequately. Many refugees desire a more significant role in self-governing their community, yet they lack resources to do this effectively.

Individually, refugees are creating income-generating opportunities, yet such opportunities are unstable, and the clear majority still live in poverty at Dzaleka. Those in the camp who are more successful than others generally are those who own successful businesses, as this can enable a higher income than working for an organisation which has a maximum upper limit. Owning a business does not guarantee self-reliance, however. In the camp, there has been a vast increase in the numbers of businesses operating, meaning that competition is high, and prices have decreased. While organisations such as CARD seek to enhance access to the broader market, the law limits most of those who want to expand their business. Finally, the fact that so many women are engaged in survival sex for meagre payments demonstrates a failure in the promotion of self-reliance.



## Chapter 8. Discussion

Throughout this thesis, the implementation of the conceptual approach of self-reliance has been explored, critiquing the disjuncture between interventions and the main challenges facing refugees at Dzaleka. Livelihood strategies and their outcomes indicate whether self-reliance is being achieved and whether the UNHCR pursuit of self-reliance is an aim shared by 18-25-year olds at Dzaleka.

In this discussion, the experiences of 18-25-year olds at Dzaleka will be related to the theoretical framework and the arguments surrounding the concept of self-reliance. The implications of this will then become clear as to informing key literature. Recommendations will also be made for both future research and policy.

### *Strengths*

#### 8.1 Promoting self-reliance creates benefits for both the refugee population and host state and therefore precedes integration

Integration requires a supportive legal framework; an economic, social and cultural dimension (UNHCR, 2005). It depends on the political will of the government and receptiveness or financial capacity of the host community (UNHCR, 2005). Self-reliance is not framed as a durable solution but as a method of achieving it. Self-reliance helps provide the economic and social/cultural dimension as a result of this encouraging the government to change the legal framework. The achievement of self-reliance indicates whether economic and social integration has been attained and is part of the process of solutions being achieved in the future.

Refugees engaging in various livelihood strategies implies that economic and social integration has been achieved. Economically, the fact that Dzaleka resembles in so many ways an urban centre, a hub of business and agricultural products for the local community, particularly during market days, demonstrates that it has undoubtedly achieved a significant degree of economic integration. Integration is highlighted by the government turning a blind eye to refugees living in the city due to them owning successful businesses. While self-reliance may have difficulties providing real benefits to the general refugee population, the host community is benefitting from Dzaleka, replacing the assumption of refugees being a burden on refugee-hosting areas.

Networks formed with Malawians, often via community-based organisations, demonstrate that there has been some form of social integration at least for this age category. 18-25-year olds tend to integrate more with their peers in the surrounding community. The increase in community-

based organisations is not explicitly linked to the implementation of self-reliance, yet by providing training and funding to some of them, this can help refugees achieve some community self-reliance. Integration is encouraged through the involvement of both Malawians and refugees.

Aleinikoff (2015) argues that a new narrative is required to highlight how refugee populations have the potential to contribute to host and origin societies. However, despite the refugee camp creating benefits for the local community, the encampment policy in Malawi is still prevalent. The government may have made promises and are turning a blind eye in some cases, but in practice, the legal framework has not been changed. The lives of refugees in the short term are being used as tools to pressure change, which may take decades if ever, to arrive.

Moreover, it is not just the concept of self-reliance which encouraged Dzaleka's existence as an urban hub, benefitting the host community. Other factors include the length of its establishment, enabling it to become more integrated over time. Furthermore, the government has slightly more lenient policies reflected in Dzaleka's unfenced nature, its proximity to the capital, as well as refugees' ability to run their businesses and move around the local area.

### *Criticisms*

#### 8.2 Too individualistic and ignores legal barriers

There is value to the criticism of self-reliance as fundamentally neo-liberal and problematic. It pushes refugees to be entirely self-supportive when they lack positive liberties to thrive. Refugees are expected to provide their own and others needs within an environment of limited and declining support. Assistance is being reduced, with basic relief halved, yet refugees are not ready to support themselves. 18 – 25-year olds at Dzaleka are mobilising their resources to fill the gaps; however, they face obstacles mainly due to government policies.

Encouraging refugees to group up in community-based organisations disputes how individualistic the concept is, yet community-based organisations stem primarily from the refugees' accord. Funding for official interventions is going to individual self-reliance projects such as livelihood programs or vocational training. However, community-based organisations need funding and resources to be successful. Refugees cannot meet their own basic needs; thus, it seems implausible to expect them to support one another. Further, just because refugees are taking on more services, it does not mean that these services are effective or reaching enough people without adequate resources.

Similarly, while economic activities are taking place, widespread poverty indicates that these businesses are failing in enabling a young person to meet their basic needs. Highlighting refugees' strategies overcomes their treatment as vulnerable and passive, but it does not mean that they do not need support in order to realise their agency fully. This can, therefore, dispute Enghoff (2010) who argues that displaced people can be autonomous with limited humanitarian or development assistance. It is evident at Dzaleka that with a stronger safety net, they are more likely to overcome poverty. Furthermore, the argument of Polzer (2009) that the potential to explore increased self-reliance lies beyond the concept of refugee rights and state policies can be disputed. Polzer (2009) argues that successful integration is pushed by the host community and refugee's agency themselves. Whilst integration has and is currently being led by the host community and refugees; self-reliance cannot be fully achieved without a shift in legislation and greater refugee rights.

Decreasing relief does not automatically encourage refugees to generate their own successful livelihood strategy, and at Dzaleka in the absence of a supportive legal framework, self-reliance is shown to be difficult. Milner (2011) argues that while an increased focus on self-reliance and livelihoods may improve conditions for refugees, these cannot be a substitute for a durable solution. Challenges discussed by 18-25-year olds highlight that economic and social integration has not been attained and ultimately, refugees cannot be self-reliant under the encampment policy. Challenges discussed by refugees most often relate to such legal obstacles. Therefore, these systemic issues must be addressed.

Refugees' values for self-reliance, specifically with the age category 18 – 25, does not match the sole focus of access to employment or the markets. 18 – 25-year olds place a high priority on education, yet self-reliance interventions side-line this. Consequently, education is a privilege, not a right at Dzaleka. The perceptions of 18-25-year olds demonstrate that there is a disjuncture between formal interventions and what youth perceive as crucial for their self-reliance.

Paradoxically, self-reliance presumes refugees ought to be having more autonomy over their decision making, yet at Dzaleka, refugees are alienated from decisions which affect them and their futures. Self-governance is not occurring, and refugees are often not aware of decisions which take place, let alone involved in them. If refugees were viewed as active agents, as the self-reliance concept presumes, then they should be treated as such.

### 8.3 Failing to protect refugees

Refugees are incredibly resourceful primarily because they have limited means and support networks, thus forcing them to think creatively. However, it can be observed with Dzaleka that

denying refugees their basic needs and pushing them into further poverty is not translating them into being self-reliant. They cannot fill the gap themselves when interventions can only target a few, supporting the argument of Aleinikoff (2015) that most projects only provided a limited number of refugees with some skills. This means the programs are less successful and many at Dzaleka excluded. Often, they can only think of daily survival amidst high rates of poverty. Therefore, some of those engaged in livelihood activities spend the capital or sell the equipment they receive from the UNHCR or other partner organisations, to meet their basic pressing needs. While the graduate approach with CARD successfully overcomes this challenge, through including quick cash-based assistance, the numbers this can target is limited.

The arguments of Bakewell are evidenced at Dzaleka, where he argued how recipients must highlight their poverty in order to receive benefits, in some cases preventing refugees from improving their own situation (“Giving out their daughters for their survival”- Refugee Law Project: 246). Only those who are most vulnerable can access the livelihood interventions by CARD, and by operating on a needs-based approach with dwindling financial resources, the number of people receiving assistance is reduced. Kaiser’s (2002) explores how refugees are afraid of being perceived as ‘self-reliant’ by the UNHCR because they would lose their protection from the organisation. This can also be seen with the criteria for resettlement at Dzaleka, whereby refugees feel they have to appear as vulnerable as possible, discouraging some from developing their livelihoods.

The reasons behind these reductions of relief are often out of the UNHCR’s control, yet the practice of decreasing food rations within current restrictions heightens poverty and undermines the likelihood of refugee being self-reliant. Self-reliance ought to entail a shift from relief aid to development support and provide enabling conditions for refugees to establish livelihoods. In Dzaleka, the only shift which is taking place is the decrease in assistance. This supports the arguments taken by Naohiko Omata (2018) and his work in a study of Buduram refugee camp in Ghana. The UNHCR commended it as a self-reliant model in spite of vast economic inequality within the camp, and the leading resource for those who could satisfy their basic needs was remittances, unrelated to the UNHCR’s initiatives of fostering self-reliance. At Dzaleka this can be seen. Only a few (3-5%) are better off in the camp, unlike 76.5% who are ‘ultra-poor’. This generally has to do with other livelihood resources, such as arriving with capital (Ethiopians in the camp who are far more abundant than the rest) or having connections when first arriving. The

duration of time spent in exile can also play a role in enabling self-reliance through acquiring new social capital (De Vriese, 2006).

The promotion of self-reliance, according to the UNHCR, is also viewed as a protection tool, reducing factors making refugee's vulnerable to violence and exploitation (UNHCR, 2006). However, trying to reduce refugee's dependence on aid amidst declining funding, whilst refugee rights are not being extended, risks undermining refugee's protection. The fact that teen pregnancies, early marriage and prostitution are occurring at Dzaleka, suggests that self-reliance as a programme approach has not reduced factors making refugees vulnerable. Operating on a needs-based approach, it has not protected those classed as most vulnerable, including some women, those who are unaccompanied, have albinism or are LGBT. By promoting jobs and the market as a substitute to relief without a change in legislation places refugees at risk of exploitation in the informal economy.

#### *8.4 Conclusion*

Self-reliance as a program approach is currently failing to meet the needs of 18-25-year olds at Dzaleka refugee camp. Under current legislation and the encampment policy Malawi, self-reliance will not fully be realised for the majority of those at Dzaleka. Only until the Malawian government extends rights to refugees will development actors become involved, and self-reliance be achieved. Self-reliance is framed as a method of attaining local integration through reducing refugee's dependence, yet by withdrawing aid and implementing limited new programs is not a successful strategy to assist all in becoming self-reliant. By linking some individuals to the market, they are helping the most vulnerable achieve some degree of self-reliance. However, for the rest, they remain in need of decreasing relief amidst other livelihood strategies.

To properly achieve self-reliance, development actors must be engaged, and policies must be changed through greater advocacy. The strategies that 18-25-year olds are taking demonstrate they are actively seeking to be self-reliant, and they do not want to be dependent. The resilience and entrepreneurship of young refugees at Dzaleka is not disputed by highlighting the need for supportive policies or more beneficial interventions. The actions that they are currently taking and their perceptions on what is vital for their self-reliance should be emphasised. Community-based organisations need to be supported more and funded, in order to build upon refugees' models of self-reliance. Further, educational programs are a necessity for a young person's self-reliance. Thus, they are not something which should be reduced, as is currently being done. To say that there are

structural limitations does not refute the agency of those living at Dzaleka, and the perception that 18-25-year olds ought to fully take responsibility for themselves in the absence of care is misguided in the current situation at Dzaleka Refugee Camp.

### *8.5 Recommendations*

The increasing camp population at Dzaleka correlates with increasing refugee and migration patterns globally. This is set to rise in the coming years due to climate change. Northern countries first and foremost need to accept more refugees via resettlement. Refugee numbers are increasing, and those in the global South are carrying the greatest number, with the most limited resources. Advocating host governments in the South to soften policies towards protracted refugee situations is unfair when donor countries are failing to meet their own responsibilities. The UNHCR main funders are in the North, yet they are contributing to these protracted refugee situations by preventing asylum for refugees and reducing their donor commitments. This leaves refugees and host countries in the South on their own.

Rather than refugees themselves being used as a tool for changing legislation through the shift in concept to self-reliance, this changing legislation needs to take place first, prior to the reduction of assistance. The UNHCR, therefore, needs to continue to advocate for changing legislation. Whilst it has achieved a first vital step in pressuring the Malawian government to sign the CRRF, this has not yet been acted upon. The collaboration of development, humanitarian and state actors is vital for solutions to protracted refugee situations. If development actors were to become more involved, investments in roads or in larger-scale manufacturing projects, for instance, could be achieved, further encouraging local integration and enabling the development of Malawi.

Even if not guaranteeing full residency citizenship, labour migration with work permits ought to be considered, as Long argues (2014). In this setting, refugees could start to have their business registered, with a permit for integration and freedom to work. This is providing there are conditions with tax regulations, or ensuring locals are employed and paid an acceptable wage based on the work they are doing, in order to heighten the host community's receptivity and acceptance. If refugees comply with these, they could get a permit. Currently, those living in the city are paying more in bribes than in taxation, and rather than teaching Malawians the benefits of refugee's integration, they ought to be shown. Temporary labour migration may have its own problems unlike the security of legal status, and nor is it a 'durable solution', yet it could in the meantime provide refugees with greater access to self-reliance opportunities.

The perceptions of 18 – 25-year olds need to be considered. They value educational opportunities highly. Thus, there is a need for more educational interventions and livelihood interventions to benefit more than just a minority. Furthermore, there could be advocacy for partnerships with companies in Lilongwe or other cities once students graduate, such as short-term internships or traineeships. Although there are high rates of unemployment in Malawi, there are many skilled people living at Dzaleka who have much to contribute to its development.

Community-based organisations should be funded to place attention on how refugees are already utilising networks and displaying resilience. This would also match the aspirations of 18-25-year olds, which often relate to helping their community. Rather than focusing solely on self-reliance as a program approach for livelihoods, it should be widened to cater for the varying goals of 18-25-year olds, which are more viable in this context.

### *8.6 Implications for future research*

No research has focused specifically on youth concerning the concept of self-reliance in protracted refugee situations. Each protracted refugee situation is different, yet this research provides an essential gateway into understanding the lives, goals and frustrations of young people living in such camps. It provides a counter-claim to the success of self-reliance interventions and highlights the need for change.

Future research is required in deepening our understanding of self-reliance interventions. With regards to Malawi, research is needed to explore the self-reliance opportunities of refugees who are now living illegally in cities. This could help make comparisons to a camp setting and assist with advocacy.

For other camps in different contexts, it ought to be explored as to whether self-reliance interventions are successful, and why that is the case if so. There may be certain contextual factors which enable interventions to succeed in other camps. This could then help tailor interventions more appropriately in the future. More participatory research techniques concerning young refugees would also set a precedent for young people to be more involved in policy decision making.

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